

**FY 12-FY 13 Superintendent Self-Assessment
(March 2012 to March 2013)**

As Superintendent of Schools, I have the overall responsibility for all successes and failures in the Lexington Public Schools. In past years, I prepared a self-assessment report to the School Committee that summarized the entire system's work, which sometimes made it difficult for the School Committee to evaluate my own work from that of others. This year, I prepared the following self-assessment that focuses mainly on my work. When my work was primarily leading or supporting others, I described my role in such situations.

1. Finance

Major accomplishments:

- I recommended a balanced budget for FY 14 that meets all School Committee guidelines, maintains lower fees, and includes funds for increased enrollment, new special education costs, and some high priority program improvements.
- The school department returned 2.24 million dollars to the Town in FY 12.
- The school department is on-target to end FY 13 with a balanced budget.

Self-assessment:

Approximately half of the FY 12 surplus was due to careful monitoring of the budget and making decisions that were cost effective. I shared that responsibility with the Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business. The other half of the FY 12 surplus was due to an unanticipated increase in state Circuit Breaker funds. Throughout FY 13, I have continued to carefully monitor the budget to keep overall expenditures within budget. I recommended an FY 14 budget that will provide the funds needed to add additional positions for projected enrollment growth, positions needed to meet legally mandated special education student needs, and positions that will enable some program improvements.

Rating: Outstanding

2. Collective Bargaining

Major accomplishments:

- We negotiated a new three-year Unit A contract that includes an entirely new transfer process that allows the administration the right to assign teachers based on student needs, not seniority.
- In the new Unit A contract, all LEA evaluators have been transferred from the LEA contract to the ALA contract.
- In the new Unit A contract, the percentage raise between each step has been narrowed and more equitably established between steps 1 through 12.

Self-assessment:

I personally fought for all of the major changes listed above. Without my tenacity, the LEA would never have agreed to: eliminate seniority as the criterion to determine teacher transfers, and the transfer of evaluators from the LEA to the ALA. The transfer of all LEA evaluators to the ALA was a multi-year process that started with filing a petition with the State labor relations board. The third listed accomplishment, creating a fairer step schedule, was a collaborative effort by both the LEA bargaining team and me.

Rating: Outstanding

3. Supervision and Evaluation

Major accomplishments:

- I personally led the effort to convince the LEA to agree to pilot the new DESE evaluation process.
- I evaluated all principals and central office administrators based on the new DESE evaluation criteria (pilot year).

Self-assessment:

In order to help all LPS educators make a successful transition to the new DESE evaluation system in FY 14, I took steps to start the process a year earlier than required by the State. After experiencing considerable resistance from the LEA to pilot the new DESE system this year, I requested a meeting with the LEA executive board. A group of us convinced them that administration sincerely wanted to work with them to co-create an evaluation pilot that would help both teachers and administrators learn about the new system. The parties agreed to a pilot that includes 52 LEA members and most school administrators. Next year, the 52 LEA members in the pilot will serve

as mentors for other teachers to learn about the new evaluation system.

Rating: Excellent to Outstanding

4. Personnel

Major accomplishments:

- I led the searches for the new Director of Special Education and Director of Guidance.
- In collaboration with Mr. Harris and other administrators, I dismissed some employees either who were engaged in misconduct or whose work was ineffective.
- In collaboration with Mr. Harris and other administrators, the district made important gains in the number of teachers of color who were hired.

Self-assessment:

School personnel administration is the one area where I have the greatest expertise. I used my skills this past year to make significant gains in collective bargaining (Unit A contract, DESE pilot, removal of certain employees for just cause, hiring outstanding educational leaders, and overseeing all personnel matters in the school system.)

Rating: Outstanding

5. Professional Relationships

Major accomplishments:

- I continued to build trust with the LEA leadership by demonstrating commitment to honesty, transparency, and inclusion of others in decision-making. I met regularly with Phyllis Neufeld to solve problems together. I also met with the LEA Executive Board and collective bargaining committee to solve problems.
- I required all principals and central office administrators to establish specific, action-oriented goals to improve professional relationships in their schools or departments. At mid-year, I met with these administrators to discuss their progress. All of these administrators are willingly engaged in this endeavor and making important progress.
- The LEA agreed to write goals on what the Association could do to improve professional relationships. I have no data on the LEA's progress on their goals.

- In collaboration with the LEA, the school system hired consultant Cathy Lassiter to help the LEA and the administration identify years of past frustrations and to begin the healing process. Cathy met with the LEA for two meetings, with the principals/central administration for two meetings, and with all of us together for two meetings. During the past six months, Cathy has helped the group identify strategies we can use to become a higher performing team. By the last meeting in March, all participants reported that the process was extremely helpful. I heard over and over again from LEA members and principals that they no longer want to process the past, but now look forward to a brighter future.

Self-assessment:

Two years ago, I made a decision that I would deeply commit myself to doing whatever it takes to improve trust throughout the school system. I knew the journey would be very difficult for all employees, including me. In the summer of 2011, many principals were angry with me when I sometimes took the view of the LEA and told them that we must first demonstrate trust and vulnerability, even with teachers/staff members who criticize us. I told them that eventually enough staff members would see by our actions that we are sincere and that would eventually shift the culture. Our individual and collective actions these past two years surfaced years of pain caused by some people who no longer work for LPS and pain by some current employees.

By working non-defensively and acknowledging my own mistakes, I was able to build trust with administrators, Phyllis, and other LEA leaders. I urged other leaders to do the same. Now, two years later, I am confident that Phyllis and her leadership trust me and we respect each other. I also can clearly see that the level of trust in all schools has significantly improved these past two years. Two schools recently conducted anonymous teacher/staff surveys that show the faculty/staff have high levels of trust. By June, all schools plan to administer trust surveys.

I am very pleased with my work in this area.

Rating:
Excellent to Outstanding

6. School Committee Relationships

Major accomplishments:

- I communicated with School Committee members almost on a daily basis.
- I did my best to listen to the requests and needs of School Committee members.
- I did my best to treat all School Committee members with respect.
- I always provided the School Committee with the best information I could based on my years of experience and careful research.
- I included a School Committee member on the Director of Special Education search.

Self-assessment:

I trust the members of the School Committee to always act in the best interest of the students. I believe I have a strong and effective working relationship with the Committee. I hope the Committee agrees.

Rating: Excellent

7. Community Engagement

Major accomplishments:

- I met with the PTA presidents to identify ways I could increase my engagement with the community. We agreed that the best way for me to see and speak with more parents would be to attend more school events where parents could speak with me. Since September, I have attended evening or weekend events at the High School, Clarke, Bridge, Bowman, Estabrook, Fiske, Harrington, Hastings, and LexFun (for preschool).
- I attended the Martin Luther King, Jr. event and marched in the parade.

Self-assessment:

I have made significant progress toward this goal. Next year, I hope to expand my progress on this goal.

Rating: Good

8. My Professional Growth

Major accomplishments:

- I co-wrote the book *School Systems That Learn* with John D'Auria.
- I visited schools of education and ministries of education in Finland, France, and England.
- I attended two national conferences (Learning Forward in Boston and AASA in Los Angeles).

Self-assessment:

Writing *School Systems That Learn* these past two years has been the most significant professional growth activity in my professional life. The research and writing process taught me more about the qualities of effective school systems than earning my masters, certificate of advanced studies, and doctorate degrees combined.

Rating: Outstanding

9. District Goals:

Major accomplishments:

- We accomplished all of the FY 12 district goals.
- We expect to complete all FY 13 district goals

Self-assessment:

Since other administrators are directly responsible for carrying out all of the district goals, my job is to monitor their work and to provide support when necessary. I feel my work here has been sufficient.

Rating: Outstanding

10. Student Learning

Major accomplishments:

- For the sixth year in a row, LHS students had the highest mean SAT scores in the state of Massachusetts
- For the second year in a row, 100% of LHS students scored at the proficient or advanced level on the ELA grade 10 examination. Ninety-seven percent of Grade 10 students scored at the proficient or advanced level on the mathematics examination.
- The number of METCO students taking AP courses increased to nine students. A few years ago, the number was zero.

- Boston Magazine listed LHS as the number 2 high school in the Boston area.
- Many students and teams of students continue to win national and international awards in science, mathematics, foreign languages, history, and the arts.
- Clarke Middle School was nominated as a Blue Ribbon School by the US Department of Education. Winners will be announced next fall.
- The K-5 schools made significant process this past year providing interventions that support struggling students. All K-5 schools now have data teams that monitor student progress and identify more ways to support struggling students (Response to Intervention, also known as RTI).

Self-assessment:

I am not directly responsible for any of these accomplishments. As Superintendent of Schools, my job is to set the conditions where others can achieve at high levels. I do that by hiring exceptional educators, setting goals for the district that supports high levels of learning, working with others to obtain the resources necessary, and leading/managing the work that helps others achieve our goals.

Rating: Outstanding

11. Building projects

Major accomplishments:

- I supported the work of three principals and the Director of Public Facilities with the Bridge, Bowman, and Estabrook projects.
- I increased the administrative time for three assistant principals positions to full-time so their principals would have more time to lead their building projects and also lead their schools.
- I worked with the Bridge and Bowman principals and the LEA to work through the problems associated with the construction delays last summer.
- I worked with the Bridge and Bowman principals and the Director of Public Facilities to identify what was needed to improve the quality of construction management by the contractor.

Self-assessment:

The major work for supervising the construction of Estabrook and renovating Bridge and Bowman belongs with others. At times, I was needed to solve problems with the union and to provide support and resources.

I believe my level of support has been sufficient.

Rating: Excellent

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

March 30, 2013
