

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, May 13, 2014
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

PRESENT: Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Judy Crocker, Jessie Steigerwald, Alessandro Alessandrini, and Mary Ann Stewart

The Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting convened at 7:32 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome:

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comment.

Richard White, 1 Pelham Road, here to support his daughter regarding a recent decision to change the resource teacher model at the high school. His daughter feels that having the same resource teacher for the past 3 years has had a significant positive impact on her learning at the high school. Mr. White asked the Committee to review the new policy change and hold a public hearing on the subject.

Margaret Coppe stated that she appreciates Mr. White for coming forward. The Committee has just learned about this change and there will be a conversation about this and will let the public know the outcome of that conversation.

Katherine Bradtke, 209 Waltham Street has a freshman in High School and echoes the concern of Mr. White and would like to know the justification for changing the model. She would like the model to stay the same.

Andrew Mazur, 39 Bertwell Road, junior in college, who used the model during his time in the Lexington Public School system. When he returned home from college he learned about the change to the resource model and felt compelled to come before the Committee to state that model should not be changed.

Matthew Giovanni, 27 Sanderson Road requested the Committee to look at the proposed change and he would like to see the policy stay the same.

Mark Connor, 16 Highland Avenue has a daughter who is a sophomore and he was surprised to learn of the model change. His family has benefitted from the continuity and consistency of having the same resource teacher. He would urge the Committee to keep the resource model the way it is.

Roberta Wilson, 5 Litchfield Road has a son who is graduating this year because of having the same resource teacher throughout high school. In middle school he changed each year, and it was difficult. He was successful in high school because he had the same resource teacher. Ms. Wilson also added that changing resource teachers also makes it time consuming for them to get to know the students.

Kelly Fahy, 6 Todd Road is a junior at LHS who has had the same resource teacher for three years. She recently had an IEP meeting and during the meeting her teacher was able to help her describe her

needs. It takes a while to learn with new teachers and a trust is created between the teacher and student. Ms. Fahy does not want to have to change for her senior year.

Judy Crocker thanked everyone for bringing this to our attention and this is new to everyone on the school committee and we look forward to learning together why the process changed and incorporating feedback.

Alessandro Alessandrini would like to have this on the agenda to discuss.

Margaret Coppe stated that first the discussion needs to happen with Dr. Ash and his staff and it may not be necessary to place this on a future agenda and she needs more information.

Jessie Steigerwald, having spoken with a student who is not comfortable coming forward, says she is trying to understand what happened. There may be important reasons why it is changing and then make sure communication is shared. Parents and students may have a different perspective than our staff, and we may need more of an exchange of information.

Mary Ann Stewart has heard mixed comments from students and parents. Everyone has different experiences at school. Ms. Stewart thinks it is important to hear and understand what brought this about and she has heard from some who are concerned about change and some that are not concerned.

Dr. Ash thanked the eight speakers who spoke about the change. Dr. Ash suggested that the conversation would continue at the high school level with the high school principal.

Margaret Coppe will communicate what the next step will be. The Chair appreciates everyone coming forward. They will let the public know how they will proceed with this.

II. Superintendent's Announcements

Dr. Ash had no comments this evening.

III. School Committee Member Announcements

Judy Crocker shared that bus ridership signup is over 2200 and the deadline is this Friday to receive the subsidized registration fee. Ms. Crocker requested Dr. Ash to speak on the Estabrook bus registration. Ms. Crocker also shared that this week is Bike N' Walk and Bus Week and tomorrow is Massachusetts Walking Wednesday, Thursday there is a paracourse exploration and there will be an open house for bus ridership.

Dr. Ash shared that on Friday he met with Mark Corr, Chief, Lexington Police Department, Mary Ellen Dunn Assistant Superintendent Business and Finance, Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facility and Sandy Trach, Principal, Estabrook Elementary School to talk about changes around school property and to be sure the municipal and school side have the same understanding: (i) common understanding; and (ii) letter to be sent out to the Estabrook community about no queuing on Grove Street. The deadline will be expanded only for Estabrook Elementary School until next Friday, May 23, in order to give parents the option to sign up for bus ridership.

Jessie Steigerwald congratulated members of the High School Music Department on winning five special awards. Ms. Steigerwald shared that the only schools who performed better were Performing Art

Schools. Lexington has a great music program. Congratulations to the high school art department for their performance of " Kiss Me Kate".

Ms. Steigerwald and Dr. Ash attended a small working group on how the gym at the Estabrook Elementary School might be used and they are considering opening the gym for specific hours for community access. It would be a way for the recreation department or human services department to share space with details to follow.

Ms. Steigerwald had a follow up meeting with parents representing elementary, middle school and high school and Site-Based School Councils on a proposed schedule that would be a monthly roundtable to follow district goals as a way to support principals and have each school plan aligned with district goals.

Alessandro Alessandrini thanked the music department.

Margaret Coppe shared the upcoming May 8 Committee meeting will discuss whether or not to issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) to hire a search consultant. The goal is to have the consultant in place by August 1. The search will actively begin in September.

Judy Crocker inquired if there were any updates from the Board of Selectmen (BOS) meeting.

Margaret Coppe responded there was no public comment .There were some comments from BOS who thought school traffic issues are a school matter and not a municipal matter and urged more communication

IV. Agenda:

1. Vote to Fund LHS Bicycle Racks

Dr. Ash shared that Abe Benghiat, Founder and CEO, Lexington Bike and student at Lexington High School came to him with a proposal to add bicycle racks at the High School. Mr. Benghiat and others did an enormous amount of work and made a compelling argument along with increasing ability for students to ride bikes to school and get cars off road and build healthier students. Dr. Ash would recommend that the School Committee vote to buy bike racks at the high school for \$10,000.

Mr. Benghiat shared with the Committee over the past few years all the bike racks at the high school were full and that it had become a problem because students were locking their bicycles all over the high school. Mr. Benghiat's research showed that \$10,000 would purchase 7 – 8 bike racks which would hold 4 – 6 bicycles and the price would include the install costs.

There were questions and comments from the committee (i) glad to see that there are more bikes being ridden to school and the Committee needs to do something about Mr. Benghiat's proposal; (ii) do we have a policy on bike racks; (iii) how to plan for the number of racks needed; (iii) the \$10,000 being requested, would it be funded from end of year funds; (iv) would like more understanding at the elementary level; (v) long term vision is to look at middle schools; (vi) bike racks are part of the policy and some were donated; and (vii) congratulations to Mr. Benghiat on his hard work.

Dr. Ash shared that Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent Business and Finance could not be at the meeting this evening but she has a deep understanding of the problem and has spoken with Mr. Benghiat. Dr. Ash states that the bike racks will be installed by June 30, 2014.

There were comments and questions by the Committee (i) the schools should partner with Minuteman Tech to work with their program (wood); (ii) how do students bike in bad weather; (iii) does Mr.

Benghiat have any suggestions; (iv) are there a steady number of teachers who ride their bikes to school; (v) racks will be chosen by Lexington Bike, which is not our usual practice or is it a recommendation and not “chosen”; (vi) any funds not used will be used for bike education and how will that be used before end of June; and (vii) have you checked with Ms. Dunn that you are allowed to do this.

Dr. Ash shared the bike racks will be installed within the appropriation and a small dollar left might go unused and if we can spend it on something that directly supports this proposal, we will. End of year money buys things.

Motion to vote to fund, as recommended for up to \$10,000 for the purchase Lexington High School bike racks (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

2. Social Studies Curriculum Review – Year 3

Dr. Ash invited Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development invited Robert Collins, Lexington High School Social Studies Department Head, Mary Barry, Middle Schools Social Studies Department Head and Jane Hundley, K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator to share the summary of the work of the Social Studies Review Committee. Their PowerPoint presentation will be emailed out tomorrow. The presentation included (i) the mission statement; (ii) Year 3 Goals; (iii) Key Aspects of the Lexington Social Studies Program; (iv) K-12 Committee Accomplishments: National Standards; (v) Summary Report (a) Elementary School, (b) Middle School, and (c) High School; and (vi) Next Steps.

There were comments and questions from the Committee (i) attended the Mock Town Meeting and was amazed at the students; (ii) C3 framework 4th dimension is huge and inquiry process is important to be interdisciplinary; (iv) middle school faculty taking on different roles; (v) excited that they are investigating at the high school the different options that students can choose from; (vi) liked that we are not forgetting social sciences; (vii) expanding on understanding by design; (viii) backwards design work; (ix) Dimension 3 – using resources - is all this done online or do you also use books; (x) studies coming out online and they show that going through books helps them learn online; (xi) looks forward to learning more on Professional Learning and asked whether they will be developing or recommending any model; (xii) more support from the state for media literacy for all grade levels; (xiii) as the program has been refined has there been narrowing down in the categories and where are we with this curriculum now; (xiv) glad to hear students learning how to form their own questions; (xv) any challenges talking about citizenship at elementary level; (xvi) applauded on their working on encouraging students; (xvii) concern that some students felt they needed a keyboard with the iPads and requested a description of the equipment; (xviii) share how students could work from home (Noodle Tools); (xix) how is technology being integrated in middle school projects; (xx) how much time are students spending on social studies in elementary school; (xix) would like more time for social studies and science; (xxi) commends social studies at high school in helping students reduce stress through offering elective options; (xxii) are there are other members of the team here tonight; and (xxiii) pleased to see mention of study of China and India and interested in cultural diversity in our schools and would like to see more recognition of those cultures because of high number of students from those backgrounds.

Andre Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, would like to thank School Committee for asking a question about time spent being taught on Social Studies in each schools and concerned with MCAS testing math, English and science. What process are you following when choosing text books?

3. Elementary World Language: Subcommittee Update

Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development presented the Elementary World Language Subcommittee Update. Discussion centered around the process and steps that would need to be put in place in order to investigate and study the possible re-instatement of an Elementary World Language Program in the Lexington Public Schools.

The update included (i) the Charge; (ii) overview; (iii) three phases of committee work (a) examination of research and exploration of existing programs, (b) consideration of viable options, and (c) formation of recommendations; (iv) Meeting 1 held on October 30, 2013; (v) Meeting #2 – November 20, 2013; (vi) information from research (a) resurgent interest across the country, (b) programs lost in 80s and 90s, (c) knowledge of other cultures augments skills to be global citizens, (d) students make better inter-disciplinary connections, (e) three major standards of a high leverage program include: communication, culture and connections; (vii) Meeting #3 December 10, 2013 total immersion program; (viii) Meeting #4 – January 23, 2014 – (a) One World Classrooms (non-profit organization) designed to be incorporated into a curriculum, and (b) Andover, MA Public Schools – recommended a FLES program, similar to what Lexington had and that committee recommended a coordinator for the K-12 program but is now on hold, concerns time, disagreement on language; (ix) Meeting #5 February 26, 2014 (a) Part I – Middlebury Interactive Languages – committee not thrilled with this program, (b) Part II – Polarities Survey - Essential Questions; (x) Meeting #6 – March 25, 2014 shared survey results and administered a re-poll survey at end of meeting; (xi) Meeting #7 – April 10, 2014, reviewed re-poll results, plan to help shape our three recommendations; (xii) Meeting 8 April 30, 2014 – review of re-poll results, discussed framework for the formulation of final recommendation and what might be in the program pros and cons; (xiii) transition to Phase III – decisions Yet to be finalized (a) exposure/enhancement, (b) content-based, (c) integrated, (d) full/partial immersion; will the program be optional or required; and which language or languages will be taught, what grade level and what grade level would it start in implementation phase, how much time allocated to program; (xiv) common agreements – consensus that LPS should offer World Language Program, equity for all students has emerged as a common theme; and (xv) list of committee members.

There were comments and questions from the Committee (i) Ms. Pilarski gave a narrative of all the work that has been intensive and collaborative; (ii) twenty-five people have met and have had productive meetings; (iii) this was very helpful and appreciates everyone's work; (iv) will more than one option be presented; (v) would like to give time to the community to comment on; (vi) it should be communicated to the public that this will take time and manage expectations so people understand; (vii) have you considered as a committee conducting site visits; (viii) agrees that we can learn from Andover, (ix) community center in works and how we can work with community or at community center and have a language lab; and (x) two internal survey and results not in report and curious to see process of thought.

Dr. Ash would like broad community input to manage expectations.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street thanked the Committee for beginning to address this issue and shared her thoughts on (i) the community really wants this, (ii) sister city Antony, France and how to incorporate their ideas into the new World Language Program; and (iii) would like to be invited to one of your meetings before the Committee's recommendations are made.

Mr. Alessandrini, member of the Elementary World Language Subcommittee, commented that the Antony program has been discussed.

Ruth Litchfield, 6 Connors Road is looking at a three year roll out and would like to give the community time to buy in.

4. Discussion of 2015-2016 Recommended School Calendar

Dr. Ash provided background on the two calendars for 2015-2016. He is recommending the calendar beginning before Labor Day.

Carol Pilarski spoke about the before Labor Day calendar. Teachers begin on August 31 and students on September 1. The long weekend holiday with no school on Friday and Labor Day off follows. The last day will be June 21 with five obligatory snow days bringing the possible last day to June 28. The problem with an after Labor Day start occurs at end of calendar with no room for a fifth snow day. 180 days would not be possible, and something internally would need to be changed in order to get an extra snow day at the end of the school year.

Margaret Coppe asked about the November 12 Professional Day and wondered if that is set in stone. November is a terrible month for kids out of school and would it be possible to move that Professional Day to either October 9 or 13.

Carol Pilarski responded that it is not carved in stone and will review to see if it is able to be moved to October 9 or 13.

The Committee then began a discussion regarding holidays, professional development, parent teacher conferences, International Mother Language Day, and Diwali.

Dr. Ash would like to give employees time to comment on the calendar.

Phyllis Neufeld, LEA President, said the process seems fine with her as long as members can view and provide input.

The School Committee will vote the calendar on May 27.

5. Vote on the Charge for the Ad Hoc Master Planning Committee

Margaret Coppe received a phone call objecting to the name of the committee; it was stated that it is too similar to the title used by Board of Selectmen (BOS) so the Committee and Dr. Ash collaborated to come up with a better name and agreed to change the name to "Ad hoc Pre-K through 12 School Building Master Planning Committee." The work of the Committee will include (a) assign members to participate in the Designer Selection process per RFQ 14-48, (b) meet regularly to assess capacity findings, enrollment projections and identify short and long term options to align school capacities with enrollments, (c) propose recommendations into existing LPS Ten-Year Facility Master Plan; and (d) make a final report to the School Committee. The criteria for members were discussed. Margaret Coppe recommended Judy Crocker and Mary Ann Stewart to serve the School Committee.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street stated that the warrant will be closed this Thursday at Noon. Ms. McKenna is confused the way the composition of the committee is written. Ms. McKenna suggested language be changed regarding those two members to be staff representatives.

The Committee had questions and comments (i) wants to include community needs; (ii) would Dr. Ash comment on modern educational standards elaborate on types of environments; (iii) if focus is on school needs and there will be plenty of time for more gym time; and (iv) suggest educational standards for high quality education.

Motion to Approve the name change for the Ad hoc School Building Master Planning Committee (Stewart, Crocker) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

Motion to Appoint Judy Crocker and Mary Ann Stewart as our Representative to the Ad hoc School Building Master Planning Committee (Alessandrini, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (4-0-1) Steigerwald abstained

6. Vote on School Choice

Dr. Ash shared that by statute we must vote on school choice and if no vote is taken then it would open up students from other communities to enroll in Lexington Public Schools.

Motion to Not Be a School Choice Town (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

7. Vote to Appoint Voting Representative to the LABBB Collaborative Board of Directors

Dr. Ash has served as voting representative to the LABB Collaborative Board of Directors and would be willing to continue to serve as representative.

Motion to Appoint Dr. Ash Voting Representative to the LABBB Collaborative Board of Directors (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

8. Vote to Appoint Voting Representative to the EDCO Collaborative Board of Directors

Dr. Ash has served as voting representative to the EDCO Collaborative Board of Directors and would be willing to continue to serve as representative.

Motion to Appoint Dr. Ash as the Voting Representative to the EDCO Collaborative Board of Directors (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

V. Consent Agenda

1. Vote to Accept a \$131 Donation from Wilson Farms' Shop at Wilson Farms School Fundraiser to Be Deposited in the Lexington Children's Place Gift Account
2. Vote to Accept a \$1,000 Donation from GFI Software in Support of the LHS F1 Club
3. Vote to Accept the 2014 Intel Science Talent Search School Award in the Amount of \$2,000 from the Society for Science & the Public to Be Used to "support excellence in science, math and/or engineering education" at Lexington High School
4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of February 4, 2014, as amended (pulled out)
5. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of March 11, 2014
6. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of March 24, 2014, as amended (congressional delegation)
7. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of March 26, 2014
8. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 2, 2014

Motion to Accept, with Gratitude Consent Agenda Items 1, 2 and 3 (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

There was discussion regarding changes to School Committee Meeting Minutes dated February 4, March 11 and 24.

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Item 4, as amended (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (4-0-1) Crocker abstained

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 5 and 6 as amended and Consent Agenda Items 7 and 8 (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

Margaret Coppe announced that there will be a reception for Bonnie Brodner's retirement at the Central Office, Conference 2A on Tuesday, May 27, 2014 from 4:00 – 6:00 p.m.

Margaret Coppe also announced the Special Town Meeting will be held on June 16, 2014.

VI. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

The meeting adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; Memorandum dated April 17, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Ash re Standardization and Installation of Bike Racks at All Schools; Recommendation from Abe Benghiat dated April 15, 2014 for \$10,000 to purchase 7-8 bike racks for the high school; Memorandum dated May 13, 2014 from Robert Collins, Mary Barry and Jane Hundley to Dr. Ash and the LSC re Summary of the Work of the Social Studies Review Committee (Year 3); Memorandum dated May 13, 2014 from Carol Pilarski to Dr. Ash and LSC re Elementary World Language Committee – Status Report; Lexington School Calendars (FY 2015-2016) before Labor Day Start and one for After Labor Day Start; Ad hoc School Facilities Master Planning Committee description and criteria for membership; Letter dated May 2, 2014 to the LSC from Elizabeth Billings-Fouhy re donation of \$131 from the 2014 Shop at Wilson Farms Day Fundraiser to the Lexington Children's Place; Letter dated April 7, 2014 from Charles Mixer to Angelica Micallef Trigona, GFI Software regarding a \$1,000 donation to the LHS F1 Club; Letter dated April 18, 2014 from Caitlin Sullivan, Intel Science Talent Search to Principal Laura Lasa regarding a \$2,000 award check for two semifinalists; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated February 4, 2014; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated March 11, 2014; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated March 24, 2014; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated March 26, 2014; and Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated April 2, 2014

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, May 27, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

All agenda

Voted by the School Committee June 10, 2014