

DRAFT

School District Administrative and Structural Options Subcommittee
January 16, 2018
Meeting Minutes

Present: Susan Iuliano (Sudbury BOS), Dan Carty (Sudbury BOS)

Guests: Christine Hogan (SPS Committee Chair), Kevin Matthews (L-S School Committee Chair, attended via telephone)

Citizens in attendance: Janie Dretler, Silvia Nersessian, Pat Brown

Meeting opened @ 4:45pm by Iuliano, Carty offered to take minutes

Iuliano started by giving brief overview and history

Matthews discussed combination of concerns and opportunities. Concerns more historical in nature due in part to Lincoln's relationship with Hanscom while opportunities exist in closing gaps endemic to this type of split model. Stated he is not interested in pushing for regionalization because historically Lincoln is not interested in regionalization.

Iuliano asked for clarification – do you mean K-12?

Matthews – 3 current districts merging into 1 to make it a K-12. Acknowledged that a consolidation or union superintendency, would need Lincoln's permission. Also mentioned that while historically Lincoln wasn't interested changes at Hanscom and its retirees may change people's minds.

Iuliano – perhaps someday but not at this point. Hanscom underwrites 50% of Lincoln's administrative costs.

Matthews – interested in pursuing what's reasonably and easily attainable – shared superintendency could fall into that category. Historically we were not even able to get into a conversation to allay the fears that Lincoln might have and the process was not productive or collaborative at all. Once they see this is not a threat perhaps [Lincoln] might see that an improved LS would be better for Lincoln and Sudbury. Sees pressures put in K-8 due to this split - highlighted as historical trouble in superintendent searches for both SPS and LS. Seasoned experienced superintendents likely to not be interested in either job. We may not be getting the best candidates due to our structure. We are more likely to get aspirational candidates.

Iuliano – agreed Lincoln not interested in regionalization at least now. What about other models?

Matthews – not now because they don't need it

Luliano - Lincoln's position is they don't want us to come to them with solutions without addressing the problems we see and data to support it. There is value in discussing things in between shared superintendent and regionalization; we just need to define what issues we are addressing.

Carty – Agreed about the solutions and data but stated it's not just about solving problems; it's about potentially making things better too.

Hogan – Agreed and said as the leaders it is important that we message this appropriately. Need to stop referring to as problems and concerns as that is too negative and instead see this as opportunity for improvement.

Luliano – Certainly – let's flip it! I put the agenda together and used the word "concerns." Already spoke to others about using different wording.

Hogan – we are in a unique position with Bella (Wong) who is a finalist for super position 2nd year in row and Anne retiring and I see our district as being a great place with terrific teachers and families and where an incoming superintendent sees opportunity for growth to possible Pre-K-12. Opportunities for efficiencies include Shared food services, Students services – continuity of service ages 2 through 22, Transportation, Arts – music, Fine Arts Coordinator, Student Leaders, Efficient administrative functions. Possible opportunity to rethink middle school: studies show separate middle schools not good for middle school students, better for them to be leaders to younger or looking up to high schoolers.

Luliano – Boston looking at rethinking middle school. Also we tried shared food service before and it didn't work.

Hogan – That shouldn't stop us from trying again, different people involved now. We are looking for a K-8 Superintendent and perhaps a 9-12 too so this could be viewed as a ground-floor opportunity.

Hogan – parents of students on IEPs are stressed by jumping from one system to another. We could perhaps gain some efficiencies via economy of scale and provide a single streamlined system. There are possible benefits to Lincoln too and big umbrella items to look at - coordinated middle school between Lincoln and Sudbury, their capital projects on the horizon including new schools and community center

Carty – definitely want to frame as opportunity but as Susan mentioned when met with Jennifer Glass Lincoln would want to know what problems we want to solve and show the data to support it so we can't lose sight of that.

Matthews – Lincoln in the past has voiced concern that Sudbury is reluctant to pay at the same level Lincoln is. If we gain efficiencies we could possibly roll the cost avoidance towards a higher dollar per student contribution. Students benefit from dollars spent in the classroom

and not from redundant administration. If we are truly partners our concerns should be theirs and vice versa.

Luliano – They feel like we have not supported their concerns. Their concern isn't money but more about how to support LS. Sudbury has a low \$/student ratio at SPS and they are afraid we will syphon money from LS down to SPS. FinComm should not make educational decisions. If we moved to a Concord Carlisle model there may be more money available. CC has educators looking at budget allocation in a K-12 way.

Hogan – we have to look at entire funding model. Lincoln right now benefits from \$12MM federal every year which offsets their costs. If Sudbury had the same return based on comparable enrollment we would be looking at \$50MM/year.

Luliano - Yes but that is not what they're talking about.

Hogan - You can't look at part of the issues and say Lincoln is concerned about some \$ moving towards Sudbury vs. Lincoln students and not the entire financial picture.

Matthews – High Schools always pay much more than elementary.

Luliano – Yes but not to the extent that the Sudbury split is.

Hogan – this is much different now than it was 10 years ago. Plus Sudbury's population is more than Lincoln's is. Rich Tinsley has started great work on comparables. Sudbury pays 70% of our budget for education, Lincoln pays 40%. Given the government contract that Lincoln has and the 70%, 40% payments is just not an apples to apples comparison.

Carty – If Lincoln people say we should pay more what if you have a joint person who looks at SPED? It is not just dollars – there would be improved continuity and maybe save a couple bucks too.

Hogan – It wouldn't be a straight 2 for 1 swap

Carty – No, it's about economies of scale, not a 2 for 1 cut and run.

Matthews – It is difficult for people in different organizations to meet and collaborate but it gets a little easier when they have the same boss. There have been collaboration meetings yes but no deep conversations that I am aware of on how to make things better.

Hogan – yes, just look at amount of time spent on deciding first day of school and coordinating SPS with LS

Luliano – I am hearing a lot of good things here. We need to make sure it would work for both towns.

Carty – I think that if we could start with something – anything – and show success between SPS and LS eventually Lincoln may grow trust and actually join in. That would give us even more economy of scale.

Matthews – Agreed. Messaging will be key.

Iuliano – What should our next steps be? We still need to keep in mind that Lincoln is going to want to know about specific problems not solutions. We have to let Lincoln know that we have them always at top of mind.

Hogan – Kevin, Tim Christenfeld (Lincoln Public Schools Committee Chair) and I are pretty much in constant conversations. I can't speak for prior processes but we keep each other updated with what is going on in our space. Constant communications and meetings for anything that can impact budgets. Tim and I specifically discussed advantage Sudbury students have entering LS compared to LPS students and ways to address. Lincoln kids are at a disadvantage due simply to the fact that there are so many more Sudbury kids.

Carty – Jennifer Glass did tell us that social issues are big and is a primary reason why they wouldn't want their own school. Meeting new kids is very important.

Hogan – Feels a task force driven by the respective Boards of Selectmen would be a good idea

Carty – Tough one – we could pretty quickly get opportunities and problems ready to articulate but we don't want Lincoln to be on the defensive right out of the gate.

Matthews – We certainly have varying levels of turf on this. First we have town turf and then we have cost center or district turf. I saw defensive move on both LS and SPS and this is change – change naturally makes people uncomfortable. Conversations with BOS' involved in this process it is likely to give people on LS School Committee a level of comfort. If the BOS' can give permission to have this conversation and to give the people in Lincoln a way to express their concerns as well as in Sudbury. Talking about opportunities would be a cultural shift in the process. This is all normal – need to build trust with everyone around the table.

Carty – is this something BOS have to give permission for?

Hogan – No but it certainly would carry a lot of weight. Recommends BOS requests LS and SPS to explore options for sharing services and offer their support. Does not recommend directing us, but requesting will encourage committee members to take on and support goes a long way.

Matthews – Notes that the State is trying to push for shared services for their own reasons. When you have efficiencies to education then you can deliver more resources to the classroom.

Iuliano – Perhaps our BOS should reach out to Lincoln BOS?

Carty – Timing and sequence will be tricky, we definitely need to include Lincoln but we also need to make sure our own school boards are on board. It will tell us if we have to push this or even if it may be feasible. Then go to Lincoln BOS through Jennifer Glass? Let them know what we are thinking about and get a sense of everyone's appetite to move forward.

Iuliano – We could but there's historical aversion to this

Matthews – I think we are talking about incrementally building up a shared model. Demonstrate to Lincoln a degree of sobriety in process then down the road they may be more eager to. But to talk about it with a partner that is not at all eager to pursue is fruitless.

Iuliano – that might be where we end up but we should go into this more open and without decisions already made. But building a coordinated system should start with a coordinated structure. We are fractured in our school committees, employment practices, etc. Concord Carlisle is much more integrated. I talked to people about this before, to different districts and teachers, and what I heard from a superintendent was I would not take a shared job – one committee wants to address school start time now, another next year. We should have an integrated approach – it will be very hard to hire this way. We might get a transitional figure.

Carty – perhaps but it all has to start with a conversation.

Matthews – I'd like to see the process start. We get a group of interested parties to explore then we could always bring in someone like the Collins Group to facilitate

Iuliano – I agree with that approach

Hogan – the Regionalization grant that SPS applied for could certainly help there. We should know results soon – Carmine Gentile is pushing hard for us.

Matthews – If a process started then LS might change. SPS could provide the seed money with their grant then we could apply for follow up. This will take a few years

Carty – I think we need to discuss with our BOS to make sure this is something they are interested in. Then next steps would be to reach out to Lincoln.

Iuliano – Dan and I will meet again as our subcommittee then bring to the BOS for input. Then we will reach out to the Lincoln BOS. If both BOS' agree then we would pull back in all three school committees.

Hogan, Carty, Matthews agreed with approach.

5:55PM – Matthews left call

5:55Pm Public comment – Nersessian felt this is something the public wants but it should start with the two BOS then perhaps a task force be created.

Carty and Iuliano set next subcommittee meeting for Jan 24th at 6PM.

6:03 PM – Minutes from Dec 14 2017 approved with minor edits. Carty will forward to Leila Frank.

6:05PM Iuliano motioned to close meeting, Carty seconded. Unanimously approved, meeting adjourned.