

## Lincoln Public Schools

| <b>FY '14<br/>Actual</b> | <b>FY '15<br/>Budget</b> | <b>FY '16<br/>Proposed</b> |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|----------------------------|
| <b>\$9,913,338</b>       | <b>\$10,258,812</b>      | <b>\$10,529,900</b>        |

### General Information

The Lincoln Public School Committee operates the Lincoln Public Schools Preschool to Grade 8 programs at the Lincoln School on Ballfield Road and at the Hanscom Primary School and Hanscom Middle School located on Hanscom Air Force Base. The Committee's overarching goal is to maintain and improve educational programming and school facilities within the fiscal constraints established by the Lincoln Finance Committee and the contract with the Department of Defense to operate the Hanscom schools.

The FY '16 budget for the operation of the Lincoln School is a preferred budget request representing an increase of 2.64%, which is \$14,618 above the 2.5% growth guideline established by the Finance Committee. The budget is also supported by approximately \$1.16 million in grants, fees and reimbursements. This level of support will provide the resources needed to maintain the existing program and make modest improvements in supports for students and teachers. The School Committee continues to operate the schools at Hanscom under a contract with the Department of Defense. This contract is beneficial to the district and provides funding for half the cost of central office operations, curriculum and instructional leadership and professional development. The value of the contract is between \$50 million and \$65 million over five years, depending upon enrollment.

Following a series of public outreach forums early last year, community feedback advised the School Committee to request funding at the 2014 Town Meeting for costing out the various SBAC pathways in preparation for further discussions with the community. The School Committee reformed the School Building Advisory Committee (SBAC) to guide a study of the facility and educational needs of the Lincoln School and to solicit community input on potential pathways towards addressing the needs. After several months of study and a number of public forums, the SBAC presented a final report outlining several approaches to the School Committee. The School Committee will bring several questions to the 2015 Town Meeting, the outcome of which will determine the next steps for addressing the needs of the Lincoln School. Details may be found in the SBAC report linked to the Lincoln Public Schools website at [www.lincnet.org](http://www.lincnet.org).

The School Committee and administration are also working with the Department of Defense on the design and construction of a new Middle School and a new Primary School for Hanscom. The federal government will fund the entire project. The total project cost for the Hanscom Middle School is approximately \$39 million and will serve 310 students in 85,000 square feet of new educational space. A contract was awarded to

J&J Contracting of Lowell, and construction is under way. The Middle School is currently housed in a large temporary modular facility, and the old Middle School building was demolished last fall. The design of the replacement Hanscom Primary School is essentially complete, with construction planned to follow the completion of the new Middle School in mid-2016. The new Primary School is projected to cost \$39 million for the 80,000 square feet of new educational space to be constructed on the current Primary School footprint, and will be connected directly to the new Middle School when completed.

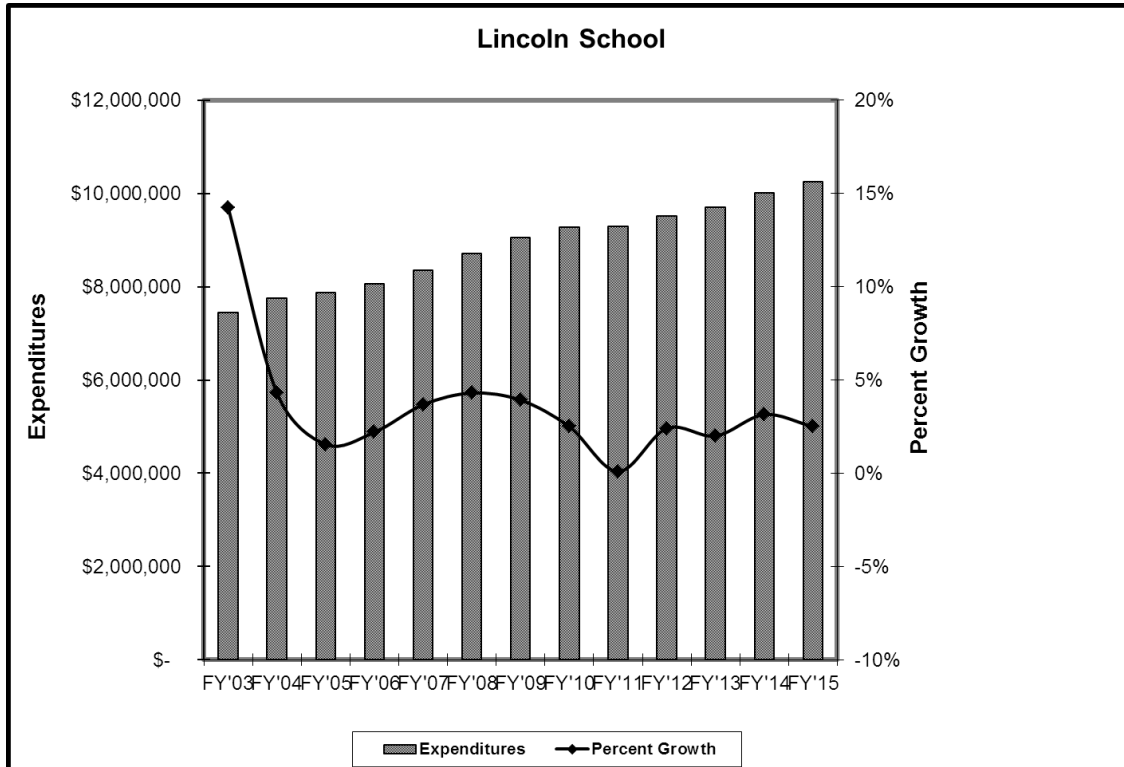
The School Committee requested funds for several capital warrant initiatives in recognition of the need for continued maintenance and repair of the current Lincoln School pending the outcome of the ongoing discussions, and in recognition of the capital replacement needs at the Hartwell Building. Cash capital in the amount of \$75,000 is recommended for continued preventive maintenance and classroom rehabilitation. These funds support routine maintenance for several smaller projects each year. Finally, the School Committee has proposed warrant articles to fund a Feasibility Study to develop building projects to address the school building needs identified by the School Building Advisory Committee.

### **Key Issues**

- K – 8 enrollment for the 2015-2016 school year is projected to increase by 3.3% to 610, compared to 590 students enrolled on October 1, 2014. The number of classroom sections will remain constant at 31 sections, and the number of sections at each grade will adjust to match the size of each cohort moving through the school. The Lincoln School will continue to enroll students from Boston through the METCO program, and the projected enrollment of METCO students is 91.
- Personnel costs continue to represent almost 80% of the Lincoln School's operating costs. The School Committee will shortly be in negotiations with the unions representing the custodians and the secretaries, and remains optimistic that it will be possible to advance this year's program into next year and stay within the proposed budget.
- Special education costs at the Lincoln School remain essentially level, and receipts from special education circuit breaker and Medicaid reimbursements are factored into the FY'15 budget.
- Two major initiatives related to the educational program were reported last year, and their implementation will continue into FY '16. Full implementation of the new MA Educator Evaluation system began at the beginning of this school year. The statewide educator evaluation regulations require changes in the way administrators and teachers are evaluated and involve multiple measures of student performance as one factor in evaluating an educator's job performance. The second initiative is the adoption of the new State curriculum frameworks in mathematics and English language arts. Work to revise Lincoln's Learning Expectations and the realignment of core curriculum is mostly complete. The district is working on refining the systems for standards-based teaching, assessing and reporting established for grades kindergarten through eighth grade last year.

**Warrant Articles**

- Article 10, Feasibility study for the Lincoln School: \$750,000
- Article 12, Feasibility study for the Lincoln School: \$650,000
- Article 14, Replace Hartwell west curtain wall: \$40,000
- Article 14, IT replacement cycle: \$107,771
- Article 21, Annual classroom rehabilitation and preventive maintenance program: \$75,000
- Article 28, Transfer Medicaid reimbursements into budget: \$34,000



# Annual Town Report: Lincoln Public Schools

## Executive Summary

### FY '15

#### I. Introduction

The Lincoln Public School District serves a diverse student population in preschool through grade 8 with children from four communities: Lincoln residents; residents of the Hanscom Air Force Base; Boston families in the METCO Program; and school and town employees. The Lincoln school district differs from the neighboring school districts – it is smaller, it includes the schools on the Air Force Base, and it has a relatively high level of economic and racial diversity. Nevertheless, comparisons with the neighboring districts -- Bedford, Concord, Lexington, Sudbury K-8, Wayland, and Weston – provide useful information about the profile and performance of our schools.

**II. District profile** [Note: Unless otherwise noted, the information provided is based on the 2012-2013 school year. Where we refer to Lincoln Public Schools (LPS), the district, we are including the Hanscom schools, while 'Lincoln School' refers only to the Lincoln campus.]

**Enrollment:** The current K-8 student enrollment at LPS is 1,108 students, including 518 students at Hanscom Air Force Base and 590 students on the Lincoln campus. In addition, there are 133 preschool students attending programs at Hanscom Air Force Base and on the Lincoln campus.

**Staffing:** LPS salaries are comparable to our peer communities and reflect the high number of experienced, senior teachers. In 2012-13, we had 121.6 full-time equivalent teachers with an average teacher salary of \$79,176, down from \$79,798 in the previous year and \$81,693 in the year before that (due to retiring teachers replaced by more junior teachers).

**Class Size:** LPS maintains an enviable average class size of 15.2, down from 15.7 in the previous year, while our peer communities have, on average, an average class size of 17.7 (ranging from 14.8 in Bedford to 20.2 in Sudbury K-8).

**Diversity:** Lincoln has a longstanding commitment to the METCO program, and now enrolls 89 Boston residents at the Lincoln School through this program (the highest percentage of any community in the Boston metropolitan area), to supplement the diversity of Lincoln's resident students. In addition, Lincoln has the second highest level of low-income enrollment among the comparison communities (and the highest level if one includes the Hanscom schools).

**Per-pupil Expenditure:** The residents of Lincoln provide generous support to the public school district. Lincoln remains above most of our peer communities in per pupil expenses, but as responsible stewards of Town funds, the School Committee aims to ensure that tax dollars are used effectively and is trying to moderate budget growth slightly over the next 5 years, while still making important strategic investments in our budget.

In the 2012-13 school year, for the third consecutive year, the LPS per-pupil expenditure declined, from \$19,490 to \$19,155. At the conclusion of the 2013-2014 school year, the

school administration and School Committee returned \$114,010 from the school budget to the town. The Lincoln Public School District is committed to providing the community with a high quality educational experience that is a financial value.

Our per-pupil costs are relatively high for the following reasons:

- Lincoln is a *small district* that does not benefit from economies of scale that a larger district obtains by spreading administrative costs across a larger number of students.
- Lincoln has enviably *small class sizes* and an unusually high level of *instructional assistant support and training*.
- Lincoln is a K-8 district, while most of our neighbors have a single school system to serve students through the 12<sup>th</sup> grade, which allows for further economies of scale.
- Lincoln provides a high level of *professional development and planning time* to teachers during Wednesday release days, weekly times for collaborative work with teams, summer work, and funds for conferences and courses. Teachers have at least 3 hours of planning time built into each week so they can prepare lessons, review and respond to assessments, connect with parents, and collaborate with colleagues.
- Lincoln's educational program is intentionally rich in "*specials*" including foreign language, science enrichment, art, music, and technology/engineering. These programs provide a broad and rich educational experience for students. Secondly, the provision of specials provides the opportunity for teams of teachers to collaborate. This results in better teaching and more engaged teachers.

### III. Outcomes

The Lincoln school district, with all the districts in the state, is developing outcome measures and performance benchmarks, an integral part of a new evaluation system for teachers and administrators that is being fully implemented this year. Because much of this effort is relatively new in Lincoln and statewide, the Lincoln Public Schools is still in the process of developing consistent and reliable measures of student performance beyond MCAS. We think MCAS is *a useful* measure but not *the only useful* performance measure and we are working to identify other performance benchmarks for future years of the Annual Report.

**MCAS:** First, a note: LPS has a higher percentage of low-income students than any of our surrounding comparison districts other than Bedford. DESE notes that low-income students are a high-risk group and significant achievement gaps exist across the nation for such students. Thus, we compare achievement at grade 8 with that of other districts only for Lincoln School, as students on that campus have, typically, had the greatest amount of time to make up for any early gaps in learning.

In the spring of 2014, 96% of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders at the Lincoln School scored 'proficient' or 'advanced' on the English Language Arts portion of the MCAS. The equivalent percentages in the neighboring districts ranged from 89 to 96. The median Student Growth Percentile (a measure of students' growth relative to peers with similar performances on prior MCAS assessments) for the Lincoln 8<sup>th</sup> graders on this test was 68.0, which was considerably higher than that in any of the neighboring districts.

On the Math portion of the MCAS in the spring of 2014, 81% of the Lincoln 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored 'proficient' or 'advanced' (while in the neighboring districts, 69-86% of the 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored 'proficient' or 'advanced' on this test). On the Science portion of the MCAS, 31% of the Lincoln 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored 'advanced' in the spring of 2014, markedly higher than the percent in any of the neighboring districts (which had between 4 and 19% of their 8<sup>th</sup> graders scoring 'advanced').

**Special Education:** It is a legal and philosophical tenet of American education that students with special needs should be educated in the least restrictive environment available. An indicator of the district's success in this regard was that, in the 2012-2013 school year, 90.6% of the LPS students in Special Education were in full inclusion programs (up from 88.4% the previous year), which means that they spent 80% or more of the school day in general education classrooms. That the district has the skilled professionals, administrative leadership and programmatic supports that make this level of full-inclusion education possible is a point of pride. The average full inclusion rate for the six neighboring towns was 73.4%.

#### **IV. Achievements and Challenges**

The Lincoln Public School district has continued to maintain a high level of student achievement (as indicated by the 8<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS scores) while lowering costs (as indicated by the per-pupil expenditures). The per-pupil costs in Lincoln have declined for three consecutive years even while the state average per-pupil costs have risen more than 2% each year (including an increase of 4.9% from 2012 to 2013). In each of the last three fiscal years, the school district has set a non-override budget within Finance Committee guidelines, has been able to return unspent funds to the town and has been able to make significant additional contributions to the town's **fund for retiree post-employment benefits other than pensions.**

The main challenge facing the School Committee is to develop a plan, in cooperation with other Town boards, to address the serious facilities needs on the Lincoln campus. At the same time, the district is managing two building projects on the Hanscom campus (fully funded by the Department of Defense). Within the schools, the administration and faculty continue to work together to implement the new state-mandated educator evaluation system. At the same time, there is an increased focus on creating opportunities for faculty collaboration, buttressed by professional development, with a view to enhancing teaching practices and improving student learning.

The full school's annual report (complete with annotated graphs and charts) can be accessed at: [Lincnet.org](http://Lincnet.org).

**We welcome your feedback. For more information on the Lincoln schools, including our budget, Annual report to town meeting, complete MCAS report, visit [Lincnet.org](http://Lincnet.org) or [DESE](http://DESE).**