

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, December 3, 2013

Twelfth Baptist Church

160 Warren Street

Roxbury, Massachusetts

PRESENT: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Bonnie Brodner, Vice-Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini; Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart

ABSENT: Sam Lehn, Student Representative

Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comment

There were no public comments

II. Superintendent Announcements

Dr. Ash shared that this was his favorite meeting of the year and thanked everyone for coming out tonight. The family presence here tonight shows how much the community cares about educating your children. Faculty and students will talk tonight about the METCO program followed by questions and answers.

III. School Committee Member Announcements:

Jessie Steigerwald shared that she has two children who attend the high school and had enjoyed being part of the Family Friends program. Ms. Steigerwald offered congratulations to the High School for the performances of *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Mary Ann Stewart thanked everyone for the warm welcome and meal the School Committee received this evening. She spoke with several students from LHS, Clarke and Diamond about their learning experiences at their respective schools and was interested to hear their thoughts about homework, favorite classes, and connecting with friends during the school day (it mostly happens on the bus to and from Boston).

IV. Agenda:

1. Update on Minority Hiring

Dr. Ash introduced Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources who presented an update on minority hiring.

Robert Harris presented the update on minority hiring this year, which included 5 African Americans, 8 Asians, 3 Hispanics, and 116 white new hires which totaled 132 new hires and

raised the minority ratio in FY13 from 8.2% to 12.1% in FY14. Lexington is continuing to make strides on increasing its hiring of minorities by holding and attending minority job fairs. The Lexington teacher workforce is 91.9% white, while comparable communities (suburban communities with METCO programs) are 92.3%. Lexington's African American teacher workforce is 1.8% and in other communities it is 3%. The Lexington Asian teacher workforce is 4.4% and in other comparable communities it is 2.8%. The Lexington Hispanic teacher workforce is 1.9% and in other comparable communities it is 1.8%. There are continued opportunities for growth and work towards increasing our diversity in the public schools.

2. 2013 MCAS Results

Dr. Ash presented the METCO Students Grade 10 MCAS results. Dr. Ash chose to compare the METCO Grade 10 English Language Arts (ELA) and Math results and the African American MCAS results for all grades. Grade 10 METCO student's scores in the ELA consisted of zero in the warning category, 6% in the needs improvement category, 60% in the proficient category and 34% in the advanced category.

Grade 10 METCO student's scores in Math resulted in none in the warning category, 15% in the needs improvement category, 40% in the proficient category and 45% in the advanced category. The African-American Students in All Grades MCAS Math results included 13% in the warning category, 27% in the needs improvement category, 36% in the proficient category and 24% in the advanced category.

The African-American Students in All Grades MCAS ELA results included 4% in the warning category, 26% needs improvement, 51% in the proficient category and 19% in the advanced category.

In 2013, 60% of students in Lexington scored proficient or better in Math vs. 39% in Massachusetts. In 2013, 71% of Lexington students scored proficient or better in ELA vs. 51% in Massachusetts. Dr. Ash shared that our goal is to have more students in the advanced column. Thomas Plati, Director of Technology Education and Assessment compiled this data from the State.

Barbara Nobles, METCO Academic Director shared that the METCO grade point average (GPA) was low compared to Lexington counterparts. When she looked at the data, it indicated that 9th grade was the most difficult for transition. A student's GPA is important so she began a mandatory summer program. In 2010 only 4 METCO students out of 80 made the honor roll. Ms. Nobles was pleased to see this year that there were 17 students who made honor roll and honorable mention. Ms. Nobles was pleased to see that more METCO students have set high goals for themselves.

3. Three Programs That Support METCO Students

Dr. Ash spoke briefly about the following three programs that support METCO Students. He turned this portion of the program over to Ms. Nobles.

a. METCO Elementary Learning Program (MELP)

Marie Louise Bean spoke about the MELP program that supports METCO elementary school students. MELP is in its 4th year and it is designed to enhance the education of our Boston students. Students from all 6 Elementary Schools participate on 21 Thursday afternoons at the Central Office and receive targeted instruction in mathematics and other subjects.

Ms. Bean acknowledged MELP teachers Sharon Fitzgerald, Megan Hinton, Ruth Litchfield, and a special thanks to Karen Thompson from Bowman Elementary School who is a volunteer teacher. Ms. Bean then introduced Malik McGuire-DuPont and Kaila Cooper from the Hastings Elementary School.

Kaila Cooper shared that MELP is good for kids because you get to review the work you do in school and when you get to school you can do it better. At MELP you get to see other METCO kids that you never would have met.

Malik McGuire-DuPont shared that he has been in MELP for two years and the teachers make it fun to learn. He suggested a designating time to do homework and allowing all elementary kids to go to MELP.

b. MathPath Summer Program

Sharon Fitzgerald, Math Specialist and MELP teacher spoke of the summer program entitled MathPath which focuses on improving achievement of minority students. All METCO students are invited from surrounding communities and in July they come every day and work on foundation skills. Most of the costs for this program have been absorbed by the District and the parents pay the remainder of the fee.

Naiomi Harris was in her first year in the METCO program. MathPath helped her by getting to know other METCO students and the work they would be doing.

Kyra Cooper, a 6th grade student in middle school, shared that she was initially scared but no longer is. At first she was most excited about the sports clubs and she was least excited about math. Kyra was nervous when she first walked into the MathPath class, but she is now glad to be in MathPath because it has helped make math easier. Kyra shared that she now has all A's on math tests which helped her get on the honor roll and she thanked the teachers for their help.

Ms. Fitzgerald acknowledged the support of the parents of these children. Ms. Fitzgerald recognized the Calculus program in Brookline with Dr. Adrian Mims that has helped change many students' math skills.

A video was shown showing what the children do during the summer in this program.

c. Jump Start Program

Mrs. Nobles introduced Cheryl Crowder, METCO social worker, who coordinated the Jump Start program two years ago for students entering the Lexington METCO Program. She thought it would aid them if they knew the schools and some of the students before school started in the fall. Ms. Crowder recognized the Facilities staff for their hard work during the summer months. Louise Lipsitz, Principal, Hasting Elementary School was recognized for allowing the METCO Jump Start Program to utilize classrooms. The program is mandatory because it has made a significant difference for our new METCO students. The Jump Start Program focuses on exposure to math and literacy concepts that are introduced in the first few weeks of the school year. It includes responsive classroom, introduction to the lockers, getting in quiet lines, transitioning between classrooms, indoor voices and raising hands. Cheryl Crowder invited Makalah and Semaya to share their experience with this program.

Makalah shared that she did this program this year as a second grade student. Jump Start is a good place for her to be and if she had not gone and she would not have not known enough.

Semaya told everyone that she did the Jump Start Program her first year. She shared that on her first day she was shy and then got to know everybody.

4. Question and Answer Period

Ms. Nobles shared questions from the METCO Parent Executive Board: (i) how is the Lexington district assisting the staff and teachers with cultural proficiency in light of the growing diverse population in Lexington; (ii) how are culturally sensitive materials shared with both METCO and Lexington students; (iii) how is cultural sensitivity imparted to those students; (iv) K-8 space in Lexington is of concern and METCO is a space available program. Does the Committee have a plan in place that METCO students will not be affected due to enrollment; (v) the concern is not about redistricting but certain schools have not been able to take in students and parents are concerned and how that might impact their children; (vi) is there a plan to place to have at least two METCO students together bin a class; (vii) with recent issues of school violence reported in the news, what procedures are in place to keep our children safe; (viii) how did the District come up with the new report cards and how are our students assessed.

Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development explained the Standards Based Report Card was developed for several reasons (i) what was happening in classrooms was out of sync with the new Common Core Standards that we have to follow; and (ii) with these new Common core standards we need to focus on what all kids need to know and do at each grade level. School Committee members addressed the concern of the parents relating to Lexington's commitment to maintaining the METCO program at its current numbers. They assured the parents that there are no plans to reduce the numbers.

V. Adjourn

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

Bonnie Brodner thanked everyone who came tonight.

The Meeting adjourned at 8:15 p.m.

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, December 17, 2013, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Offices Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

Materials: Meeting Agenda; Lexington Public Schools All Staff by Race FY14, Lexington Public Schools All New Hires FY12, FY13 and FY14 by Gender and Race; Lexington Public Schools All New Teachers & Administrators FY12, FY13 and FY14 by Gender and Race; METCO Students Grade 10 ELA and Math Results; and African American Students MCAS Results all grades ELA and Math.

Voted by the School Committee January 28, 2014