

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, June 12, 2007
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Tom Diaz, School Committee Members Helen Cohen, Margaret Coppe, Tom Griffiths and Ravi Sakhuja. The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 7:37 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Tom Diaz)

II. Public Comment

Jaime Rausher: The passing of the override is not a mandate and does not mean our financial problems are solved. We are getting the same service for more money. The paint will still peel at the High School. LHS produces more winners at the Science Fair than anyone else, debate will still be cut in half; will we run out of toner again in April? We have not addressed the fundamental issues. My husband and I voted yes but we struggled with this. We need to get health care expenses under control. Are we getting SPED out of district expenses under control? SPED is causing us to go over budget. Everyone deserves a good education. It's great, but all we have is a little breathing room. You asked for input from the community and we only got a note back from Mr. Diaz and no one else. We need courage to make difficult decisions. Overrides are divisive for the community.

III. Superintendent's Announcements

We had a glorious graduation ceremony; thanks to the LHS faculty and parents who make the all night party happen. Prom and graduation went smoothly.

IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Helen Cohen: This afternoon was a celebration for Barbara Manfredi and tomorrow is David Crump's. They are two wonderful principals who we will miss. It was exciting to read Mary Ann Stewart's name in the Globe. She was one of three potential candidates for the parent position on the state Board of Education. Though she did not get it she came very close and is doing a great job reaching out from the PTA locally, state-wide and beyond. She is doing a great job for us.

Tom Griffiths: I just came from Permanent Building Committee (PBC) meeting, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Mary Ellen Dunn is still there. Well caps have been installed at Fiske and we are pumping water with all five wells and there is no flooding. The problem with the automated portion of the lighting system persists and

there will be a summit meeting about it. Thanks to everyone who supported the override and all who worked for the override. Our Schools are not mismanaged. At the end of 2005, all but one of the central office people left which lead to problems, but not problems of mismanagement. FY06 unpaid bills were \$50K, which is a reasonable sum. Recent cost overruns are a direct result of increasing demands of SPED. We have implemented three new programs to better manage SPED. We also have new projects to reduce energy costs and we have established a financial review committee. What are the attributes of mismanagement? Not these kinds of steps.

Ravi Sakhuja: Question regarding the lights, can we institute a manual system while we are trying to institute an automatic system?

Paul Ash: That is exactly what I did. A directive went out to Ms. Petersen and Mr. Newell to that effect.

Ravi Sakhuja: What is happening with the replacement of Bill Hartigan?

Paul Ash: The job has been advertised and applications have been received. We (Town Manager Carl Valente, Mary Ellen Dunn and I) are doing the paper screening. Then there will be a committee to interview candidates.

Ravi Sakhuja: I am happy to help on that.

Paul Ash: Work through the chair and let me know.

Ravi Sakhuja: We need to take care that the temperatures are right and buildings are only being cooled if people are there.

Paul Ash: You will have a list of capital projects for the summer.

Ravi Sakhuja: I'd like to hear challenges Sean Newell is facing.

Margaret Coppe: What are the plans over the summer for moving the Central Office?

Paul Ash: The Old Harrington is being cleaned. It will be painted over the summer. We will move in by the end of July. We need to pack and move people and phones, etc...

Tom Diaz: Thanks to everyone who supported the override and voted YES. I consider the margin of votes significant. It was an excellent campaign run by great people.

V. Discussion Items

A. Update: Year 1 Mathematics Curriculum Review

Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Dr. Lynne Sarasin gave an overview of the two presentations, including the process and budgetary implications.

The curriculum review process has been modified to a 7-year process due to budgetary

considerations. 2008-2009 will be a very ambitious year (4 reviews will be happening at the same time). The goal is to keep this within a reasonable amount of time so that the reviews are kept current.

The discussion included the possibility of a request for a full time Assistant to the Superintendent next year.

Assistant to the Superintendent, Carole Pilarski gave the presentation on the mathematics curriculum review. She acknowledged the tremendous committee she worked with including their dedication and compassion. They accomplished 90% of their goals for year one. Everyday mathematics has research-based positive effects on learning. We have not yet met AYP in one SPED subgroup at Clarke.

The discussion included: the impact of last year's failed override on the mathematics department (the math resource room, less time for teachers to develop lessons because of increased teaching load, more students struggling, teachers can't meet with each other as much), we are strong on MCAS in math, the need to do better in certain cohorts, increasing time and differentiating instruction can improve scores (this was done in Millis where they had math 10 times a week), teacher training and time on task are the two things that are known to improve test scores. Next year we are doubling the math time for the students who did not make AYP last year, at the expense of an elective. Regarding "the math wars" there have not been many complaints from parents over the last several years. How does our math curriculum compare to that of other districts? Can we collaborate with them? Dawn McKenna brought up the need for differentiated instruction to boys and girls. She also expressed concern that teachers are leaving to teach in districts where they will have to teach fewer classes.

B. Update: Year 1 PE/Wellness Curriculum Review

Presentation by K-12 Coordinator for Physical Education and Wellness Kate Cremens-Basbas. Kate thanked the people who worked on the committee.

Q & A: Prom buses, how to get the community involved, cooperation between parent groups and Phys Ed and Wellness Department—200 came to a forum on athletes and stress, we don't meet recommended phys ed requirements, though most schools don't, (Paul Ash said we need a longer school year and school day to teach all the academics we need to teach). Concern was voiced over the increase in students' Body Mass Index (BMI). Scheduling gym and health in high school is difficult.

VI. Action Items

A. Vote to Approve Superintendent's Recommended 2008-2009 Calendar

Motion to approve the 2008-2009 School Calendar (Griffiths, Cohen) The motion passed 5-0.

B. Vote to Approve Donation of Dictionaries from Elks

Carol Pilarski: This is the 5th year that the Lexington chapter of the Elks has requested to donate dictionaries to all third grade students. There are approximately 480 students, the cost is \$ 1.75 per dictionary for a total of \$840.

Motion to gratefully accept the donation of dictionaries to third grade students (Cohen, Diaz) The motion passed 5-0.

VII. Motion to adjourn (Griffiths). The motion passed 5-0.

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 19, 2007, at 7:30 p.m. at the Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.