

Robert I. Rotberg
School Committee

School Closings and Fiscal Savings

School Closings. At a time of enrollment decline and rising taxes Lexington must reduce costs. Since 88% of the School budget is in salaries the most effective savings are made by reducing teachers as pupil numbers go down. For three years the School Committee has done that. Next year the Committee is taking \$300,000 out of the budget. This is equivalent to 20 teachers. This reduction is exactly proportional to student decline. (No additional teacher salaries are saved when schools are closed.)

Schools will have to be closed in Lexington. They should be closed, however, only after the Town knows for what they will be used. It makes sense to close schools only when all of the relevant questions are answered. What are the possible financial advantages? Could we lease or sell buildings? (Hancock cannot be demolished and the Council on Aging does not want to use Hancock.) For example, it might now make much more economic sense to move the administration to the high school and use the present administration building for the Council on Aging or for commercial office space.

The first thing a new School Committee should do is to set out a Policy on school closings which is rational and orderly, and answers rather than raises questions.

I voted against the closing of the Hancock School because:

There will not be enough room at Fiske and Hastings to receive the Hancock students and provide them with adequate educational facilities. Additional students are expected from the St. Brigid's and East Street developments.

Practically, older buildings cannot be reopened once they are closed.

Closing Hancock is not a final answer to the fiscal crisis. Savings only amount to 25 cents per \$1000 on the tax rate. Equivalent savings can be found elsewhere in the school budget.

We do not know what the Town will do with Hancock. Leaving it empty would be wasteful and invite vandalism.

Fiscal Responsibility. During the past three years Rotberg has consistently sought to save tax dollars in ways which would have a minimal impact on the instructional services of the school system.

He initiated the successful effort to improve testing procedures. In the process the testing budget fell by 50%.

He reduced the heat in the schools. Savings equal one and possibly two teacher salaries.

He cut capital expenditures (replacement and new items). He reduced unnecessary summer workshops.

He voted against funds for the Drummey Rosanne facilities report, the Arthur D. Little management report (both unnecessary and wasteful), the inflated Max-Ed Coordinator position (now eliminated), towels, and portions of Out-of-State travel. The biggest potential savings comes in the management area. He drafted contract improvements which permit substantial savings in the area of merit (step) salary increases, and leadership and sabbatical pay.

VOTE, MONDAY MARCH 7
for open, honest, responsive government

REELECT ROTBERG