

MINUTES OF THE LINCOLN SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, February 28, 2013
Hartwell Building, Lincoln, MA
OPEN SESSION

Present: Jennifer Glass (Chair), Tom Sander (Vice Chair), Al Schmertzler, Tim Christenfeld, Jen James.
Also present: Becky McFall (Superintendent), Mary Sterling (Assistant Superintendent), Stephanie Powers (Administrator for Student Services), Buckner Creel (Administrator for Business and Finance).
Absent: Lisa Pizarro (Hanscom Civilian School Liaison Officer).

I. Greetings and Call to Order

Ms. Glass, Chair, called the meeting to order at 7:02 pm.

II. Chairperson's and Members' Reports

Mr. Christenfeld and Mr. Sander will attend the PTO's conversation with candidates running for town office tomorrow morning. He noted that he and Mr. Sander also finished the Annual Report for the Finance Committee, and the Executive Summary will be posted online on the school website in a few weeks.

Ms. Glass thanked them for all of their work on the Annual Report.

Mr. Schmertzler and Ms. Glass attended the EDCO meeting. Mr. Schmertzler mentioned that Lincoln is very fortunate because the Committee members get along. Ms. Glass noted that the relationships between the School Committee and the superintendent were discussed, and the new evaluation process was also discussed.

Ms. Glass mentioned two upcoming events at Hanscom: 1) Tuesday, March 5 at 9:00 am, the Hanscom Middle School will hold an assembly about Black History Month; 2) Thursday, April 4 at 9:00 am, there will be a ceremony to celebrate the Month of the Military Child. She noted that all are invited.

III. Public Comments

None.

IV. Consent Agenda

None.

V. Time Scheduled Appointments

A. Report from DeCordova Board Appointee

Document: Lincoln School Committee Appointee to the DeCordova Board of Trustees 2012
Report by Katherine Hall Page

Katherine Hall Page, the Committee's representative to the DeCordova Board of Trustees, introduced the DeCordova's Deputy Director of Learning and Engagement Julie Bernson. Ms. Bernson worked at the Clark Gallery and came to the DeCordova from the Addison Gallery in Andover.

Ms. Page reviewed her report on the year, noting that weather has been a problem for arranging meetings. She has met with the four art teachers—Edy McAndrews, Donna Lubin, Pamela DiBiase, and Colleen Pearce—on the Lincoln and Hanscom campuses and Ms. Bernson to discuss ways that the museum and schools can collaborate. Ms. Page thanked the teachers for their work with the DeCordova. Ms. Bernson has also met with the PTO and METCO Coordinators on after school and weekend programs.

Ms. Page noted that the closing of DeCordova School and moving the Lincoln Nursery School into that space was a tough one, but it is in line with the DeCordova's strategic plan to change how education works at the DeCordova. She encouraged all to visit the current exhibit on claymation shorts and noted that the Andy Goldsworthy exhibit called The Snowball Project brought schools and families together.

Ms. Page highlighted the annual Lincoln Public Schools Student Art Exhibit that will be up in the new Square (the school gallery by the Store at DeCordova), from May 23 to June 5. The opening reception will be on Thursday, May 23 from 4:00-6:00 pm.

Ms. Glass noted that the student art show is a fantastic and important event. Mr. Christenfeld said the collaboration has some wonderful established activities and asked that the DeCordova bring activities to the school campuses. Ms. Page noted that Ms. Bernson has a program called "Gallery on

the Go” and it is her goal to do this soon. Ms. Bernson said she can coordinate any programming with the art curriculum and is aware the collaboration is a two-way street. Ms. Page said they could also explore some grants to help with the issue. Ms. Page enjoys being the Committee’s representative to the DeCordova. Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

B. METCO Organization

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, from Lateefah Franck, Stephen McKenna, and Sharon Hobbs, RE: Evaluation Report on Lincoln School’s METCO Program Reorganization Plan, dated February 28, 2013

Ms. Lateefah Franck, METCO Director and Academic Advisor, reviewed a PowerPoint presentation on their report on the METCO reorganization, which has advantages and challenges. One of the biggest successes is having 1.5 FTE academic advisors who work with all students, not just the Boston students, and they work with groups of students in addition to individuals. She and LaToya Rivers provide these services and are part of the teaching teams. They also have relationships with parents. One of the challenges is that the Director and .5 Academic Advisor needs to attend many meetings, in addition to providing direct support to students.

Mr. Steve McKenna said that they do not yet have the math data available yet, and therefore it is not mentioned in the report. They have had anecdotal successes with students. One “spirited and engaged” student who read below benchmark at the start of the year was reading yesterday above benchmark at level H in his office. Mr. McKenna and the student read for twenty minutes three times a week, and they are now writing about sharks, and it speaks to the real potential of the role of an academic advisor.

Dr. Sharon Hobbs noted that Ms. Rivers has offered an extension for sixth graders that focuses on studying and learning habits that has been successful. Boston students interact with five or six adults to get coaching, and the students did well in the second trimester.

Ms. Franck said the after school programs are going well, and the math focus is helping. They have added 4th graders to the program this year, and they receive math instruction and assistance with homework. All but two Boston students in grades 5-8 participate in the after school programs.

Mr. McKenna said the role of the Director / .5 Academic Advisor needs to be further refined, and they are engaging as many mentors for students as they can. Ms. Franck lets parents and students know that there are many at school that they can call to help if needed.

Ms. Glass thanked them for the anecdotes; it is great to build bridges with students. Mr. Christenfeld said they’ve not had a METCO representative on the Committee and asked whether there are any concerns from Boston parents. Ms. Franck said parents are concerned about school security, and Dr. McFall attended a METCO parent meeting where they discussed security and core values. Mr. McKenna noted that the face to face connection with Boston parents helps everyone, and the PTO has collaborated with the METCO Coordinating Committee and are enhancing the efforts, but there is more work to be done. Mr. McKenna commended Ms. Franck for her work, and noted that she has been a very visible presence.

Dr. McFall said one of the challenges is how to monitor the data and to look at the achievement gap to see what interventions are effective. The balance between academic support and the connection to the community is the key to having the Boston students succeed. Dr. McFall wants the METCO Director to take the lead on it, while all have their eye on the data. The METCO Director knows the Boston students best and is an advocate.

METCO Lobby Day at the State House will be March 13 and it starts at 9:45 am and ends at 10:30 am, and at that time people meet with legislators. It was recommended that people interested in visiting legislators should make appointments. Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

C. Report on Superintendent’s Entry Plan

Document: Superintendent’s Entry Plan Report, dated February 28, 2013

Ms. Glass said that the mid-cycle review is part of Dr. McFall’s entry plan, and the entry plan reveals what she has learned. They will have a formative assessment of the superintendent at the next meeting.

Dr. McFall reviewed her report on the superintendent’s entry plan, which is required by the new Massachusetts Educator Evaluation model. The entry plan process gives Dr. McFall a chance to gather information about the district from many stakeholders and to build relationships with all

interested parties in the schools and in the Town. The plan spells out the challenges that face the district.

Dr. McFall met with many community members, has attended many events, and her report is based on the notes that she made after those meetings. She has observed teachers and students in classes and works closely with the principals and school administrators on a daily basis.

Dr. McFall noted that the district has a culture of learning and collaboration, and there are high levels of achievement and growth that are on par with Lincoln's neighboring districts. Lincoln has a standards-based curriculum that is broad and rich and includes engineering, art, music, and foreign language. The administration and teachers are always willing to discuss and work on how the district moves forward, and Dr. McFall said it is a privilege to work with the district's teachers and administrators.

Moving forward, they will continue to measure student learning and to decide the measures that help to inform their instruction in addition to developing a common language and vision of effective teaching. The use and reliability of technology is inconsistent as the bandwidth is not always available. The technology review committee is working on this issue. During the Lincoln building project, she learned that there are mixed and wide-ranging perceptions of the quality of the school program, and they need to communicate better about the work they do. The school building projects on both campuses will be a major issue. Their most precious resource is time, and deciding the right places to focus their energies will be challenging with the numerous state mandates and items mentioned earlier. Dr. McFall said she still has much to learn.

Dr. McFall thanked the Town for its support of the schools. She also thanked the School Committee for its work and support. She thanked the Town departments for their help with school security and during Hurricane Sandy and winter blizzards. Police Chief Kevin Mooney, Fire Chief Steve Carter, Town Administrator Tim Higgins, and Council on Aging Director Carolyn Bottum have been especially helpful.

Ms. Glass asked her to consider what other supports the Committee could provide and that discussion will take place next week. The Committee thanked her for her work.

D. School Choice Hearing and Vote

Document: None.

Dr. McFall recommended that the district withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2013-2014 school year for the following reasons: 1) potential financial loss because of the significant discrepancy between the reimburse figure and or actual per pupil cost in Lincoln; 2) potential special education costs to the district; 3) commitment to maintain small class size; and 4) classroom space constraints.

Mr. Sander moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program for the 2013-2014 school year for the four reasons stated above. The Committee voted unanimously to withdraw from the Massachusetts School Choice program.

VI. Superintendent's Report

Document: None.

Dr. McFall said they held lockdown drills on both campuses today, and they went smoothly. She and Police Chief Kevin Mooney went through the schools, and the drill took eight and a half minutes on the Lincoln campus and was efficient at Hanscom. She thanked the safety officers, and they will have a debriefing soon. Mr. Christenfeld noted that the preschools at the Hartwell Buildings did not hear the drill and said they need a PA system. Dr. McFall noted they will remedy that issue.

Dr. McFall and Ms. Glass had a conference call with the Massachusetts School Building Authority [MSBA], and the MSBA said the L-shaped building proposal is a different project, and they recommended that Lincoln submit a new Statement of Interest to the MSBA; the MSBA is clear that Lincoln has needs. The deadline to submit a Statement of Interest [SOI] is April 10. Ms. Glass proposed a multi-board meeting—with the Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee and Capital Planning Committee—for 7:30 am on March 6 to discuss whether to submit another SOI, but the date and time are tentative. The Board of Selectmen and the School Committee would need to sign the SOI.

Mr. Creel noted the last time the district submitted an SOI, they heard whether they were invited to the feasibility study process in September 2008. The MSBA can invite the district to the process with conditions. As much work has already been accomplished, it can be used again, but there

will be some work, such as demolition estimates, that will need to be changed. Ms. Glass thanked her for her work.

VII. Curriculum

Document: None.

Dr. Sterling mentioned the English Language Learners [ELL] standards are changing, and they are working on those.

Every six years, the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education [DESE] conducts the Coordinated Program Review [CPR] to make sure that the district is following all state and federal regulations and requirements for education. Dr. Sterling said the auditor visited the district this morning and found the district to be “stellar” after reviewing student records. It takes time to get the records together, and the Review is not yet finished. Dr. McFall shared that the state noted that the district was so well prepared for the CPR, and their work serves as examples for other districts.

Ms. Powers said the CPR will be ongoing in the next couple weeks, and on March 11-13 the state will conduct interviews with 33 people, including the principals, teachers, and paraprofessionals. Once they’ve conducted those, they will give the district their preliminary findings, but she does not expect to see the final report from them until the summer.

Dr. Sterling and teachers had a scoring session for the common writing assessment for 5th graders that assessed the writing response to reading using evidence from the text. The quality of supporting details is the quality of work. She is pleased with the work and is happy to be part of it.

Ms. Glass thanked them for their work.

VIII. Policy - None.

IX. Facilities and Financial

A. Warrant Approval

Document: None.

Mr. Creel presented the payroll warrants totaling \$667,007.07 and the accounts payable warrants totaling \$149,981.27 for a total of \$816,988.34. Mr. Schmertzler reviewed the warrants and had his questions answered and recommended that they be approved. Mr. Sander moved to approve the warrants, with Ms. Glass seconding the motion. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the warrants. Ms. Glass noted that she received Mr. Schmertzler’s approval for the February 7 warrants.

B. Declaration of Excess Building Space and Use Restrictions

Documents: 1) Memorandum to School Committee and Rebecca McFall, Superintendent, from Buck Creel, Subject: Proposed Request for Proposal (RFP) Process for Lease of Pod, dated February 14, 2013; 2) Balance Sheet Current (sic) Pod C Lease, dated 13 February 2013; 3) Draft, Request for Proposal After-School Care Program for the Lincoln Public Schools with Appendix A Specifications: Insurance Requirements; Certificates: Proposal Form #1; Pricing: Proposal Form #2; References: Proposal Form #3; Statement of Non-Discrimination in Employment: Proposer (sic) Form #4; Proposal Checklist: Proposal Form #5

Mr. Creel noted that the lease of Pod C in the Hartwell complex expires on June 30, 2013. The space is currently leased by LEAP, which runs an after-school care program. The district is required by Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 30B, Section 16 to initiate a formal Request for Proposal [RFP] process to lease the space again as the rental value of the property will exceed \$25,000.

Dr. McFall and Maureen Onigman have reviewed the draft of the RFP and were concerned that if there is a school building project, the district might need to use Pod C, and they included language if that situation occurs. Mr. Creel also noted that they changed the time of the March 22 conference to 11:00 am instead of 10:00 am.

He asked the Committee for their input on the language. Ms. James asked that they take out the language on terminating the agreement for the school building project and that they would make sure they could find a place for the lessee. Mr. Sander asked that they include language for the termination for nonperformance of the lease terms and not solely have termination language because of the school building project. Mr. Creel will also include language on the potential lessee’s evidence of financial stability, enrollment history and enrollment projection and also where appropriate, language about

CORI [Criminal Offender Record Information] checks on the lessee's staff. Mr. Creel will bring an updated RFP to next week's meeting.

Mr. Creel said the Committee must affirm by public vote that Pod C continues to be surplus space and available for rent; should affirm by public vote that it desires the surplus space to be used for a licensed school-aged child care program and related uses; and should affirm by public vote that the Committee's objective is to promote a public purpose by providing an affordable after-school and school recess period day care center for school-aged children rather than raising revenue, to allow the acceptance of less than fair market rental rates.

Mr. Christenfeld moved, and Mr. Sander seconded, the motion that Pod C continues to be surplus space and available for rent; that the Committee desires the surplus space to be used for a licensed school-aged child care program and related uses; and that the Committee's objective is to promote a public purpose by providing an affordable after-school and school recess period day care center for school-aged children rather than raising revenue, to allow the acceptance of less than fair market rental rates. The Committee voted unanimously for the motion as presented above. Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

C. FY 2014 Capital Project Update

Document: Memorandum to School Committee and Becky McFall from Buckner Creel, Subject: FY14 Capital Projects Updates, dated February 15, 2013 with Spreadsheet entitled "FY14 Capital", dated February 8, 2013 FINAL

Mr. Creel updated the Committee on their requests to the Capital Planning Committee [CapCom], and noted that he and Mr. Schmertzler met with them to present their projects. No money was approved for the energy management system, and he and Michael Haines will find circuit boards, panels, zone cards, and sensor heads. They need to replace the analog sensors with digital ones. They will also phase the Hartwell curtain wall project. Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

D. Reserve Fund Transfer

Document: Memorandum to Laura Sander, Chair, Finance Committee from Becky McFall, Superintendent, and Buckner Creel, Administrator for Business & Finance, Subject: Reserve Fund Transfer Request, dated February 29, (sic) 2013

Mr. Creel presented the memorandum and said that the replacing the main fire alarm panel would increase their budget but would be paid for by a reserve fund transfer. Receiving the reserve fund transfer takes the project out of the CapCom requests for FY14, and the project will also be withdrawn at Town Meeting.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to direct the administration to request a Reserve Fund transfer in the amount of \$36,000 to replace the Lincoln School fire alarm panel. The Committee voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Mr. Creel will send his memorandum tomorrow. Ms. Glass thanked him for his work.

X. Old Business

A. Bus Contract

Document: Letter to Buck Creel from Cynthia J. Murphy, President, Doherty's Garage, dated February 8, 2013

Mr. Creel noted the Town's lawyer said that most communities do not have a performance bond unless there has been a problem. Mr. Creel asked that the Committee waive the requirement for a performance bond as there have not been any problems with Doherty's Garage. It would add 2% to the contract cost, and the district would not receive anything in return. Ms. Glass asked that he strike the clause from the contract.

Ms. Glass moved, and Mr. Schmertzler seconded, the motion to waive the performance bond clause in the bus contract with Doherty's Garage for 2013-2016. The Committee voted unanimously to waive the performance bond clause in the bus contract with Doherty's Garage.

B. Remote Participation in Committee and Board Meetings

Document: None.

Ms. Glass attended the Board of Selectmen's meeting for the discussion of the policy on remote participation for board, committee, and commission members. Town Counsel Joel Bard attended. The Board of Selectmen has not yet decided whether to approve the policy. The Selectmen choose whether to adopt the policy that accepts that some board members may participate in meetings remotely. Other

town boards and commissions may opt out of the policy if the Selectmen vote that they can, but if each board, committee, and commission decides to opt in, all boards, committees, and commissions must adopt the same rules and regulations on how to implement the policy. Each committee, board, or commission chair would decide whether to allow remote participation and the policy.

Ms. Glass noted that remote participation could be helpful in that it has the possibility of including more people to participate in town government.

Ms. Glass noted that the School Committee was generally supportive of the policy but they did not vote.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Approval of Minutes

None.

XIII. Information Enclosures

None.

XIV. Adjournment

On motion by Ms. Glass, seconded by Mr. Sander, the Committee voted unanimously to go into Executive Session for the purpose of contract negotiations. Ms. Glass, yes; Mr. Sander, yes; Mr. Schmertzler, yes; Mr. Christenfeld, yes; Ms. James, yes. The Committee would not be returning to open session. The open session adjourned at 9:40 pm.

The next School Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, March 7, 2013 at 7:00 pm.

XV. Executive Session

Respectfully submitted,
Sarah G. Marcotte
Recording Secretary