

GRANT UPDATES

Steve Cullen, Brooks eighth-grade social studies teacher, took part in a Ford's Theater summer workshop called Civil War Washington with a small group of teachers from around the country. They visited Civil War sites in the capital, including the homes of Frederick Douglass and William Seward, as well as Lincoln's Cottage, which translated to a more enriching experience for students during their eighth grade trip to D.C., where Mr. Cullen was able to lend deeper context to their study of the Civil War.



Maureen Markelz, Gwen Blumberg and Rose Vignola (left to right, above), district literacy coaches, traveled together to NYC for the Coaching of Writing Institute at Teachers College, meeting with coaches from around the globe who are leaning into and supporting the work of the Units of Study. They had the opportunity to closely interact with the researchers at Teachers College Reading and Writing Project (TCRWP), learn about the questions the project is asking, and then think about how those questions are shaping future units, as well as the impact on the daily work of the units. Working in NYC TCRWP project schools allowed the coaches to try on the work as learners, and grow their abilities to support this work with our teachers. Traveling together allowed them to process all that they were learning each day and to think about how what they were doing in NYC could begin to build in Lincoln.

Jenny Nam, Brooks sixth-grade ELA teacher, reports that her grant for Live Video Cultural Exchange Exploration opened the door to thinking about implementation, with an exciting idea for a first, small step: might the first exchange be between Lincoln and Hanscom students?

Nicole Putnam, Instructional Technology Specialist at HPS, shares that in the first year of Screen-Free Coding for Kindergarteners, a district-wide grant, students worked together to practice step-by-step thinking to create algorithms, fix "bugs", identify patterns in the code, and determine where a loop could be used to create a more efficient program. Students were engaged and motivated and loved using the materials!

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Seventh grade students looked at the water crisis in the United States. Their job was to be a delegate for a state, researching the water crisis for that state and then proposing a solution based on the following: "A committee of environmental advocates is offering a grant of \$3 billion dollars to address concerns related to water issues within the United States and Puerto Rico."

The final result was students finding solutions unique to the crisis in their state, including a budget for solving the crisis, and finding allies who had already helped with solutions in the state (history, government response, and allies) and then presenting at a grade level meeting. Moving forward, the seventh grade team has found places where they would like to expand the project to include a field trip to Walden Pond, adding more water study to the project, potentially having delegates collaborate across the states in a Model United Nations format, and doing actual fund raising for a water crisis.

This collaborative work will be exceptionally well suited to the hub spaces in the new school building, allowing for seamless transitions between classrooms, supervised work in larger spaces, and gathering spaces for presentations. As we refine the units, we look forward to trying them in the new school building. We are grateful to the Lincoln School Foundation for the support to try something new and for the funding that allowed teachers to see alternative ways to teach and to deepen student learning in authentic ways. It's been rejuvenating and important work for the teachers in the middle school and for me as their principal!

Dr. Sharon Hobbs, Brooks School Principal

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SUPPORT BIG IDEAS

Lincoln's teachers, and their big ideas, are one side of the grant cycle. The other side is made up of donors who ensure we can greenlight the best grants that come our way. If you like the teacher and district projects highlighted in this newsletter, please consider donating to the LSF today. Projects and initiatives like these are only made possible by community members like you.

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Lincoln, MA 01773

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FALL 2019 *So much has happened in the Lincoln Public Schools since our last newsletter that we've found ourselves in the happy position of having so much to report, we almost don't have room for it all. Last spring was an especially exciting signal of what's to come. We funded grants totaling nearly \$60,000 for 2019-2020, including two very exciting, long in the works, district grants. And we had the great pleasure of supporting an exciting venture by the Brooks sixth grade teachers: a mini-expedition at the tail end of the last school year, inspired by their visit to King Middle School in Portland, Maine. The teachers were nimble, unafraid to fail, and excited to roll up their sleeves and give it a try. Students rose to the challenge as enthusiastic participants in what was, in truth, a big experiment. And the result? It was a huge success! We are so excited about their work, and thank Sharon Hobbs, Principal at Brooks, for her help and encouragement in pulling it together.*

In the past two years, the sixth and seventh grade teams at the Lincoln School were fortunate to be the recipients of grants from LSF that allowed them to visit schools to see different ways of teaching and learning. In 2018, the seventh grade teaching team went to Meridian Academy in Jamaica Plain, a grade 6-12 school where most of the learning is done in a thematic way allowing students to make immediate connections between their learning (and often their life). The sixth grade went to King Middle School in Portland, ME. King is an Expeditionary Learning school, meaning that students spend up to twelve weeks on 'expeditions' which are interdisciplinary units that have both a connection to the community around them and a final product that is presented to parents or the public.



Jon Mayer, Education Coordinator from Codman Farm, leading a workshop on food and agriculture and with the sixth graders at Brooks

Both teams were excited to model what they had seen in their own classrooms, and requested a full day to work together to think through their planning. They spent the day at Town Hall, thinking about the overarching question they wanted students to explore, the outcome of the learning, and the timing of the project. Both teams settled on the end of the year, so that they had maximum time to prepare and so that they could keep students well engaged in their learning until the end of the school year.

What does it take for life to thrive? This was the question that the sixth graders thought about in their mini-expedition, which was based around the idea of planning a mission to Mars. They began with team building and robotics activities, and then dug deep into planning for food and water, health and wellness, jobs and economy, politics and government, energy and waste, and the physical environment and transportation in three colonies. Working together, with more narrowly focused objectives, students planned and prepared presentations to a "panel of NASA experts" that would decide whether to fund the mission. The LSF helped to connect the students with experts in the community who could offer insight into such practical matters as agriculture, energy, and government, to name a few.

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2019-2020 GRANTS

\$59,441



Bluebird Nest Box Trail

Siobhan Rooney, First Grade Teacher, Smith

Ms. Rooney's students are studying the habitats and life cycle of nesting bluebirds, in boxes (at left) they have installed will observe and maintain on school grounds — an ideal location for a bluebird box trail with its open fields alongside wooded areas. An innovative, project-based extension of the 1st grade curriculum unit on backyard birds, the children will have a special view of the bluebird life cycle, and the opportunity to collect and analyze data, see how their efforts are helping with bird conservation, and enjoy the outdoors.

DISTRICT GRANT

Designing for Deep and Powerful Learning for All

Jess Rose, Asst. Superintendent

Over 30 faculty and administrators have been deep in their own learning since September, participating in a district-based course taught by Jal Mehta, Lincoln parent, Professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education, and author of the book *In Search of Deeper Learning*, with his colleague Sarah Fine. Participants in the course have read a number of articles and books, written a midterm where they have defined what Deeper Learning means to them and have been using the design process to ideate and prototype a way they can create deeper learning in their unique role — whether they work directly with students or with faculty. The course has influenced the district's Institute Day and spurred the district to apply to the MA Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's new initiative, the Kaleidoscope Collaborative, which seeks to support schools and districts pursuing deeper learning for all students.

Digital Book and Reading Clubs

Monica Albuixech, HMS Instructional Technical Specialist

Seesaw for Schools is a platform that can be used to host book clubs and interactive read aloud discussions which can take the form of drawing, voice, video, or text. Through teacher moderated discussions, HMS 5th graders will learn how to discuss and critique books, use writing to express their thoughts, and develop a joy for reading. The project aims to inspire reading and increase reading levels in an environment that makes it easier for shyer students to engage.

DISTRICT GRANT

Teacher Leaders of Learning

Jess Rose, Asst. Superintendent and Becky McFall, Superintendent

Lincoln Public Schools has long been working towards ensuring that all students have meaningful, engaging, authentic, differentiated, and deep learning experiences that honor their diverse identities in all of their classes. This year, the district is focusing heavily on shared work across all faculty and administrators around foundational ideas in the book *Leaders of their Own Learning* by Ron Berger. This districtwide grant supports the efforts of a diverse group of faculty and staff from across the schools — the Teacher Leaders of Learning (TLL) — who share this vision for the district and are taking an active role in its realization.

The TLL group of seven faculty (below) have met throughout the fall, representing each elementary and middle school, and are a complementary mix of classroom teachers, specialists, and a related service provider. Their work has centered around two components since September: 1) advising the superintendent on professional development, and 2) incubating ideas in their own work with students.

In September the group previewed a district-wide workshop on feedback and offered a variety of ideas for revision; when brought to faculty across the district, 93% of participants gave high marks to their suggestions. The group has also been experimenting with ideas from the book in their own day-to-day work and have helped prepare for Institute Day in early December, when they will co-facilitate working sessions alongside administrators.

Through the year they will serve as a sounding board, reflective team, and co-develop ongoing strategies and resources to further this work in the district.



Racial Equity Discussion with Debby Irving Claudia Fox Tree, Special Ed. Teacher at Brooks With Jaime Moody, former Lincoln METCO Advisor

On November 13, students, teachers and members of the community gathered for an all-day learning experience with Debby Irving (above right, with Claudia Fox Tree), author of *Waking Up White*, to enhance our community's ability to have deeper conversations about racism and build awareness of actions to take to dismantle oppression. Students at Brooks participated in workshops, teachers spent the afternoon in professional development, and community members engaged in a two-hour event in the evening. This work builds on the Brooks School's professional development of the last two years around culturally responsive teaching as well as book group/community conversations around works by diverse authors.

Digital Photography in the Classroom

Mary Keane, Second Grade Teacher at HPS

An HPS service learning project teaches students how to be observant when creating a photo composition (as in this photo, below, by a student), and to think about the audience of the photos, which in this project are framed and hung in apartments provided for homeless or near-homeless veterans. The grant provided for 20 new digital cameras with WiFi capability, to replace old equipment. In addition to facilitating better ease of use, they can also be used in conjunction with the green screen in the MakerSpace to create posters and books, and to facilitate learning about digital editing, a valuable 21st century skill. The cameras will be shared with other teachers on an as needed basis as well, providing a resource for the school overall.



Upstander Academy Professional Development - Studying Genocide to Encourage Decolonization and Upstanding

Claudia Fox Tree, Special Ed. Teacher at Brooks

This 6-day course explored new content about post-genocide Rwanda and genocide against Native peoples in New England, with a special focus on innovative teaching methods that support the inquiry arc and critical and creative thinking in the classroom. In the course, teachers, practiced and modeled the skills of upstanders in their classrooms and communities, and learned how to integrate genocide education and strategies for decolonization into the curriculum. Ms. Fox Tree continues to work to transform curriculum, most notably in seventh grade, where she envisions integrating upstander teachings into seventh-grade advisory sessions on bullying and stereotyping and bringing literature and other material to augment African studies in seventh grade.

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TLL

Carolyn Baughan

3rd Grade Teacher, HPS

Maureen Markelz

Literacy Coach and Interventionist, Smith

Jay Peledge

7/8 Social Studies Teacher, HMS

Nicole Putnam

Instructional Technology Specialist, HPS

Alyssa Rosenfeld

Social Worker, Brooks

Carolyn Shannon

Math Specialist, HMS

Lauren Whitehead

3rd Grade Teacher, Smith

Lincoln Opera Company

Blake Siskavich, Music Teacher at Smith in

collaboration with Smith Fourth Grade teaching team

Fourth grade students this year will write, compose, design, promote, and perform an opera to a public audience, building in themes from other areas of study from the year. This meaningful and enriching artistic experience puts students at the center of creating and leading the process and shifts teachers into facilitating roles. In classes, students have begun work on acting, movement and thinking skills (as in a mirroring exercise at near left), and have explored how visual and performing arts can inspire more ideas and tell stories individually or together. To prepare for the project, fourth grade teachers engaged with the Boston Lyric Opera teaching artist program and spent time over the summer mapping the curriculum, planning lessons, creating teaching materials, and designing the timeline needed to accomplish all aspects of an opera company. To kick off the project, on November 14, the 4th graders visited the Emerson Paramount Theater (far left), where the Boston Lyric Opera was housed for their current production. Students met with members of the opera company to learn about the many different jobs that together make up a production and had a chance to tour the stage, dressing rooms, and the orchestra pit. Back on campus, students will choose jobs for their self-created opera company, write the story, compose the music, market the production, and design sets, lights, and costume ideas for their June production.