

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, November 18, 2014**  
**Jonas Clarke Middle School, Auditorium**  
**17 Stedman Road**

**7:30 p.m. Call to Order and Welcome:**

Public Comment – (Written comments to be presented to the School Committee; oral presentations not to exceed three minutes.)

**7:40 p.m. Superintendent’s Announcements:**

1. Boston Globe Names LPS as a “Top Place to Work” for 2014

**7:45 p.m. School Committee Member Announcements:**

1. Update on the Board of Selectman Decision Regarding a Special Town Meeting

**7:55 p.m. Agenda:**

1. Report of the Ad Hoc Committee for Youth at Risk (60 minutes)
2. Update on Special Education Parent Survey and Work with the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (30 minutes)
3. First Quarterly Financial Report (10 minutes)
4. Vote to Approve EDCO and LABBB Articles of Agreement (10 minutes)
5. Superintendent Evaluation Standards (15 minutes)

**10:00 p.m. Consent Agenda (5 minutes):**

1. Vote to Accept a 2013 Intel Science Talent Search School Award in the Amount of \$1,000 from the Society for Science & the Public to Be Used to “support excellence in science, math and/or engineering education” at Lexington High School
2. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of May 9, 2012
3. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of March 31, 2014

**10:05 p.m. Adjourn:**

**The next scheduled meeting of the School Committee is as follows:**

- Wednesday, November 19, 2014 – 7:30 p.m., Town Offices Building, Selectmen’s Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

*All agenda items and the order of items are approximate and subject to change.*

**Recommendations for  
Reducing Stress, Building Resiliency and  
Improving Services for Our Youth**

**Submitted by the Ad Hoc Committee for Youth At Risk**

**to the Lexington School Committee**

**Lexington, MA**

**November 2014**

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# I. FRAMING THE ISSUE

## 1. Stress is taking its toll on Lexington's youth

According to the 2013 Youth Risky Behavior Survey:

- 55 LHS students recently tried to commit suicide (at least once)
- 247 (15% of those surveyed) seriously considered suicide – the highest level in a decade
- Harassment at school and through social media was the *strongest predictor* of suicide ideation
- 60% reported “extreme” or “a lot” of stress due to classes
- 83% of students felt the atmosphere of the school encouraged academic competition

## 2. The key is to reduce *unnecessary* stress while maintaining academic standards and a healthy balance for youth

- Not all stress is bad. The stress from challenging oneself just the right amount is a good and necessary kind of stress. But too much stress is physically and emotionally unhealthy and can lead to risky behavior.
- Some stress is simply unnecessary – and parents, teachers and students can do something about it. Sources of unnecessary stress include academic, extracurricular, peer, family and social pressure
- If students are not subjected to too much stress, particularly unnecessary stress, they will learn more, perform better and be healthier.
- Reducing stress for students will not compromise academic standards or student achievement. Rather, having less stress can actually improve students' academic performance and success.
- Efforts to reduce student stress should also include efforts to reduce teacher/staff stress. Less stressed teachers are more effective teachers and they can model stress reduction behaviors for their students.

## 3. This is a community issue that requires leadership

- It's not just about the schools – This is a community problem requiring a community response that involves parents, students, town and the community, as well as schools.
- There must be more visible leadership and more effective organization within both the Lexington Public Schools and the Town Government to address stress and youth at risk. And there should be more coordination between the Town and LPS.
- Schools are doing a lot to serve youth with emotional issues, but Town services for youth are seriously under-resourced relative to comparable communities.
- While efforts in the schools require district-wide leadership and organization, effective solutions also require a “bottoms up” approach with heavy teacher and staff involvement.
- More effective communications to the community is needed from LPS and the Town.

**4. Enhancing social-emotional intelligence and building resiliency leads to higher quality education and better performance**

- If the emotional intelligence of students is enhanced, through programs such as those based on Social Emotional Learning, they will be more successful.

**5. It is critical to improve identification of youth at risk and provide support services for them and their families.**

- When youth and their families are experiencing problems, they should have access to quality services.

**6. Changing the culture and climate for youth requires building awareness and engaging in community discussion and education.**

- Coming together can make a difference. Other communities have successfully brought town services, schools, parents and community groups together to address stress, e.g. Newton, Needham, Bedford and Winchester

## II. SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

### 1. Leadership and Organization

- a) Designate senior leaders in both the Lexington Public Schools and town government to manage and oversee programs to reduce stress, build resiliency and provide services for youth at risk.
- b) Establish collaborative working groups within the LPS system and between the schools and town government, as well as a town-wide working group comprised of community leaders to develop a coordinated approach.

Schools	Town Government	Community*
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire or designate a <b>senior LPS administrator</b> with the organizational authority to mobilize initiatives in the classroom, guidance, social services and professional Learning in order to lead district-wide efforts to build youth resiliency, reduce youth stress, and provide services for youth at risk</li> <li>▪ Create a district-wide <b>Stress Reduction and Resiliency Working Group</b> chaired by the senior LPS administrator that includes administrators, principals, guidance, wellness and special education staff and classroom teachers, to develop new initiatives in the schools, share information among schools about their programs and assess the effectiveness of these efforts</li> <li>▪ Form an <b>on-site working group within each school</b> chaired by the principal or assistant principal to find ways to reduce stress, build resiliency and improve the school climate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire or designate a <b>Director of Youth Services</b> within the Department of Human Services responsible for overseeing and coordinating services to youth</li> <li>▪ Create a <b>Committee for Lexington Youth</b>, co-chaired by the Director of Youth Services and designated LPS lead administrator and comprised of youth, school, town, and community leaders and stakeholders, to promote and develop programs aimed at building resiliency, reducing stress and providing counseling and support services to youth at risk</li> <li>▪ Hire counseling staff or contract with a community counseling agency to assist the Director in providing <b>counseling and support services</b>, staffing the Youth Center and developing community education programming for youth and parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Under the auspices of the Committee for Lexington Youth Working Group, recruit leaders from community groups, such as PTA/PTO's, religious and civic organizations, social service and healthcare providers, to form a <b>Community Resources for Youth Working Group</b> with the aim of mobilizing community resources to build resiliency, reduce stress, and provide community-based services for youth at risk</li> <li>▪ The Community Resources for Youth Working Group would develop and organize <b>community forums, education programs and town-wide events</b> aimed at promoting discussion and educating the community on social and emotional health, reducing stress and supporting youth at risk</li> <li>▪ The Community Resources for Youth Working Group will act as a <b>liaison</b> in order to coordinate the community education programs and forums for youth and families offered by various community groups</li> </ul>

\* Community includes the community-at-large (parents, students, community members) as well as community organizations such as PTOs and PTAs, health service providers (social workers, physicians, mental health providers), youth counseling and prevention organizations, civic youth groups (Boy Scouts, Girls Scouts), faith-based youth groups (all church/temple/mosque youth groups), community-based education booster groups (FOLMADS, LEF), youth-based community not-for-profits and businesses (ArtSpan, LACS, Dance Inn), community-based organizations (Rotary, Lion), community businesses and professionals (retailers, professionals), other ancillary quasi-public organizations (library, Hayden, Lexington Community Education, colleges).

## 2. Help students and youth build resiliency, enhance social-emotional intelligence, manage stress, create balance in their lives, and improve overall wellness.

Schools	Town Government	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand, initiate and coordinate evidence-based <b>Social-Emotional Learning</b> programs with aim of ensuring consistency, continuity and alignment of SEL efforts K-12</li> <li>▪ Implement programs to teach children how to <b>manage emotions</b>, stress, anxiety, and build resiliency</li> <li>▪ Expand <b>Professional Learning</b> for teachers on how to create pro-social classrooms and help students manage stress and build resiliency</li> <li>▪ Evaluate effectiveness of current programs and consider <b>alternative approaches</b> for reducing stress and building resiliency at all levels, e.g. morning meeting time, intervention/exploratory blocks, LHS extended homerooms</li> <li>▪ Initiate pilot programs and expand existing initiatives to integrate <b>mindfulness</b>-based stress reduction practices into all schools</li> <li>▪ Offer and expand <b>wellness program for teachers and staff</b> to reduce and manage their own stress</li> <li>▪ Reinstate <b>health education</b> in elementary schools and increase frequency of health/ wellness programs in middle and high school</li> <li>▪ Develop and encourage ways to foster personal connections and <b>mentorship</b> opportunities between teachers/staff and individual students</li> <li>▪ Enable the <b>peer leadership program</b> to expand by providing additional staff resources</li> <li>▪ Increase number and access to <b>yoga classes</b> in middle and high school</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a <b>Youth Center</b> (possibly at the Lexington Community Center) operated by youth themselves and a Youth Center Board of adults and youth to provide administration and support for the Youth Center</li> <li>▪ Provide free or low-cost access to <b>stress relieving activities</b>, such as yoga, recreation, art, through the Town, the Community Center, the Youth Center and other sites</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>online listings</b> of both town-sponsored and outside resources in the community for stress management, health and wellness</li> <li>▪ Work with community and business leaders to engage youth in <b>community service programs</b> including interning and mentoring programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organize <b>community forums and education programs</b> coordinated by the Community Resources for Youth Working Group on topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• social-emotional learning and building resiliency</li> <li>• mindfulness-based stress reduction approaches</li> <li>• stress-relief techniques &amp; activities</li> <li>• role of sleep in learning &amp; mood regulation, good sleep hygiene to improve well-being.</li> <li>• how to balance academic achievement and emotional well-being.</li> <li>• improving work-family balance</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Work with local business and community groups to offer <b>wellness programs</b> for parents and youth</li> <li>▪ Work with town youth services to establish community <b>peer leadership and peer mentor programs</b> for teens that complement programs serving students in school</li> <li>▪ Develop a <b>parent's guide to Social-Emotional Learning</b> and educate parents on ways to complement social-emotional learning practices from school with their children at home</li> <li>▪ Support <b>community events</b> sponsored by the town, businesses and community organizations that promote social connection, family-centered fun, relaxation and stress-relief, e.g. Discovery Day</li> </ul>

3. Examine ways to reduce sources of *unnecessary and unhealthy* stress for students and youth, including academic, extracurricular, social, peer, family, societal or internal pressures.

Schools	Town Government	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish <b>best practices for homework</b> through teacher groups and PLCs, and provide a Professional Learning course for teachers on homework best practices</li> <li>▪ Revise district and school <b>policies</b> and guidelines for <b>homework and workload</b>, e.g. recommended homework/workload, vacation policies, respites from homework, schedules of multiple tests/projects</li> <li>▪ Examine and consider altering <b>LHS course offerings, levels and sequences</b> in specific areas where alternative options would provide more appropriate choices for students, e.g. adding honors levels where needed, Learningal readiness for Grade 10 AP courses, science course preparation</li> <li>▪ Offer greater <b>choice and flexibility of course options</b> in middle and high school so students can closely align classes to their ability levels and interests, e.g. electives that appeal to student interests, alternatives for required classes</li> <li>▪ Define consistent and clear <b>recommendation procedures for courses</b> in middle and high school to ensure proper placement</li> <li>▪ Examine ways the schools can assist, inform and educate students and families in making <b>balanced choices for course selection</b>; provide information on course expectations and workload to students</li> <li>▪ Teach <b>time management and executive functioning skills</b> to students in middle and high school</li> <li>▪ Explore and evaluate implementing a <b>later start time for LHS</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Create a comprehensive town <b>website for youth services</b> that includes information and resources for reducing stress and building resiliency</li> <li>▪ Work with community groups to institute <b>town-wide campaigns</b>, such as managing digital media exposure ("unplugged week"), good sleep hygiene, meeting-free and homework-free days, to reduce stress and promote in-person, social interaction</li> <li>▪ Offer <b>information on health and wellness</b> topics, e.g. alcohol and other drugs, sleep, social media, etc. through the website, social media and written material.</li> <li>▪ Partner with schools to coordinate <b>community-wide programs</b> on bullying, dating violence, Internet safety, alcohol and other drug use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organize <b>community forums and education programs</b>, coordinated by the Committee Resources for Youth, on sources of stress that can be minimized or avoided. Possible topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peer pressures/competition</li> <li>• cyber-bullying</li> <li>• social media</li> <li>• over-scheduling</li> <li>• sleep deprivation</li> <li>• how to balance academics, activities, social life, family life</li> <li>• college application process and its role in driving student stress</li> <li>• how early student stress starts and how to prevent it</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Organize <b>parent-teen discussion</b> events to talk about sources of stress and what can be done to reduce stress in students' lives</li> <li>▪ Hold <b>peer discussion groups</b> with students in the Youth Center, religious youth groups, and other community youth groups to talk about their own sources of stress and how to reduce stress in their lives</li> <li>▪ Expand efforts to reduce teen engagement in <b>unhealthy stress coping strategies</b> such as caffeine, alcohol, marijuana and other drug use</li> <li>▪ Support <b>community activities</b> and events aimed at reducing stress, e.g. unplugged week, meeting-free/homework-free days</li> </ul>



#### 4. Identify youth at risk, provide support services, and improve coordination of services and referrals between schools, town, and community.

Schools	Town Government	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance <b>identification and support services</b> for students with emotional and mental health concerns (anxiety, stress, depression, psychological issues) at all grade levels</li> <li>▪ Hire <b>additional guidance counselors or social workers</b> in elementary schools to provide a balance of preventive and responsive services</li> <li>▪ Create additional <b>preventive support programs</b> in middle schools and at LHS for students with anxiety, stress-related psychological, social-emotional or mental health issues (apart from TLP, Alpha, and SPED). This may help offload cases that end up in SPED</li> <li>▪ Ensure <b>continuity</b> of support services as students transition in the system from one school level to the next</li> <li>▪ Develop <b>Professional Learning</b> programs and delineate protocols for identifying students who exhibit signs of stress, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, risky behavior</li> <li>▪ Partner with the Town and community providers to identify resources for school personnel to make <b>referrals</b> and do follow-up coordination</li> <li>▪ Put <b>information stickers</b> on bathroom doors about symptoms of depression and anxiety; suggest talking to doctor, guidance counselor or help line for advice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Plan and implement a community-wide <b>youth suicide prevention program</b> developed by a task force of adults and youth representing the schools and community</li> <li>▪ Develop and implement a town <b>protocol for suicide prevention</b> in response to a youth suicide</li> <li>▪ Provide free, accessible individual and family <b>counseling and support services</b> to youth and families through a contracted community counseling agency or town youth services staff</li> <li>▪ Provide counseling and support <b>groups for at-risk youth</b> involved in alcohol and other drug abuse, harassment, bullying, dating violence; referred by police, schools, clergy and others</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>outreach programs</b> to at-risk youth, including peer leadership programs at the Youth Center, designed to reach out to at-risk youth and enhance self-esteem</li> <li>▪ Designate a town coordinator or a contracted community youth counseling agency to be the community resource for school personnel to make <b>referrals</b> for at-risk students</li> <li>▪ Provide an <b>online directory</b> of free and low cost mental health services and private mental health providers in the community</li> <li>▪ Develop programs through a <b>youth-run website and social media</b> to reach out to at risk and disconnected youth and to provide information to prevent suicide, dating violence, harassment, etc.</li> <li>▪ Work with the schools and community to provide <b>prevention programs</b>, such as the Child Assault Prevention Program (CAPP), <b>to younger children</b> and parents</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Present results of <b>Youth Risk Behavior Survey</b> to parents and the community in a public forum and publish the full report on the town and youth operated websites</li> <li>▪ Review YRBS and other <b>data</b> to identify problem areas, triggers, and risk factors for youth</li> <li>▪ Train and <b>educate adults</b> (parents, educators, service providers, youth groups) to recognize signs of excess stress, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, mental health issues, self-injurious and risky behaviors</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>peer training programs for teens</b>, coordinated with the schools, on what to do, how to get help in situations of risky or harmful behavior, e.g. signs of self-harm, suicidal behavior, drug use, anxiety</li> <li>▪ Distribute information online and in print to the community on what to do and <b>how to get help</b> in risky or harmful situations</li> <li>▪ Work to <b>de-stigmatize</b> the act of seeking counseling and support</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>Parent Education and Support Group</b> aimed at prevention of suicide, substance abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, self-destructive behavior</li> <li>▪ Engage community groups, cultural organizations, faith-based youth groups, civic youth groups to do <b>outreach</b> for youth at risk and their families</li> <li>▪ Engage <b>mental health and medical professionals</b> in the community to advise and work with schools, clergy and town service</li> <li>▪ Solicit <b>community support</b>, including financial support, for mental health services for youth and families</li> </ul>

## 5. Community Education and Changing the Culture

a) Build awareness and ongoing discussion through parent and community education activities.

b) Work together to change the culture and climate in schools, at home, and in the community in ways that help reduce stress and build resiliency

Schools	Town Government	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage <b>school leaders</b> to make reducing stress a priority in the school culture; engage teachers/staff</li> <li>▪ Improve the <b>school climate and culture</b> by identifying ways to reduce competitiveness, shift the focus more on learning rather than grades, recognizing non-academic and collective accomplishments</li> <li>▪ Reduce <b>peer-to-peer competition</b> through more collaborative learning projects, group projects and grading</li> <li>▪ Make substantial improvements in <b>communication to parents</b> at the district and individual school level about school programs and efforts to reduce stress and build resiliency including use of websites, social media</li> <li>▪ Facilitate <b>school-home partnership</b> by establishing guidelines for parents on communication with school staff and providing workshops for staff on working with families</li> <li>▪ Encourage Learning of <b>student-run supports</b> for stress, e.g. peer groups, advice columns, clubs, students voices</li> <li>▪ Hire <b>teachers and staff</b> to reflect the <b>diversity</b> of the student population in order to enhance opportunities for adult mentorship and guidance to students of different cultures, orientations and backgrounds</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>Professional Learning</b> to help teachers and staff understand the diverse backgrounds of students in order to help them support the social-emotional needs of students</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue good work towards developing <b>positive relationships</b> between youth and police, fire, and library who are seen as a resource for youth at risk</li> <li>▪ Increase visibility of <b>Town services</b> and efforts to serve youth at risk</li> <li>▪ Offer more <b>non-competitive</b> recreational sports and activities</li> <li>▪ <b>Publicize</b> public events and forums as well as resources and services available to youth</li> <li>▪ Create a <b>Teen Youth Summer Internship</b> for teens to volunteer to work with Youth Services staff and assist in planning of community forums</li> <li>▪ Increase support for coaches and <b>recreation staff</b> in their efforts to build positive relationships with at risk youth and relieve unhealthy stress in general among teens</li> <li>▪ Establish <b>partnerships with businesses</b> and companies for job shadowing, internships and mentoring</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organize <b>community forums and education programs</b> coordinated by Community Resources for Youth on topics such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open discussion about “what the community wants”</li> <li>• how to redefine success</li> <li>• societal, parental expectations and its effect on students</li> <li>• how to balance high-achievement culture with stress on students</li> <li>• open dialog between parents and children/teens about stress</li> <li>• discuss possible solutions and actions</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Organize events such as <b>Youth Summits</b> that bring together teens, parents, town, community to address concerns of teens and stress</li> <li>▪ Initiate <b>parenting workshops</b>, a “Parent University”, or book groups around stress and parenting topics</li> <li>▪ Utilize the resources and <b>expertise</b> of local healthcare and mental health professionals to work with schools, community and youth groups</li> <li>▪ Encourage community youth programs, counseling programs, mental health professionals, faith-based youth groups to work together and <b>coordinate programs</b></li> <li>▪ Create a <b>family-friendly environment</b> in schools and community, e.g. inter-generational activities, improved communication, translation</li> <li>▪ Continue and expand community efforts focusing on the social-emotional and mental health needs of the <b>diverse student population</b>, e.g. Lexington Asian Mental Health Initiative</li> </ul>

## 6. Reach out to find networking opportunities and other resources

Schools	Town Government	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reach out to and learn from <b>other school districts</b> grappling with the same issues</li> <li>▪ Review data and <b>outcomes</b> in school systems that have instituted programs or changes</li> <li>▪ Join a <b>network of schools</b>, collaborate or partner with universities or other community programs</li> <li>▪ Look into <b>research</b> programs and findings related to stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire a <b>grant writer</b> to solicit funding from SAMHSA, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, CHNA15, Foundation for Metrowest, and others.</li> <li>▪ Review efforts in <b>other towns</b> to learn how to best structure services, communication and engagement with the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review accomplishments in <b>other communities</b>, e.g. Needham, Newton, Bedford, Winchester in implementing programs to reduce stress and prevent suicide and violence</li> <li>▪ Engage <b>businesses and companies</b> to match students with mentors, shadowing opportunities</li> </ul>

## 7. Create a joint Task Force with representatives from the schools, town and community to follow-up and oversee implementation of the recommendations outlined in this report.

### III. UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM

#### Stress among Youth

Chronically high levels of stress, along with ineffective coping strategies, are well-known contributors to poor physical, mental, and social health. Of particular concern today is the rising prevalence of unhealthy stress among our youth. According to a recent national survey by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2014), teens now report feeling stressed at levels rivaling that of adults, and at levels far above what is believed to be healthy.

Some stress, if time-limited, can be helpful for boosting mental and physical performance (Carmichael, 2009), and stress is a fact of modern life for which our youth should be prepared. However, chronically high stress levels contribute to youth suicide, depression, anxiety, violence, substance abuse, poor physical health and growth, and poorer performance on tests (Lepore et al., 1997; McEwen 1998).

The increase in unhealthy stress among youth today is especially alarming in light of the growing scientific evidence showing that the brain continues to undergo critical maturation throughout adolescence into the early 20's (Giedd et al., 1999), and chronic stress can harm the developing brain in areas critical for memory formation and executive functions (e.g., decision-making, organization, impulse control), with potentially life-long implications. (Arnsten & Shansky, 2004; Evans & Schamberg, 2009; Boston, 2009).

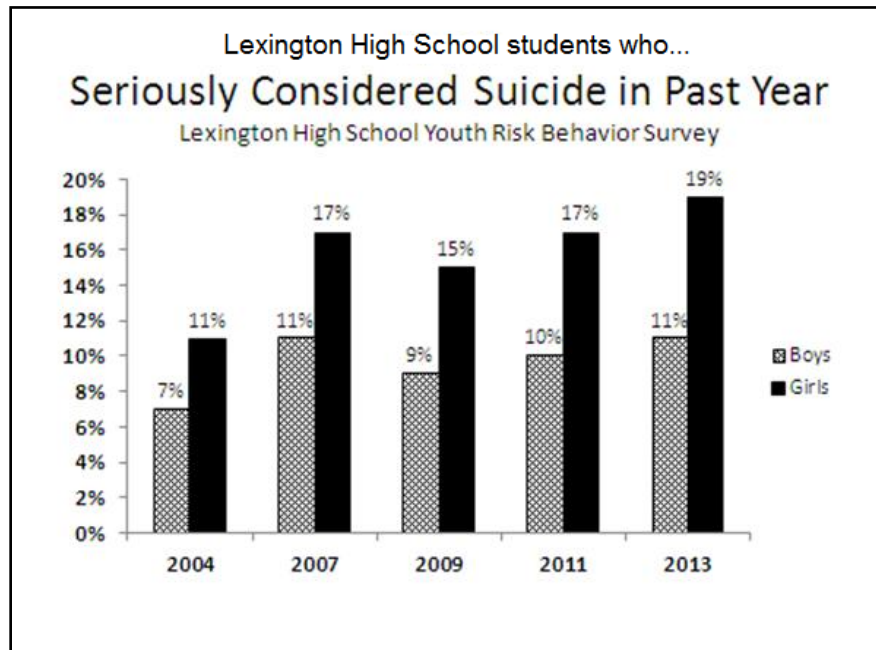
#### Our Youth in Lexington are At Risk

The situation in Lexington is no exception, as it is for many communities with high academic standards. The three recent suicides among students in Newton (Ishkanian, 2014) and the recent suicide of a 2013 LHS graduate highlight the very real danger to our youth in Lexington of community inaction and complacency around addressing this pressing problem. According to the biennial Lexington High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey:

##### 1. *Lexington students are at risk for suicide*

- A full 55 LHS students reported having attempted suicide in the past 12 months, up from 51 in 2011
- The percentage of students reporting having seriously considered attempting suicide in the past 12 months is at the highest levels in a decade (see Figure 1). In 2013, about 1 in 7 (15%) students overall reported seriously considering suicide, a figure similar to the national rate (17%) (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2014).
- The factors predicting the greatest increased risk for considering suicide among LHS students include: (a) being female, in the older grades, (b) being of Asian/South Asian ethnicity, (c) reporting higher stress related to classes and planning for the future, (d) being of sexual minority, and (e) having experienced harassment at school or related to school.
- Of particular note is that the *strongest* predictor of suicidal ideation was having been harassed in school or related to school. Having been harassed conferred a *300% increase* in

the odds of considering attempting suicide, compared to an 85% increase for the next most predictive factor (being Asian/South Asian).



## 2. *Lexington students experience extreme amounts of academic stress and competition*

- The majority of students consistently report homework and academic classes among their top stressors.
  - 60% reported “extreme” or “a lot” of stress due to school
  - 96% reported stress due to homework, with 16% reporting “extreme” stress
  - 32% agreed or strongly agreed that difficulties were piling up so high that they could not overcome them
  - 35% reported they could not cope with all of the things that they have to do
  - These numbers illustrate how toxic and unrelenting the stress level has become for many Lexington youth.
- A consistent theme in the LHS YRBS data is how much the culture of competitiveness in Lexington plays a role in student stress and disconnection.
  - The vast majority (83%) of students either agreed or strongly agreed that the atmosphere at LHS and in the town encourages students to compete academically with each other.
  - Over half (52%) reported that there was a lot of back-stabbing at school. Nearly 40% of students reported that bullying occurred often or very often at LHS, and 30% *disagreed* with the statements “I feel close to people at my school” and “I feel like I am part of my

school.” Experiencing such harassment was also a strong predictor of reporting higher stress related to school.

- Unfortunately, 62% of students reported feeling that the majority of teachers at LHS were unaware of their stress level.

### 3. *Stress can lead to negative coping strategies and risky behavior*

- Use of negative strategies to cope with stress is high among our youth.
  - Nearly 1 in 6 (13%) reported self-injurious behaviors in the past 12 months such as cutting, burning or bruising
  - Over half (55%) endorsed drinking alcohol as a means to cope with stress.
  - Half reported past-30-day drinking, a rate substantially higher than the state (36%) or nation as a whole (35%) (CDC, 2014)
  - Fully one-quarter reported binge drinking (5+ drinks on a single occasion) in the past 30 days
- Exacerbating the stress and inability to cope is insufficient sleep, with 46% of students reporting getting an average of 6 or fewer hours of sleep on school nights, while the National Sleep Foundation recommends 8.5-9.5 hours for growing teens.
- When youth are exhausted and stressed, they are also more likely to be tempted to engage in dishonest academic behaviors. In 2013, 80% of students reported having copied other students’ homework and papers, 31% having used electronic devices to cheat, and 35% having cut and pasted materials from the Internet without proper attribution.

### **Stress is Affecting Younger Children**

Stress has a negative impact not just on teens, but it affects younger children as well. The principals and staff in our Lexington elementary schools are seeing an increase in the number of young children who are experiencing anxiety. The pressures upon children can start early in some cases, including over-scheduling, pressures to excel in academics and extracurricular activities, outside tutoring, academic or enrichment programs, high expectations, and the quest for perfection. Some children show signs of stress-related difficulties, such as school avoidance or changes in behavior, while others internalize the feelings. The schools also see children with other emotional, psychological or behavioral issues who need intervention and support. Oftentimes, children who show signs of emotional issues in elementary school, later have more serious problems when they reach high school.

Therefore, it is vital to recognize that stress can affect younger children, and that efforts to prevent stress-related concerns as well as efforts to build resiliency and social-emotional intelligence must start early.

## IV. WHO WE ARE

### The Ad Hoc Committee for Youth At Risk

In 2013, the Lexington School Committee formed the Ad Hoc Committee for Youth At Risk to address concerns regarding Lexington youth aged 3 to 22 whose mental or physical health is at risk because of unhealthy stress originating from physical, emotional, social, cultural, and academic sources that may adversely affect them and their families. Members of the School Committee elected to create the Ad Hoc Committee because of its own concern for the effects of stress on students, as well as its acknowledgment of concerns expressed by the community. The Ad Hoc Committee for Youth at Risk was charged by the School Committee “with recommending policies, goals and programs to address the issue of youth at risk due to stress”.

When the School Committee established the Ad Hoc Committee, it noted that this is a community issue that transcends the schools and which requires a collaborative response by the community as a whole. Therefore, the Ad Hoc Committee was constituted to include representatives from not only the

Ad Hoc Committee for Youth At Risk	
<u>Members</u>	<u>Representing</u>
Laurie Atwater	Business
William Blout, <i>co-chair</i>	Therapists
Katie Boudreau	Teachers
Linda Chase	School Administration
Constance Counts	Community Programs
Tammy Darling	Teachers
Adam Goldberg	School Principals
Sion Kim Harris	Parents
Eileen Jay	Parents
Serena Luo	Students
Alana Martel	Students
Ann Redmon	Community Groups
BJ Rudman, <i>co-chair</i>	Community Groups
Valerie Viscosi	School Administration
<u>Liaisons</u>	
Alessandro Alessandrini	School Committee
Margaret Coppe	School Committee
Tessa Riley Clare	School Guidance
Kathleen Cardona	PTO
Bettina McGimsey	PTO

Lexington Public Schools (administration, teachers, principals) but also from a Lexington community-based program serving youth at risk, concerned community groups, parents of Lexington students, Lexington students, a Lexington-based therapist, and a community business leader, as well as liaisons from the School Committee and School Guidance. Other parties who were invited but did not participate included liaisons from the Youth Services Council, the Lexington Human Services Department, the Human Services Committee, the Lexington Health Department, the Lexington Police Department, the Town Recreation Department, and the Board of Selectmen.

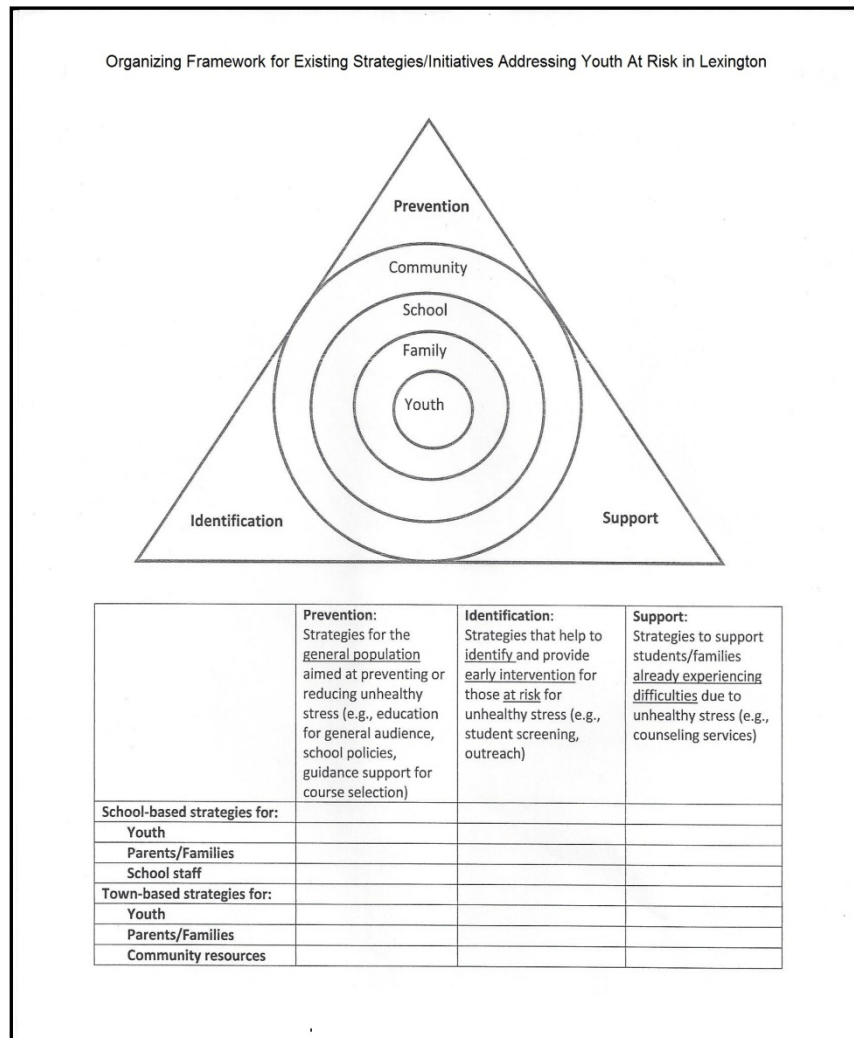
The Ad Hoc Committee, which was established as a one-year committee met monthly, and later weekly, from November 2013 through November 2014. Its work culminates with the submission of this report and a companion presentation to the School Committee.

## V. WHAT WE DID

### Our Framework

As its first step, the Committee wanted to review and obtain information about programs, services, and practices that already exist to support youth and families in Lexington. We needed to develop a framework for gathering information about existing services and programs and collecting recommendations and ideas for needed services.

We constructed the model (below) that includes three aspects from primary prevention to intervention to serve our youth, i.e., (1) **Prevention** (aimed at the general population), (2) **Identification** (aimed at a selected population), and (3) **Support** (aimed at youth at risk). The model also acknowledges the widening circle of people – from youth to families to schools to community – that need to work together to help our youth.





## Information Gathering

To identify what is currently being done in the schools and community and to gather ideas for what more can be done, the Committee:

(1) gathered information on current programs and activities being provided by the schools aimed at reducing stress and building resiliency for students, as well as services for youth at risk. We developed a questionnaire to be completed by the Principal of each school using the Survey Monkey online tool. The Principals were asked to both describe all of the current efforts in their schools to prevent and reduce unhealthy stress and build resiliency, and to offer any ideas and suggestions they might have on additional steps that should be taken. We then had follow up meetings with the Principals of all nine schools (or an Assistant Principal, in one case) as well as with teachers and staff to explore some of these questions in more detail.

(2) used a similar approach, although not the online tool, to learn about activities and programs in the community. Questionnaires were given or sent to various town and community entities including private practitioners, physicians and community groups. We also met with Charlotte Rogers, Emily Lavine and Matt Ryan in the town Department of Human Services as well as with the Youth Services Council and the Human Services Committee.

(3) learned about what is being done in comparable communities such as Needham and Newton (both of these communities have had to deal with a series of student suicides). We met with the Directors of Youth Services in Newton, Bedford, Winchester, Needham, the Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction in Needham and the Superintendent of Schools in Weston.

(4) did literature searches on sites like CASEL and Challenge Success to better understand the current research and evidence-based recommendations regarding students stress. The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL) is a national organization whose mission is to help make evidence-based social and emotional learning (SEL) an integral part of education. Challenge Success is a research-based organization from Stanford University that provides schools and families with information and strategies to create a more balanced and academically fulfilling life for children.

In addition to gathering information, Committee members held numerous discussions about issues and concerns related to stress on youth. Based on these discussions, the input received from those we interviewed or surveyed, and our own understanding of the issue, we drafted the recommendations contained herein.

## Existing Programs and Efforts in Schools, Town and Community

## **The Schools**

It should be emphasized that there are noteworthy efforts already being undertaken throughout the Lexington Public Schools to reduce student stress, build resiliency and to identify and provide services to youth at risk. These efforts need to be supplemented, intensified and coordinated so that all of the students benefit from them.

Current programs and efforts include SEL-based programs like Open Circle, Responsive Classroom and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) in the elementary schools and Rachel's Challenge in the middle schools. Health education classes, which emphasize developing and applying critical thinking skills to real life challenges, are taught at both the middle and high schools. The K-12 Prevention Program includes a Peer Educator Initiative which increases youth awareness of important health and wellness issues such as alcohol and drug use, other risky behaviors, decision making skills and peer pressure. Efforts are also being made at LHS and other schools to improve the climate and assess how homework practices can be improved. In addition, mindfulness practice has been initiated by some teachers and schools with support from the Lexington Education Foundation (LEF). The Therapeutic Learning Programs (TLP) at the middle schools and high school serve students who need support for emotional and behavioral issues. The Alpha Program at the high school is a very successful re-entry program for students who have been hospitalized, and similar programs are being planned for the middle schools.

The School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) provides an effective forum for educators, health professionals, parents and community group representatives to discuss issues, programs and services for the physical and emotional well-being of students. There may well be other programs and initiatives in the schools but, as noted elsewhere in this report, what is being done throughout the District is very poorly communicated to parents and the community.

## **The Town**

### *Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents*

The town funds two staff positions, one full-time and one part-time, within the Human Services Department. The full-time social worker (LICSW), the Assistant Director of Youth and Family Services, provides crisis intervention, information and referral and support services for youth at risk. The part-time, Youth Program Coordinator, provides some prevention and group work to middle school students. Both positions are currently vacant but a hiring process is underway.

This year the Board of Health received a CHNA15 grant to provide prevention programs in the community. Working with the Prevention Services Coordinator at Lexington Youth and Family Services (LYFS), the Mental Health First Aid program will train adults, in the community, including police, fire and town employees to better help people with mental health issues. Some of the MHFA programs will be training adults who work with youth.

### *Other Youth Services*

The town offers Lexington other services through the Health Department, Lexington Police and Fire Departments, the Recreation Department and others as well as town supported programs that contribute to physical, social and emotional learning and well-being of Lexington youth

## **The Community**

### *Mental Health Services for Children and Adolescents*

Our community has an abundance of individuals, groups and service organizations that provide a range of mental health and support services to youth and families. Some of these include:

- Private mental health practitioners and group practices
- Hospitals - e.g., McLean, Emerson, Mt. Auburn - inpatient, outpatient, day treatment
- Massachusetts Department of Mental Health
- Lexington Youth and Family Services
- Wayside Community Services
- The Advocates - psychiatric emergency services
- The Edinburg Center

### *Other Youth Services*

Many individuals, groups and service organizations also provide a broad range services to youth and families from recreation, arts, education, health and social activities. Some of these include:

- Cary Library
- Faith-based Youth Groups
- Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association (LICA)
- The Youth Commission
- PTO, PTSA and other parent groups
- Physicians (Pediatricians)
- Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts
- The Munroe Center for the Arts
- Lexington Youth Summer Theater
- Civic Organizations (e.g., Lions, Rotary)
- Hayden Recreation Center
- Lexington Education Foundation
- Lexington Boosters
- Lexington Community Endowment
- Lexington Food Pantry
- Lexington Community Education

## VI. RECOMMENDATIONS WITH FULL NARRATIVES

The Committee's recommendations are proposed actions and efforts to be done by the schools, town government, and the community. The full list of recommendations for all three of them is presented in the **Summary of Recommendations** at the beginning of this report. In this section, we will describe each recommendation more fully.

Because reducing stress, building resiliency and serving youth at risk is a community issue that requires action by the town government and the community as well as the schools, the specific recommendations are presented in a manner that shows what each should do to implement the six major recommendations being made. Underlying these recommendations is the need for collaborative efforts and organizational structures that must be established to facilitate this collaboration.

In accordance with our framework, some recommendations are aimed at (1) **prevention** for the general population to help youth and families reduce and manage stress, build resiliency, and prevent serious consequences and outcomes from unhealthy stress. Meanwhile, other recommendations focus on (2) **identification** of youth who show signs of being at risk including emotional, physical or psychological difficulties or risky behavior, and (3) providing **support** services for youth at risk who already do or would potentially engage in risky or harmful behavior.

### OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. Addressing student stress and risky behavior requires **community engagement**. It is an issue that needs the involvement of the town, schools, parents, and the community.
2. Enhancing **social and emotional intelligence** builds resilience in youth, increases pro-social behavior, and leads to greater success academically, socially and personally.
3. We need to find ways to help **reduce sources of unnecessary and unhealthy stress** for youth whenever possible, including academic, extracurricular, peer, family and societal sources of stress.
4. If we can **redefine success** in a way that is not just achievement-oriented, young people will have more avenues for feeling successful and accomplished.
5. Reducing stress for students will not compromise academic achievement; rather, **less stress may improve academic performance**.
6. Young people need to learn how to **create balance** in their lives and make healthy choices, including learning not to overload themselves, eat healthily, get adequate sleep.
7. Our youth are affected by the attitudes, behavior and values around them, so by **changing the culture and climate** in schools, at home, and in the community, they can learn to reduce stress and make better choices.
8. It is vital to **identify youth at risk** and **provide support and resources** in the town, schools and community to serve their needs.

## **RECOMMENDATION #1**

### **Leadership and Organization**

- a) Designate senior leaders in both the Lexington Public Schools and town government to manage and oversee programs to reduce stress, build resiliency and provide services for youth at risk.**
- b) Establish collaborative working groups within the LPS system and between the schools and town government, as well as a town-wide working group comprised of community leaders to develop a coordinated approach.**

### **The Need for Strong, Visible Leadership**

Addressing this issue – reducing unhealthy student stress, building the resiliency of our youth, preventing risky behaviors and providing services to youth and families at risk – requires visible and effective leadership – in the school system, by town government and in the community.

While many acknowledge there is a serious problem in Lexington, there is no leader in the schools, no leader in town government and no effective organizational vehicle in the community for mobilizing its considerable resources.

A successful effort will take time – information needs to be provided, attitudes and behaviors changed, programs initiated - and this in turn requires ongoing leadership.

### **Recommendation #1 SCHOOLS**

In the schools, for the past several years, an explicit written priority for the District has been to “Increase student pro-social behavior and resiliency and reduce sources of unhealthy student stress”. Yet it is not clear all that is being done to meet this goal, what has been tried, what has worked, what has not worked, what has been learned, what is planned for the future. We know there are some exemplary efforts – notably by Jennifer Wolfrum and Julie Fenn primarily at the high school – and noteworthy programs in many of the elementary and middle schools– Open Circle, Responsive Classroom and PBIS. And activities are mentioned in individual school improvement plans.

But there is no clear, comprehensible picture of what is being accomplished throughout the District. While we have met with virtually all of the school principals, we are still not sure we have a complete view of what’s being done. Nor is there a clear vision or plan of where the District wants to go in meeting this priority.

This reflects the lack of organizational clarity on who is responsible, district wide, to the school committee, for the achievement of this goal. Who is leading this effort? Who is accountable? Who is ensuring an ongoing focus? Who is advocating and mobilizing resources district wide?

**Recommendation #1**

Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire or designate a <b>senior LPS administrator</b> with the organizational authority to mobilize initiatives in the classroom, guidance, social services and professional Learning in order to lead district-wide efforts to build youth resiliency, reduce youth stress, and provide services for youth at risk</li> <li>▪ Create a district-wide <b>Stress Reduction and Resiliency Working Group</b> chaired by the senior LPS administrator that includes administrators, principals, guidance, wellness and special education staff and classroom teachers, to develop new initiatives in the schools, share information among schools about their programs and assess the effectiveness of these efforts</li> <li>▪ Form an <b>on-siteworking group within each school</b>, chaired by the principal or assistant principal, to find ways to reduce stress, build resiliency and improve the school climate</li> </ul>

**Designate senior administrator to lead district effort.**

A senior administrator should be designated by the Superintendent to lead the district-wide effort to research, plan, execute, and assess initiatives throughout the district. The Superintendent should have this person report to the School Committee on a regular (perhaps quarterly) basis and ensure a systematic and comprehensive communications effort to inform the community about what is being done and planned. Our recommendations entail initiatives in the classroom, guidance, social services, and professional learning, as well as the faculty /staff wellness program and this person should have the necessary organizational “clout” to mobilize efforts through the LPS system. He/she should also be able to work closely with the Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources to make stress reduction and resiliency building a significant part of the LPS Employee Wellness Program. While this is of course the Superintendent’s prerogative, we strongly recommend that whoever he designates should be at the Assistant Superintendent level in the LPS Central Office. This leader may well require additional resource support.

**Create district-wide Stress Reduction and Resiliency Working Group.** This leader should chair a district-wide Stress Reduction and Resiliency Working Group, consisting of principals, administrators, guidance, wellness and special education staff. This Working Group, which could meet monthly, will share information and ideas among schools about what is being tried, what has been learned, what is being planned; identify new programs and initiatives that can be tried; and monitor the effectiveness of the various efforts. This group should consider utilizing a consultant experienced in implementing district-wide SEL programs. This organizational model is logical and based on what apparently has been a successful effort in Needham.

A particularly important aspect of the leader’s job is to ensure the effective communication of current and comprehensive information to the community on activities and plans with regard to meeting this priority. At this point, from looking at the LPS website, there is no way to know that increasing student pro-social behavior and resiliency and reducing sources of unhealthy student stress is a priority for the school system much less to learn what programs and activities are being undertaken to achieve this priority. There are many good efforts throughout the system – about which many Lexington parents and residents would be interested in learning -- but there is no straightforward way for them to do this. As an example of what could be done in Lexington, we recommend that the leader look at the portion

of the Needham Public School website concerning their Social and Emotional Learning program -- <http://www.needham.k12.ma.us/sel/index.htm>

**Form an on-site working group in each school.** Within each individual school, it would be beneficial to form an on-site working group in order to find ways to reduce stress, build resiliency and improve the school climate. These groups should be chaired by the principal or assistant principal and could include teachers, guidance, social work and/or health and wellness staff, classroom aides and other staff who work with students. The on-site groups would share ideas and implement changes to school programs and practices that best suit the needs of the school.

**Recommendation #1 TOWN GOVERNMENT**

**Hire a Director of Youth Services.** For Town Government, the hiring of a "Youth Services Coordinator" ten years ago marked the first time that the Town of Lexington funded a position devoted exclusively to working with youth. Adjacent communities, e.g., Arlington, Burlington, Bedford, have funded youth service positions providing prevention and intervention programs for at risk youth for more than 30 years. The budget and staffing for these critical services are three or four times larger than ours.

We believe the town administration needs to provide strong leadership to address the needs of our at-risk youth. Most important, the needs of youth must be viewed as a "community problem" - not a "school problem."

Therefore we recommend hiring or designating a single full-time position of leadership - a "Director of Youth Services" whose primary responsibility will be to lead a coordinated community effort to provide prevention and intervention services to Lexington youth and families.

**Create a Committee for Lexington Youth.** The Committee for Lexington Youth, co-chaired by the Director of Youth Services and the designated LPS lead administrator, will facilitate a comprehensive and coordinated effort by the town and the schools to promote and develop programs aimed at building resiliency, reducing stress and providing counseling and support services to youth at risk. Coordination between the schools and town in developing and delivering services for Lexington's youth

**Recommendation #1**

- | <b>Town Government</b>   |
|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire or designate a <b>Director of Youth Services</b> within the Department of Human Services responsible for overseeing and coordinating services to youth</li> <li>▪ Create a <b>Committee for Lexington Youth</b>, co-chaired by the Director of Youth Services and designated LPS lead administrator and comprised of youth, school, town, and community leaders and stakeholders, to promote and develop programs aimed at building resiliency, reducing stress and providing counseling and support services to youth at risk</li> <li>▪ Hire counseling staff or contract with a community counseling agency to assist the Director in providing <b>counseling and support services</b>, staffing the Youth Center and developing community education programming for youth and parents</li> </ul> |

is critical. This coordination will ensure that the programs in the town and schools complement and reinforce each other, are more cost-effective and not duplicated, and are comprehensive in scope. This Committee will also work with the Community Resources for Youth Working Group (see below) to mobilize the substantial community resources that are available to serve youth and ensure that they complement the services provided by the town and the schools. The two co-chairs, working together and with the support of the community, will be responsible for managing the Committee's overall effort.

**Provide counseling and support services for youth.** Free and accessible counseling and support services are needed for our youth. These services could be provided directly by the town or contracted for and provided by a youth service agency. In our interview with Charlotte Rodgers, Director of Human Services, a position created six years ago, she offered her belief that it may not be a good idea for a town employee to provide counseling services to youth at risk. We concur. In fact, some other communities with robust youth services do not provide direct services to youth through the town administration, but rather contract for those services with local youth agencies. This was the model for the town-supported non-profit youth service agency, RePlace, inc., for more than twenty years until 2003. We think this model should be re-considered.

We were struck by the fact that the social/emotional needs of our youth seem to be largely unpublicized by the town. For example, we could not find the YRBS information - specifically that over **15% of the students at LHS reported that they had seriously considered suicide last year and 55LHS students tried to kill themselves** - anywhere on the town website. This is in marked contrast to other communities where information about youth risky behavior is displayed prominently on the town and schools websites.

**Recommendation #1 COMMUNITY**

An important theme throughout all our recommendations is a call for robust involvement of key community groups and individuals to work closely with the schools and town in providing prevention and intervention youth services.

We recommend the immediate creation of a community leadership group called the "Community Resources for Youth Working Group". This group, operating under the town's Committee for Lexington Youth will closely coordinate its efforts with school and town programs to provide community-based services to both the general youth population and youth at risk. Members, both adult and youth, would be concerned individuals drawn from groups such as PTO, physicians, mental health providers, civic organizations, civic clubs, school-based clubs, faith-

**Recommendation #1**

<b>Community*</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Under the auspices of the Committee for Lexington Youth, recruit leaders from community groups, such as PTA/PTO's, religious and civic organizations, social service and healthcare providers, to form a <b>Community Resources for Youth Working Group</b> with the aim of mobilizing community resources to build resiliency, reduce stress, and provide community-based services for youth at risk</li> <li>▪ The Community Resources for Youth Working Group will develop and organize <b>community forums, education programs and town-wide events</b> aimed at promoting discussion and educating the community on social and emotional health, reducing stress and supporting youth at risk</li> <li>▪ The Community Resources for Youth Working Group will act as a <b>liaison</b> in order to coordinate the community education programs and forums for youth and families offered by various community groups</li> </ul>



based organizations, quasi-public and non-profit organizations (e.g., Cary Library, Munroe Center for the Arts), and local businesses.

Lexington is a town rich in human resources. People with renowned expertise, knowledge and skills live in Lexington and many devote countless hours already to our youth. We have found that many youth programs and services sponsored by community groups are not integrated into a overall community plan or coordinated with other services that would enhance their reach and effectiveness.

The Community Resources for Youth Working Group will provide leadership and direction from the community to identify needed youth services and coordinate community programs with school and town services.

**RECOMMENDATION #2**

**Help students and youth build resiliency, enhance social-emotional intelligence, manage stress, create balance in their lives, and improve overall wellness.**

**Recommendation #2 SCHOOLS**

**Recommendation #2**

Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expand, initiate and coordinate evidence-based <b>Social-Emotional Learning</b> programs with aim of ensuring consistency, continuity and alignment of SEL efforts K-12</li> <li>▪ Implement programs to teach children how to <b>manage emotions</b>, stress, anxiety, and build resiliency</li> <li>▪ Expand <b>Professional Learning</b> for teachers on how to create pro-social classrooms and help students manage stress and build resiliency</li> <li>▪ Evaluate effectiveness of current programs and consider <b>alternative approaches</b> for reducing stress and building resiliency at all levels, e.g. morning meeting time, intervention/exploratory blocks, LHS extended homerooms</li> <li>▪ Initiate pilot programs and expand existing initiatives to integrate <b>mindfulness</b>-based stress reduction practices into all schools</li> <li>▪ Offer and expand <b>wellness program for teachers and staff</b> to reduce and manage their own stress</li> <li>▪ Reinstate <b>health education</b> in elementary schools and increase frequency of health/ wellness programs in middle and high school</li> <li>▪ Develop and encourage ways to foster personal connections and <b>mentorship</b> opportunities between teachers/staff and individual students</li> <li>▪ Enable the <b>peer leadership program</b> to expand by providing additional staff resources</li> <li>▪ Increase number and access to <b>yoga classes</b> in middle and high school</li> </ul>

**Continuity and alignment of Social-Emotional Learning Programs.** There has been much work done in the schools to help students and youth to build resiliency, enhance social-emotional intelligence, manage stress, create balance in their lives, and improve overall wellness. Our committee's major recommendation is to expand current social and emotional learning (SEL) opportunities within the schools.

SEL is the process through which children and adults acquire and effectively apply the knowledge, attitudes and skills necessary to understand and manage emotions, set and achieve positive goals, feel and show empathy for others, establish and maintain positive relationships, and make responsible decisions. Social and emotional skills are critical to being a good student, citizen and worker; and many risky behaviors (e.g., drug use, violence, bullying and dropping out) can be prevented or reduced when multi-year, integrated efforts are used to develop students' social and emotional skills. Effective SEL programming begins in preschool and continues through high school.

While the schools provide many SEL opportunities for students, there is the need to ensure consistency across grade levels and schools, and continuity from one grade level to the next, from Kindergarten through Grade 12. Some SEL programs are provided by classroom teachers, while others are provided by the Health and Wellness and Guidance departments

often in conjunction with teachers and other educators.

At the elementary level, programming includes Open Circle, Mind-Up, Superflex and Zones of Regulation. At the middle school level, programming includes cyber-citizenship and anti-bullying curriculum provided by the Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center, Rachel's Challenge, and other locally developed curricula. At the middle and high school, SEL curriculum is incorporated into health classes.

Our recommendation is to expand these SEL programs and efforts in a way that ensures consistency of their implementation across all schools in a given level, and that provides continuity and alignment of SEL efforts from one level to the next to create an integrated K-12 program.

**Professional Learning for SEL.** Teachers and support staff should have additional professional learning opportunities and supports so they can help students to learn and grow in SEL areas and effectively employ strategies they have learned.

**Evaluate current programs and consider alternative approaches.** There is the need to evaluate the current SEL programming and determine whether there should be any changes or additions. SEL requires adequate time allocation, personnel and resources. Often time on learning academic tasks leaves little consistent time for SEL. Additional personnel in the form of guidance counselors and health educators may also be necessary to provide more SEL. At the elementary level in particular, the number of counselors per student is very low, which results in counselor time being pulled to reactive responses with little time left for preventive SEL.

**Mindfulness-based stress reduction techniques.** Mindfulness practice is a proven and effective way to reduce stress and enhance overall emotional health. There are teachers who are already integrating mindfulness into their classrooms. We should build on these initiatives to expand mindfulness practice into all of the LPS classrooms to help both teachers and students. More pilots should be initiated. One idea that should be tried is a "mindfulness minute" at the beginning of each class in middle and high school. For a minute, the teacher and the students will do a breathing exercise or some other technique aimed at relaxing them so that they are better able to engage in learning and better able to teach more effectively.

**Reinstate and increase frequency of health education.** Health education is not offered in the elementary schools, creating another disconnect between SEL opportunities at one level versus the next. Allocation of counselors and health educators at the middle and high school levels and student schedules do not allow for adequate time for SEL. We recommend that the LPS consider reinstating health education in the elementary schools and increase the frequency of health education classes in the middle and high schools.

**Wellness programs for staff.** Expanded wellness opportunities for educators will help adults to manage their own stress and model this behavior for students.

**Personal connection to an adult, mentorship opportunities.** Developing a personal connection with an adult in their school can make an important difference in students' lives. When students believe that adults in the school care about their learning and about them as individuals, they feel more connected

to the school which can contribute toward reducing the likelihood of engaging in risky behaviors and increasing the likelihood of academic success. If a student has a trusted adult at school, he or she has someone to go to when emotional, social, academic, or stress-related difficulties arise.

**Recommendation #2 TOWN GOVERNMENT**

**Establish a Youth Center.** Central to this recommendation is a town-supported Youth Center: a place for teens to go and "just be" - not a place for academic or extracurricular achievement or recreation - but a place of acceptance, comfort, social connection and emotional support.

The need for a youth operated youth center has long been identified by many community groups and in a survey of the young people themselves. A Youth Center can be an important tool in reaching isolated, disconnected at risk youth who are having difficulties connecting in traditional ways in school and in the community.

The proven, most effective model is one of empowerment - directly involving young people who might otherwise feel powerless and hopeless - in the operation of the youth center. In essence the young people themselves must feel ownership and take responsibility for its success. (Note that this was recommended in April 2014 by the Assistant Director of Youth and Family Services, Emily Lavine, and Matt Ryan, Youth Program Coordinator, Lexington Human Services Department.)

To initiate the program we recommend that a working group of youth and adults be created to form the foundation of a Youth Center Board. This group, under the direction of the Director of Youth Services, should represent various segments of the youth adult community including disengaged youth who are less connected to traditional institutions and services. We suggest that this working group visit youth centers in other communities and consult with people with expertise in starting and operating youth centers.

Other specific recommendations for the town government call for: (1) free or low-cost access to stress relieving activities, such as yoga, recreation, art, through the Town, the Community Center, the Youth Center and other sites; (2) online listings of both town-sponsored and outside resources in the community for stress management, health and wellness; and (3) work with community and business leaders to engage youth in community service programs including interning and mentoring programs.

**Recommendation #2**

<b>Town Government</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a <b>Youth Center</b> (possibly at the Lexington Community Center) operated by youth themselves and a Youth Center Board of adults and youth to provide administration and support for the Youth Center</li> <li>▪ Provide free or low-cost access to <b>stress relieving activities</b>, such as yoga, recreation, art, through the Town, the Community Center, the Youth Center and other sites</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>online listings</b> of both town-sponsored and outside resources in the community for stress management, health and wellness</li> <li>▪ Work with community and business leaders to engage youth in <b>community service programs</b> including interning and mentoring programs</li> </ul>

## Recommendation #2 COMMUNITY

**The role of parents and community.** A strong family-school-community connection has proven to improve academic and social outcomes for students. Families and schools are woven into the broader community and both influence, and are influenced by the culture of the community at large.

It is important that community entities (through representatives) be invited to participate in efforts *to listen* to the community (e.g. any town-wide forums) and *to create* effective family school-community partnerships that encourage community buy-in.

Those relationships can be leveraged for the benefit of students as comprehensive wraparound community services are developed to address the academic/health/social needs of our children. Community resources can offer important opportunities for social/emotional learning outside the context of school. Already many of the most important town-wide cohesion building events in Lexington are sponsored by organizations outside the schools. Some of these include the Fourth of July Carnival, Lexington Lions Club, Halloween Trick or Treating, and Lexington Retailers Association & LexFUN! In addition many organizations support student/family activities and fund student scholarships.

### **Organize community education forums for parents and youth.**

The Committee recommends that the Community Resources for Youth Working Group work with local business and community groups to organize community education forums for parents and youth on topics such as mindfulness-based stress reduction approaches, stress-relief techniques and activities, how to balance academic achievement and emotional well-being, and improving work-family balance.

**Develop a parent's guide to social-emotional learning.** Representatives from the Community Resources for Youth Working Group could work with the schools to develop a Parent's Guide to Social-Emotional Learning. This would help to educate parents on what is being done in schools so that parents can complement social-emotional learning practices from school with their children at home, using common language, lessons and values.

## Recommendation #2

### Community

- Organize **community forums and education programs** coordinated by the Community Resources for Youth on topics such as:
  - social-emotional learning and building resiliency
  - mindfulness-based stress reduction approaches
  - stress-relief techniques & activities
  - role of sleep in learning & mood regulation, good sleep hygiene to improve well-being.
  - how to balance academic achievement and emotional well-being.
  - improving work-family balance
- Work with local business and community groups to offer **wellness programs** for parents and youth
- Work with town youth services to establish community **peer leadership and peer mentor programs** for teens that complement programs serving students in school
- Develop a **parent's guide to Social-Emotional Learning** and educate parents on ways to complement social-emotional learning practices from school with their children at home
- Support **community events** sponsored by the town, businesses and community organizations that promote social connection, family-centered fun, relaxation and stress-relief, e.g. Discovery Day

**Establish community-based peer leadership and mentoring programs.** Finally, the Committee recommends that the community work with town youth services, through the human services department or a contracted non-profit, to establish community-based peer leadership and mentoring programs to complement those in the schools.

**Support community events.** In order to reduce stress and bring the everyone together, we recommend that the community support activities sponsored by the town, businesses and community organizations that promote social connection, family-centered fun, relaxation and stress-relief, e.g. Discovery Day.

### RECOMMENDATION #3

**Examine ways to reduce sources of *unnecessary and unhealthy* stress for students and youth, including academic, extracurricular, social, peer, family, societal or internal pressures.**

#### Recommendation #3 SCHOOLS

#### Recommendation #3

Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish <b>best practices for homework</b> through teacher groups and PLCs, and provide a Professional Learning course for teachers on homework best practices</li> <li>▪ Revise district and school <b>policies</b> and guidelines <b>for student workload</b>, e.g. recommended homework/workload, vacation policies, respites from homework, scheduling of multiple tests/projects</li> <li>▪ Examine and consider altering <b>LHS course offerings, levels and sequences</b> in specific areas where alternative options would provide more appropriate choices for students, e.g. adding honors levels where needed, Learningal readiness for Grade 10 AP courses, science course preparation</li> <li>▪ Offer greater <b>choice and flexibility of course options</b> in middle and high school so students can closely align classes to their ability levels and interests, e.g. electives that appeal to student interests, alternatives for required classes</li> <li>▪ Define consistent and clear <b>recommendation procedures for courses</b> in middle and high school to ensure proper placement</li> <li>▪ Examine ways the schools can assist, inform and educate students and families in making <b>balanced choices for course selection</b>; provide information on course expectations and workload to students</li> <li>▪ Teach <b>time management and executive functioning skills</b> to students in middle and high school</li> <li>▪ Explore and evaluate implementing a <b>later start time for LHS</b></li> </ul>

**Homework best practices.** Homework is an emotionally laden topic – for both students and parents. According to the 2013 Youth Risky Behavior Survey, 96% of LHS students reported being under stress because of homework.

It's not just about the volume. Homework can be a source of unnecessary stress because students do not understand the homework assignment (and worry about it); they think that they need to get it all right in order to get a good grade (even though they do not understand it); if they are struggling with it, they don't know how much time they are expected to spend on it (instead of other work, sleep, family time); or they do not understand its educational purpose. Recently published research concerning students in affluent high performing high schools like Lexington High School showed that too much homework is associated with greater stress, health problems such as exhaustion, sleep deprivation, weight loss and stomach problems and less time for friends, family and extracurricular pursuits ("Nonacademic Effects of Homework in Privileged, High Performing High Schools, *Journal of Experimental Education* 2013.81:490-510).

While we do not presume to tell teachers how they should use homework in teaching their students, we strongly believe that teachers must find the time to identify best practices, discuss them among themselves (e.g. in a Professional Learning

Community) and then determine what changes should be tried, perhaps on a pilot basis. They should also be provided with professional learning opportunities to learn homework best practices.

Some examples of best practices are:

- (1) state the purpose of the homework on the assignment (e.g. practice, check for understanding, reflect on discussion in class or pre-learn, such as outlining a chapter before discussion)
- (2) state the expected amount of time to complete/the maximum time to spend on the assignment)
- (3) take time in class to discuss the homework assignment and possibly give students a few minutes to begin the assignment – to make sure they understand it
- (4) provide feedback rather than a grade, with the goal of improving learning, promoting student ownership of the learning and encouraging self-assessment

As a vehicle to facilitate their discussions, we would encourage the teachers to read a paper prepared by Challenge Success entitled “Changing the Conversation about Homework from Quantity and Achievement to Quality and Engagement.”

<http://www.challengesuccess.org/portals/0/docs/ChallengeSuccess-Homework-WhitePaper.pdf> An excellent and concise book is *Rethinking Homework* by Cathy Vatterot, an associate professor of education at the University of Missouri and a former teacher and principal. For the sake of their students, they should not ignore this subject.

As part of its 2014-2015 School Improvement Plan, LHS will be having faculty discussion on homework practices to evaluate the use of homework, identify strategies, and make suggestions for possible change. We commend the effort LHS is making to examine and discuss homework within the teaching staff.

The School Committee should budget sufficient funds to enable teachers to examine best practices and institute pilot programs. The district-wide homework policy, last revised in 1989, is out-dated and needs to be revised. The current time guidelines for elementary, middle and high school homework are not an accurate reflection of actual practice and should be eliminated or revised. New policies and guidelines are needed most at middle and high school because students have work assigned by multiple teachers.

Parents also need to re-examine their assumptions about homework. Many assume that the more time students spend on homework, the higher their grades and test scores tend to be. Research does not support this assumption and, in fact, too much time spent on homework can lead to lower test scores because of health problems such as stress, exhaustion and headaches. The point is that, for the emotional health of their children, parents should examine their assumptions and examine the research.

*“There is simply an overload of testing... It has reached the point that there is never a day that testing isn’t happening at school. This creates stress in students and parents and is a never-ending source of stress for teachers. And a stressed teacher creates stress in the classroom. Stressed students do poorly on tests and then even more testing is required. It is a vicious circle.”*

*~ LPS Principal*



**Revise workload policies and practices.** Much of the academic stress that students experience is related to the workload, especially at the high school and to some extent in middle school. Students feel that the total amount of the work required can be overwhelming and relentless, particularly if they are taking challenging courses. Some of the sources of stress regarding workload are that:

- (1) the sum total of work from multiple courses can become overwhelming and unmanageable;
- (2) the workload is continuous with little or no respite; and
- (3) workload stress is exacerbated when a student has simultaneous or overlapping major assignments, tests or projects

These concerns need to be addressed through internal review of school policies and practices, and cooperative faculty discussions. In addition to identifying best practices with regard to homework, we recommend the following issues be addressed in terms of workload stress:

1. *Overall workload that is overwhelming or unmanageable*

- Evaluate assignments on their necessity, purpose and relevance for learning. Eliminate unnecessary and repetitive work when possible. Establish consensus on a suitable amount of work at each course level.
- Consider innovative approaches to reduce excess work, e.g. once a student reaches understanding of a concept, allow him/her to discontinue repetitive work.
- Provide teachers with a better understanding of the workload from the student's perspective, e.g. "a day in the life of an LHS student."
- Permit more "free passes" for late work submission. Consider giving reduced rather than zero credit for late work.
- Extend time allowed for make-up work when a student is absent.

*"I wish my teachers had better understood how hard the students were working and how late they stay up. I wish that instead of telling the kid sleeping on the desk 'to sit up and pay attention', they gave us a night off from homework.*

*~ LHS student*

2. *Continuous workload with little or no respite*

- Ensure regular enforcement of no homework over vacations and holidays. Assignments/projects due shortly after a vacation break should not require extensive work over the break.
- Create occasional respites from work, such as occasional homework-free weekends or homework-free days every quarter.
- Reassess the quantity and nature of summer assignments. Consider eliminating or minimizing written assignments for AP courses in summer.

3. *Simultaneous or overlapping assignments, tests or projects*

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the "flexible" policy for multiple exams and projects on the same day. This puts the onus on students to come forward. Many students are either

reluctant to approach a teacher or don't bother because it merely puts off the required work and doesn't always ease their situation.

- Seek alternative solutions to this problem, including scheduling systems to avoid major tests on same day, and coordinating the due dates for long-range projects.

*“The quarter system works in such a way that teachers usually have their “big assignments” due around the same time. On any given ‘last Friday of the semester’ a student will likely have some combination of essays, projects, and tests. And while most teachers are usually reasonable, there is a stigma against asking for extensions...It quickly becomes overwhelming.”*

*~ LHS student*

It should be emphasized that reducing the pressures related to workload does not mean compromising academic standards. In fact, the intensity of the workload may actually contribute toward less effective learning on the part of students. We urge that teachers maintain the focus on purposeful and essential coursework while

**LHS Course Offerings, Levels and Sequencing.** We recommend that the administration examine and consider altering LHS course offerings, levels and sequences in specific areas where alternative options would provide more appropriate choices for students. When course choices lead students to stretch too far beyond their capabilities, they can experience unnecessary and unhealthy stress. The most often-cited area where some students find themselves overextended and unduly stressed is the gap between Level 1 (College Preparatory) and Advanced Placement (AP) courses in sophomore and junior years.

Adding honors level courses in Grades 10 and 11. The jump from Level 1 to AP is most problematic in Grade 10, for World History and Biology. Sophomore students are young and developmentally less well-prepared to handle the rigor of a college level course and the independent work habits expected for AP classes. AP World History continues on from freshman history, but with a faster, higher-level, more conceptual approach. AP Biology covers an entirely new scientific subject for which students have not had previous preparation. Many sophomores find it very challenging to jump from 9<sup>th</sup> grade Earth Science to college level biology. Currently nearly one third of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are enrolled in AP Biology sections. While some are capable of thriving in AP Biology, the high enrollment suggests that many of those students might be served better with an honors level class. An honors course would also serve Level 1 students who would like a more challenging curriculum but are afraid to take the AP class.

Another problem is that some students take both AP World History and AP Biology because they want the highest level courses possible, but then find the workload overwhelming and very stressful. Having an honors level in either history or science in Grade 10 could alleviate this problem by allowing students to take one AP and one honors class.

Although Grade 11 students are more developmentally capable, they still are faced with course choices that can lead to stressful workloads. At this stage, larger numbers of students elect to take both AP U.S. History and AP Chemistry, so having the option to take one at the honors level would be helpful. Currently, nearly half of the juniors are enrolled in AP Chemistry, an unreasonably high percentage.

The burgeoning enrollment in both AP Chemistry and AP Biology suggests that an honors level is called for. It indicates that students are choosing AP because it is the only higher-level option. An honors course could be a more appropriate choice for many students and would help distribute students into more suitable levels.

*“Junior year for your typical LHS honors student is a sick joke. I pulled my share of all nighters and had a healthy number of breakdowns. It was weird being on my computer at three in the morning and seeing that almost everyone from my AP US history class was also on-line. Most of my friends went, at least, a little crazy. A few became minorly depressed.*

*~ LHS graduate*

We strongly urge that the administration and teaching staff examine the problem and consider the best alternative options for offering appropriate course levels to students. Adding honors levels might not be the best option in all cases, but the school should explore suitable ways to alter course offerings to help alleviate the problem. While teacher load, extra class preparations and staffing are considerations, the schools must make the best interest of students a priority if they are serious about addressing student stress. It does not serve students or teachers well to have students who are academically overextended in their classes or are experiencing excessive stress.

**Greater choice and flexibility of course options.** The previous section addressed a specific area where a gap in levels for certain course options puts some students at LHS in a more stressful situation. There is another broader kind of change in course offerings that could help reduce stress for students at all ability levels at the middle schools and high school. When students can choose courses that closely align to their abilities and their interests, they can manage better, will be more engaged, and will feel less stress.

We encourage the middle schools and high school to look for opportunities to offer greater choice and flexibility of course options. The current course choices and electives for seniors at LHS are a good example. Rather than taking a general, standard class in English and social studies, seniors are allowed to choose electives that align with their interests. They are satisfying cluster requirements but in a way that is closer to their own interests and passions.

Students are less likely to find it stressful when classes match, not only their abilities, but also their interests. So, for example, students who might struggle in a standard science course like physics, but are interested in human anatomy or engineering or the environment, could find it more interesting and less stressful to have alternate options. More flexible options in certain subject areas could serve students at all ability levels.

**Well-defined recommendation procedures for course placement.** During course selection time, a student's current teacher in a given subject makes the recommendation for the student's placement into the course level in that subject area for the next year. Since teachers can base the

recommendation on any criteria they choose to consider and are not required to document their recommendation procedures, the recommendations may appear to be rather subjective.

We recommend that the high school and middle schools define consistent and clear recommendation procedures for courses to ensure proper placement of students. Well-defined criteria would aid teachers in making their recommendations and ensure that the process is consistent across all situations. Schools could design and adopt a simple system where teachers assess students on categories of factors that contribute to their recommendation. Examples of categories might include grades, homework and tests, class participation, student's work habits, capacity for independent learning, student's motivation, improvement over time, comprehension of the material, or other factors. This would help in placing students in more appropriate levels and acknowledge the fact a variety of factors, not just grades, contribute toward a student's ability to succeed in a given class. It does not preclude teachers from having conversations with students about their placement and teachers can even factor in a student's motivation in their assessment.

The implementation of consistent and clear recommendation procedures would help to reduce stress for students, teachers and parents. Most importantly, this would help reduce stress by ensuring that students are placed into appropriate course levels. By considering multiple factors, it becomes less likely for a student to be placed into a class where the independent work habits or other non-academic requirements needed cause undue stress on the student. It would be less stressful for teachers because their incoming classes would be more likely to receive students who have not only the academic ability, but also the work habits and study skills necessary to succeed.

A well-defined process can help reduce stress and save valuable time for teachers, administrators and guidance personnel because it may help reduce the number of appeals and provide concrete justification for placements when appeals do occur. The detailed assessments done by teachers need not be made public, but could be useful in appeals cases. Establishing a consistent system for teacher recommendations will reduce stress and frustration for students and parents because the recommendation procedures would become more transparent and holistic.

**Making balanced choices for course selection.** The high school and middle schools should explore ways to assist, inform and educate students and families in making balanced and appropriate choices for course selection. Making informed, well-considered course choices is the best way to keep students from selecting a course load that is too difficult or stressful. Some students opt to take multiple AP courses, others take an occasional AP/honors, and some take mainly Level 1 or 2 courses.

Although it has been suggested that LHS limit the total number of AP courses a student can take as a means of reducing stress, we are not recommending it as a policy change. There is no one-size-fits-all number. Rather, students should make informed decisions that are suitable to their needs and ability. In the end, students are responsible for making their own choices, based on teacher recommendations. However, schools can assist them and their families in the process.

The schools should provide more clear and consistent information about the course expectations and workload for all courses in advance, during course selection time. Teachers often have this information presented in a syllabus given to enrolled students when they begin the semester. It's too late at that point for students to be learning about what is expected of them. It would be more useful to have access to the information when they are deciding to register for a class. On the department website,

there could be either a sample syllabus or a detailed description of the course expectations and the approximate weekly or daily workload for each course level in a given subject.

Schools can play a role in educating students and families about how to select courses that are appropriate and balanced. Guidance and messages to parents and students can be communicated through the school website and at Curriculum Night. The schools could consider sending home Time Planning sheets where students list all the hours needed for their anticipated weekly course workload, extracurricular activities, non-school activities, outside commitments, sports, jobs, social and family time, and relaxation/down time. If students add up all of their time commitments in advance, they may notice conflicts and become more cognizant of potential overload. Students and families can then make more realistic decisions about the total commitments undertaken by the student.

During course selection, guidance counselors should play an active role in helping students create reasonable and balanced course choices. Counselors should especially reach out to students who register for a particularly demand course load.

**Consider later start time for LHS.** Research studies show that adolescents who don't get enough sleep often suffer physical and mental health problems, an increased risk of automobile accidents and a decline in academic performance. The biological rhythms that regulate adolescent sleep cycles cause teens to tend to stay up late, yet they must wake up early for school. As a result, many teens are chronically sleep-deprived which is both stressful and unhealthy.

In August 2014, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) issued a policy statement recommending that high schools and middle schools delay the start of classes until 8:30am or later. The AAP policy statement notes that "delaying school start times is an effective countermeasure to chronic sleep loss and has a wide range of potential benefits to students with regard to physical and mental health, safety, and academic achievement." (AAP Policy Statement on School Start Times for Adolescents, 2014)

*"...stress can still damage, if not ruin, a high school experience. Indeed, my own junior year was characterized by stress. I felt lucky if I got four hours sleep, and every Thursday at 1 AM was "breakdown night."*

*~ LHS student*

If there is sufficient interest from the school system or the community, we recommend that the LPS look into the possibility of changing to a later start time for LHS in order to determine if it is desirable and workable for the system. It would definitely need further investigation. Changing the start time for the high school is a complex decision, involving schedules for all LPS schools, school buses, and extracurricular activities including sports, as well as the operations of LHS itself. Therefore, if the school system wishes to investigate a later start time, we suggest the formation of a Start Time Task Force to evaluate the benefits and drawbacks and to make proposed recommendations to the system.

A number of school systems across the country have moved toward later start times for high school and/or middle school. Several towns in Massachusetts, including Duxbury and Sharon, have made the shift. If Lexington is interested in the possibility, we suggest that the task force investigate and talk with these school systems to better understand the implications of making such a change

### Recommendation #3 TOWN GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

Students and their parents need more information about how to reduce the unnecessary stress in their lives outside of school and how to gain more resiliency and put more balance into their lives. The Committee on Lexington Youth -- where the town, schools and community can work effectively together -- should facilitate the provision of this information.

The sources of this unnecessary stress that can be addressed include: over-scheduling and the resultant lack of downtime to play or be with family and friends; cyber-bullying; excessive peer pressure and competition; inaccurate/incomplete information about whether it is really important or necessary to attend a highly selective college/university in order to pursue a successful career (it isn't) -- and how to locate colleges/university that provide excellent educations (but are not necessarily showcased by US News and World Report) and provide the best fit with individual students' aspirations and passions.

This information can be provided in several ways. The Committee on Lexington Youth should establish a website with information for adults and youth about the sources of stress, programs/activities in Lexington or nearby which they can use, and links to websites and other sources of information about what they can do. Social media -- like FaceBook -- should also be used to provide information. The Project Resilience FaceBook page in Ridgefield CT -- <https://www.facebook.com/ProjectResilience/> -- is a good model of the use of social media.

#### Recommendation #3

##### Town Government

- Create a comprehensive town **website for youth services** that includes information and resources for reducing stress and building resiliency
- Work with community groups to institute **town-wide campaigns**, such as managing digital media exposure ("unplugged week"), good sleep hygiene, meeting-free and homework-free days, to reduce stress and promote in-person, social interaction
- Offer **information on health and wellness** topics, e.g. alcohol and other drugs, sleep, social media, etc. through the website, social media and written material.
- Partner with schools to coordinate **community-wide programs** on bullying, dating violence, Internet safety, alcohol and other drug use

This information can be aimed specifically at parents, students or families. For example, there could be a series of parent education programs on topics such as the effects of overscheduling and sleep deprivation, a series of teen education programs dealing with cyberbullying and lack of sleep, and family programs on these topics as well as the college application process and how to balance academics and emotional well-being. These programs should also facilitate discussions among parents, students and families.

There should also be community forums on what the community can do collectively to minimize unnecessary stress and build resiliency.

### Recommendation #3

Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organize <b>community forums and education programs</b>, coordinated by the Committee Resources for Youth, on sources of stress that can be minimized or avoided. Possible topics include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peer pressures/competition</li> <li>• cyber-bullying</li> <li>• social media</li> <li>• over-scheduling</li> <li>• sleep deprivation</li> <li>• how to balance academics, activities, social life, family life</li> <li>• college application process and its role in driving student stress</li> <li>• how early student stress starts and how to prevent it</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Organize <b>parent-teen discussion</b> events to talk about sources of stress and what can be done to reduce stress in students' lives</li> <li>▪ Hold <b>peer discussion groups</b> with students in the Youth Center, religious youth groups, and other community youth groups to talk about their own sources of stress and how to reduce stress in their lives</li> <li>▪ Expand efforts to reduce teen engagement in <b>unhealthy stress coping strategies</b> such as caffeine, alcohol, marijuana and other drug use</li> <li>▪ Support <b>community activities</b> and events aimed at reducing stress, e.g. unplugged week, meeting-free/homework-free days</li> </ul>

**RECOMMENDATION #4**

**Identify youth at risk, provide support services, and improve coordination of services and referrals between schools, town, and community.**

**Recommendation #4 SCHOOLS**

**Recommendation #4**

<b>Schools</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Enhance <b>identification and support services</b> for students with emotional and mental health concerns (anxiety, stress, depression, psychological issues) at all grade levels</li> <li>▪ Hire <b>additional guidance counselors or social workers</b> in elementary schools to provide a balance of preventive and responsive services</li> <li>▪ Create additional <b>preventive support programs</b> in middle schools and at LHS for students with anxiety, stress-related psychological, social-emotional or mental health issues (apart from TLP, Alpha, and SPED). This may help offload cases that end up in SPED</li> <li>▪ Ensure <b>continuity</b> of support services as students transition in the system from one school level to the next</li> <li>▪ Develop <b>Professional Learning</b> programs and delineate protocols for identifying students who exhibit signs of stress, anxiety, depression, suicidal thoughts, risky behavior</li> <li>▪ Partner with the Town and community providers to identify resources for school personnel to make <b>referrals</b> and do follow-up coordination</li> <li>▪ Put <b>information stickers</b> on bathroom doors about symptoms of depression and anxiety; suggest talking to doctor, guidance counselor or help line for advice</li> </ul>

**Identification and support services for students at risk.** The schools already have highly trained staff and protocols and procedures for identifying students at risk. However, as the numbers of students experiencing stress-related problems increases, we suggest that LPS review and enhance its procedures and programming in this area. At the middle and high school level, picking up on students experiencing excess stress, anxiety, depression or self-harming behavior is especially difficult. The administration should work with school staff to propose ways of improving their ability to identify students at risk at all grade levels.

**Additional guidance counselors or social workers at elementary level.** Although there are some social workers at the middle and high school levels, there are no social workers currently at the elementary level to help identify and provide support to students with intensive needs other than those who attend Special Education programs. Although there are highly trained professionals within the schools, their numbers are not adequate for the work to be done in this area. We strongly recommend that the LPS hire social workers or additional guidance counselors to adequately cover the population at all elementary schools.

**Preventive and support programs in middle and high school.** The high school and middle schools have existing programs in place to serve specific groups of



students in need, such as the Therapeutic Learning Program (TLP), Alpha Program, and Special Education (SPED) services for students with an individualized education plan. There are a large number of students who are experiencing high levels of stress-related issues, anxiety, severe depression, psychological issues or self-harming behavior but who do not qualify for these programs. These students would benefit from the kinds of support services offered by the programs, such as help with transitioning back in when school has been missed, a safe haven for students with school avoidance, help in keeping up with missed work, and social work and counseling support.

We recommend that LPS explore the possibility of creating additional support programs to serve these students. In many cases, the only current avenue for getting services for individual students is to request services through SPED. There may be students who need help but may not really belong in SPED, yet their families apply because it is the only option. It is possible that if the schools created additional programs to serve these students, it would off-load some cases that end up in SPED and would ultimately save money for the LPS.

**Ensure continuity from one level to the next.** As students transition from elementary to middle to high school, guidance and social work staff need to ensure continuity of services for these students. There should be mechanisms for staff to communicate with receiving staff at the next school. Improved data systems could help with tracking students as they go through the system.

**Professional Learning on identifying students at risk.** There is also a recognized need to provide professional learning for classroom teachers and other non-clinically trained staff to learn how to identify students at risk and the skills for making an appropriate referral to a trained professional within the school. Furthermore, there should be similar programming for students, so they can recognize warning signs of potential risk and strategies for connecting themselves or others to appropriate professionals so help can be obtained.

*“If teachers had time to talk, laugh and relate with their students, they would know who is under stress, but they have no time for this.”*

*~ LPS Administrator*

**Referrals and partnership with Town and Community resources.** It is imperative that there are mechanisms for identifying youth at risk, providing support services, and improving coordination of services and referrals between schools, town, and community. School staff need a point person in the town government, ideally a Director of Youth Services, who will be a resource for referrals to services and who will coordinate follow-up with school personnel.

## Recommendation #4 TOWN GOVERNMENT AND COMMUNITY

The Town Government and Community need to take a more active leadership role in identifying youth at risk and providing prevention and intervention services directly to them. In addition town and community groups need to strengthen and expand efforts by the Youth Services Council and the Human Services Department to coordinate youth services in the town and work directly with the schools.

The Committee was struck by how the Lexington Public Schools take on so much of the responsibility for identifying and providing services to youth at risk. For example, an extremely valuable tool in identifying numbers and the extent of the problem facing our young people, the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS), is viewed by most in the community as a *school* survey.

The results of YRBS are written up and shared by the authors and school personnel with the LPS solely responsible for publishing the results (the school website is apparently the only place). It follows that the Schools that are then viewed as having the main responsibility to implement services and programs in response to the needs uncovered by the YRBS. Other communities view the implementation of the YRBS, and the concerns raised by the results, as a *community* issue, publicizing the full survey results prominently on the Town website, holding town forums to discuss the issues and carry forward a community response.

### Comparison to Other Communities

Members of the Ad Hoc Committee made site visits to three other nearby towns, Needham, Newton, and Bedford to compare how those community identify and respond to needs of youth at risk. All three communities place a high priority on funding and sustaining prevention and intervention services to youth. In all three of these communities town funded youth services are:

### Recommendation #4

#### Town Government

- Plan and implement a community-wide **youth suicide prevention program** developed by a task force of adults and youth representing the schools and community
- Develop and implement a town **protocol for suicide prevention** in response to a youth suicide
- Provide free, accessible individual and family **counseling and support services** to youth and families through a contracted community counseling agency or town youth services staff
- Provide counseling and support **groups for at-risk youth** involved in alcohol and other drug abuse, harassment, bullying, dating violence; referred by police, schools, clergy and others
- Provide **outreach programs** to at-risk youth, including peer leadership programs at the Youth Center, designed to reach out to at-risk youth and enhance self-esteem
- Designate a town coordinator or a contracted community youth counseling agency to be the community resource for school personnel to make **referrals** for at-risk students
- Provide an **online directory** of free and low cost mental health services and private mental health providers in the community
- Develop programs through a **youth-run website and social media** to reach out to at risk and disconnected youth and to provide information to prevent suicide, dating violence, harassment, etc.
- Work with the schools and community to provide **prevention programs**, such as the Child Assault Prevention Program (CAPP), **to younger children and parents**

- Much more robust than those in Lexington
- Completely integrated with the schools and community agencies
- Accessible and available at low cost or free to youth at risk
- Provided directly by the town or by a contacted mental health agency

For comparison with one town we selected Needham because it is similar in size, youth population and median income to Lexington. Here are the numbers and a brief summary of Needham Youth Services:

<b>Needham Youth Services</b>		
	Needham	Lexington
Total population	28,886	31,394
Youth Population (under 18)	28.2% (8145)	26.1% (8194)
Median Household Income	\$125,170	\$138,095
Persons below poverty level	4.2% (1213)	4.0% (1255)

**Staffing**  
Four full-time staff - the Director, two social workers, one administrative assistant and NYS is hiring additional new 3/5 position asked for last year. In addition there is one social worker intern, several volunteers and summer staff of college age students to help, such as child-care for during single parent groups.

**Funding**  
Needham Youth Services are totally town and community funded. The Town budget for FY'15 is \$278,000 with \$273,000 going to salaries. An additional \$15,000/year raised through events and lots of in-kind contributions.

**Cost to clients**  
There are no fees for service (except for one substance abuse group but the \$45 charge is often waived). NYS does not bill insurance.

**Sources of Referrals**  
NYS receives most of its referrals from schools (58%), parents (29%), and community sources. See the 2013 annual report for statistics for numbers, programs and types of problems.

**Services and Programs**  
Needham offers a very comprehensive website at <http://www.needhamma.gov/>. A visit to their Youth Services website speaks volumes. The site is full of detailed information about all Needham's town-supported youth services including parent resources and an annual report for 2013 showing numbers of clinical hours and program highlights.

### **Suicide Prevention - The Highest Priority**

Needham was devastated several years ago by a series of suicides at the high school in a short period. The response by the town government and the community was extraordinary. The town government and community created the Needham Coalition for Suicide Prevention to work with the schools to develop one of the most comprehensive suicide prevention initiatives in the state. This program is aimed not just at preventing teen suicides but preventing suicides among all age groups. Currently the

Youth Services Director provides regular QPR (CPR for suicide prevention) training to community groups. In Needham the intra-structure existed to respond quickly to prevent other tragedies.

The YRBS numbers at LHS (1700 students) are worth repeating. Last year

- 247 students **seriously** considered suicide
- 137 students made a plan
- 55 students attempted suicide

We believe that our greatest, immediate need is for suicide prevention. Lexington Youth and Family Services, the Lexington Board of Health and the Human Services Department have secured small CHNA grants to begin to address this need. At this time, however, the town and community have no suicide prevention programs for hundreds of Lexington youth who are at risk.

As we write this report, many teens and parents are reacting with sadness and pain to the suicide of a 2013 LHS graduate. He took his life while attending college. The schools are responding in a planned, coordinated manner by providing support to his brother, other students, and school personnel who are affected. However, the town government and community groups (such as the church youth group, PTO, other caring parents) have no coordinated plan to respond - no way to provide support to his peers, friends and family. The Ad Hoc Committee would like to see this change.

### Outreach to Youth At Risk

Currently there are no town-supported programs designed to reach out to our youth at risk. Of highest concern are the "disconnected youth", often young men, ages 16-22 years old, who may be withdrawn, depressed, suicidal and/or potentially homicidal.

These young people may be students who are performing well academically, but are socially isolated or disconnected from their peers and not engaged in sports and extracurricular activities. They could be

### Recommendation #4

Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Present results of <b>Youth Risk Behavior Survey</b> to parents and the community in a public forum and publish the full report on the town and youth operated websites</li> <li>▪ Review YRBS and other <b>data</b> to identify problem areas, triggers, and risk factors for youth</li> <li>▪ Train and <b>educate adults</b> (parents, educators, service providers, youth groups) to recognize signs of excess stress, anxiety, suicidal thoughts, mental health issues, self-injurious and risky behaviors</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>peer training programs for teens</b>, coordinated with the schools, on what to do, how to get help in situations of risky or harmful behavior, e.g. signs of self-harm, suicidal behavior, drug use, anxiety</li> <li>▪ Distribute information online and in print to the community on what to do and <b>how to get help</b> in risky or harmful situations</li> <li>▪ Work to <b>de-stigmatize</b> the act of seeking counseling and support</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>Parent Education and Support Group</b> aimed at prevention of suicide, substance abuse, sexual abuse, domestic violence, self-destructive behavior</li> <li>▪ Engage community groups, cultural organizations, faith-based youth groups, civic youth groups to do <b>outreach</b> for youth at risk and their families</li> <li>▪ Engage <b>mental health and medical professionals</b> in the community to advise and work with schools, clergy and town service</li> <li>▪ Solicit <b>community support</b>, incl. financial support, for mental health services for youth and families</li> </ul>

out of school, having dropped out, or between college and career. They are often disconnected from traditional sources of support such as church youth groups, civic clubs, and not connected to community in any way.

Finally, besides a youth center, other forms of outreach can be most effective in reaching at risk youth. Studies show that some of the most effective suicide prevention programs are peer-lead youth leadership. People who work with teens know that a friend or peer is most often the first to know when a young person is experiencing trouble with depression, anxiety, eating disorders or alcohol abuse - not a parent, teacher, coach or other trusted adult. The empowerment model of peer leadership programs allows for disconnected youth to build peer connection and self-esteem. They are valued for overcoming difficult life experiences and can be most effective in reaching out to others who may be experiencing difficulties.

## RECOMMENDATION #5

### Community Education and Changing the Culture

- a) **Build awareness and ongoing discussion through parent and community education activities.**
- b) **Work together to change the culture and climate in schools, at home, and in the community in ways that help reduce stress and**

### Recommendation #5 SCHOOLS

#### Recommendation #5

Schools
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Encourage <b>school leaders</b> to make reducing stress and building resiliency a priority in the school culture; engage teachers/staff</li> <li>▪ Improve the <b>school climate and culture</b> by identifying ways to reduce competitiveness, shift the focus more on learning rather than grades and recognize non-academic and collective accomplishments</li> <li>▪ Create a more <b>pro-social climate</b>, address bullying and harassment.</li> <li>▪ Reduce <b>peer-to-peer competition</b> through more collaborative learning projects, group projects and grading</li> <li>▪ Make substantial improvements in <b>communication to parents</b> at the district and school level about school programs and efforts to reduce stress and build resiliency including use of websites, social media</li> <li>▪ Facilitate <b>school-home partnership</b> by establishing guidelines for parents on communication with school staff and providing workshops for staff on working with families</li> <li>▪ Encourage Learning of <b>student-run supports</b> for stress, e.g. peer groups, advice columns, clubs, students voices</li> <li>▪ Hire <b>teachers and staff</b> to reflect the <b>diversity</b> of the student population in order to enhance opportunities for adult mentorship and guidance to students of different cultures, orientations and backgrounds</li> <li>▪ Provide <b>Professional Learning</b> to help teachers and staff understand the diverse backgrounds of students in order to help them support the social-emotional needs of students</li> </ul>

**School leaders need to make reducing stress a priority.** Reducing stress and building resiliency is already a district goal. The administration needs to make it a priority and set the direction for the system. It is the principals at each school who can establish it as a priority for their schools and make it an important part of the school culture. Principals should engage teachers and staff in becoming aware of the social-emotional needs of students and in creating a culture that works toward reducing stress. This is not just a concern for health and wellness, nurses, and guidance staff. Classroom teachers need to play a role in reinforcing the messages, being attuned to the social-emotional needs of students, noticing students who show signs of stress, anxiety or harmful behavior, and supporting a shift in the culture. It is a whole school effort.

**Improving the school climate and culture.** Creating a more healthy school climate and culture is critical in making an environment that helps reduce the stress and competitiveness, shifts the focus more on learning, rewards collective accomplishments, and reinforces a positive, pro-social climate.

Perhaps within each school a group of administrators and teachers could work together to develop and implement ideas that would work best for improving the climate in their school. LHS and the middle

schools can engage the students in suggesting ways to improve the climate and make the environment less stressful. This could be done through the LHS Student-Faculty Senate, student officers or representatives, and student feedback or surveys. Schools should encourage the establishment of student-run groups, clubs and other supports for stress that would be valuable resources for students themselves.

*Academic shift that focuses on learning rather than grades.* Changes in culture related to academics should include a shift in the focus more toward learning and self-enrichment rather than grades and test scores. It is important to reinforce the message to students (and parents) that the grades and assessments are meant to be reflection of a students' comprehension, skills, and progress in learning, not an end to itself. The recent change to *standards-based report cards* in the elementary schools is an example of assessment that defines and focuses on desired academic and pro-social skills. At the secondary level, students often become more concerned and competitive about grades and individual achievement. Teachers can help by placing emphasis on substantive feedback and comments on students' work, identifying the purpose of work including target concepts and skills, or giving students opportunities to redo/revise work/do test corrections so that grades reflect improvements in learning. Schools as a whole need to reinforce this message. They can also consider the impact of their policies, such as how best to open the grade book.

*Recognition of non-academic and collective achievements.* Naturally, students are proud of their accomplishments and achievements and deserve recognition. However, an over-emphasis on top rankings, high-level awards, and individual achievements can lead to increased competition, a sense of inadequacy for many students, and implicit values by the culture. As much as possible, schools should recognize non-academic as well as academic achievements, and collective as well as individual accomplishments.

**Creating a pro-social climate.** Apart from academic or workload stress, much of the stress students face comes from social interaction. At elementary levels, it can be seen in the form of bullying, while later it can become personal harassment. Surprisingly, our analysis of the YRBS data showed that harassment was by far the highest predictor of suicide ideation. In classrooms, health classes and team time/homerooms, it is important to explicitly talk about the effects of harassment on others, whether done in person or through social media. Through repeated messages and common language, hopefully, students will learn to call out unacceptable behavior amongst their peers.

### **Peer-to-peer competition.**

At LHS, competition among students is very strong. In some circles, there is a great deal of competition, comparison of grades and performance, pressure to take AP courses and challenging course loads, competition about college admissions, and even one-up-manship over how late one stays up doing homework. The schools should address this directly with students and explicitly try to diffuse the competition. Peer pressure convinces students that they must push themselves extra hard and that they are implicitly in competition with one another. The schools can try to dispel some of the myths and promote a less competitive

*“I learned..my own stress..wasn't coming from myself or my parents, but rather the environment in which I was working and the friends with which I was associating. Constantly being around stressed out peers didn't make me feel completely stress-free..There is certainly an air of competition that verges on cut-throat at times.”*

*~ LHS student*

environment. In classes, peer-to-peer competition could be reduced by having more collaborative learning projects that are group-graded.

**Improve communication to parents, create website, home-school partnership.** The schools have many programs and initiatives in the schools to reduce stress and build resiliency, yet they are not well-known by the parents and community. The district and schools should make substantial improvements in communication to parents. The LHS website on Reducing Stress and Building Resiliency that contains information and resources for parents and students should be updated and made more visible. The district should also create a visible and accessible website on reducing stress and building resiliency.

**Diversity hiring and training.** We recommend that the administration make concerted efforts toward hiring teachers and staff to reflect the diversity of the student population. The student body is diverse in cultures (over 30% of the student population is Asian), sexual orientation, and other backgrounds. Hiring practices that reflect this diversity is important with regard to stress in that it improves opportunities for students to find adult mentors who they can better understand them. Providing Professional Learning training for all teachers and staff to help them understand the diverse cultural and other backgrounds of students would help them in supporting the social-emotional needs of students.

**Recommendation #5 TOWN GOVERNMENT**

We recommend that the town increase its support to all town departments working to build a positive climate for Lexington youth.

To its credit the town has made great progress in working with the schools and community groups to improve the culture and climate for Lexington youth. Increased visibly and expanded outreach to youth has been a goal of many town departments including the Recreation Department, the Human Services Department and the Police Department for the past several years. The police in particular have emphasized the development of positive relationships with youth through its school resource officers and through general contact with youth and families in the community.

We recommend that the town work with the schools to reach out to community businesses, professionals and local human service providers to explore partnership opportunities that provide opportunities

**Recommendation #5**

<b>Town Government</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Continue good work towards developing <b>positive relationships</b> between youth and police, fire, and library who are seen as a resource for youth at risk</li> <li>▪ Increase visibility of <b>Town services</b> and efforts to serve youth at risk</li> <li>▪ Offer more <b>non-competitive</b> recreational sports and activities</li> <li>▪ <b>Publicize</b> public events and forums as well as resources and services available to youth</li> <li>▪ Create a <b>Teen Youth Summer Internship</b> for teens to volunteer to work with Youth Services staff and assist in planning of community forums</li> <li>▪ Increase support for coaches and <b>recreation staff</b> in their efforts to build positive relationships with at risk youth and relieve unhealthy stress in general among teens</li> <li>▪ Establish <b>partnerships with businesses</b> and companies for job shadowing, internships and mentoring</li> </ul>



for students to partner with and create connections with adults resulting in greater social integration of youth within the community. Here are some ideas:

- *Business sponsorship* of clubs and/or competitions with complementary mentoring - Soliciting sponsorships could offer mentoring/advising opportunities as well as financial support for activities such as travel to events. An example is business or corporate sponsorship of science fair or debate activities
- *Speakers Bureau* - Establish a Speakers Bureau of that would include local business people, professionals, scientists and researchers, who would be available to speak to students about their chosen fields and advise on pursuing those fields at special events.
- *Pro-Bono Work* - Encourage pro-bono work on the part of professionals in the community to assist families/students in need of such services as counseling and legal. e
- *Internships, Job shadowing, paid employment* - Work with professionals and businesses to develop internships, mentoring and job shadowing programs for students and encourage local organizations large and small to provide hands on opportunities to local students

## Recommendation #5 COMMUNITY

Do we as a community have to simply accept that our children are going to be stressed out and at risk? Or can we do something to address this problem? Do we as a community want to make our youth more resilient?

One of Lexington's strengths is that the community has a lot of intelligent people - many of whom are active and concerned citizens - and we should capitalize on this strength to figure out what we can do to make our children more resilient and less stressed out and at risk.

Let's make sure that we understand the problem and then let's identify what we can do - as parents, students, town leaders, educators, concerned community members.

*"In my experience it seems the biggest sources of unhealthy stress come from parents (and sometimes teachers, counselors, society) about how tough the competition is and how students need to take every possible AP class and do every possible activity to pad their resumes. The message is that there is no room for mistakes and an A is the only acceptable grade."*

*~ LHS student*

**Organize community forums and education programs.** We should start with an ongoing series of community forums (conferences, workshops, discussions) where we can come together to become better informed and identify solutions. These forums should be organized by the Committee for Lexington Youth - bringing together the schools, town and community leaders -- and co-sponsored by the School Committee and Board of Selectmen. The topics should include the following:

- The results of the Youth Risky Behavior Survey: what do they mean and what can we do about them? (teens, parents and educators as key participants). Newton initiated a series of “Youth Summits” based on the results of their survey (see attached for more details).
- What can parents do to reduce stress on their children? How can the schools and community help?
- How can parents help their children be more resilient to better cope with the pressures of everyday life? How can the schools and community help?
- How can parents work with teachers to reduce academic stress?
- How can students reduce academic stress?
- What can the community do to help at-risk youth?
- How do I know whether my child is at risk? And what can I do about it?

These forums/events could be filmed and made available on demand/on line by LexMedia for those who cannot attend the event.

The excellent resources of Lexington Community Education should be more fully utilized to educate parents, youth and the broader community about reducing stress and building resiliency. There should be more speakers like Dr. Robert Brooks, who LCE recently brought to Lexington to speak on building resiliency in youth, and more courses like those offered on parenting and mindfulness.

**Initiate parenting workshops.** A priority should be parenting workshops focusing specifically on helping parents help their children. For example:

- Needham has annual High School Parent Conferences – organized jointly by the high school and Needham Youth Service -- with workshops like “The Secret Life of Teens – What’s really on your teenager’s mind?”
- Bedford has a Parent Education Series with topics like “Bullying and Cyberbullying: Prevention in Schools and Communities” aimed at elementary school parents.
- Newton has organized a lecture series for parents of teens with topics like “OMG! Your teen actually talks to you?”
- Wakefield has initiated a “Parent University”

The community can also offer wellness programs for parents of adolescents. Newton, for example, has offered a four session program entitled “Taking Care of Ourselves and Our Teens” provide by the Benson-

#### Recommendation #5

Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Organize <b>community forums and education programs</b> coordinated by the Community Resources for Youth Working Group on topics such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• open discussion about “what the community wants”</li> <li>• how to redefine success</li> <li>• societal, parental expectations and its effect on students</li> <li>• how to balance high-achievement culture with stress on students</li> <li>• open dialog between parents and children/teens about stress</li> <li>• discuss possible solutions and actions</li> </ul> </li> <li>▪ Organize events such as <b>Youth Summits</b> that bring together teens, parents, town, community to address concerns of teens and stress</li> <li>▪ Initiate <b>parenting workshops</b>, a “Parent University”, or book groups around stress and parenting topics</li> <li>▪ Utilize the resources and <b>expertise</b> of local healthcare and mental health professionals to work with schools, community and youth groups</li> <li>▪ Encourage program coordination among community youth programs, counseling programs, mental health professionals, and faith-based youth groups</li> <li>▪ Create a <b>family-friendly environment</b> in schools and community, e.g. inter-generational activities, improved communication, translation services</li> <li>▪ Continue and expand community efforts focusing on the social-emotional and mental health needs of the <b>diverse student population</b>, e.g. Lexington Asian Mental Health Initiative</li> </ul>

Henry Institute of Mind-Body Medicine at Massachusetts General Hospital.

In mobilizing the community's resources, the Committee for Lexington Youth should recognize and acknowledge the fine work with youth being done by town agencies such as police, fire and recreation as well as the library and faith-based groups such as the Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association. And we urge increased support for coaches and recreation staff in their efforts to build positive relationships with at risk youth and relieve unhealthy stress among teens.

**Meeting the needs of the diverse youth population.** Community groups should continue and expand efforts focused on social-emotional and mental health needs of the diverse youth population. For example, the Lexington Asian Mental Health Initiative brought together mental health professionals, parents, town Human Services, town police and resource officers, community organizations and others to organize town-wide community forums on understanding and managing stress for Asian students. Creating coalitions like this are a model for how members of the community can work together to address these issues as a community.

## RECOMMENDATION #6

### Reach out to find networking opportunities and other resources

Schools	Town Government	Community
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Reach out to and learn from <b>other school districts</b> grappling with the same issues</li> <li>▪ Review data and <b>outcomes</b> in school systems that have instituted programs or changes</li> <li>▪ Join a <b>network of schools</b>, collaborate or partner with universities or other community programs</li> <li>▪ Look into <b>research</b> programs and findings related to stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hire a <b>grant writer</b> to solicit funding from SAMHSA, Massachusetts Department of Public Health, CHNA15, Foundation for Metrowest, and others.</li> <li>▪ Review efforts in <b>other towns</b> to learn how to best structure services, communication and engagement with the community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review accomplishments in <b>other communities</b>, e.g. Needham, Newton, Bedford, Winchester in implementing programs to reduce stress and prevent suicide and violence</li> <li>▪ Engage <b>businesses and companies</b> to match students with mentors, shadowing opportunities</li> </ul>

Lexington is by no means alone in dealing with the issue of unhealthy stress and youth at risk or working to build the resiliency of their youth. As noted, for example, in recommendation # 3, communities similar to Lexington like Needham, Newton, Winchester and Bedford have initiated programs that should be seriously considered in Lexington. This is not to say that we should simply copy these efforts, but we should take advantage of the opportunity to learn from their experiences and apply what would work best in Lexington.

We would encourage the school leader and the Director of Youth Services to reach out to their peers in these communities and perhaps join the information-sharing groups that are operating (e.g. one involving the Directors of Youth Services in Newton and Needham and neighboring communities).

We recommend joining the “Making Caring Common Project” based at the Harvard Graduate School of Education under the leadership of Dr. Richard Weissbourd. This recently awarded \$2 million grant focuses on strategies for promoting caring, courage, and other key moral and social capacities in both schools and homes. The project will disseminate accessible, easy to implement strategies for promoting awareness of and responsibility for others to parents, educators and other community members in its network.

There are also organizations like Challenge Success and the Collaborative for Academic, Social and Emotional Learning (CASEL) which have excellent websites and other programs. They also provide the results of research that have been incorporated into evidence-based programs.

There are also potential funding sources that could be tapped such as the Community Health Network Area (CHNA) 15, the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. A grant writer – perhaps jointly funded by the schools and the town – should be hired to pursue grants to support Lexington’s efforts to reduce youth stress and build resiliency.

**RECOMMENDATION #7**

**Create a joint Follow-up Task Force with representatives from the schools, town and community to monitor implementation of these recommendations and to report progress to the Committee.**

We have endeavored to make these recommendations specific and measurable action steps, but their implementation will require an ongoing process that may well cover several years. To maintain a focus on this implementation over time, we recommend that the School Committee, ideally jointly with the Board of Selectmen, establish a Task Force with members from the School Committee and the Board of Selectmen along with representatives from the schools, town and community, to monitor progress towards the achievement of these recommendations and to make periodic public reports.

## VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Our work was aided enormously by many educators in the Lexington Public Schools -- principals, assistant principals, program directors and teachers --who were very generous with their time, knowledge and information And staff, particularly Miriam Souza in the Central Office, provided vital assistance. We would also like to acknowledge the strong and ongoing support provided by School Committee Chair Margaret Coppe and School Committee member Alessandro Alessandrini.

In Town Government and community, we want to thank Charlotte Rodgers, Director of the Human Services Department, and her staff, Emily Lavine and Matt Ryan for giving of their time, suggestions and recommendations. We appreciate the feedback from the Youth Services Council, the Human Services Committee and therapists and community members who responded to our questionnaire.

Finally we like to thank the youth services staff and board members in other communities, Jon Mattleman, Director of Needham Youth Services, Sue Baldauf, Director of Bedford Youth and Family Services, Jennifer O'Higgins, Director of Youth Services in Newton, and Rebecca Levine, Director, Bekah Epstein, Assistant Director, and Dr. Robin Smith, Board Chair of the Winchester Youth Center, who generously gave of their time and made themselves so available for our questions

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## **IX. AD HOC COMMITTEE FOR YOUTH AT RISK CHARTER**

Members: 14 members (plus 11 organizational liaisons and two liaisons from the School Committee)

Appointed by: School Committee

Length of term: 12 months

Meeting times: As needed

Description: The Committee will address issues concerning Lexington youth, ages 5 - 22, whose mental or physical health is at risk because of stress originating from physical, emotional, social, cultural, and academic sources that may adversely affect them and their families. Youth stress may also be caused by the stressors experienced with education performance expectations, financial issues, job loss, relocation and/or homelessness. Youth may be considered "at risk" because of stress when they or their families experience problems such as depression, anxiety, eating disorders, substance abuse, suicidal thoughts, trauma, PTSD, physical or sexual abuse, chronic illness, domestic violence, or feelings of grief/loss.

This is a community public health concern whose solution requires a collaborative approach involving the schools, students, parents, town agencies such as the Health and Human Services/Youth and Family departments, and the broader Lexington community.

The ad hoc Committee is charged with recommending policies, goals and programs to address this issue of youth at risk due to stress. These recommendations would be based in part on a review, and evaluation of programs and services that currently exist to support youth and families in Lexington. The committee will address the following issues:

Review existing public and private programs and services in the community, schools, and town that currently serve youth at risk.

Identify unmet needs (gaps in services) – including using data from existing surveys, 20/20 Demographic Task Force, Healthy Community Grant Survey from the Board of Health, and interviews with staff.

To address these unmet needs as well as to develop the resiliency of Lexington youth, recommend to the School Committee modifications of existing programs and services in the community and schools or the implementation of new programs and services in the schools and public or private programs and services in the community.

It will submit interim reports to the School Committee by March 1, 2014 and work to submit a final report by November 2014.

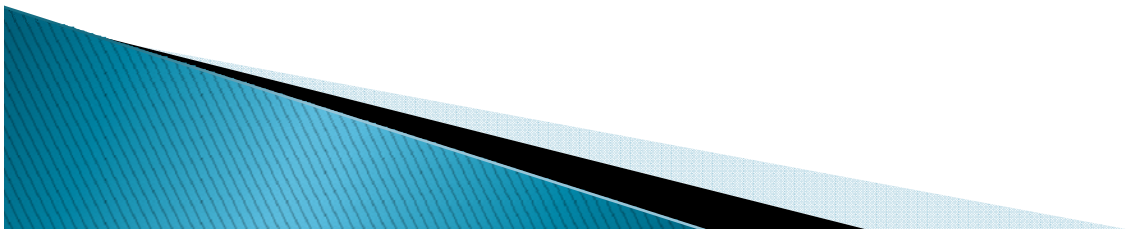
# Special Education Department Response to 2012 SEPAC Parent Survey

November 18, 2014



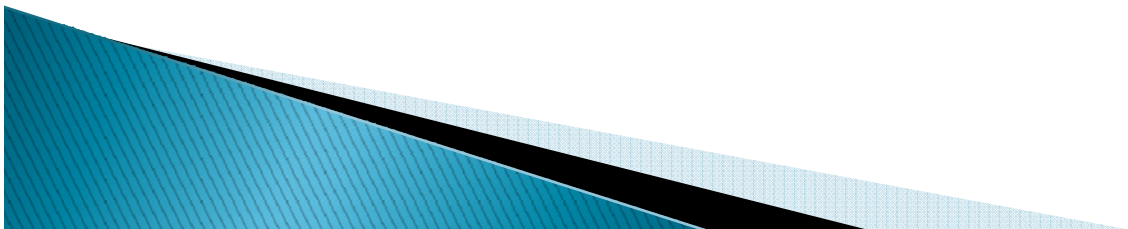
# SEPAC Parent Survey

- Launched electronically for 14 days in November 2012
- Total Respondents: 298
- Results presented April 2013



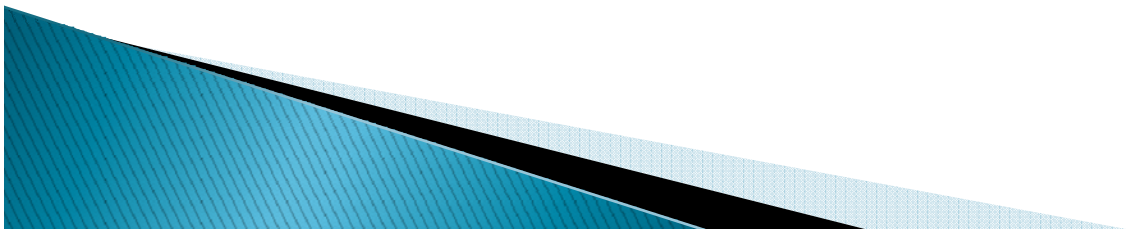
# Areas of Concern:

- Communication
- Service Delivery
- Administration
- Staff Training/Resources



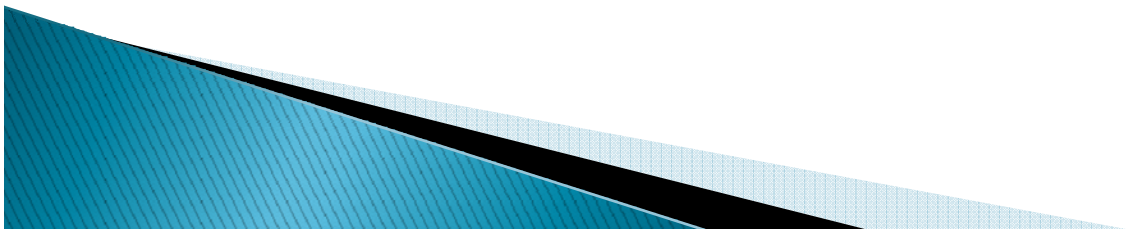
# Special Education Department IEP Parent Survey

- ▶ Developed by staff in response to:
  - SEPAC Parent Survey of 2012
  - Entry Plan Interviews and Discussions



# Special Education Department IEP Parent Survey

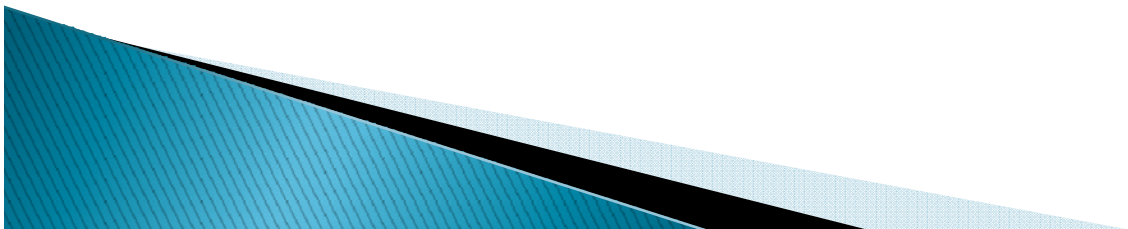
- ▶ Sent with every IEP beginning in September 2013
- ▶ Sent out for 10 months
- ▶ 570+ responses as of August 2014
- ▶ Identifiable by level
- ▶ Was anonymous





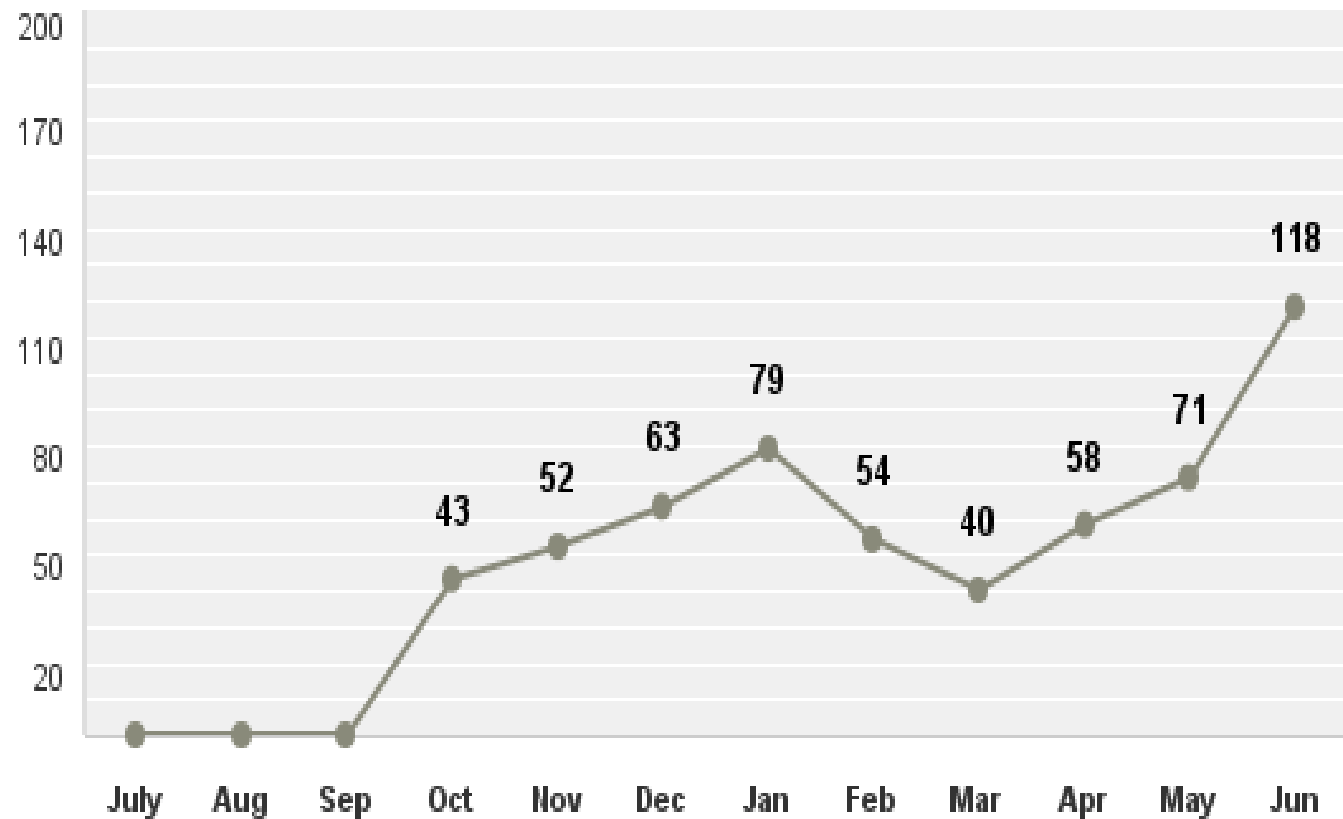
# Special Education Department IEP Parent Survey

- ▶ Last year reviewed every two weeks
- ▶ This year reviewed weekly



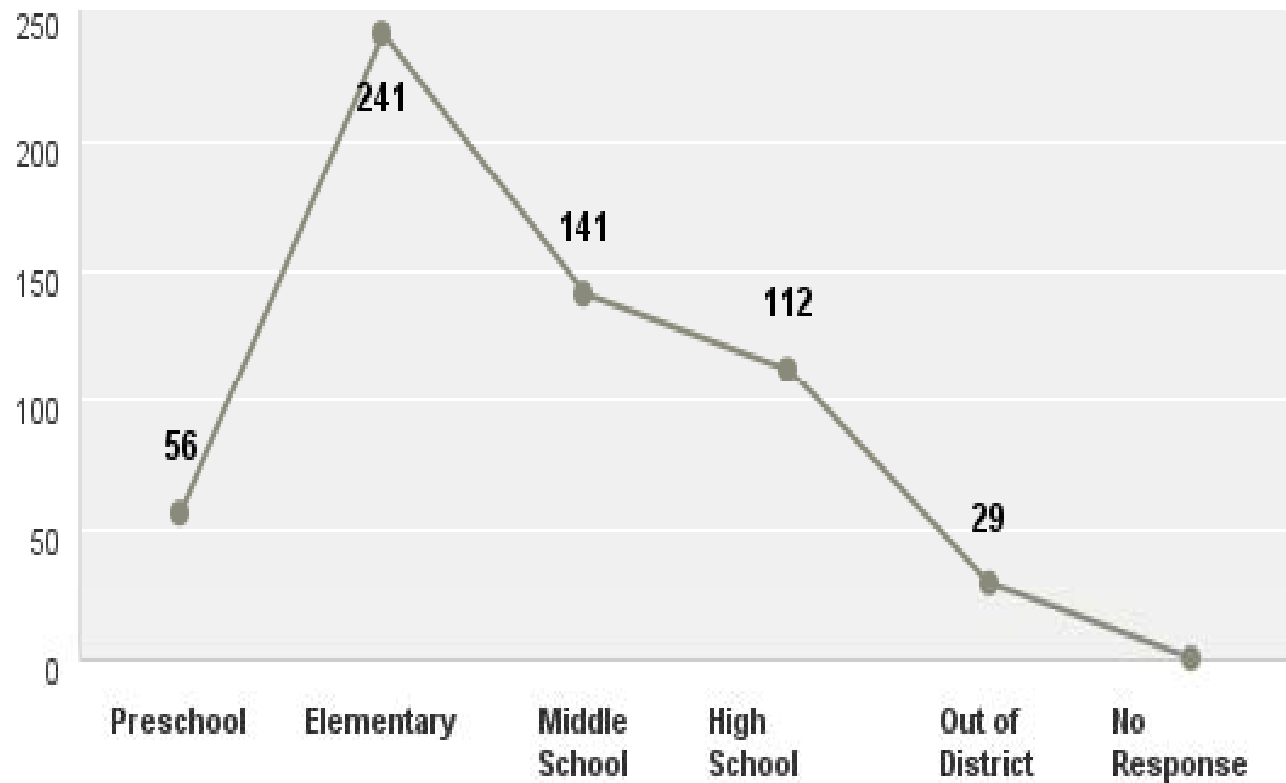
# Count of Surveys By Month Received

▶ Answered: 578



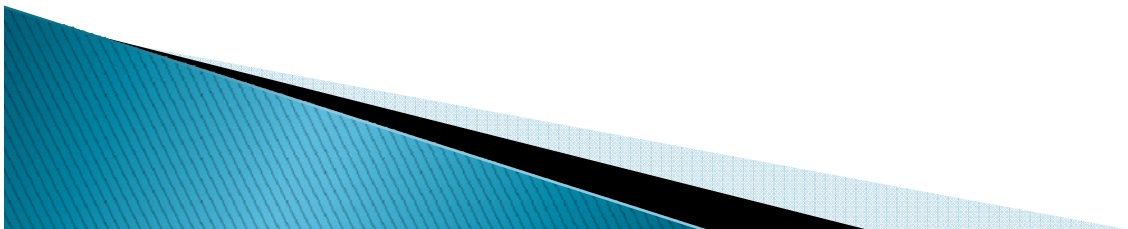
# Survey Responses by School Type

▶ Answered: 579

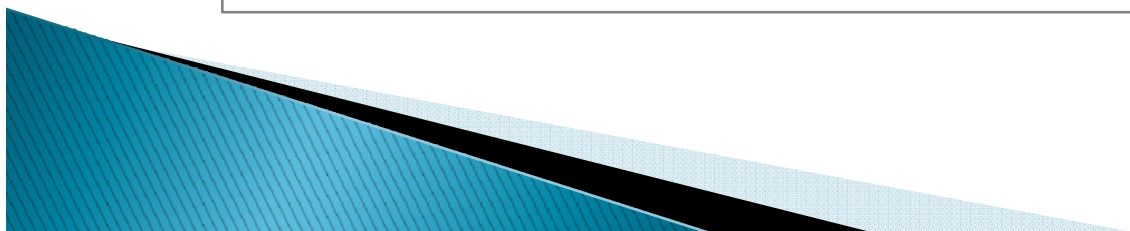
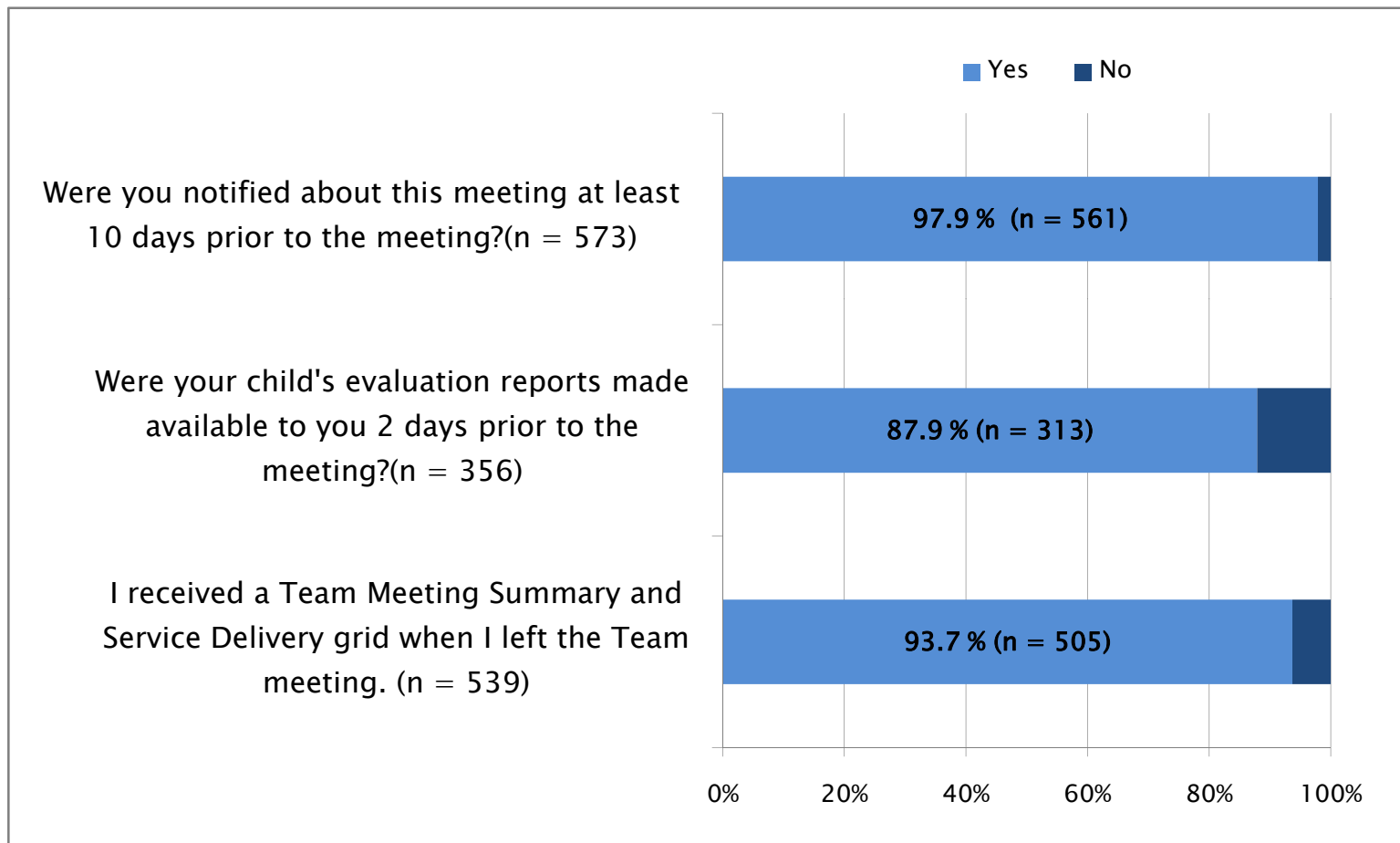


# Survey Questions

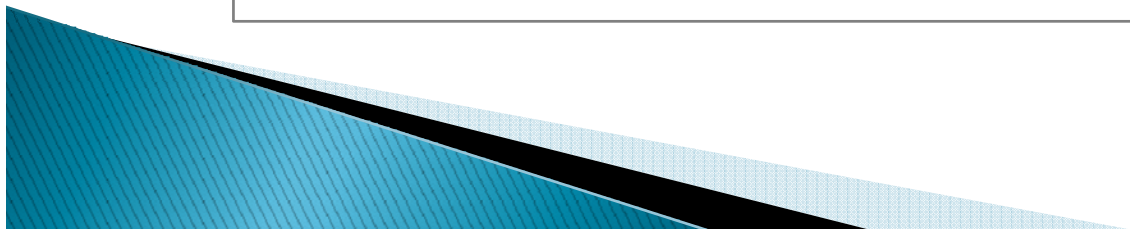
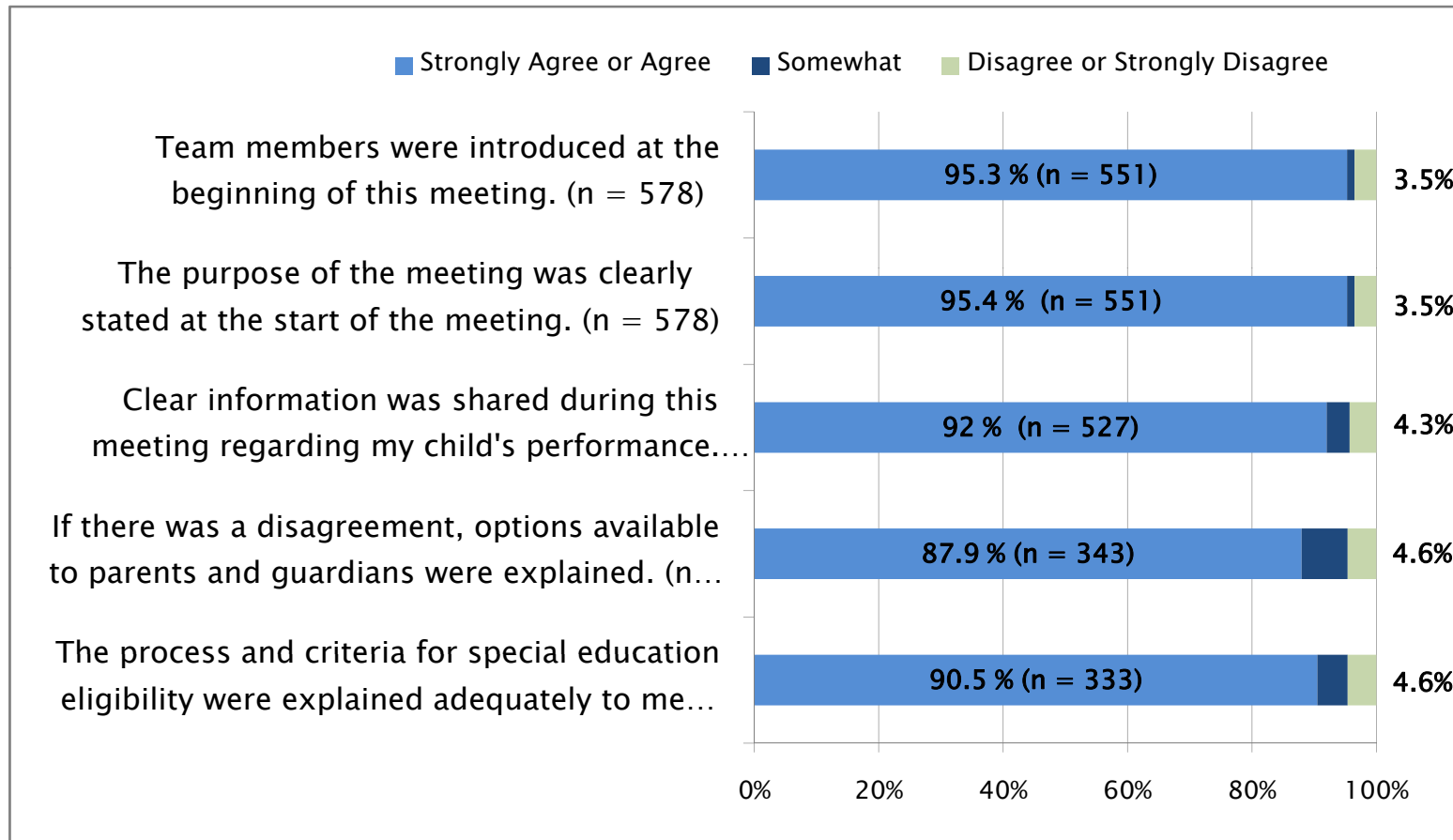
- ▶ Two basic areas of questions:
  - Compliance
  - Communication



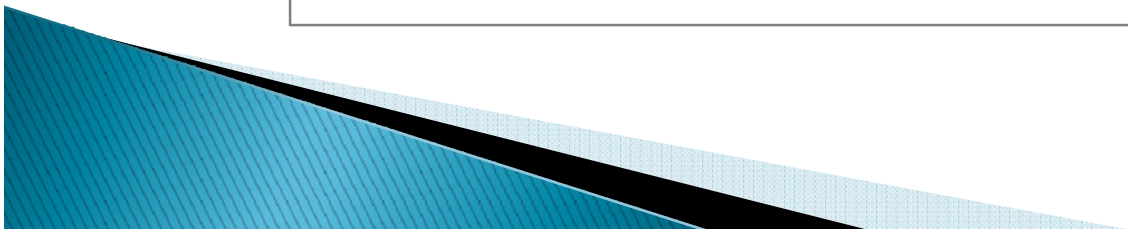
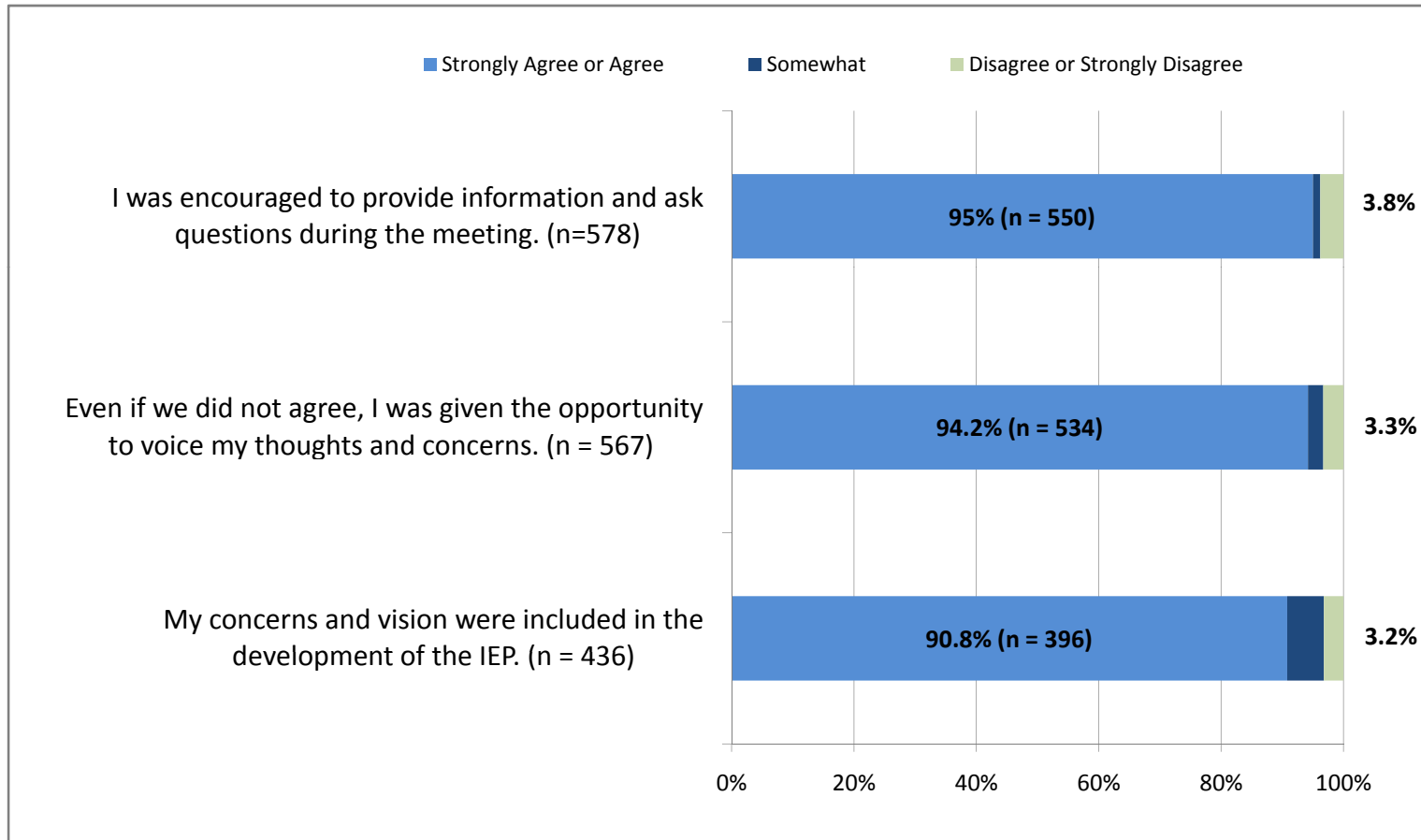
# Compliance Questions



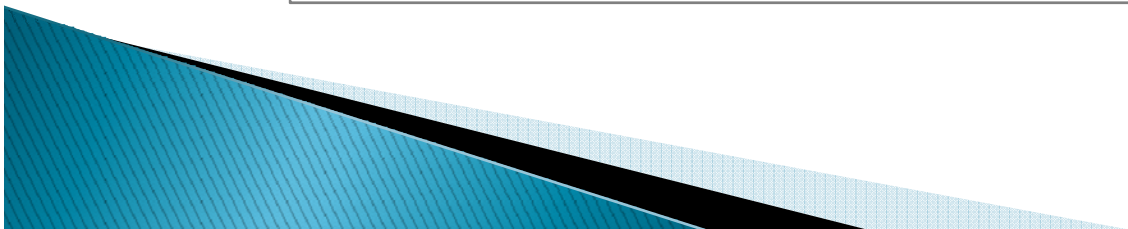
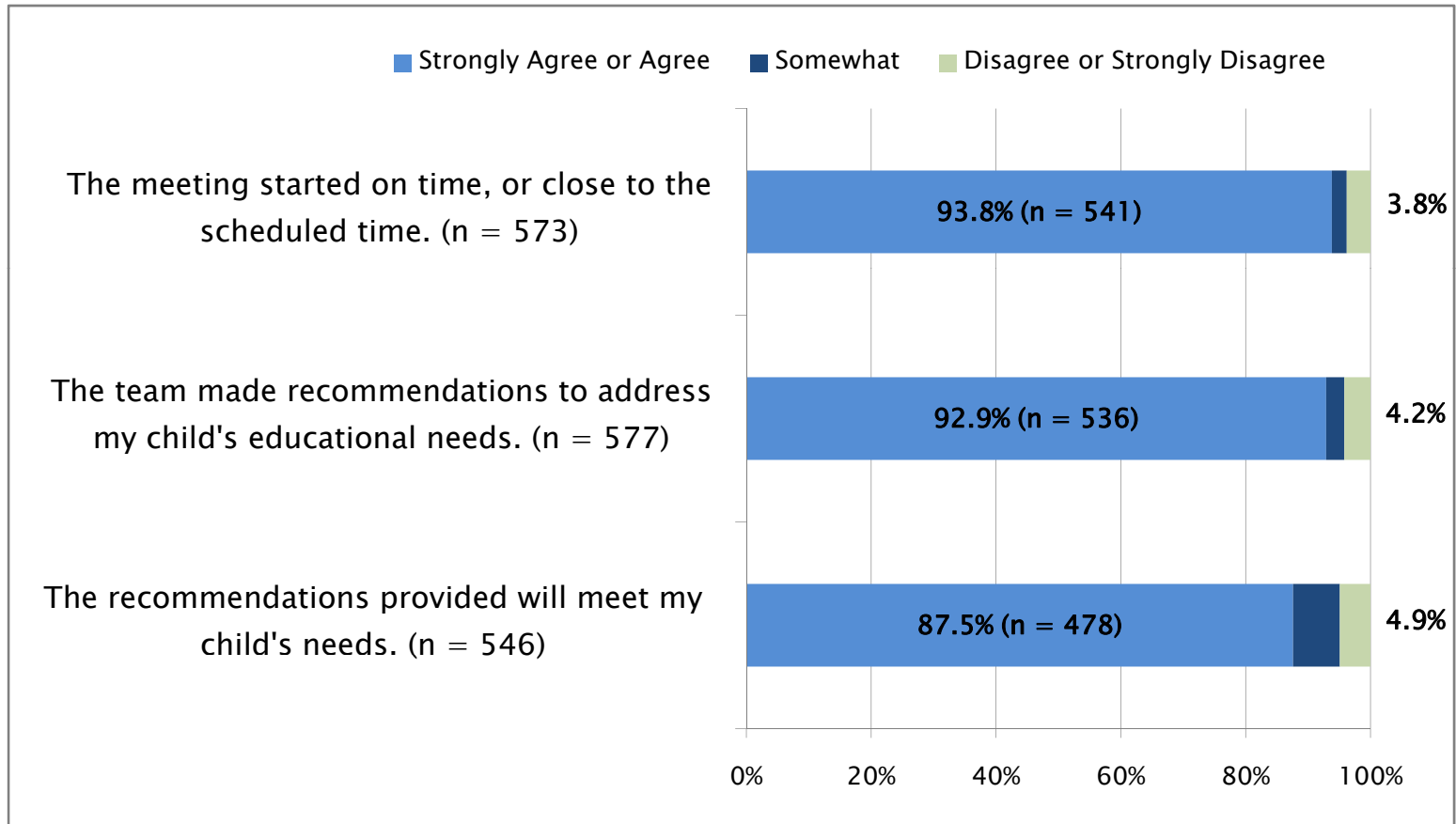
# Questions Related to Communication



# Questions Related to Quality of Communication



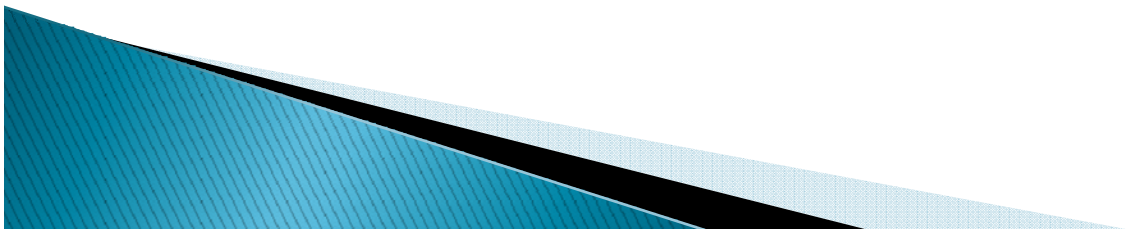
# Additional Questions





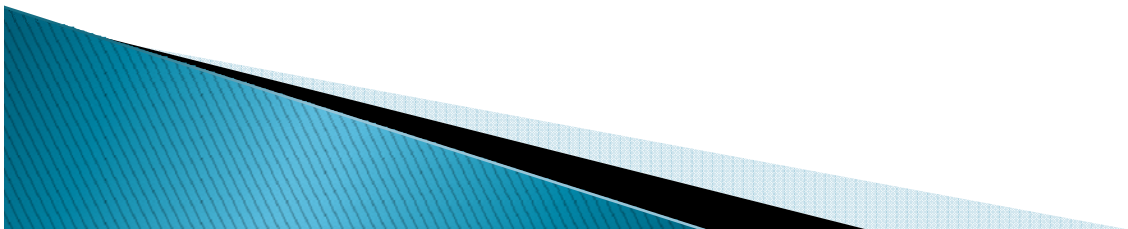
# SEPAC and LPS Activities

- ▶ Parent Coffees held in each building in September/October
- ▶ Staff Appreciation Day held in June
- ▶ SEPAC workshops on:
  - Effective Communication
  - Working with Independent Evaluators
  - Assistive Technology

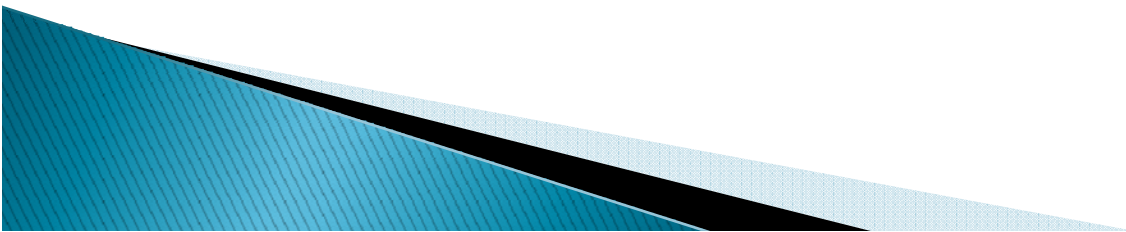


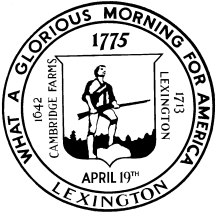
# Next Steps:

- ▶ Continue the current survey for 2014–2015 in order to maintain validity
- ▶ Continue to work with staff and parents to improve communication, service delivery, administration, and quality of instruction



# Questions?





# Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ♦ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

Mary Ellen N. Dunn.  
*Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business*

Tel: (781) 861-2563

Fax: (781) 863-5829

[mdunn@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:mdunn@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us)

To: Paul Ash, Superintendent  
 From: Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business  
 Date: November 12, 2015  
 Re: FY 2015 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Financial Report

The current year-end balance projected for FY 2015 is a deficit of \$129,042 before grant transfers. The projection assumes all budgeted positions are filled and assumes all program budgets are fully expended. The major source of these funds causing the deficit is Special Education Tuitions. This is a somewhat normal fluctuation that occurs because we hold funds in reserve for students who we anticipate will be placed in out-of-district placements before the end of the school year. This is a declining reserve as each month a student is not placed is savings in the tuition budget.

S/E	Sum of ORIGINAL APPROP	Sum of TRANFRS/A DJSMTS	Sum of REVISED BUDGET	Sum of YTD EXPENDED	Sum of ENCUMBRANCE/ REQ	Sum of AVAILABLE BUDGET
Salaries and Wages	\$ 73,496,851	\$ -	\$ 73,496,851	\$ 16,702,647	\$ 56,472,739	\$ 321,465
Expense	\$ 13,127,078	\$ -	\$ 13,127,078	\$ 9,897,328	\$ 3,680,258	\$ (450,507)
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$ 86,623,929</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 86,623,929</b>	<b>\$ 26,599,974</b>	<b>\$ 60,152,997</b>	<b>\$ (129,042)</b>

Additional areas of unanticipated expenditures are the following:

- Student Activity and other audit requirements that exceed the normal audit activity required by the district (\$25,000). A more detailed summary will be provided once all audit engagement letters are completed with the Town’s auditing firm, Melanson Heath.
- The Superintendent search expense will add a minimum of \$30,000 in unbudgeted expense in the school committee line items.
- Transportation is also currently being projected as a worst case scenario. The demand for Homeless Transportation is less than last year and we anticipate staying within budget with the current complement of students. However we are still transporting students both in-district and out-of-district, there are just fewer students. The Town will receive partial reimbursement for out of district students. Transportation for the district’s special education student is currently projected to be in deficit \$33,860. General Education transportation is still in a state of flux. We are still adding routes and a bus to address the 3100+ riders for this school year.

**Salaries and Wages:** Projections are based on current filled positions and estimated wage settlements as of the end of September. Of note, the district is experiencing a significant number of Special Education staff that is out on leave whereby a traditional substitute cannot be hired. The Substitute Teacher line in our expense budget will need to be offset by any salary savings in Unit A. The second quarter report will have more detail available for the staffing fluctuations, the impact of the long-term substitutes. The net change in staffing is 21.61 FTEs. See Table 1 at the end of the report for more detail.

**Grant Transfer Request:** The district each year must reconcile grants to actual expenditures. The second quarter report will have the exact transfers the will need to be made to address funding issues with the grant. Please see table 2 at the end of the report for a preview of what transfers are being anticipated.

**Expenses:** Overall the expense budget is in deficit. At this time of the school year we focus on three specific line items: In-District Transportation, Out-of-District Transportation, and Special Education Out-of –District Tuitions. These accounts can be highly variable.

Lexington Public Schools – FY2015 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report as of September 30, 2014

Transportation was outlined above and will have more detailed information available in the 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter report.

**Out-of-district Tuition:** The out-of-district tuition budget is currently supporting 123 students. This is an increase of 24 students over budget. Currently, Circuit Breaker funds are undergoing an audit review by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. We do not have confirmation of our final reimbursement amount. In addition, there are some out-of-district schools who have applied for reconstruction or adjustments for special circumstances adjustments that have not been notified of the award to date. We are projecting the highest potential cost.

	FY15 ATM	Current Projection	Balance
Estimated Tuition	7,747,810	8,187,970	\$ (440,160)
Less Circuit Breaker Reimbursement	(2,950,251)	(3,028,763)	\$ 78,512
<b>Total Tuition</b>	<b>4,797,559</b>	<b>5,159,207</b>	<b>\$ (361,648)</b>

**Tuition Projection as of November 7, 2014**

DOE Function Code	DOE Function Title	Program	Sum of FY15 ATM Budget Head Count	Sum of FY15 ATM tuition projection	Sum of FY15 current head count	Sum of Current FY15 estimated tuition	Favorable/ (Unfavorable)
9100	Tuition to Mass. Schools	day	6	\$ 288,942	5	\$ 280,485	
		extended services					
		summer		\$ 48,985	1	\$ 18,395	
	<b>Tuition to Mass. Schools Total</b>		<b>6</b>	<b>\$ 337,927</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>\$ 298,880</b>	
<b>9100 Total</b>			<b>6</b>	<b>\$ 337,927</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>\$ 298,880</b>	\$ 39,047
9200	Tuition to Out-of-State Schools	residential	2	\$ 303,994	2	\$ 292,302	
		summer				\$ 13,950	
		<b>Tuition to Out-of-State Schools Total</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$ 303,994</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$ 306,252</b>	
<b>9200 Total</b>			<b>2</b>	<b>\$ 303,994</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>\$ 306,252</b>	\$ (2,258)
9300	Tuition to Non-Public Schools	1:1 Aide		\$ 42,236		\$ 15,600	
		day	49	\$ 3,032,380	59	\$ 3,209,660	
		PT				\$ 2,640	
		residential	10	\$ 2,406,621	13	\$ 2,470,502	
		short term			3	\$ 47,499	
		summer		\$ 55,817		\$ 45,121	
		summer					
		summer program	1	\$ 4,873	1	\$ 4,800	
	<b>Tuition to Non-Public Schools Total</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>\$ 5,541,928</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>\$ 5,795,821</b>		
<b>9300 Total</b>			<b>60</b>	<b>\$ 5,541,928</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>\$ 5,795,821</b>	\$ (253,894)
9400	Tuition to Collaboratives	bus monitor				\$ 8,100	
		day	30	\$ 1,272,614	36	\$ 1,554,778	
		extended services		\$ 13,107	1	\$ 31,803	
		short term			1	\$ 8,719	
		summer		\$ 163,322		\$ 148,509	
		summer & day	1	\$ 56,559			
		summer-LESP		\$ 58,360		\$ 13,640	
		tuition			1	\$ 21,468	
	<b>Tuition to Collaboratives Total</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>\$ 1,563,962</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$ 1,787,016</b>		
<b>9400 Total</b>			<b>31</b>	<b>\$ 1,563,962</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>\$ 1,787,016</b>	\$ (223,054)
<b>Grand Total</b>			<b>99</b>	<b>\$ 7,747,810</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>\$ 8,187,970</b>	\$ (440,159)

All high risk students are projected as of November 7, 2014.

**Table 1: 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Operating Budget Salary and Wage projection**

LINE No	ROLL UP	FY15 FTE	FY15 Budget	Current FTEs (through 10/17/14 payroll)	FTE Difference Favorable (Unfavorable)	Salaries Projection (through 10/17/14 payroll)	\$ Difference - Favorable (Unfavorable)	Notes (illustrates material changes)
1	UNIT A - LEA	660.89	53,063,354	633.19	27.70	\$ 50,879,238	\$ 2,184,116	1. Net FTE Transfer: -1.60 FTE 2. -29.05 FTEs on LOA, shifted to Long Term Subs 3. +2.95 FTE Supplemental Positions 4. +7.66 FTE Vacancy
2	UNIT A - STIPENDS		684,963	-		\$ 684,963	\$ -	
3	UNIT A - COACHES		607,996	-		\$ 607,996	\$ -	
4	Unit D - LEA	77.95	3,070,784	77.98	(0.03)	\$ 3,154,034	\$ (83,250)	1. +0.09 FTE Supplemental Positions 2. 2.32 FTE Vacancy 3. 0.40 Pooled FTE Team Meetings
5	NON-UNION DISTRICT SUPPORT/MGRS	20.70	1,751,505	23.40	(2.70)	\$ 2,029,635	\$ (278,130)	1. Net FTE Transfer: +2.70 FTE 2. 0.25 FTE Vacancy
7	UNIT C - INSTR ASST./ Student Support/A.S.Asst	143.57	5,216,335	154.58	(11.01)	\$ 5,337,006	\$ (120,671)	1. Net FTE Transfer: +0.87 FTE 2. +14.26 FTE Supplemental Positions 3. 10.49 FTE Vacancy
7.1	NON-UNION PARAPROFESSIONALS	5.80	770,766	6.97	(1.18)	\$ 632,539	\$ 138,226	1. Net FTE Transfer: -1.45 FTE 2. +1.42 FTE Supplemental Positions 3. 1.25 FTE Vacancy
8	ABA/BCBA INSTRUCTORS	3.89	409,778	3.88	0.02	\$ 355,265	\$ 54,513	
9	OT ASSISTANTS	-	-	-	-	\$ 842	\$ (842)	1. Cost here due to split FY14/15 payroll
10	SPECIAL CLASS AIDES	6.12	211,221	11.39	(5.27)	\$ 425,730	\$ (214,509)	1. Net FTE Transfer: -0.87 FTE 2. +1.8 FTE Supplemental Positions 3. 0.825 FTEs on LOA, shifted to Long Term Subs
13	TECHNOLOGY UNIT	16.00	879,235	15.75	0.25	\$ 872,916	\$ 6,319	1. 1.0 FTE Vacancy 2. 0.25 FTE converted to summer pool hours
14	CENTRAL ADMINISTRATORS	6.00	1,023,229	6.00	-	\$ 1,055,415	\$ (32,186)	
15	PRINCIPALS	9.00	1,241,589	9.00	-	\$ 1,227,343	\$ 14,246	
16	ALA - ASST PRINC/SUPERVISORS	39.20	4,229,592	38.55	0.65	\$ 4,219,103	\$ 10,490	1. Net FTE Transfer: +0.35 FTE 2. 1.0 FTEs on LOA, shifted to Long Term Subs
17	NURSE SUBS		15,300	-		\$ 15,300	\$ -	
	TEACHER SUBSTITUTES		755,010	-		\$ 755,010	\$ -	
	LONG TERM PROFESSIONAL SUBSTITUTES			30.05	(30.05)	\$ 856,858	\$ (856,858)	1. 29.05 FTEs from SLEA currently on LOAs 2. 1.00 FTEs from SALA currently on LOAs
18	SECRETARY SUBSTITUTES		16,193			\$ 16,193	\$ -	
	PARAPROFESSIONAL SUBSTITUTES		50,000	0.83		\$ 50,000	\$ -	1. 0.825 FTEs from SSCA currently on LOAs
20	SICK LEAVE BUY BACK						\$ -	
	Sal Dif		(500,000)				\$ (500,000)	
TOWN	SHARED EXPENSES						\$ -	
	All other - operating						\$ -	
	Grant/Revolving Activity						\$ -	
	Adjustments						\$ -	
<b>SALARIES &amp; WAGES Total</b>		<b>989.12</b>	<b>\$ 73,496,851</b>	<b>1,011.56</b>	<b>(21.61)</b>	<b>\$ 73,175,386</b>	<b>\$ 321,465</b>	

Lexington Public Schools – FY2015 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Report as of September 30, 2014

**Table 2: 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Grant Salary and Wage projection**

Federal Grant Title	FY14 Award - Level Funded for FY14	FY15 Actual Award	Enrollment and low income changes reported	% Change in Award	Original Projected FY15 Expense	Projected (deficit)/ Balance Against Level Fund	Revised FY15 Projection as of October 31*	Projected (deficit)/ Balance FY15 Awards
					(col.B-col.H)			(col.C - col. I)
Title I	\$ 157,598	\$ 151,166	\$ (6,432)	-4.08%	\$ 151,166	\$ 6,432	\$ 145,347	\$ 5,819
Title II	\$ 86,954	\$ 85,482	\$ (1,472)	-1.69%	\$ 85,482	\$ 1,472	\$ 92,202	\$ (6,720)
Title III	\$ 57,937	\$ 66,030	\$ 8,093	13.97%	\$ 67,360	\$ (9,423)	\$ 35,173	\$ 30,858
Title III Immigrant	\$ 39,500	\$ -	\$ (39,500)	-100.00%	\$ 39,236	\$ 264	\$ 27,445	\$ (27,445)
94-142	\$ 1,514,322	\$ 1,547,887	\$ 33,565	2.22%	\$ 1,572,356	\$ (58,034)	\$ 1,574,127	\$ (26,240)
Early Childhood	\$ 38,408	\$ 40,067	\$ 1,659	4.32%	\$ 40,067	\$ (1,659)	\$ 38,655	\$ 1,412
<b>Total Federal Grants</b>	<b>\$ 1,894,719</b>	<b>\$ 1,890,632</b>	<b>\$ (4,087)</b>	<b>-0.22%</b>	<b>\$ 1,955,667</b>	<b>\$ (60,948)</b>	<b>\$ 1,912,949</b>	<b>\$ (22,317)</b>
<b>State Grant Title</b>						<b>-3.22%</b>		<b>-1.18%</b>
METCO	\$ 1,342,033	\$ 1,373,791	\$ 31,758	2.37%	\$ 1,373,791	\$ (31,758)	\$ 1,372,718	\$ 1,073
Essential School Health	\$ 116,440	\$ 116,440	\$ -	0.00%	\$ 118,268	\$ (1,828)	\$ 118,268	\$ (1,828)
Academic Support	\$ 10,400	\$ 7,400	\$ (3,000)	-28.85%	\$ 7,400	\$ 3,000	\$ 7,400	\$ -
Full-Day Kindergarten	\$ 233,666	\$ 227,000	\$ (6,666)	-2.85%	\$ 227,681	\$ 5,985	\$ 183,851	\$ 43,149
Special Education Entitlement	\$ 27,976	\$ 51,219 est	\$ 23,243	83.08%	\$ 51,219	\$ (23,243)	\$ 51,219	\$ -
<b>Total State Grants</b>	<b>\$ 1,730,515</b>	<b>\$ 1,775,850</b>	<b>\$ 45,335</b>	<b>2.62%</b>	<b>\$ 1,778,359</b>	<b>\$ (47,844)</b>	<b>\$ 1,733,456</b>	<b>\$ 42,394</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 3,625,234</b>	<b>\$ 3,666,482</b>	<b>\$ 41,248</b>	<b>1.14%</b>	<b>\$ 3,734,026</b>	<b>\$ (108,792)</b>	<b>\$ 3,646,405</b>	<b>\$ 20,077</b>

*		\$ Impact to Operating Budget	FTE Transfer to Operating Budget
Title I	Does not reflect the Grant Application's proposed increase of FTE from 1.35 to 1.43	(\$5,494.85)	0.08
Title IIA	Does not reflect the Grant Application's proposed reduction of FTE from .9574 to .6523.	\$13,784.65	0.34
Title III	Does not reflect the Grant Application's proposed moving LHS Teacher .25 (\$19,452.00) to Operating and moving Middle School Teacher .25 (\$13,411.00) and Bowman .25 (\$ 14,034.00) to Title III Acquisition due to non-funding of Title III Immigrant.	\$19,452.00	0.25
Title III Immigrant Grant	A reporting and classification error on our Student Information Management System caused the district to lose this grant even though we have eligible students. The error is being corrected and staff training is underway.	\$0.00	-
94-142 Grant	Grant amendment to be filed reducing other line items to cover payroll deficit.	\$0.00	-
Metco	Does not reflect the proposed moving KA's to FDK grant.	\$0.00	-
Essential School Health	An amendment will move money from other lines to cover payroll deficit.	\$0.00	-
FDK	Does not reflect the proposed moving Metco KA's and as many Operating Budget KA's as possible to grant.	(\$21,281.99)	0.80
Special Education Entitlement	Amount posted on web but application not filed yet.		
		\$6,459.81	1.47

**Table 3: Transfer Requests**

Transfer request for grant accounts will appear in the second quarter report when the grant amendments are completed.

# **EDCO** Collaborative

Strength in Diversity  
Quality through Collaboration

To: EDCO Member District School Committees  
Fr: Colleen Dolan  
Re: EDCO Articles of Agreement and Capital Reserve Fund  
Date: July 17, 2014

## Articles of Agreement:

Massachusetts' education collaboratives are required by new regulations to revise their Articles of Agreement to comply with changes in legislation. At their meeting today, the EDCO Collaborative Board of Directors approved the revised Articles. The next step is school committee approval, followed by approval of the Commissioner of Education. A summary of the provisions of EDCO's Articles as well as the Articles in their entirety is attached.

**Recommendation: to approve the EDCO Collaborative Articles of Agreement as presented.**

## Capital Reserve Fund:

We also seek your approval to allow us to establish a capital reserve fund for EDCO Collaborative. In the past, EDCO has funded capital expenses through the annual budget. EDCO Collaborative's auditors, Fritz DeGuglielmo LLC, have recommended the establishment of a capital reserve fund for expenses related to space acquisition and maintenance, and expenses meeting the DESE definition: "fixed assets, including real property, with a unit cost \$5,000 and a useful life of one year or more, debt payments and deposits into capital reserve." Establishing such an account will provide us the option of setting funds aside for anticipated expenses related to facility maintenance, technology, etc., and thus, avoid a capital assessment.

Funds may be used for:

1. Facility upgrades
2. Space modifications
3. Extraordinary maintenance expenses
4. Technology upgrades
5. Equipment with a unit cost \$5,000 and a useful life of one year or more

**Recommendation: to authorize EDCO Collaborative to establish a capital reserve fund to support costs associated with the acquisition, maintenance, and improvement of fixed assets, including real property, pursuant to a capital plan.**

The following are excerpts from EDCO Collaborative's Articles of Agreement on surplus and capital:

## "Surplus Funds:

Unexpended general funds, as defined in 603 CMR 50.00, at the end of the fiscal year plus any previous year's surplus funds, as determined through the financial statements, will be



considered cumulative surplus.(603 CMR 50.07 (9)) The determination of cumulative surplus shall not include funds deposited in a capital reserve fund as provided for in 603 CMR 50.07(10), funds deposited in trust in accordance with M.G.L. c. 32B, § 20, and any amounts prepaid for tuition or services in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E.

1. The Board will retain no more than 25 percent in cumulative surplus, in accordance with 603 CMR 50.03(5)(b)10.
2. On an annual basis, after the Board has discussed the audit results of the previous fiscal year, the Board shall determine and approve, by majority vote, the final dollar amount of the cumulative surplus.
3. The Board shall determine whether such final dollar amount of surplus funds is within the established 25 percent limit, and whether the funds will be retained by the Collaborative or whether all or some portion will be refunded to the Member Districts or credited to support programs and services offered to Member Districts.
4. Retained surplus may be used to support the budget in future years at the discretion of the Board.
5. Surplus funds will be distributed in proportional shares using the Enrollment Assessment formula articulated under Annual Member Assessment.

#### Capital:

The Board may create a capital reserve fund to support costs associated with the acquisition, maintenance, and improvement of fixed assets, including real property, pursuant to a capital plan.

1. The establishment of a capital reserve fund shall be subject to the approval of two-thirds of the Member Districts.
2. Deposits into the capital reserve fund shall be proposed and approved through the budget process, based on needs determined in the plan.
3. In the event that the purpose for which the capital reserve fund was created requires modification, the collaborative Board shall revise its capital plan and provide notice to all member districts. If the member district does not vote to disapprove the revised capital plan within a 45-day period, that member district shall be deemed to have approved the revised capital plan. Two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Member Districts is required to revise the capital plan.
4. The Board may vote to charge a capital assessment for capital costs not funded through the above process or not funded from available capital reserves. This capital assessment will be determined using the Enrollment Assessment formula previously articulated below under Annual Member Assessment."

In the event the Board determines EDCO's surplus to be over the 25% limit, a determination must be made to decide how surplus funds will be used. Some options are:

1. Offset the following years' budgets by reducing the membership assessment, tuitions, or fees for service
2. Transfer funds to restricted accounts: capital reserve fund or post retirement benefit trust
3. Return funds to member districts

## **EDCO Collaborative Articles of Agreement**

This agreement replaces the agreement  
dated 6.28.1988.

This agreement becomes effective  
as of the date on the signature page.

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## **PREAMBLE / AUTHORIZATION**

This document constitutes the Collaborative Agreement of EDCO Collaborative, established pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 40, Section 4E of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and acts or amendments thereof as they may from time to time be enacted by the legislature, and 603CMR50.00. This Collaborative Agreement shall not be effective until approved by the Member School Committees and Member Charter School Boards as indicated on the signatory page, and the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. This agreement replaces the agreement dated December 15, 1969 as most recently amended on June 28, 1988, entered into by and between the Member School Committees and Member Charter School Boards listed in Article I (herein, "Member Districts").

## **DEFINITIONS**

Commissioner – The Commissioner of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Board – Board of Directors of EDCO Collaborative comprised of Superintendents, School Committee Members, or Charter School Board Members voted by Member Districts

EDCO Collaborative Administrator – Member of EDCO Collaborative's Leadership Team including central office directors (i.e. Executive Director, Associate Executive Director, Business Administrator, Chief Financial Officer, Director of Informational Technology, Director of Seefurth Education Center) and EDCO Collaborative program directors

## **ARTICLE I: MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of EDCO Collaborative as of the effective date of this agreement, includes the School Committees and Charter School Boards from the following districts, as indicated by the signatures of the Chairs of the School Committees and Charter School Boards:

1. School Committee for the Acton Public Schools (until June 30, 2014)
2. School Committee for the Acton-Boxborough Regional School District
3. School Committee for the Arlington Public Schools
4. School Committee for the Bedford Public Schools
5. School Committee for the Belmont Public Schools
6. School Committee for the Boxborough Public Schools (until June 30, 2014)
7. School Committee for the Brookline Public Schools
8. School Committee for the Carlisle Public Schools
9. School Committee for the Concord Public Schools
10. School Committee for the Concord-Carlisle Regional School District
11. School Committee for the Lexington Public Schools

12. School Committee for the Lincoln Public Schools
13. School Committee for the Lincoln-Sudbury Regional School District
14. School Committee for the Newton Public Schools
15. School Committee for the Sudbury Public Schools
16. School Committee for the Waltham Public Schools
17. School Committee for the Watertown Public Schools
18. School Committee for the Wellesley Public Schools
19. School Committee for the Weston Public Schools
20. School Committee for the Winchester Public Schools

## **ARTICLE II: MISSION, OBJECTIVES, FOCUS, AND PURPOSES**

### **A. Mission of EDCO Collaborative:**

The mission of EDCO Collaborative is to cooperatively develop and deliver high quality and cost-effective programs and services for students, school districts, partner organizations and communities; to improve education through inter-district and inter-agency collaboration; and to enhance equity, intercultural understanding and equal opportunity in education.

### **B. Objectives of EDCO Collaborative:**

1. To provide day programs and other services for students with low-incidence disabilities in the least restrictive environment consistent with MGL c. 40 § 4E and 603 CMR 50.00
2. To provide day programs and services for at-risk students
3. To provide therapeutic services for adults with disabilities in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Services and /or other agencies
4. To offer quality professional learning opportunities to general and special education teachers and administrators, related service providers, School Committees, and Charter School Boards
5. To explore and pursue grants and other funding to support identified needs of the Member Districts and community
6. To offer cooperative and regional programs and/or services to help Member Districts maximize cost efficiency and program effectiveness through a collaborative effort

### **C. Focus of EDCO Collaborative:**

1. Programs and services for students and adults with disabilities and at-risk students
2. Professional learning
3. Pupil transportation

4. Support of initiatives from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education
5. Cooperative planning and delivery of services to meet the needs of the Member Districts

D. Purpose of EDCO Collaborative:

The purpose of EDCO Collaborative is to provide programs and services for students with disabilities and at-risk students, to provide therapeutic services for adults with disabilities in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Disabilities and / or other agencies, to provide professional learning opportunities to educators based on best practice, to enhance equity, intercultural understanding and equal opportunity in education and to provide other high quality cost-effective services to meet the changing needs of Member Districts. The Collaborative, therefore, exists to conduct educational programs and services which shall complement and strengthen the programs of Member Districts and community partners and increase educational opportunities for children when it is determined that such programs and services can most effectively and economically be provided on a collaborative basis. The foregoing purpose includes the authority of the Collaborative, acting through its Board, to contract with corporations, individuals, associations, agencies, and/or any other entities in order to obtain and provide services for Member Districts. In addition, the Collaborative will continue to increase and expand its level of service in general education, special education, professional learning and training opportunities, research and development of innovative programs, and in any such area determined to be a need by the Member Districts.

Notwithstanding any other provision of these articles, the Collaborative is organized exclusively for educational purposes, as specified in Section 501(c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code, and shall not carry on any activities not permitted to be carried on by any entity exempt from Federal income tax under Section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.

No substantial part of the activities of the Collaborative shall be carrying on of propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation, or participating in, or intervening in (including the publication or distribution of statements), any political campaign on behalf of any candidate for public office.

**ARTICLE III: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE OFFERED**

To complement the educational programs and services of the Member Districts in a cost-effective manner, EDCO Collaborative will offer the following:

1. Day school programs and related services for students with disabilities
2. Alternative programs for at-risk students
3. Therapeutic services for adults in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Disabilities and/or other agencies
4. Clinical evaluations

5. Professional learning opportunities
6. Financial management services
7. Pupil transportation
8. Other Member District services

The above list is not all-inclusive. The Board, acting at the request of the Executive Director and/or Member Districts, may consider and approve other programs and services to be provided by the Collaborative so long as such programs or services are in the best interest of the Member Districts, and are not inconsistent with M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and 603 CMR § 50.00, as amended from time to time.

#### **ARTICLE IV: GOVERNANCE**

Each Member District executing this Agreement shall annually appoint the Superintendent of Schools or one School Committee Member or Charter School Board Member as a voting member of the Collaborative Board. An appointee of the Commissioner shall be a voting member of the Collaborative Board.

The Board shall provide overall management and supervision of the Collaborative. No employee of the Collaborative may serve on the Board.

The Board shall meet at least six times each fiscal year. The schedule will be determined by the Board Chairperson in collaboration with the Executive Director. Special meetings may be called for special purposes by the Executive Director with consent of the Board Chairperson or by the Board Chairperson him/herself. Meetings will be posted in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A §§ 18-25.

A quorum for conducting business shall consist of a simple majority of the Board. A quorum is not needed to close the meeting. In order to pass any motion, a majority vote of Board Members present shall be required, except that a vote to terminate the Collaborative shall be approved in accordance with Article IX of this agreement.

The Executive Director, or designee, will act as Secretary to the Board. The Executive Director shall attend all Board meetings but shall not be entitled to a vote.

The Board shall, annually at the first meeting of the fiscal year, organize itself by electing a Chairperson and Vice-chairperson. The Chairperson may appoint standing committees and /or advisory committees of the Board as will facilitate the work of the Board.

Each Board Member shall be responsible for providing the following information to the representative's Member District in accordance with the provisions of M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and 603 CMR 50.00, et seq.

1. Quarterly information and updates to the Member District, at an open meeting, on collaborative activities, including, but not limited to, the programs and services provided by the collaborative
2. A copy of the Collaborative agreement and any amendments

3. A copy of the annual budget and tuition rate
4. A copy of the annual report and financial audit
5. Notification of applications for real estate mortgages
6. A copy of any capital plan approved by the Board
7. Any additional information as may be requested by a vote of the Member District
8. Any additional information as may be required in M.G.L. Ch. 40 § 4E, 603 CMR § 50.00, et seq. and any amendments thereto

Using its authority to establish standing committees to advise the Board in its annual business, the Board of the EDCO Collaborative shall establish an Advisory Council to the Board to meet concurrently with the Board and to provide guidance to the Board in its decisions. The Advisory Council to the Board shall consist of a Superintendent, School Committee person or Charter School Board person from each Member District, whoever is not serving currently on the Board, who shall be appointed annually by the Member District. The Advisory Council Member may receive Board materials, participate in Board discussions, and be appointed to Standing Committees of the Board. Advisory Council Members have no voting privileges on the Board.

#### **ARTICLE V: INDEMNIFICATION**

Neither the Executive Director nor any Board Member nor any Advisory Council Member nor any EDCO Collaborative administrator shall be liable to the Collaborative or to any Member District thereof for any act or omission of the Executive Director or any Board or Advisory Council Member or be held personally liable in connection with the affairs of the Collaborative except only liability arising out of his own willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard of duty to the Collaborative or its Member Districts.

Neither the Executive Director nor any Board Member nor any Advisory Council Member nor any EDCO Collaborative administrator shall be personally liable for any debt, claim, demand, judgment, decree, liability or obligation of any kind of, against, or with respect to the Collaborative or arising out of any action taken or omitted for or on behalf of the Collaborative and the Collaborative shall be solely liable therefore and resort shall be had exclusively to the Collaborative property for the payment or performance thereof and each Board or Advisory Council Member, Member District and any Executive Director shall be entitled to full indemnity and full reimbursement out of Collaborative property, including, without limitation, fees and disbursements of counsel, if, contrary to the provisions hereof, such Board or Advisory Council Member, Executive Director or Member District shall be held personally liable. Any person dealing with the Collaborative shall be informed of the indemnification contained herein and, where the Board deems it appropriate, documents or instruments executed by or by authority of the Board shall contain reference hereto.

The Executive Director and his/her legal representatives and each Board and Advisory Council Member and



his/her legal representatives and each Member District and its legal representatives shall be indemnified by the Collaborative against all liabilities and expenses, exclusive of amounts paid to the Collaborative, including judgments, fines, penalties, amounts paid in settlement and counsel fees, incurred in reasonable settlement of any action, suit or proceeding to which such Board Member, Member District or Collaborative Administrator or his/its legal representatives may be made a party or otherwise involved by reason of his/its capacity as Board or Advisory Council Member, Executive Director, Member District, or Collaborative Administrator except only liabilities and expenses arising out of his/its own willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard of duty to the Collaborative as finally adjudged in such action or, in the event of settlement or termination of such action without final adjudication, as determined by independent counsel for the Collaborative. Said right of indemnification shall be in addition to any other rights to which such Board or Advisory Council Member, Collaborative Director or Administrator or Member District may be entitled as a matter of law or which may be lawfully granted to him/it.

#### **ARTICLE VI: CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP**

Each Member District shall have the following rights and responsibilities as a member of EDCO Collaborative:

1. Each Board Member shall be entitled to a vote, which cannot be delegated to any other individual.
2. Each Board Member must attend training required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education as outlined in M.G.L. Ch. 40, § 4E; 603 CMR 50.05 and 603 CMR 50.12(3). Should a Board Member fail to complete the required training within the timelines set in law and regulations, notice will be given to the appointing Member District. Should the Board Member fail to complete the training within a reasonable time frame following notice to the appointing Member District, the Member District shall automatically become an inactive member of the Board, shall not count towards a quorum, and shall not have voting rights on the Board, but shall continue to have all other rights and obligations of membership. The Member District shall become an active Member and voting rights shall be reinstated once the Board Member completes the training or the Member District appoints a new representative.
3. No Board Member shall serve as a Collaborative Administrator or on the board of directors or as an employee of a related for-profit or non-profit organization.
4. No Board Member shall receive an additional salary or stipend for his/her service on the Board.
5. Each Member District shall contribute a membership assessment in accordance with Article VIII.

#### **ARTICLE VII: POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD AND APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD**

EDCO Collaborative shall exist as a public entity.

The Board shall be vested with the authority to enter into agreements with Member Districts, non-

memberdistricts, charter schools or other collaboratives to establish mutually beneficial programs and services or pricing arrangements.

The Board shall be responsible for the following, consistent with the requirements of law, regulation, and Article VIII of this agreement:

1. Ensuring adherence to this Agreement and progress toward achieving the purpose and objectives set forth in the Agreement
2. Determining the cost-effectiveness of programs and services offered by the Collaborative
3. Determining the appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of any borrowing, loans or mortgage
4. Approving all expenditures, including contracts, borrowing, and the purchase and sale of real estate
5. Ensuring an annual report for the previous fiscal year be prepared and submitted to the Commissioner and Chair of each Member District no later than January 1 of each year
6. Ensuring that an independent financial audit is completed annually and submitted to the Chair of each Member District, the Commissioner, and the State Auditor no later than January 1 of each year
7. The Board may delegate to the Treasurer the causing of an audit. The Board shall have all the powers and duties conferred and imposed upon educational collaborative boards by law and conferred and imposed upon it by this Agreement and such other additional powers and duties as are specified in M.G.L. c.40, §4E, 603CMR 50.00 and any amendments thereof, or as may be specified in any other applicable general or special law. The Board may adopt by-laws consistent with law and regulations and with this Agreement to govern the day-to-day operation or other appropriate matters of the Collaborative. If a particular matter is not covered by such a document, then any such matter will be handled, as the Board deems appropriate by a vote of the Board Members present and voting. It is the function and responsibility of the Board to formulate policy for the Collaborative and to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and 603 CMR 50.00. The Board shall review the effectiveness of such policies to ensure currency and appropriateness, and may establish a subcommittee to make recommendations to the Board concerning such policies.
8. The Board may establish subcommittees such as an Executive Subcommittee and a Finance and Administration Subcommittee to expedite the work of the Board and to provide guidance and support in managing the essential functions and business of the Collaborative.
9. The Board shall hire all employees of the Collaborative and ensure that all employees possess the necessary and required credentials and approvals, to the extent applicable, including those required by M.G.L. c. 71, § 38G and 603 CMR 7.00, M.G.L. c. 74 and 603 CMR 4.00, and all acts and regulations amendatory thereof.
10. The Board shall appoint the Executive Director, Business Administrator, Treasurer and at least one registered nurse, and oversee the operation of the Collaborative to the end that the educational needs of

students enrolled in Collaborative programs, as well as the goals of any cooperative program of the Collaborative, are met in an effective and economical way. The Board will ensure there is segregation of duties among the Executive Director, Business Administrator, and Treasurer.

11. The Board shall have the authority to borrow money for any purpose consistent with law, regulations, and Article VIII of this Agreement, including, but not limited to, to meet ongoing payroll obligations, to finance the purchase and/or lease of any real or personal property, including equipment, land and/or a building(s) (including portables), and/or to finance any renovation, reconstruction and/or construction of any real property. The Board shall be responsible for ensuring that any borrowing, loans, or mortgages are cost-effective and necessary to carry out the purposes for which the Collaborative is established, in the best interest of the Collaborative and its Member Districts, and consistent with the terms of this agreement.

12. The Executive Director shall have the day to day responsibility for all activities of the Collaborative, shall be responsible for overseeing all of its programs, shall be responsible for implementing the policies and by-laws, if any, and for developing procedures consistent with the policies of the Board. The Board may delegate the Executive Director to supervise and discipline personnel to the extent permitted by applicable law and regulation. In addition, the Executive Director shall have the authority granted by M.G.L. c.40, §4E and any amendments thereto. The Board shall complete an annual evaluation of the Executive Director in accordance with 603 CMR 50.06(2).

13. The Executive Director shall be charged with maintaining a website for the Collaborative in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40 § 4E. Said website shall include a list of Board Members, copies of Board Meeting minutes, a copy of the Collaborative Agreement and any amendments to the Agreement, a copy of the annual independent audit, a copy of the Annual Report required by 603 CMR 50.08, and contact information for the Collaborative and key Collaborative staff members.

14. The Board shall appoint a Business Administrator subject to M.G.L. Chapter 41, Sec. 52 who shall have such powers and responsibilities determined by the Board in its approved job description. Said duties are similar to those of a town accountant and are consistent with 603 CMR 50.00. The Board shall ensure that an annual evaluation of the Business Administrator occur in accordance with 603 CMR 50.06(3). The Business Manager may not be the Treasurer of the Collaborative.

15. The Treasurer who shall have such powers and responsibilities as determined by the Board and as stipulated in the Board approved job description, consistent with 603 CMR 50.00. The Board shall annually evaluate the Treasurer's performance and effectiveness. No Collaborative employee or appointed representative to the Board may serve concurrently as the Treasurer. The Treasurer shall report directly to the Board.

**ARTICLE VIII: FINANCIAL**

A. Financial Terms:

The Board may enter into contracts to obtain the funds necessary to carry out the purpose for which the Collaborative was established.

The Collaborative is subject to M.G.L. c. 30B for the procurement of goods and services.

B. Collaborative Fund:

1. The Board shall establish and manage a fund to be known as the EDCO Collaborative Fund, herein, “the Fund”.

2. The Fund shall be the depository of all monies paid by Member Districts and non-member districts and all grants, gifts, or contracts from the federal government, state government, charitable foundations, private corporations, or any other source; all such monies shall be paid directly to the Board and deposited in the Fund.

3. The Treasurer, subject to the direction of the Board, shall receive and disburse all money belonging to the Collaborative without further appropriation.

4. The Board must approve all payments through designated signatories voted by the Board.

5. The Treasurer may make appropriate investments of funds of the Collaborative not immediately necessary for operations, consistent with M.G.L. c. 44, §55B.

C. Borrowing, Loans, and Mortgages:

The Board may authorize the borrowing of funds or enter into short-term or long-term agreements or mortgages, and acquire or improve real property to support Collaborative operations, subject to the following procedures:

1. All borrowing, loans, and mortgages shall be discussed at a public meeting of the Board.

2. The Board shall investigate options related to the terms of borrowing, loans, and mortgages in order to determine that the terms related to any borrowing, loans and mortgages are the most favorable available at the time of the application.

3. The Board shall be responsible for ensuring that the borrowing, loans, and mortgages are necessary to carry out the purposes for which the Collaborative is established, in the best interest of the Collaborative and its Member Districts and consistent with the terms of this agreement.

4. In the event that such borrowing, loan or mortgage is for the acquisition or improvement of real property:

a. The Board shall discuss its intent to apply for a real estate mortgage at a public meeting of the Board prior to the meeting of the Collaborative Board at which the final vote is taken.

b. The Board shall provide notice to each Member District within thirty (30) calendar days of applying for real estate mortgages.

c. The Board shall approve such action by a majority vote.

D. Surplus Funds:

Unexpended general funds, as defined in 603 CMR 50.00, at the end of the fiscal year plus any previous year's surplus funds, as determined through the financial statements, will be considered cumulative surplus. (603 CMR 50.07 (9)) The determination of cumulative surplus shall not include funds deposited in a capital reserve as provided for in 603 CMR 50.07(10), funds deposited in trust in accordance with M.G.L. c. 32B, § 20, and any amounts prepaid for tuition or services in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E.

1. The Board will retain no more than 25 percent in cumulative surplus, in accordance with 603 CMR 50.03(5)(b)10.
2. On an annual basis, after the Board has discussed the audit results of the previous fiscal year, the Board shall determine and approve, by majority vote, the final dollar amount of the cumulative surplus.
3. The Board shall determine whether such final dollar amount of surplus funds is within the established 25 percent limit, and whether the funds will be retained by the Collaborative or whether all or some portion will be refunded to the Member Districts or credited to support programs and services offered to Member Districts.
4. Retained surplus may be used to support the budget in future years at the discretion of the Board.
5. Surplus funds will be distributed in proportional shares using the *Enrollment Assessment* formula articulated under Annual Member Assessment.

E. Development of the Collaborative Budget:

The Board shall annually determine the Collaborative budget consistent with the timelines, terms, and requirements in M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E, regulations promulgated by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and this agreement.

By May 15 of each year, the Executive Director shall propose a budget for the upcoming fiscal year to the Board. The Board shall hold a public hearing on the proposed budget prior to its adoption at a public meeting. The Board shall adopt the final budget by an affirmative majority vote at a subsequent meeting no earlier than ten (10) working days after the Board meeting at which the Collaborative budget was first proposed but no later than June 15 of the preceding fiscal year. Adoption of the budget shall require a majority vote Board.

1. The proposed budget shall contain all planned financial activity for the upcoming fiscal year.
2. Expenditures from grant funds, trust funds and other funds not designated as general funds that by law may be expended by the Board without further appropriation shall be segregated in the budget.
3. The proposed budget shall be classified into such line items as the Board shall determine.
4. Capital: Capital is defined as fixed assets, including real property, with a unit cost of \$5,000 and a useful life of one year or more, debt payments and deposits into capital reserve. All capital costs to support collaborative operations will be included in the budget. Capital costs will be included in the calculation of

the annual membership assessments, tuition rates, or fees for services, depending on the program(s) which the capital cost(s) will benefit.

The Board may create a capital reserve fund to support costs associated with the acquisition, maintenance, and improvement of fixed assets, including real property, pursuant to a capital plan.

- a. The establishment of a capital reserve fund shall be subject to the approval of two-thirds of the Member Districts.
- b. Deposits into the capital reserve shall be proposed and approved through the budget process, based on needs determined in the capital plan.
- c. In the event that the purpose for which the capital reserve was created requires modification, the collaborative Board shall revise its capital plan and provide notice to all member districts. If the member district does not vote to disapprove the revised capital plan within a 45-day period, that member district shall be deemed to have approved the revised capital plan. Two-thirds (2/3) approval of the Member Districts is required to revise the capital plan.
- d. By an affirmative vote of 2/3 of the Board members, the Board may vote to charge a capital assessment for capital costs not funded through the above process or not funded from available capital reserves. This capital assessment will be determined using the Enrollment Assessment formula previously articulated below under Annual Member Assessment.

Revenues of the Collaborative shall be derived from the following sources:

F. Program Tuition:The tuition for each program shall be determined based on the projected enrollment in each program, and the cost of operating the program including salaries, benefits, overhead, and fixed costs, and program supplies and materials. Cost estimates are divided by the projected number of students to determine tuition rate. Rates are recommended by the Executive Director and approved by the Board.

Non-member districts will be charged a surcharge, not to exceed twenty (20) percent over the cost for Member Districts, to support administrative and overhead costs. The Board may waive or decrease the percentage of the surcharge or fee charged to non-member districts when doing so is determined to be in the best interest of the Collaborative.

G. Annual Membership Assessment:Member Districts shall, on July 1 of each year, be assessed an amount determined annually by the Board to offset a portion of the administrative and overhead costs of the Collaborative. The annual membership assessment will be determined using two parts. Part one is entitled *Basic Assessment* and is assigned based on school district grade configuration i.e., K-8, K-12, 9-12. It is used to offset the cost of services such as administrative roundtables. The second part entitled *Enrollment Assessment* is a formula based on the total number of students enrolled in the Member District as of October 1 of the prior calendar year (as published on the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education website, "Enrollment Data"). It is used

to offset the cost of providing services such as professional learning opportunities. The two parts are added together to determine the total annual membership assessment.

H. Fees for Services: Fees for services offered by the Collaborative, as determined by the Executive Director and approved by the Board, shall be assessed to Member and Non-member districts. Fees for services shall be determined based on the projected number of users and the cost of providing services including salaries, benefits, overhead, and fixed costs, and program supplies and materials. Non-member districts will be charged a surcharge, not to exceed twenty (20) percent over the cost for Member Districts, to support administrative and overhead costs. The Board shall establish the surcharge or fee annually based on the total administrative and overhead cost of the Collaborative and may waive or decrease the percentage of the surcharge or fee when doing so is determined to be in the best interest of the Collaborative.

I. Gifts, Grants and Contributions: The Board may, from time to time, accept gifts, grants or contributions from governmental and private sources, whether in cash or in kind, which will further the purposes of the Collaborative. Revenues and expenses from grants and contracts are included in the budget presented to the Board for approval, i.e., contract with the Department of Developmental Disabilities to provide therapeutic services for adults. The Treasurer shall certify and transmit the budget and the tuition rates, membership assessment and fees-for-service for the upcoming fiscal year to each Member District not later than June 30 of the preceding fiscal year.

1. Member Districts and non-member districts shall be invoiced monthly for tuitions and fees for service. Payments are due within thirty (30) days of receipt of the invoice.

2. Member Districts shall be invoiced annually for the membership assessment. Payments are due within sixty (60) days.

3. Procedure for Amending the Budget: In the event it becomes necessary to amend the budget, the following procedure shall apply:

- a. All budget amendments shall be proposed at a public meeting of the Board, and must be approved by a majority vote of the Board to take effect. Budget amendments shall be proposed as needed. When the need for a budget amendment is determined, the amendment will first be proposed by EDCO Collaborative administration to the Finance and Administration Subcommittee for consideration and a recommendation to the full Board. Amendments and the recommendation of the Finance and Administration Subcommittee will be presented for a Board vote at the next Board meeting.
- b. Any amendment to the budget that results in an increase in the tuition rates, the membership assessment or fees-for-service shall adhere to the following procedures:
  - i. All Board members shall, within ten (10) working days of the public meeting at which the amendment was first proposed, report to their Member Districts the content of the proposed

amendment.

ii. All amendments shall be voted on by the Board at a second public Board meeting no earlier than thirty (30) working days after the Board meeting at which the amendment was first proposed; adoption shall require a majority vote.

iii. The Treasurer shall certify and transmit the amended tuition rates, membership assessment and fees-for-service to each Member District not later than ten (10) working days following the affirmative vote of the Board.

c. The Board has the authority to reduce tuition rates, membership assessment, and fees-for-service to Member Districts and non-member districts when doing so is determined to be in the best interest of the Collaborative.

4. No part of the net earnings of the collaborative shall inure to the benefit of any member of the Board, Collaborative Administrators, or any private individual (except that reasonable compensation may be paid for services rendered to or for the Collaborative by a private individual who is not a Board Member or Collaborative Administrator). No Board Member or Collaborative Administrator shall be entitled to share in the distribution of any of the assets upon dissolution of the Collaborative.

#### **ARTICLE IX: METHOD OF TERMINATION**

A Member District may request that the Board initiate proceedings to terminate the EDCO Collaborative agreement by giving notice to all other Member Districts and the executive director at least twelve (12) months before the end of the current fiscal year.

Within thirty (30) days of a request that the Board initiate termination proceedings, the Board shall discuss the request to terminate the collaborative and determine next steps. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Board is required in order to initiate termination proceedings. Should the Board vote to initiate termination proceedings, notice must be provided to all Member Districts within ten (10) working days of such vote.

Prior to termination, the Board shall:

1. Cause a final fiscal audit of the Collaborative to be performed, including an accounting of all assets and liabilities (debts and obligations) of the Collaborative and proposed disposition of the same. A copy shall be made available to each Member District and to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

2. Determine the fair market value of all assets of the Collaborative.

3. Determine the process for appropriate disposition of state and federal funds, equipment, and supplies.

4. Determine which Member District(s) will maintain fiscal, employee, and program records.

5. Determine the means for meeting all liabilities (debts and obligations) of the Collaborative, including obligations for post-employment benefits.

6. The Collaborative must meet all liabilities before any monies are distributed to the Member Districts.



7. Distribute surplus or reserve funds in proportional shares using the *Enrollment Assessment* formula previously articulated above under Annual Member Assessment.
8. Return individual student records to their respective school district.
9. Assets shall be sold and monies distributed in proportional shares using the *Enrollment Assessment* formula previously articulated above under Annual Member Assessment.
10. The Executive Director shall notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in writing at least one hundred eighty (180) days before such termination.
11. The Board shall notify the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education of the official termination date and submit documentation required by 603 CMR 50.11 to the Department.

#### **ARTICLE X:METHOD OF WITHDRAWAL**

1. A Member District may withdraw from the Collaborative as of July 1st in any year provided that such district provides written notice to the Executive Director of the Collaborative and the Board of such intent by December 31st with an effective date of July 1st for the withdrawal. Upon receipt of such notice, the Collaborative Agreement must be amended (see Article XII) and approved, first, by the Board, then, by a majority of the Member Districts, and finally, by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and provided that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has approved the withdrawal by April 30th of the fiscal year in which the withdrawal is to occur.
2. Written notification of a Member District's intent to withdraw from the Collaborative at the end of a fiscal year shall include the following:
  - a. Notification addressed to the chair of the Board and the Executive Director that the Member District has voted to withdraw from the Collaborative with the effective date of withdrawal; and
  - b. A copy of the minutes from the School Committee or Charter School Board meeting at which the Member District voted to withdraw from the Collaborative.
3. An amendment to this Agreement shall be prepared to reflect changes in the Agreement caused as a result of the change in membership of the Collaborative.
4. Upon withdrawal, a former Member District shall not be entitled to any assets or a portion of any assets of the Collaborative, including any surplus funds that may have been carried over from prior years and any reserve funds that may have been established by the Board.
5. The withdrawing Member District must fulfill all of its financial obligations and commitments to the Collaborative.
6. A School Committee or Charter School Board that has withdrawn from the Collaborative will continue to be

liable to the Collaborative for its proportional share of liabilities and any debts, claims, demands, or judgments against the Collaborative, incurred during said School Committee's or Charter School Board's membership. Such proportional share is determined by the *Enrollment Assessment* formula previously articulated above under Annual Member Assessment.

7. Upon withdrawal, the withdrawing Member District will be reimbursed any funds prepaid to the Collaborative by the Member District for tuition or services under M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E.

8. The withdrawal of any Member District(s) at any time shall not affect the status of this Agreement and the same shall remain in full force and effect until specifically changed or amended consistent with Article XII.

9. If, after the withdrawal of a Member District (s), less than two Member Districts remain, the Collaborative Board will initiate termination proceedings as provided in Article IX.

#### **ARTICLE XI: PROCEDURE FOR ADMITTING NEW MEMBER DISTRICTS**

Any School Committee or Charter School Board may seek to become a Member District of the Collaborative upon a majority vote of the Board and provided that the Collaborative Agreement is amended (see Article XII) and approved by a majority of the Member Districts and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

1. At least 180 days prior to the beginning of a new fiscal year, the prospective Member District shall submit in writing to the chair of the Board and the Executive Director its request to join the Collaborative.

2. Upon receipt of the prospective member district's request to join, the Board will consider the request.

3. Upon a majority affirmative vote of the Board, this Agreement shall be amended to add the new Member District.

4. The votes for approval may provide for the deferral of the admission of a new Member District until July 1 of the subsequent fiscal year.

5. The admission of a new Member District to the Collaborative shall become effective only after the execution and delivery by the current Member Districts and the applicant School Committee or Charter School Board of an amendment to this Agreement agreeing to be bound by all the terms and conditions thereof, and approval by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

6. A School Committee or Charter School Board may be admitted to the Collaborative as of July 1st of any fiscal year provided that all required approvals, including that of Member Districts, and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, are obtained by the preceding April 30th of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the new Member District is to be admitted to the Collaborative. If all steps for admission have been completed with the exception of approval of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the new Member District may participate in meetings of the Board and receive other benefits of membership as determined by the Board, except that the new Member District may not vote on any matter.

7. Following the approval for admission to the Collaborative and continuing until the actual date of such admission, the School Committee or Charter School Board may designate a non-voting representative to the Board.

#### **ARTICLE XII:PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING THE AGREEMENT**

This Agreement may be amended from time to time as needed, pursuant to the following procedure:

1. Any Member District, Board Member, or the Collaborative Executive Director may initiate a proposal for amendment of this Agreement.
2. The proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to the Secretary of the Board no less than ten (10) days prior to a meeting of the Board at which it shall first be read.
3. The proposed amendment shall be read a second time at the regular meeting next subsequent to its first majority reading, at which time it may be approved by a vote of the Board Members present and voting.
4. If approved by the Board, the proposed amendment shall then be submitted to Member Districts. If approved by a simple majority of Member Districts, the proposed amendment shall be submitted for approval to the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. If approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, the proposed amendment shall become effective.

#### **ARTICLE XIII:NON-DISCRIMINATION PRACTICES**

EDCO Collaborative does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability or national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, administrative policies, scholarship or loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs or in employment. The Board's policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business.

This Collaborative Agreement shall not be effective until approved by the Member Districts as indicated on the signatory page, and the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The Agreement is

authorized by a vote of each of the Member Districts and signed by the Chairperson of each Member District.

**APPROVALS:**

Date of first reading: 3.1.2013

Date of second reading: 3.5.2013

Date approved by Collaborative Board of Directors:

Approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE ACTON-BOXBOROUGH REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON - SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE BROOKLINE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE CARLISLE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE CONCORD PUBLIC SCHOOL

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE CONCORD-CARLISLE REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE EXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE LINCOLN PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE LINCOLN-SUDBURY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE NEWTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE SUDBURY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE WALTHAM PUBLIC SCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOL COMMITTEE FOR THE WATERTOWN PUBLIC SCHOOL

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOLCOMMITTEEFORTHEWELLESLEYPUBLICSCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOLCOMMITTEEFORTHEWESTONPUBLICSCHOOLS

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON-SCHOOLCOMMITTEEFORTHEWINCHESTERPUBLICSCHOOLS

APPROVED BY THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
COMMISSIONER OF ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION



## **COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT FOR LABBB EDUCATIONAL COLLABORATIVE**

Pursuant to *M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E*.

### **PREAMBLE / AUTHORIZATION**

This document constitutes the Collaborative Agreement of the LABBB Educational Collaborative (herein LABBB or the Collaborative) established pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 40, Section 4E of the General Laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and acts or amendments thereof as they may from time to time be enacted by the legislature, and 603 CMR 50.00. This collaborative agreement shall not be effective until approved by the Massachusetts Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

This agreement will be effective upon the approval of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, as indicated on the signatory page.

### **SECTION I: MEMBERSHIP**

The membership of LABBB, as of the effective date of this agreement, includes the school committees (herein Member Districts) from the following districts, as indicated by the signatures of the chairs of the school committees:

- A. School Committee for the Lexington Public Schools
- B. School Committee for the Arlington Public Schools
- C. School Committee for the Burlington Public Schools
- D. School Committee for the Bedford Public Schools
- E. School Committee for the Belmont Public Schools

### **SECTION II: MISSION, OBJECTIVES, FOCUS, AND PURPOSES**

The mission of this Collaborative is to jointly conduct educational programs and/or services for Member Districts and non-member districts in a cost-effective manner, increase educational opportunities for children ages 3-22 and to improve educational outcomes for students.

The purposes of this Collaborative are to provide intensive educational, vocational, therapeutic, and recreational programs and services for students with disabilities which are low-incidence in their districts of residence; to provide professional development to educators; and to provide

related services to students with low-incidence disabilities in Member Districts and non-member districts.

The focus of this Collaborative is the creation of special education programs and services in the least restrictive environment and comprehensive professional development within the local communities of the Member Districts.

The overall objectives of this Collaborative include:

- A. to improve the academic achievement of students with low-incidence disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- B. to offer a variety of quality professional development opportunities to general and special education teachers, administrators and related service providers; and
- C. to offer all programs and services in a cost-effective manner.

### **SECTION III: PROGRAMS AND SERVICES TO BE OFFERED**

The Collaborative will offer the following programs and services, which shall complement the educational programs and services of the Member Districts in a cost-effective manner:

- A. day school placements and other programs and services for students with low-incidence disabilities;
- B. professional development programs for general and special educators;
- C. vocational/occupational educational opportunities for Member Districts;
- D. vocational/occupational exploratory and major trade/technical course concentrations in collaboration with Chapter 74 schools;
- E. transportation services;
- F. 45 day assessment programs; and
- G. consultation services, BCBA consultation and direct services and other Behavioral consultation services.

The programs/services listed above are not all-inclusive; the Board of Directors, acting at the request of the Executive Director and/or Member Districts may consider and approve other programs and services to be provided by the Collaborative so long as such programs/services are in the best interest of the Member Districts, and are not inconsistent with M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and 603 CMR 50.00, et seq., as amended from time to time.

### **SECTION IV: GOVERNANCE**

Each school committee executing this Collaborative agreement shall annually appoint the superintendent of schools or one school committee member to serve as its representative on the LABBB Board of Directors; these Board members shall be referred to in this agreement as "appointed representatives." An appointee of the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education shall be a voting member of the LABBB Collaborative Board of Directors. The

educational Collaborative shall be managed by the LABBB Collaborative Board of Directors, hereinafter referred to as the “Board”.

- A. Regular meetings of the Board shall be held six times per year from September to June; July and August meetings will be scheduled at the discretion of the Board. Public notice will be given in accordance with M.G.L. c. 30A, §§ 18-25 and meeting minutes will be posted on the LABBB website.
- B. A quorum for conducting business shall consist of a simple majority of the voting members of the Board. A quorum is not needed to close the meeting.
- C. In order to pass any motion, a majority vote of the appointed representatives present shall be required, except that a vote to terminate the Collaborative shall be approved in accordance with Section XI of this agreement.
- D. The executive director, or designee, will act as executive secretary to the Board. The executive director shall attend all Board meetings but shall not be entitled to a vote.
- E. The Board shall annually organize itself by electing a chairperson by a majority vote of the members present at the first Board meeting of the year. The chairperson, by vote of the Board, may appoint such subcommittees or advisory or operating committees of the Board as will facilitate the work of the Board.
- F. LABBB will maintain a website that will list the appointed representatives of the Board, meeting minutes, Collaborative agreement, annual report, annual audit and contact information of key collaborative office staff.

#### **SECTION V: CONDITIONS OF MEMBERSHIP**

Each Member District shall have the following rights and responsibilities as a member of LABBB:

- A. Each appointed representative on the Board shall be entitled to a vote.
- B. Each appointed representative shall be responsible for providing timely information and updates to its appointing Member District(s) on LABBB Collaborative activities, as outlined in M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and 603 CMR 50.04(2) and for providing other information as required or requested.
- C. Each appointed representative is expected to attend every Board meeting. When an appointed representative has missed one-half (1/2) of the meetings within a fiscal year, the chair of the Board shall inform the chair of the appointing Member District of the appointed representative’s absences. An appointed representative who misses more than two-thirds (2/3) of the Board meetings within a fiscal year will no longer be considered an appointed representative on the Board. The Board will notify the respective Member District that the seat will remain vacant until such time as the Member District, by appropriate vote, appoints a new representative. When a seat becomes vacant, the appointed representative shall automatically become an inactive member of the Board, shall not count towards a quorum, and shall not have voting rights on the Board, but the Member District shall continue to have all other rights and obligations of membership.



- D. Each appointed representative must attend training required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (herein Department), as outlined in M.G.L. Ch. 40, § 4E; 603 CMR 50.05 and 603 CMR 50.12(3). Should an appointed representative fail to complete the required training within the timelines set in law and regulations, the appointed representative shall automatically become an inactive member of the Board, shall not count towards a quorum, and shall not have voting rights on the Board, but the Member District shall continue to have all other rights and obligations of membership. Notice will be provided to the appointing Member District prior to the removal of voting rights. The Member District shall become an active Member District and voting rights shall be reinstated once the appointed representative completes the training.
- E. No appointed representative on the Board shall serve as a member of a board of directors or as an officer or employee of any related for-profit or non-profit organization as defined in M.G.L. c.40, § 4E, as most recently amended.
- F. No appointed representative shall receive an additional salary or stipend for his/her service as a Board member. All employees and appointed representatives shall comply with M.G.L. c. 268 A.
- G. No appointed representative shall delegate his/her powers or send a representative in his/her place as a voting Board member and no Member District shall delegate the rights, responsibilities, or duties of its appointed representative to any other individual, unless the Member District is replacing the appointed representative with that individual.
- H. At the discretion of the Board a new Member District must contribute classroom space within its respective school buildings for the collaborative to build and operate educational programs.

## **SECTION VI: POWERS AND DUTIES OF THE BOARD AND APPOINTED REPRESENTATIVES TO THE BOARD**

The LABBB Board shall manage the Collaborative and shall be responsible for providing fiduciary and organizational oversight and accountability over the operation of the Collaborative. The Board shall be vested with all authority and responsibilities provided to it by M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and 603 CMR 50.00 and all acts and regulations amendatory thereof, including but not limited to the following:

- A. It is the function and responsibility of the Board to formulate policy for the Collaborative, and to ensure compliance with applicable state and federal laws and regulations, including M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and 603 CMR 50.00.
- B. The LABBB Educational Collaborative is a governmental entity, and, in compliance with M.G.L. c. 30B, may enter into contracts for the purchase of supplies, materials and services and for the purchase or leasing of land, buildings and equipment as considered necessary by the Board.
- C. The Board shall be vested with the authority to enter into agreements with Member Districts, non-member districts, adjunct member districts and other collaboratives to

establish mutually beneficial programs, health services, facility rentals, and services or pricing arrangements.

- D. The Board shall be responsible for:
  - 1. ensuring adherence to this Collaborative agreement and progress toward achieving the purposes and objectives set forth in the agreement;
  - 2. determining the cost-effectiveness of programs and services offered by the Collaborative;
  - 3. determining the appropriateness and cost-effectiveness of any borrowing, loans, or mortgages; and ensuring that any borrowing, loans or mortgages are cost-effective, necessary to carry out the purpose for which the Collaborative is established, in the best interest of the Collaborative and its Member Districts, and consistent with terms of this agreement, including Section VII; and
  - 4. approving all expenditures, including but not limited to contracts, borrowing, and the purchase and sale of fixed assets and real estate.
- E. The Board has standing to sue and be sued to the same extent as a city, town, or regional school district.
- F. The Board is a public employer and shall hire all employees of the educational Collaborative and ensure that all employees possess the necessary and required credentials and approvals as required by M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E.
- G. The Board shall hire an executive director to oversee and manage the operation of the Collaborative, a business manager or an employee with responsibilities similar to those of a town accountant to oversee Collaborative finances, at least one school nurse to support Collaborative programs, and a treasurer, who shall annually give bond consistent with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E. The Board shall ensure that there is segregation of duties between the executive director, treasurer, and business manager, and that these employees shall not serve as an appointed representative on the Board or as an officer or employee of any related for-profit or non-profit organization as defined in M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E.
- H. The Board shall ensure that no employee of the educational Collaborative is employed at any related for-profit or non-profit organization.
- I. The Board shall develop such policies as it deems necessary to support the operation of the Collaborative, including, but not limited to, policies relative to personnel, students, finance and internal controls, health and nursing, and any other policies required by state or federal law and regulation. The Board shall review the effectiveness of such policies to ensure currency and appropriateness, and may establish a subcommittee to make recommendations to the Board concerning such policies.
- J. The Board shall ensure that the Collaborative completes and files a Board approved annual report and an annual independent audit no later than January 1 of each year to the chair of each Member District, the Commissioner of Elementary and Secondary Education, as well as such other student, program, financial and staffing information, reports or documents as the Department deems necessary. The Board shall ensure that annual reports and annual independent audits are filed with appropriate governmental agencies and posted on the Collaborative's website, consistent with the requirements of M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E and 603 CMR 50.00.

- K. The Board shall establish a process to provide to Member Districts, students, parents/guardians, the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, and the public, all information required by law and regulation.
- L. The Board will have the authority to enter into agreements with Member Districts and non-member and adjunct member districts.

## **SECTION VII: FINANCE**

### **A. Financial Terms:**

1. Surcharges may be charged to non-member districts and adjunct member districts for services rendered by the Collaborative to offset the total administrative costs, including overhead and unfunded liabilities. The Board shall establish the surcharge, not to exceed 25%, and may waive or decrease the percentage of the surcharge charged to non-member districts or adjunct member districts when doing so is determined to be in the best interest of the Collaborative.
2. The Board may, by majority vote, apply for and accept gifts, grants, or contributions from governmental and private sources, whether in cash or in kind.
3. The Board may enter into contracts to obtain the funds necessary to carry out the purposes for which the Collaborative was established.
4. The Collaborative is subject to M.G.L. c. 30B for the procurement of goods and services.

### **B. The Collaborative Fund:**

1. The Board shall establish and manage a fund to be known as the *LABBB Educational Collaborative Fund* (herein, "the LABBB fund").
2. The LABBB fund shall be the depository of all monies paid by the Member Districts, non-member districts, adjunct member districts and all grants, gifts, or contracts from the federal government, state government, charitable foundations, private corporations, or any other source; all such monies shall be paid directly to the Board and deposited in the LABBB fund.
3. The treasurer, subject to the direction of the Board, shall receive and disburse all money belonging to the Collaborative without further appropriation.
4. All payments must be approved by the Board.
5. The treasurer may make appropriate investments of funds of the Collaborative not immediately necessary for operations, consistent with M.G.L. c. 44, § 55B.

### **C. Borrowing, Loans, and Mortgages:**

1. The Board may authorize the borrowing of funds or enter into short- or long-term agreements or mortgages, and acquire or improve real property to support Collaborative operations, subject to the following procedures:

- a. all borrowing, loans, and mortgages shall be discussed at a public meeting of the Board;
  - b. the Board shall investigate options related to borrowing, loans, and mortgages in order to determine that the terms related to any borrowing, loans and mortgages are the most favorable available at the time of the application;
  - c. the Board shall determine, at a public meeting, through a majority vote, that the terms related to borrowing, loans, and mortgages are cost-effective and are the most favorable available at the time of the application; and
  - d. the Board shall determine, at a public meeting, through a majority vote, that the borrowing, loans and mortgages are necessary to carry out the purposes for which the collaborative is established.
2. In the event that such borrowing loan or mortgage is for the acquisition or improvement of real property:
    - a. the Board shall discuss its intent to apply for a real estate mortgage at a public meeting of the Board prior to the meeting of the Collaborative Board at which the final vote is taken;
    - b. the Board shall provide notice to each Member District within thirty (30) calendar days of applying for real estate mortgages; and
    - c. the Board shall approve such action by a majority vote.
- D. Surplus Funds: Unexpended general funds as defined in 603 CMR 50.00 at the end of the fiscal year, plus any previous year's surplus funds, as determined through the financial statements, will be considered cumulative surplus.
1. The determination of cumulative surplus shall not include funds deposited in a capital reserve as provided for in 603 CMR 50.07(10), funds deposited in trust in accordance with M.G.L. c. 32B, § 20 and any amounts prepaid for services or tuitions in accordance with M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E.
  2. The Board will retain no more than 25 percent in cumulative surplus in accordance with 603 CMR 50.03(5)(b)10.
  3. On an annual basis, after the Board has discussed the audit results of the previous fiscal year, the Board shall approve, by majority vote, the final dollar amount of the cumulative surplus.
  4. The Board shall determine whether such surplus funds is within the established 25 percent limit, and whether the funds will be retained by the Collaborative or whether all or some portion will be refunded to the Member Districts, or credited to support programs and services offered to Member Districts.
  5. In the event an amount is to be refunded or credited to the Member Districts, each Member District's share will be apportioned in accordance to a percentage of its student membership, space allocation, and membership in the Collaborative for the previous fiscal year. The collaborative formula for distributing a specific amount of surplus funds for the Member Districts is based

on three factors. 1. 25% of students enrolled in the collaborative. 2. 25% of total space allocated to the collaborative in the district 3. 50% is for membership in the collaborative.

E. Annual Budget Preparation and Assessment of Costs

1. Development of the Collaborative Budget: The Board shall annually determine the Collaborative budget consistent with the timelines, terms, and requirements in M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E, regulations promulgated by the Department and this agreement.
  - a. By April 30 of each year, the Board shall propose a budget for the upcoming fiscal year. The budget shall identify the programs or services to be offered by the Collaborative in the upcoming fiscal year and the corresponding costs.
  - b. The proposed budget shall contain all planned financial activity for the upcoming fiscal year.
  - c. Expenditures from grant funds, trust funds and other funds not designated as general funds that by law may be expended by the Board without further appropriation shall be segregated in the budget.
  - d. The general fund budget shall segregate all operating expenditures, capital expenditures, debt service payments and deposits to capital reserve.
  - e. The proposed budget shall be classified into such line items as the Board shall determine, but shall, at a minimum, delineate amounts for operating expenditures, including, administration, instructional and rental expenses and capital expenditures, including debt service payments and deposits to capital reserve.
  - f. Revenues of the Collaborative shall be derived from the following sources:
    - 1) Program Tuition: The costs of the Collaborative's programs, as determined by the Executive Director and approved by the Board shall be assessed to Member Districts, non-member districts, and adjunct member districts based on the combined cost of providing such programs to the Collaborative's students and the number of students enrolled or projected to be enrolled in the Collaborative's programs from the respective Member Districts and non-member and adjunct member districts. A surcharge may be assessed to a non-member district or adjunct member district for all students enrolled from such non-member or adjunct member district at the recommendation of the Executive Director, and by an annual vote of the Board in accordance with Section VII. A.1.
    - 2) Fees for Services: The Collaborative may charge a fee as determined by the Executive Director and approved by the Board for student transportation based on the combined cost of providing such

transportation services and the number of students who use or who are projected to use the Collaborative transportation services from the respective Member, non-member or adjunct member districts. A surcharge may be assessed to a non-member or adjunct member district for transportation services provided to students from such districts at the recommendation of the Executive Director, and by an annual vote of the Board in accordance with Section VII. A.1.

- 3) Assessments: The Collaborative may charge an assessment as determined by the Executive Director and approved by the Board for student evaluations and other contracted services, based on the cost of the evaluation or service. A surcharge may be assessed to a non-member or adjunct member district for such evaluations and services provided to students from such districts at the recommendation of the Executive Director, and by an annual vote of the Board in accordance with Section VII. A.1.
- 4) Donations, Grants, and Contributions: The Executive Director may, with the approval of the Board, from time to time accept donations, grants or contributions from governmental and private sources, whether in cash or in kind, which will further the purpose of the Collaborative.

- g. The proposed budget shall be discussed at a public meeting of the Board and notice shall be provided to each Member District ten (10) working days before the date of the Board meeting at which the proposed budget will be discussed.
- h. The Board shall adopt the final budget by affirmative majority vote at a subsequent meeting no earlier than ten (10) working days after the Board meeting at which the Collaborative budget was first proposed but no later than June 30 of the preceding fiscal year.
- i. Capital costs will be included in operating budgets of each program or service requiring capital expenditures, and will be included in the calculations used to determine tuitions, fees, assessments for the programs and services which they benefit. The board may establish a capital reserve fund, consistent with 603 CMR 50.07 (10), to support capital expenditures, pursuant to a capital plan. Capital reserve funds will be used with approval of the board to support capital expenditures in accordance with the capital plan established consistent with 603 CMR 50.07 (10).

F. Transmitting the Budget and Payment Terms:

1. The treasurer shall certify and transmit the budget and the tuition rates, fees and assessments for services for the upcoming fiscal year to each Member District and adjunct member district not later than June 30 of the preceding fiscal year.
2. The collaborative shall submit invoices to Member Districts and non-member and adjunct member districts three times per year in August, September and February or monthly as determined through an agreement with Member Districts, or non-member or adjunct member districts.
3. Tuition payments, assessments, and fees for services shall be paid within thirty (30) days of service delivery, although it is understood that M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E allows a school committee to authorize the prepayment of monies for a program or a service provided by an educational collaborative.

G. Procedure for Amending the Budget:

1. All budget amendments shall be proposed at a public meeting of the Board and must be approved by a majority vote of the Board to take effect.
2. Any amendment that does not result in an increase in tuition rates, or fees for services shall be approved by the Board by a majority vote.
3. Any amendment to the budget that results in an increase in the tuition rates or fees for services shall adhere to the following procedures.
  - a. All appointed representatives shall, within ten (10) working days of the public meeting at which the amendment was first proposed, report to their Member Districts the content of the proposed amendment.
  - b. All amendments shall be voted on by the Board at a second public meeting of the Board no earlier than thirty (30) working days after the Board meeting at which the amendment was first proposed; adoption shall require a majority vote.
  - c. The treasurer shall certify and transmit the amended tuition rates, and fees for services to each Member District not later than ten (10) working days following the affirmative vote of the Board.
4. The Board has the authority to reduce tuition rates, assessments and fees for services to Member Districts, non-member districts, adjunct member districts when doing so is determined to be in the best interest of the Collaborative.

**SECTION VIII: PROCEDURE FOR AMENDING THE COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT**

The Collaborative agreement may be amended from time to time in accordance with the following procedures:

- A. Any Member District, appointed representative or the executive director may propose an amendment to the Collaborative agreement.
- B. The proposed amendment shall be presented in writing to the executive director of the Collaborative and the chair of the Board no less than twenty (20) working days prior to a meeting of the Board at which it shall first be discussed. No less than ten (10) working days prior to the Board meeting at which the amendment is first discussed, the

executive director shall cause copies thereof to be sent to all appointed representatives and the chairs of the Member Districts together with notice as to the time and place of the first reading of the amendment.

- C. Following the first reading of any proposed amendment and any changes as requested by the Board, the executive director shall submit the proposed amendment to the Department for initial review.
- D. Following the Department review, the executive director shall make such changes as the Department requires.
- E. No less than ten (10) working days prior to the Board meeting at which the revised amendment will be discussed, the executive director shall cause copies thereof to be sent to all appointed representatives and the chairs of the Member Districts, together with notice as to the time and place of the second reading of the amendment.
- F. The proposed amendment shall be read a second time at the regular meeting subsequent to the Department review, at which time, in order to be approved, there must be a majority vote of the Board in favor of the amendment. Following approval by the Board, the amended agreement shall be submitted by the chair of the Board to the chairs of Member Districts, for a vote to approve the amended agreement.
- G. Once a majority of all Member Districts have approved and signed the amended agreement, the Collaborative shall submit the signed amended agreement in accordance with 603 CMR 50.00 to the Commissioner for approval by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- H. No amendment to the Collaborative agreement shall be effective until approved and authorized by a majority of the Member Districts and by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Member Districts shall not delegate the authority to approve the Collaborative agreement or amendments to the Collaborative agreement to any other person or entity.

#### **SECTION IX: PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE FOR ADMITTING NEW MEMBER DISTRICTS**

A school district, through a vote of its school committee, or charter school board, may become a member of the educational Collaborative consistent with the following terms:

- A. At least 180 days prior to the beginning of a new fiscal year, the prospective member district shall submit to the chair of the Board and the executive director of the Collaborative notification of intent to join the Collaborative and a copy of the school committee or charter board minutes that indicates an affirmative vote of the committee or charter board to seek membership in the Collaborative.
- B. Upon receipt of the prospective member's notification of intent to join the Collaborative and the minutes, the Board will consider the request.
- C. Upon a majority affirmative vote of the Board, the Collaborative agreement shall be amended to add the new Member District. The collaborative agreement shall be amended consistent with Section VIII of this agreement.



- D. The authorizing votes may provide for the deferral of the admission of a new Member District until July 1 of the subsequent fiscal year.
- E. The admission of a new Member District to the educational Collaborative shall become effective only after the execution and delivery by the current Member Districts and the applicant school committee or charter school board of an amendment to the Collaborative agreement agreeing to be bound by all the terms and conditions thereof, and approval by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- F. A school committee or charter school board may be admitted to the Collaborative as of July 1<sup>st</sup> of any fiscal year provided that all required approvals, including that of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, are obtained by the preceding April 30<sup>th</sup> of the fiscal year prior to the fiscal year in which the new Member District is to be admitted to the Collaborative.

**SECTION X: PROCEDURE AND TIMELINE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF CURRENT MEMBER DISTRICT(S)**

- A. A Member District may withdraw from LABBB as of July 1st in any year provided that such Member District provides written notice to every other Member District that is party to this agreement as well as to the executive director of the Collaborative and the Collaborative Board of such intent no later than December 31. The withdrawal can take effect a year and half from January 1<sup>st</sup> provided that the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has approved the withdrawal by April 30th of the fiscal year in which the withdrawal is to occur.
- B. Written notification of a Member District's intent to withdraw from the Collaborative at the end of a fiscal year shall include the following:
  - 1. Notification addressed to the chair of the Board and the executive director that the Member District has voted to withdraw from the Collaborative with the effective date of withdrawal;
  - 2. A copy of the minutes from the school committee meeting or charter school board in which the Member District voted to withdraw from the Collaborative; and
- C. Within thirty (30) days of notification of a Member District's intent to withdraw from the Collaborative, the executive director shall cause an amendment to be prepared to reflect changes in the agreement caused as a result of the change in membership of the Collaborative.
- D. The amendment will not be effective until approved by a majority vote of the Member Districts and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- E. Upon withdrawal a former member district shall not be entitled to any assets or a portion of any assets of the Collaborative, including any surplus funds that may have been carried over from prior years and any capital reserve fund that may have been established by the Board.

- F. The withdrawing school committee or charter school board must fulfill all of its financial obligations and commitments to the Collaborative.
- G. The withdrawing member will continue to be liable to the Collaborative for its pro rata share of any debts, claims, demands, or judgments against the Collaborative incurred during said member's membership. The pro rata share is determined by dividing the total student enrollment of the withdrawing member by the sum of the total student enrollment of all members; the enrollment figures will be based on the numbers of students at the end of the fiscal year of withdrawal.
- H. Upon withdrawal, the withdrawing district will be reimbursed any funds prepaid to the collaborative by the Member District for tuition or services under M.G.L. c. 40, § 4E.
- I. The withdrawal of any Member District(s) at any time shall not affect the status of the Collaborative agreement and the same shall remain in full force and effect until specifically changed or amended by the Board and approved by the Member Districts and the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.
- J. If, after the withdrawal of a Member District(s), less than two Member Districts remain, the Collaborative Board will initiate termination proceedings as provided in Section XI.

#### **SECTION XI: PROCEDURE FOR TERMINATION OF THE COLLABORATIVE AGREEMENT**

- A. A Member District may request that the Board initiate proceedings to terminate this Collaborative agreement by giving notice to all other Member Districts and the executive director at least *twelve (12) months* before the end of the current fiscal year.
- B. Within thirty (30) days of a request that the Board initiate termination proceedings, the Board shall discuss the request to terminate the Collaborative and determine next steps. A two-thirds (2/3) vote of the Collaborative Board is required in order to initiate termination proceedings. Should the Board vote to initiate termination proceedings, notice must be provided to all Member Districts within ten (10) working days of such vote.
- C. The Collaborative agreement shall only be terminated at the end of a fiscal year.
- D. The Collaborative agreement shall be terminated at the end of any fiscal year following votes in favor of termination by two-thirds (2/3) of the Member Districts.
- E. Following the affirmative votes of the Member Districts to terminate this Collaborative agreement, the executive director shall inform the Member Districts, non-member districts and adjunct member districts who are served by the Collaborative and the Department in writing 180 days prior to the effective date of any termination.
- F. Following the affirmative votes of the Member Districts to terminate the Collaborative agreement, a final independent audit will take place and will be provided to all appointed representatives and Member Districts as well as to the Department, including an accounting of assets and liabilities (debts and obligations) of the Collaborative and the proposed disposition of same.
- G. Prior to termination, the Board shall:

1. determine the fair market value of all assets for the Collaborative, including, but not limited to, real estate, capital property, equipment and supplies owned by the Collaborative;
  2. determine the process for the appropriate disposition of federal/state funds, equipment and supplies;
  3. identify the Member District responsible for maintaining all employee, program and fiscal records;
  4. identify the Member Districts, non-member districts and adjunct member district(s) responsible for maintaining student records;
  5. determine the means of meeting all liabilities (debts and obligations) of the Collaborative, including obligations for post-employment benefits. All liabilities must be met before any monies are distributed to Member Districts;
  6. distribute surplus funds and capital reserve funds consistent with the methodology in Section VII.D.5 and to the Member Districts; and
  7. ensure the appropriate disposition of all assets of the Collaborative, including any unencumbered funds held by the Collaborative, and any capital property and real estate owned by the Collaborative. Unless the Board determines otherwise, all assets shall be sold and the monies shall be distributed to the Member Districts, consistent with the methodology in Section VII.D.5
- H. Following the affirmative vote of the Member Districts to terminate the Collaborative agreement, the Board shall notify the Department of the official termination date of the Collaborative, and shall submit the documentation required by 603 CMR 50.11 to the Department.
- I. Should the Department revoke and/or suspend the approval of the educational Collaborative agreement, the Board will follow all instructions from the Department, and Sections XI. E through XI. H, inclusive, shall be implemented to the extent these procedures are consistent with the order of the Department to revoke and/or suspend the Collaborative agreement.

## **SECTION XII: INDEMNIFICATION**

Neither the Executive Director nor any appointed representative shall be liable to the Collaborative or to any member district hereof for any act or omission of the Executive Office or any appointed representative or be held personally liable in connection with the affairs of the Collaborative except only liability arising out of his own willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard of duty of the Collaborative or its Members.

Neither the Executive Director nor any appointed representative or Member shall be personally liable for any debt, claim, demand, judgment, decree, liability or obligation of any kind or, against or with respect to the Collaborative or arising out of any action taken or omitted for or on behalf of the Collaborative and the Collaborative shall be solely liable therefore and resort shall be had exclusively to the Collaborative property for the payment of performance thereof and each appointed representative, member and any Executive Director shall be entitled to full indemnity and full reimbursement out of Collaborative property, including, without limitation,

fees and disbursements of counsel, if, contrary to the provisions hereof, such appointed representative, Executive Director or member shall be held personally liable. Any person dealing with the Collaborative shall be informed of the substance of this provision except that any such person need not be informed of the indemnification contained herein and, where the Board deems it appropriate, documents or instruments executed by or by authority of the Board shall contain reference hereto.

The Executive Director and his legal representatives and each appointed representative and his legal representatives and each member and its legal representatives shall be indemnified by the Collaborative against all liabilities and expenses, exclusive of amounts paid to the Collaborative, including judgments, fines, penalties, amounts paid in settlement and counsel fees, incurred in reasonable settlement of any action, suit or proceeding to which such appointed representative, member or Executive Director or his/its legal representatives may be made a party or otherwise involved by reason or his/its capacity as appointed representative, Executive Director or member, except only liabilities and expenses arising out of his/its own willful misfeasance, bad faith, gross negligence or reckless disregard of duty to the Collaborative as finally adjudged in such action or, in the event of settlement or termination of such action without final adjudication, as determined by independent counsel for the Collaborative. Said right of indemnification shall be in addition to any other rights to which such appointed representative or Executive Director or member may be entitled as a matter of law or which may be lawfully granted to him/her.

### **SECTION XIII: NON-DISCRIMINATION**

The Collaborative does not discriminate on the basis of race, sex, color, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, age, disability and national or ethnic origin in the administration of its educational policies, administrative policies, scholarship or loan programs, athletic and other school administered programs or in employment. The Board's policy of nondiscrimination will extend to students, staff, the general public, and individuals with whom it does business..

### **SECTION XIV: ADJUNCT MEMBERSHIP STATUS**

The LABBB Educational Collaborative may, by a majority vote of the Board, admit a school district as an adjunct member district of the Collaborative. The status may be terminated at any other time upon a two-thirds vote of the entire Board.

Adjunct Membership is defined as having no representation on the Board and the adjunct member district shall not be included in any agreement language or financial procedures regarding withdrawal or termination of the Collaborative. The adjunct member district shall have fewer rights than Member Districts, but more rights than non-members in the placement of students into Collaborative programs. The adjunct member district may have representation on the Operating Committee and other Committees operating within the Collaborative that are represented by a designee from Member Districts, but the adjunct member district shall have no voting rights.

This agreement shall take effect on the date of approval by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education and shall continue indefinitely. This agreement has been approved by duly authorized votes at public meetings held by the individual school committees whose chairpersons have signed below.

**Date of first reading:** December 19, 2013

**Date of second reading:** June 19, 2014

**Date approved by Collaborative Board of Directors:** June 19, 2014

**Dates approved by Member School Committees:**

LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

BURLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**Signatures:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON OF LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON OF ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON OF BURLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
CHAIRPERSON OF BEDFORD PUBLIC SCHOOLS Date

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CHAIRPERSON OF BELMONT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Date

**Approved by the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education:**

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**Commissioner of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education**

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**Date**



# Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ❖ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

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## Recommended Superintendent Evaluation Standards for 2014-2015

**Standard 1 (Instructional Leadership), Section E - Data-informed Decision Making Indicator - *Uses multiple sources of evidence related to student learning, including state, district, and school assessment results and growth data, to inform school and district goals and improve organizational performance, educator effectiveness, and student learning.***

### **Key Actions:**

1. Work with the Director of Planning and Assessment to examine:
  - What data do we regularly collect?
  - How administrators analyze and report data to stakeholders?
  - How administrators use data in decision-making and planning?
  - What is our current capacity to collect/store/analyze data?
  - What are some of our short- and long-range data and planning needs.
2. Work with the Enrollment Working Group to develop a more effective methodology to forecast student enrollments.

**Standard 2 (Management and Operations), Section A - Environment Indicator: *Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines and operational systems to address a full range of safety, health, emotional, and social needs of students.***

### **Key Actions:**

1. See Student Learning Goal for key actions.

**Standard 3 (Family and Community Engagement), Section D - Family Concerns Indicator: *Addresses family concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.***

### **Key Actions:**

In order to address the preK-12 overcrowding concerns and promote community support, I will

1. Serve as an active member of the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee and share the committee's reports with all interested constituencies.
2. Work closely with the architectural firm SMMA to ensure phases 1, 2 and 3 of their studies are complete and on time.
3. Serve as an active member of the Enrollment Working Group and share their reports with all interested constituencies.
4. Make recommendations to the School Committee that will address short- and long-range space needs based on projected enrollments and educational needs.
5. Meet with parents to discuss their school-specific needs and concerns.
6. Work with elected and appointed municipal officials to effectively communicate school facility needs and plan for potential Town Meetings.

October 21, 2014

**Standard 4 (Professional Culture), Section D - Shared Vision Development Indicator:** *Successfully and continuously engages all stakeholders in the creation of a shared educational vision in which every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and careers, and can become responsible citizens and community contributors.*

***Key actions:***

In order to assist the School Committee to develop a district Mission, Vision, and Beliefs statement, I will

1. Participate in the School Committee's subcommittee on Mission, Vision, and Beliefs to develop a draft document.
2. Communicate the draft Mission, Vision, and Beliefs document to all schools, PTAs/PTOs, and School Site Councils.
3. Work with school and parent leaders to ensure that the draft document is discussed and feedback welcomed.
4. After discussions are held by all of the constituencies listed above, create a summary document for the School Committee and include my recommendation.



## Superintendent Rubric At-A-Glance

Standard I: Instructional Leadership	Standard II: Management & Operations	Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	Standard IV: Professional Culture
<p><b>A. Curriculum Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Standards-Based Unit Design</li> <li>Lesson Development Support</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Instruction Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Instructional Practices</li> <li>Quality of Effort &amp; Work</li> <li>Diverse Learners' Needs</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Assessment Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Variety of Assessments</li> <li>Adjustment to Practice</li> </ol> <p><b>D. Evaluation Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educator Goals</li> <li>Observations &amp; Feedback</li> <li>Ratings</li> <li>Alignment Review</li> </ol> <p><b>E. Data-Informed Decision Making Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Knowledge &amp; Use of Data</li> <li>School and District Goals</li> <li>Improvement of Performance, Effectiveness, and Learning</li> </ol>	<p><b>A. Environment Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans, Procedures, and Routines</li> <li>Operational Systems</li> <li>Student Safety, Health, and Social and Emotional Needs</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Human Resources Management &amp; Development Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Recruitment &amp; Hiring Strategies</li> <li>Induction, Professional Development, and Career Growth Strategies</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Scheduling &amp; Management Information Systems Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time for Teaching and Learning</li> <li>Time for Collaboration</li> </ol> <p><b>D. Law, Ethics &amp; Policies Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Laws and Policies</li> <li>Ethical Behavior</li> </ol> <p><b>E. Fiscal Systems Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fiscal Systems</li> </ol>	<p><b>A. Engagement Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family Engagement</li> <li>Community and Business Engagement</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Sharing Responsibility Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Student Support</li> <li>Family Collaboration</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Communication Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two-Way Communication</li> <li>Culturally Proficient Communication</li> </ol> <p><b>D. Family Concerns Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Family Concerns</li> </ol>	<p><b>A. Commitment to High Standards Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Commitment to High Standards</li> <li>Mission and Core Values</li> <li>Meetings</li> </ol> <p><b>B. Cultural Proficiency Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Policies and Practices</li> </ol> <p><b>C. Communications Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Communication Skills</li> </ol> <p><b>D. Continuous Learning Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continuous Learning of Staff</li> <li>Continuous Learning of Administrator</li> </ol> <p><b>E. Shared Vision Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared Vision Development</li> </ol> <p><b>F. Managing Conflict Indicator</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Response to Disagreement</li> <li>Conflict Resolution</li> <li>Consensus Building</li> </ol>