



LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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To: School Committee
Becky McFall, Superintendent

From: Michael Haines, Facilities Manager
Buckner Creel, Administrator for Business and Finance

Subject: Annual Update on Custodial Service Review

Background: On October 24, 2011, the School Committee approved the review of LPS custodial services by Sanitation Systems Inc. (SSI). SSI was to review current practices and make recommendations on how to improve the overall cleanliness of our schools.

Beginning in December 2011 and completed in April 2012, baselines were determined, building areas were studied, schedules were analyzed, schedules were tweaked, individual routes were created, contingency routes were created, cleaning products and tools used were streamlined, tools were purchased and supplied, and initial training was done. Also of note is that we gained some "on the tool" hours by converting the paid 20-minute meal period to an unpaid 30-minute meal period during the last contract negotiations.

Recent Review: The SSI process has provided LPS with what we believe to be an excellent foundation to build upon. Although we are not where we can be, Michael has seen us take large strides in the custodial work process and anticipates us continuing to move forward over time. We have seen many weeks in a row of this new process work with good to very good results.

SSI recently returned (April 10, 2014) to rate our overall cleaning process. The summary report is attached. SSI found that the initial improvement made has remained and has increased in many areas. It had previously been reported that we tend to pay greater attention to areas that were found to be deficient while somewhat neglecting other areas that met standards. In this year's report, we find that things have evened out, which is a good sign in that all areas are now being attended to regularly. These past reports have told us where we were weakest, and we have now improved in all of these areas.

We have still not fully implemented the SSI program; we are not able to do cleaning inspections on a daily/weekly basis. In addition, staff absences, while unavoidable, can still lead to inconsistent cleaning results. Certainly the addition of the .5 FTE has helped us out, and we thank the School Committee for backing that position. The part time position (on the Lincoln campus) has given us additional hours for cleaning along with flexibility to manage gaps in coverage more effectively.

The District does have a unique staffing situation--there are actually four different custodial groups for the two different campuses. These groups are a day custodian per individual school and multiple second shift custodians for each campus. Our day custodians, while having cleaning duties, are also involved in the day-to-day activities of their school. There are many times when they are needed elsewhere and also act as first responders to their building. Our second shift personnel are the primary cleaners.

It is somewhat easy to cover for one custodian absence per campus and keep the cleanliness of the buildings up. It can and does become difficult to cover for multiple absences on the same day. Our changed schedules, changed shift starting times, and evenly spacing out of vacations have decreased the impact of our coverage dilemmas. We have also looked into cross training attempting to create “one big campus”; however, it quickly becomes apparent that taking from one campus to cover the other campus has no direct benefit to either.

Again this year, there have been times when long staff absences were at a level higher than experienced in prior years, and on some days, the absence rate was 50%. These absences were unavoidable, and often unplanned, but have had a direct impact on the results of the cleaning program. Substitutes or “bench” players have been hired to cover many absences, and they have contributed greatly to our coverage issues but may not bring the same consistency to the cleaning process as they move from area to area.

Our commitment to increasing the input and decision making of our lead custodians continues to be successful. Regular weekly and monthly meetings keep the communication avenues flowing in both directions. Second shift lead positions are directly responsible for much of the improvement in cleanliness seen to date. They continue to regularly communicate with their campus principals, faculty, and staff members. This empowerment has given them a large ownership stake on their campus and allows them to make area assignment changes as they deem necessary. This method has continued to produce shorter response times to support needs as well as provide them with pertinent information in a more timely manner.

As noted by SSI, while we have made significant improvements, we have yet to establish a regular inspection process.

Future Actions: Allow the periodic reviews and training sessions to continue conducted by SSI for the next fiscal year. These trainings have proven to be exceptionally beneficial to continuing the improvements needed to meet our goals and we believe they will continue to do so into the future. We hope to continue these SSI reviews for the next several fiscal years as we re-shape our custodial practices.

SSI April Inspection Report for Cleaning

The third set of ratings of the cleaning operation at Lincoln Public Schools for the academic year 2013-2014 were conducted on April 10, 2014.

The Overall Quality Factor (Q) slipped marginally, finishing at 93% to December's 94%.

The score for offices is on the rise, improving by two points. Washrooms are up six points to 86%. Miscellaneous areas remain at 93%, and classrooms fell a point to 97%. Lobbies / corridors improved by five points to finish at 96%.

The Overall Q for offices is up two points to 96%, good, but still nine points below September '13 results. Two areas were at or above standard, and two were below with scores ranging from +0.3 to -3.0. We were pleased to note that both equipment and wall scores are above standard. Floors continue to lag, now at 83%. Weather was certainly a factor, but cobwebs and litter are not affected by snow. Overall, though, 96% is certainly an improvement.

Classrooms have fared much better than the other area types. Walls and equipment are at or above standard. Floors are at 83%, again not surprising for the time of year. As with offices, however, litter and cobwebs should not be a problem with daily care. All things being equal, however, these are very good results given the tough winter we have just gone through.

Washrooms showed some very good improvement, especially on equipment and walls. Floors remain an issue, but one that cannot be adequately addressed until school is out. They were significantly below standard to begin the year, and routine work simply will not get them all the way up to standard. The five washrooms that were four or more points below standard all had six points deducted for widespread soil film on the floor, and only some heavy duty scrubbing, steaming or power washing will remove it. After that, washrooms will look significantly better year round.

Two gyms, a kitchenette, two teacher prep areas, and the Brooks Auditorium were rated this semester. Of the major elements, only equipment is above standard with floors and walls falling eighteen and eleven points respectively. The Brooks auditorium brought the Overall Q down by four points. With a net score of -10.8, this area had floor deductions for soil film, spills, dust and widespread litter as well as widespread soil film, marks and fingerprints, dust on furniture, and scuffs and built up soil film on walls.

SUMMARY

The Hanscom buildings are up five points to 97%. The Lincoln buildings are down two points to 92%. Overall by shift, the day group was, again, a point ahead of the night group.

Two of the major elements are below standard, floors at 83% and walls at 94%. Equipment is above standard at 103% because of a high score of 121% in lobbies / corridors.

The area types, with the exception of washrooms, are up and down but all are at or above 93%. Washrooms have improved by six points to 86%. In this area type, floors are up two points, walls by five points and fixtures, and equipment improved by **thirteen points**. While the better scores are going in the right direction, 86% is not acceptable for washrooms in any operation.

Given the ferocity of the weather this winter and the ongoing short staffing at the Lincoln campus, we are pleased to see that the operation is holding its own. Cobwebs, which seemed to

be everywhere in December, were much reduced this set of ratings. Keep that up and ratings will begin to approach the standard levels we are aiming for.

We think that some training in washroom cleaning would be in order over the summer, timed early enough to be sure that they are above standard to start the year. A lot more attention to detail is needed, not to mention the effort required to get the floors up to acceptable levels.

Overall, this is better than we expected and think that the crew should be appreciated for their efforts.