

I am very much concerned regarding the renewal on the superintendents contract tonight. There are too many issues unresolved, especially the teachers morals. In addition to whats been in the paper, any teacher I have spoken with is very unsettled to say the least. With the Diamond band concert tonight and confirmation at the temple, it seems a lot of parents cannot attend.

Thanks

Wendy Buchanan

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From: "Paul B. Ash" <pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us> June 7, 2011  
10:51:27 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Re: teachers  
To: marika@taaffe.org  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 6K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Marika:

Thank you for your letter. I sincerely want you to know that I wish Mr. Fiveash Madame Girondel had decided to stay. I met with both teachers to personally let them know how I am admire them and their incredible contributions to students for many years.

Dr. Ash

Marika Taaffe <[marika@taaffe.org](mailto:marika@taaffe.org)> writes:

May, 2011

> Dear Dr. Ash,

> I read with distress and sorrow your comments in the Lexington Minuteman re the changes in the school system which have forced the retirement of two of Lexington's more outstanding teachers. Collaborative work by mediocre teachers is not a good replacement for individuality, creativity, and the ability to inspire that occurs when you have brilliant teachers. There are many competent, and even excellent, teachers in Lexington, but the administrative decisions which lead to losing such teachers as Dr. Fiveash and Madame Girondel will make sure that they, also, will leave. It is easy to place the 'blame' for their departure on them, but the reality is different. No school system that really wants to keep a teacher will have them leave for anything other than significant health or familial reasons. It is obvious that you did not wish them to remain.

I am neither naive nor inexperienced and to accept this pretense is to abet the damage being done to our children. As a country, we are at risk of losing our lead as creative thinkers; the decisions that you are making as the head of the Lexington Schools seem to ensure that students from Lexington will not be 'bucking the trend'. I am very sorry to see the choices you are making. The children of the parents who hired you deserve better (and your own past history seemed to indicate that you believed in them once).

>

>

Sincerely yours,  
Marika Taaffe, Ph.D  
781 863 2765

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From: Marika Taaffe <marika@taaffe.org> June 7, 2011 10:10:44 AM  
Subject: [School-com] teachers  
To: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

May, 2011

> Dear Dr. Ash,

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changes in the school system which have forced the retirement of two of Lexington's more outstanding teachers. Collaborative work by mediocre teachers is not a good replacement for individuality, creativity, and the ability to inspire that occurs when you have brilliant teachers. There are many competent, and even excellent, teachers in Lexington, but the administrative decisions which lead to losing such teachers as Dr. Fiveash and Madame Girondel will make sure that they, also, will leave. It is easy to place the 'blame' for their departure on them, but the reality is different. No school system that really wants to keep a teacher will have them leave for anything other than significant health or familial reasons. It is obvious that you did not wish them to remain. I am neither naive nor inexperienced and to accept this pretense is to abet the damage being done to our children. As a country, we are at risk of losing our lead as creative thinkers; the decisions that you are making as the head of the Lexington Schools seem to ensure that students from Lexington will not be 'bucking the trend'. I am very sorry to see the choices you are making. The children of the parents who hired you deserve better (and your own past history seemed to indicate that you believed in them once).

&gt;

&gt;

Sincerely yours,  
 Marika Taaffe, Ph.D  
 781 863 2765

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School-com mailing list  
 School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:39:13 PM  
 Subject: Re: [School-com] Dr. Ash's contract  
 To: Marika Taaffe <marika@taaffe.org>  
 Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
 Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Marika,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

Our faculty and staff turnover rate is low and rate of applications for open LPS positions is high. While there are undoubtedly some morale issues, where it is coming from and why remains to be determined.

Focus groups are being conducted with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; Dr. Ash will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

We hope you remain engaged with us in this process as it will take some time to get a comprehensive picture and understanding of this complex issue. The School Committee is committed to understanding any and all causes related to the concern this issue has raised.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 10:09 AM, Marika Taaffe <[marika@taaffe.org](mailto:marika@taaffe.org)> wrote:

I have recently been informed that Dr. Ash's contract is due for discussion at tonight's School Committee meeting. While I appreciate Dr. Ash's prior behavior particularly around the issue of diversity, I feel that a decision on continuing his employment as Superintendent should be deferred until after a more thorough investigation of the recent loss of three outstanding teachers from Lexington High School. We have lived in Lexington since 1991 when we moved here primarily for the school system. Both of my children graduated from LHS and went on to complete college/graduate studies. I am familiar enough with the workings of systems to know that these losses reflect upper-level decisions which need to be examined.

You will note that I am not requesting that Dr. Ash's contract not be approved; I am requesting that the decision be postponed until after examination of the policies and practices which have resulted in diminishing the quality of LHS.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Marika Taaffe, Ph.D.  
43 RIndge Avenue, Lexington  
781 863 2765

PS I have copied you on my letter to Dr. Ash, written as you can tell, before the loss of Mr. Bogart, but only being sent today for logistic reasons.

School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Marika Taaffe <marika@taaffe.org> June 7, 2011 10:09:21 AM  
 Subject: [School-com] Dr. Ash's contract  
 To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

I have recently been informed that Dr. Ash's contract is due for discussion at tonight's School Committee meeting. While I appreciate Dr. Ash's prior behavior particularly around the issue of diversity, I feel that a decision on continuing his employment as Superintendent should be deferred until after a more thorough investigation of the recent loss of three outstanding teachers from Lexington High School. We have lived in Lexington since 1991 when we moved here primarily for the school system. Both of my children graduated from LHS and went on to complete college/graduate studies. I am familiar enough with the workings of systems to know that these losses reflect upper-level decisions which need to be examined.

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

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Please delay the renewal of Dr. Ash's contract until you have received feedback from the community at large. This is too big a decision to be made without more input. Thank you.

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Barbara Buck <barbara.buck@gmail.com> June 7, 2011  
10:05:46 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Renewal of Dr. Ash's contract  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 1K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Please delay the renewal of Dr. Ash's contract until you have received feedback from the community at large. This is too big a decision to be made without more input. Thank you.

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:36:38 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Very worried about state of high school affairs  
To: Brenda Friedman <brefriedman@hotmail.com>  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
selectmen@lexingtonma.gov  
Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Brenda,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

Our faculty and staff turnover rate is low and rate of applications for open LPS positions is high. While there are undoubtedly some morale issues, where it is coming from and why remains to be determined.

Focus groups are being conducted with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; Dr. Ash will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

We hope you remain engaged with us in this process as it will take some time to get a comprehensive picture and understanding of this complex issue. The School Committee is committed to understanding any and all causes related to the concern this issue has raised.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 10:03 AM, Brenda Friedman <[brefriedman@hotmail.com](mailto:brefriedman@hotmail.com)> wrote:

Dear School Committe,

The recent retirements of Fiveash, Girondel and Bogart are very worrisome. We've been Lexington residents for over 15 years. The Lexington school system has always prided itself in supporting the independence of its teachers and their commitment to supporting the enthusiam for learning and excellence in students.

Even before residing in Lexington, I was always in awe of Lexington schools' reputation. As a student at Tufts, I was invited by Mrs. Edie Gibson to be a guest to her Spanish classes and talk about Puerto Rican history and culture. This was many, many years ago, but Lexington has a wonderful national reputation, and it needs to be re-energized.

The stories coming out from our children, however, make me feel that all this is endangered. And the recent retirements of such wonderful and dedicated teachers certainly confirm these suspicions.

Can you please do your due diligence and investigate what is going on in the high school, and **not vote on Mr. Ash's contract until this research has been conducted and made available to the public.**

Many thanks for your help,

Brenda Mendoza Friedman  
6 Reed Street  
Lexington

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Brenda Friedman <brefriedman@hotmail.com> June 7, 2011  
10:03:21 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Very worried about state of high school affairs  
To: <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
<selectmen@lexingtonma.gov>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 2K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear School Committe,

The recent retirements of Fiveash, Girondel and Bogart are very worrisome. We've been Lexington residents for over 15 years. The Lexington school system has always prided itself in supporting the independence of its teachers and their commitment to supporting the



able to make the meeting in person. We appreciate your comments. By now you know that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

Our faculty and staff turnover rate is low and rate of applications for open LPS positions is high. While there are undoubtedly some morale issues, where it is coming from and why remains to be determined.

Dr. Ash is currently conducting focus groups with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; he will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

We hope you remain engaged with us in this process as it will take some time to get a comprehensive picture and understanding of this complex issue. The School Committee is committed to understanding any and all causes related to the concern this issue has raised.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 9:36 AM, Britta McCarthy <[brittawm@rcn.com](mailto:brittawm@rcn.com)> wrote:

Dear members of our town's School Committee,  
Please read the attached letter prior to or during your meeting this evening.  
Please let me know if you cannot open. I will bring a hard copy to meeting tonight as well.  
I am grateful for your time and hope you can take the opportunity to represent your town and community.  
Sincerely,  
Britta

britta w mccarthy

.....  
617 . 797 . 8706

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Britta McCarthy <[brittawm@rcn.com](mailto:brittawm@rcn.com)> June 7, 2011 9:36:19 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Letter for tonight's School Committee meeting  
To: [school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
Attachments: Attach0.html 1K  
school comm ltr jun 7 2011.docx 149K  
Attach2.html 6K

Dear members of our town's School Committee,  
Please read the attached letter prior to or during your meeting this evening.  
Please let me know if you cannot open. I will bring a hard copy to meeting tonight as well.  
I am grateful for your time and hope you can take the opportunity to represent your town and community.

Sincerely,  
Britta



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From: Saana McDaniel <saanamcdaniel@gmail.com> June 7, 2011  
 8:51:34 AM  
 Subject: [School-com] Tuesday School Committee Meeting  
 To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
 Attach1.txt 1K

Dear School Committee Members,

I have two issues I would like to bring to your attention:

#1: It seems to me that the vote to renew Paul Ash's contract today appears to be somewhat of a secretive matter that has not included transparent process. As elected representatives of the community, the School Committee has to be responsive to the public outcry surrounding the "retirement" of Mme Karen Girondel and Dr. Michael Fiveash. When the Administrators at LHS and on Maple St have nothing more to offer than a cold shoulder on this issue, the School Committee members have an obligation to respond. You should not become Dr Ash's personal rubber stamp! We need a proper check and balance system in this town now more than ever. I urge all of you to revisit the classic fairy tale by Hans Christian Andersen *The Emperor's New Clothes* and figure out who is *the* Emperor in our town.

#2: Yesterday, we received the most appalling and insulting letter from Dr. Ash in which his tone was more than accusatory making an innuendo that we do not legally reside in Lexington and therefore our three school age children will not be educated by Lexington Public Schools starting in the fall of 2011. Excuse me! We have been paying property taxes, motor vehicle excise taxes as well as water and sewer cahrges in this town since August 2003, and all that is well documented in the Town Hall if Dr. Ash would for once bother to do the decent thing and ask the Tax Collector/Treasurer's Office. What is happening in our town? Why are we telling our kids that there is no-bullying policy when the people on the very top cannot demonstrate it themselves?

I urge everyone of you to show your back bone and not be deaf to community concerns!

Respectfully,  
Saana McDaniel

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:10:20 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Dr. Ash  
To: Rhonda <blackfoley@aol.com>  
Cc: "school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us" <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 4K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Rhonda,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

Our faculty and staff turnover rate is low and rate of applications for open LPS positions is high. While there are undoubtedly some morale issues, where it is coming from and why remains to be determined.

Dr. Ash is currently conducting focus groups with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; he will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

We hope you remain engaged with us in this process as it will take some time to get a comprehensive picture and understanding of this complex issue. The School Committee is committed to understanding any and all causes related to the concern this issue has raised.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 8:30 AM, Rhonda <[blackfoley@aol.com](mailto:blackfoley@aol.com)> wrote:

I would like to request the vote on Dr. Ash's contract renewal be postponed until a later

date. Too much has come out in recent weeks that needs to be addressed and further explored.

Thank- you in advance, Rhonda Black,LICSW,parent

Sent from my iPhone

School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Rhonda <blackfoley@aol.com> June 7, 2011 8:30:14 AM  
 Subject: [School-com] Dr. Ash  
 To: "school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us" <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>

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Thank- you in advance, Rhonda Black,LICSW,parent

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<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:07:50 PM  
 Subject: Re: [School-com] In support of delaying the extension/renewal of Dr. Ash's contra  
 To: jennifer@venditti.org  
 Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 6K

Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Jennifer,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

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Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 8:18 AM, Jennifer Venditti <[jennifer@venditti.org](mailto:jennifer@venditti.org)> wrote:

I've been following the news as it relates to recent school committee discussions as well as the changes in staffing at the high school and reports about the teachers' decision to retire. I also understand that the school committee agenda posted on the web site is not consistent with a hard copy agenda update posted at Town Hall on Friday afternoon as it relates to the vote to extend Dr. Ash's contract.

I do not understand why the school committee, to date, has been reticent in reviewing the concerns of the teachers who are on staff as well as the parents of Lexington who support the school program.

Delaying the vote to extend Dr. Ash's contract until a review and discussion as it relates to these new concerns can occur makes the most sense for all involved.

While it is likely that a delay may not impact the committee's decision regarding the

extension, it will provide an opportunity for the community at large to understand the underlying concerns and how the school system intends on addressing them.

The best way to support our children and the ongoing success of the Lexington Public School system is to make sure that concerns of this magnitude are reviewed and either confirmed or dispelled.

I am hopeful that the school committee will take pause and review these serious concerns prior to committing our children's futures to an administration that could be causing discord with the teachers, who we rely on so heavily to guide the youth of our community.

Sincerely,  
Jennifer Venditti  
16 Dudley Road  
Lexington

Parent of Michael (current 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Clarke), Kate (current 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Bowman) and Ann (current 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at Bowman)

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<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: jennifer@venditti.org  
"Jennifer Venditti" <jennifer@venditti.org>  
June 7, 2011 8:18:46 AM  
Subject: [School-com] In support of delaying the extension/renewal of Dr. Ash's contract  
To: <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
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Sincerely,

Jennifer Venditti

16 Dudley Road

Lexington

Parent of Michael (current 7<sup>th</sup> grader at Clarke), Kate (current 5<sup>th</sup> grader at Bowman) and Ann (current 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at Bowman)



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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:06:35 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Regarding Paul Ash's contract vote  
To: Jim and Susan <jssplarson@me.com>  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Jim and Susan,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

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Dr. Ash is currently conducting focus groups with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; he will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

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Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 8:08 AM, Jim and Susan <[jssplarson@me.com](mailto:jssplarson@me.com)> wrote:

Dear School Committee,

We are sure you are not hurting for lengthy emails to read, so ours will be brief: we are extremely concerned by the recent news revealing teacher morale issues in the school district and ask you to delay the vote on Paul Ash's contract to investigate this very serious issue.

A contractual commitment to the school I teach at outside of Lexington prevents me from attending tonight, but I will be anxiously looking to see the results of your discussion.

Thank you for all you do, and for listening to the community~

Jim and Susan Larson  
12 Avon Street

parents of 7th and 10th grade LPS students

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[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Jim and Susan <jssplarson@me.com> June 7, 2011 8:08:49 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Regarding Paul Ash's contract vote  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 1K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear School Committee,

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Thank you for all you do, and for listening to the community~

Jim and Susan Larson  
12 Avon Street

parents of 7th and 10th grade LPS students

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:05:22 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Dr. Ash and the problem of low teacher morale  
To: Ronald Gold <ronaldkgold@gmail.com>  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Nancy,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

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Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 7:58 AM, Ronald Gold <[ronalddgold@gmail.com](mailto:ronalddgold@gmail.com)> wrote:

Nancy Gold  
70 Garfield St.  
Lexington, MA 02421

Lexington School Committee  
Town of Lexington, MA

June 7, 2011

Dear Elected Committee Members,

I am writing to encourage the elected School Committee to form an advisory group for the purpose of investigating the sentiments of our teacher population regarding Dr. Ash's leadership of our schools, thus far in his career here in Lexington. I strongly believe that this action should be undertaken immediately and should pre-empt renewal of Dr. Ash's contract.

While saving money and avoiding lawsuits are certainly important concerns for any school administrator, they should not be motivating factors that drive the preponderance of decisions that shape our schools. Our teachers should feel empowered to participate in the conversations that shape the classroom experience, for they are so much more than employees. Whatever happened to the "culture of collaboration?" If our teachers are feeling stifled and undervalued, we risk losing the creative dynamic that informs the most effective teacher practices.

Sincerely Yours,

Nancy Gold  
(former school council member at both Hastings Elementary and Diamond Middle Schools)  
School-com mailing list  
[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Ronald Gold <ronaldkgold@gmail.com> June 7, 2011 7:58:17 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Dr. Ash and the problem of low teacher morale  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

Nancy Gold  
70 Garfield St.  
Lexington, MA 02421

Lexington School Committee  
Town of Lexington, MA

June 7, 2011

Dear Elected Committee Members,

I am writing to encourage the elected School Committee to form an advisory group for the purpose of investigating the sentiments of our teacher population regarding Dr. Ash's leadership of our schools, thus far in his career here in Lexington. I strongly believe that this action should be undertaken immediately and should pre-empt renewal of Dr. Ash's contract.

While saving money and avoiding lawsuits are certainly important concerns for any school administrator, they should not be motivating factors that drive the preponderance of decisions that shape our schools. Our teachers should feel empowered to participate in the conversations that shape the classroom experience, for they are so much more than employees. Whatever happened to the "culture of collaboration?" If our teachers are feeling stifled and undervalued, we risk losing the creative dynamic that informs the most effective

teacher practices.

Sincerely Yours,  
Nancy Gold

(former school council member at both Hastings Elementary and Diamond Middle Schools)

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School-com mailing list

School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:04:04 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] school committee agenda  
To: iklimoff@rcn.com  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 4K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Ingrid,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

Our faculty and staff turnover rate is low and rate of applications for open LPS positions is high. While there are undoubtedly some morale issues, where it is coming from and why remains to be determined.

Dr. Ash is currently conducting focus groups with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; he will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

We hope you remain engaged with us in this process as it will take some time to get a comprehensive picture and understanding of this complex issue. The School Committee is committed to understanding any and all causes related to the concern this issue has raised.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 7:57 AM, <[iklimoff@rcn.com](mailto:iklimoff@rcn.com)> wrote:

Dear members of the Lexington School Committee:

Please delay the vote on tonight's agenda re: contract renewal of the school superintendent, Dr. Paul Ash. I think that research into teacher morale and other school related issues would be prudent and beneficial.

Yours truly,

Ingrid Klimoff  
75 Reed St.  
Lexington, MA 02421

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: <[iklimoff@rcn.com](mailto:iklimoff@rcn.com)> June 7, 2011 7:57:28 AM  
Subject: [School-com] school committee agenda  
To: [school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

Dear members of the Lexington School Committee:

Please delay the vote on tonight's agenda re: contract renewal of the school superintendent, Dr. Paul Ash. I think that research into teacher morale and other school related issues would be prudent and beneficial.

Yours truly,

Ingrid Klimoff  
75 Reed St.  
Lexington, MA 02421

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School-com mailing list  
School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:02:48 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] request to postpone the vote on the renewal of  
Dr. Ash's contrac  
To: Robert Sheena <enghorn@rcn.com>  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 4K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Robert and Jane,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

Our faculty and staff turnover rate is low and rate of applications for open LPS positions is high. While there are undoubtedly some morale issues, where it is coming from and why remains to be determined.

Dr. Ash is currently conducting focus groups with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; he will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

We hope you remain engaged with us in this process as it will take some time to get a comprehensive picture and understanding of this complex issue. The School Committee is committed to understanding any and all causes related to the concern this issue has raised.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart



Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 7:50 AM, Robert Sheena <[enghorn@rcn.com](mailto:enghorn@rcn.com)> wrote:

Dear Members of the School Committee-

I write to ask that you postpone the vote on the renewal of Paul Ash's contract. I believe it is your best interest and the best interest of the citizens of Lexington that the serious allegations of low teacher morale be investigated, and I believe the time must be taken to conduct a thorough and fair investigation of whether or not this is true, and if so, what is the likely cause.

Respectfully yours,

Robert and Jane Sheena

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Robert Sheena <[enghorn@rcn.com](mailto:enghorn@rcn.com)> June 7, 2011 7:50:37 AM  
Subject: [School-com] request to postpone the vote on the renewal of Dr. Ash's contract  
To: [school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

Dear Members of the School Committee-

I write to ask that you postpone the vote on the renewal of Paul Ash's

contact.

I believe it is your best interest and the best interest of the citizens of Lexington that the serious allegations of low teacher morale be investigated, and I believe the time must be taken to conduct a thorough and fair investigation of whether or not this is true, and if so, what is the likely cause.

Respectfully yours,

Robert and Jane Sheena

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School-com mailing list  
School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: "Mary Ann Stewart" <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com> June 8, 2011 8:24:12 AM  
Subject: RE: [School-com] Vote to extend the Superintendant's contract  
To: "Suzanne Lau" <suzanne\_lau\_65@yahoo.com> <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 7K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Suzanne,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the School Committee.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann Stewart,

Chair | Lexington School Committee

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**From:** school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us [mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] **On Behalf Of** Suzanne Lau  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 7:50 AM  
**To:** school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
**Subject:** [School-com] Vote to extend the Superintendent's contract

Along with many other concerned parents and citizens of Lexington, I would like to express my support for delaying the vote on extending the Superintendants's employment contract. I feel that there is enough concern and community support for this position, that the School Community should proceed in a deliberate and responsive manner. This is a normal part of the democratic, representative process.

Regards,

Suzanne Lau

Parent at Bridge, Clarke and LHS

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From: Suzanne Lau <suzanne\_lau\_65@yahoo.com>  
Suzanne Lau <suzanne\_lau\_65@yahoo.com>  
June 7, 2011 7:50:19 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Vote to extend the Superintendent's contract  
To: "school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us" <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 1K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Along with many other concerned parents and citizens of Lexington, I would like to express my support for delaying the vote on extending the Superintendents's employment contract. I feel that there is enough concern and community support for this position, that the School Community should proceed in a deliberate and responsive manner. This is a normal part of the democratic, representative process.

Regards,  
Suzanne Lau  
Parent at Bridge, Clarke and LHS

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From: "Mary Ann Stewart" <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com> June  
7, 2011 7:22:10 AM  
Subject: RE: [School-com] Just some thoughts  
To: "Cole, Rodney - 0442 - MITLL" <rodc@ll.mit.edu>  
<School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 13K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Thank you for your support, Rod.

It was nice seeing you Sunday, too.

Mary Ann.

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**From:** school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us [mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] **On Behalf Of** Cole, Rodney - 0442 - MITLL  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 7:11 AM  
**To:** 'School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us'  
**Subject:** [School-com] Just some thoughts

Hi Guys,

Good to see you on Sunday. Bonnie, sorry I missed you.

I know you are feeling some heat on the "teacher morale" front. And no doubt Paul's contract has some concerns too as there are always those that don't like him. I know I was nervous about doing his eval in general and doing it in public in particular.

So I thought maybe you could use some encouragement. You guys really pulled together on Estabrook (well Bonnie was the lucky one who got to miss that!) and that really helped. After that these new challenges don't look so bad! I know you guys can pull together to knock them off!

232

Public sentiment is a funny thing. You never know what people will latch onto next. I think the most important thing is education. Folks often don't really know what they are talking about and the best thing is to just set the story straight. For example the administration did a study a couple of years ago that included teacher morale, and I think this is a semi-recurring study. Last study reported things were pretty good morale-wise. I don't think that is widely known. Not a bad thing to repeat. Then you'll really have something to talk about. Also, in contract negotiations that really did not come up. Closest thing was some complaints about too many initiatives. Unlike Estabrook which was an actual have-to-fix-it-now sort of deal, teacher morale is a much slower paced more deliberate item. Just my take, but I think you want to be careful about having a few strident voices like Patrick's or a few parents lead the committee as opposed to having the committee lead the committee. You set the focus of the SC, even if that is hard with people nipping at your heels. I understand you got an anonymous letter from some teachers. I confess first thing that popped into my head was to wonder if it was even written by teachers, or someone else stirring the pot. How can you know? Anyway, hopefully this won't get you down. There is time to deal with it in a deliberate fashion if it turns out to be a significant problem after some study.

As to Paul's contract, I do not know the details, but Margaret mentioned it was difficult with lots of back and forth. I know I hate that sort of thing, but I guess the good news is it is done and you can move on to other topics. And while I am sure you will get some heat from some, the 360 results from his evaluation give you something nice and solid to stand on, and next year you can focus on the building projects instead Paul's contract.

Hopefully you can bang these things out in your last meeting and then take a nice break for a bit, before the challenge of getting an override for three schools passed. I think that will take a lot of focus, and starting nice and clean in the fall will help. A public face of solidarity and being on top of things will be extra important next year.

Well, I rambled on more than I like. Again, thank you very much for a welcoming Sunday outing. It was great to see all those kids graduate! And good to see you all again.

I hope you all have a great summer.

Rod

239

Rodney E. Cole

Surveillance Systems

MIT Lincoln Laboratory

781-981-5018 (office)

339-223-3394 (cell)

781-981-3495 (fax)

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From: "Cole, Rodney - 0442 - MITLL" <rodc@ll.mit.edu> June 7, 2011  
7:11:18 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Just some thoughts  
To: "School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us" <School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 7K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Hi Guys,

Good to see you on Sunday. Bonnie, sorry I missed you.

I know you are feeling some heat on the "teacher morale" front. And no doubt Paul's contract has some concerns too as there are always those that don't like him. I know I was nervous about doing his eval in general and doing it in public in particular.

So I thought maybe you could use some encouragement. You guys really pulled together on Estabrook (well Bonnie was the lucky one who got to miss that!) and that really helped. After that these new challenges don't look so bad! I know you guys can pull together to knock them off!

Public sentiment is a funny thing. You never know what people will latch onto next. I think the most important thing is education. Folks often don't really know what they are talking about and the best thing is to just set the story straight. For example the administration did a study a couple of years ago that included teacher morale, and I think this is a semi-recurring study. Last study reported things were pretty good morale-wise. I don't think that is widely known. Not a bad thing to repeat. Then you'll really have something to talk about. Also, in contract negotiations that really did not come up. Closest thing was some complaints about too many initiatives. Unlike Estabrook which was an actual have-to-fix-it-now sort of deal, teacher morale is a much slower paced more deliberate item. Just my take, but I think you want to be careful about having a few strident voices like Patrick's or a few parents lead the committee as opposed to having the committee lead the committee. You set the focus of the SC, even if that is hard with people nipping at your heels. I understand you got an anonymous letter from some teachers. I confess first thing that popped into my head was to wonder if it was even written by teachers, or someone else stirring the pot. How can you know? Anyway, hopefully this won't get you down. There is time to deal with it in a deliberate fashion if it turns out to be a significant problem after some study.

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Well, I rambled on more than I like. Again, thank you very much for a welcoming Sunday outing. It was great to see all those kids graduate! And good to see you all again.

I hope you all have a great summer.

Rod

*Rodney E. Cole*

*Surveillance Systems*

*MIT Lincoln Laboratory*

*781-981-5018 (office)*

*339-223-3394 (cell)*

*781-981-3495 (fax)*

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From: "Paul B. Ash" <pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us> June 7, 2011  
6:54:31 AM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Recent Issues  
To: BonnieBrodner@aol.com  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 12K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Bonnie:

I totally agree with your point below. You got me thinking to look back at the number of retirees from prior years. They were: 22 in 2007, 24 in 2008, 16 in 2009, 17 in 2010, and 15 in 2011. These numbers show that there has not been an increase in the rate of retirees. I will share these numbers this evening so the public has a context for the number of teacher departures.

Thanks you for your reply.

Paul

BonnieBrodner@aol.com writes:

Paul,

Thanks for this email - I really appreciate it.

I do want to comment on one thing you said below ..... I get concerned when we talk about 3 valued teachers retiring that we are inadvertently giving oil only to the squeaky wheels ..... I understand we have 15 teachers retiring ..... I would highly encourage you to talk about the retirements in that context - so that any mention of retiring teachers is linked to 15. This does at least two things in my mind - #1 it commends ALL the retiring teachers, not just the ones unhappy. We certainly don't want to reward the retiring teachers who haven't negatively spoken out by not mentioning them and #2 - it puts the ones who are speaking out in context with the complete picture. It's a very different picture to have 3 retiring teachers speaking out, with 15 total (1/5 of the retiring faculty) rather than 3 out of who knows how many - it could be 4 for all the public knows, unless you are sure to mention the accurate number.

Thanks, again, for this email - I really do appreciate it, and will do my best to try to get us all to be on the same page ..... I agree that the importance of all five of us being together can NOT be overstated .....

Bonnie.

In a message dated 6/6/2011 1:03:56 P.M. Eastern Daylight Time,  
pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us writes:

Dear School Committee Members:

I know that you are feeling pressure from some community members regarding the retirement of three valued employees, statements about morale in some schools, and the scheduled vote on my contract. I am writing to you to ask that you only think about what is best for the Lexington Public Schools and not me. On Tuesday evening, please go forward with one voice with confidence, whatever you decide to do.

I am very concerned that should the school committee fight in public over my contract or over how best to talk about morale issues, it could seriously damage the school system. Seven principals will be in attendance and a fight in public may be viewed as a lack of confidence in them. The anonymous letter was about the leadership in the high school and three K-5 schools, which I feel is unfair. I am worried the press will focus on school committee decisiveness and feed the level of community grieving that we lost three outstanding teachers. I don't want to see our collective behavior, including my behavior, leading to a school committee race next March, which could undermine the vote for three school building projects.

I wish to be helpful to your needs. If voting on my contract on June 7 is the best approach, I respect that view. If you decide that the agenda is too crowded on the 7th and wish to move the contract vote to the 13th, that's OK with me.

While none of us predicted this "perfect storm" of events, we need to deal with the reality. Some residents are angry that three valued teachers are retiring and may be looking to blame me or someone else. I believe the central issue in all three retirements is that they felt disrespected by various leaders. I believe the teachers are telling the story the way they see it, and I believe the administrators acted based on what they believed was best for children. In the months to come, I need to talk to the administrators involved and unpack what happened so we can learn from this experience. Now is not the time to talk about this matter in public. However, it is the time for me to recognize on Tuesday evening that many of us are grieving the retirement of three outstanding teachers and that we

care. To show that we care, I will speak about our long-standing commitment to support teachers, including regular opportunities to solicit feedback from them (surveys, roundtable discussions, exit interviews). I also plan to share with the community that we will continue the dialogue after we receive the teacher surveys next year.

I plan to show by my deeds that I am listening and care about community concerns. I hope the committee can find a way to show we all care and that we are all on the same team. I urge any school committee member to call me before tomorrow evening, if you feel a conversation is needed.

Paul

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School-com mailing list  
[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 5:40:16 PM  
 Subject: Re: [School-com] Support to Hold Superintendents Contract  
 To: ELIZABETH WILSON <etcw55@msn.com>  
 Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
 Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Elizabeth,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

Our faculty and staff turnover rate is low and rate of applications for open LPS positions is high. While there are undoubtedly some morale issues, where it is coming from and why remains to be determined.

Dr. Ash is currently conducting focus groups with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; he will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

We hope you remain engaged with us in this process as it will take some time to get a comprehensive picture and understanding of this complex issue. The School Committee is committed to understanding any and all causes related to the concern this issue has raised.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 6:32 AM, ELIZABETH WILSON <[etcw55@msn.com](mailto:etcw55@msn.com)> wrote:

To the Lexington School Committee,

I am in support of delaying the Lexington Superintendents contract in order to thoroughly investigate the serious issue of teacher and staff morale in the Lexington Public School System. Teachers can not teach effectively if they are in constant fear and pressure from the administrators who are supposed to help support them. Ultimately the students will be the ones to suffer when excellent teachers and staff leave the LPS system under faulty duress.

E Wilson  
781-862-3798  
Berwick Road  
Lexington

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: ELIZABETH WILSON <etcw55@msn.com> June 7, 2011  
6:32:55 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Support to Hold Superintendents Contract  
To: <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 1K  
Attach1.txt 1K

To the Lexington School Committee,

I am in support of delaying the Lexington Superintendents contract in order to thoroughly investigate the serious issue of teacher and staff morale in the Lexington Public School System. Teachers can not teach effectively if they are in constant fear and pressure from the administrators who are supposed to help support them. Ultimately the students will be the ones to suffer when excellent teachers and staff leave the LPS system under faulty duress.

E Wilson  
781-862-3798  
Berwick Road  
Lexington

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 5:36:56 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Dr. Ash's contract renewal  
To: Flavia M Vidal <fvidal@andover.edu>  
Cc: "school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us" <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 6K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Flavia,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee

To: maryann@redoniondesign.com  
 Subject: Support

Hello Maryann,

I just wanted to state that I am in support of Dr. Ash as our Superintendent. I have been seeing all the emails from the Lexington List come through which are not positive. I did already submit my survey about his performance but thought that maybe some other type of support needs to happen.

Thank you,

Jennifer Velis,

Incoming Bowman PTA Co-President

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School-com mailing list  
 School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: "Mary Ann Stewart" <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com> June 7, 2011 4:03:16 AM  
 Subject: RE: [School-com] re: Ash's contract renewal/Teacher Morale  
 To: "Debi Zilberman" <zilber16@rcn.com> <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
 Cc: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

Dear Deborah,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the School Committee. The Committee has received a high volume of emails on this issue and has been reading all of them. We value your opinions and take your concerns seriously. I have copied Dr. Ash on this reply so that he is aware of them as well.

The presentation and discussion of the issues you raise will be addressed at our meeting tonight. We understand the challenges to busy people in attending our meeting in person and hope you will consider viewing the

proceedings via live broadcast on LexMedia ([www.lexmedia.org](http://www.lexmedia.org)) and remain engaged in the on-going process.

Thank you for writing to us.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart,  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

-----Original Message-----

From: school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
[mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] On Behalf Of Debi Zilberman  
Sent: Tuesday, June 07, 2011 1:45 AM  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Subject: [School-com] re: Ash's contract renewal/Teacher Morale

Dear School Committee,

I am deeply disturbed by the SC effort to push through the vote of Paul Ash's contract at the June 7th meeting. In light of the crisis at LHS and the exodus of our most esteemed teachers, I believe this vote must be delayed. I am not sure why this must be rushed through since Mr. Ash will be with us at least through next year.

We must have an independent task force created to assess both the breadth and depth of low teacher morale. If it is related to Dr. Ash's policies than that information must be pertinent to his contract being renegotiated or terminated. We absolutely need an ombudsman to oversee this process, one who is separate from the SC and Dr. Ash and can be trusted by teachers and staff alike.

The idea that our schools will continue to deteriorate all the while operating in the black, is ironic at best and tragic for all our children and community. More and more examples are coming forward and it is important to understand what is happening, why and it's effect on the entire system. Perhaps Dr. Ash could come out stronger and free of incrimination? But, we won't know unless a committee is put in place to investigate these allegations. I trust since the SC represents all of Lexington, that you will consider the large number of us with serious concerns and will seek out the truth the best and most honest way possible.

Thank you,



Deborah Sanders

Zilberman

School-com mailing list

School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

School-com mailing list

School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Debi Zilberman <zilber16@rcn.com> June 7, 2011 1:45:04 AM  
Subject: [School-com] re: Ash's contract renewal/Teacher Morale  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

Dear School Committee,

I am deeply disturbed by the SC effort to push through the vote of Paul Ash's contract at the June 7th meeting. In light of the crisis at LHS and the exodus of our most esteemed teachers, I believe this vote must be delayed. I am not sure why this must be rushed through since Mr. Ash will be with us at least though next year.

We must have an independent task force created to assess both the breadth and depth of low teacher morale. If it is related to Dr. Ash's policies than that information must be pertinent to his contract being renegotiated or terminated. We absolutely need an ombudsman to oversee this process, one who is separate from the SC and Dr. Ash and can be trusted by teachers and staff alike.

The idea that our schools will continue to deteriorate all the while operating in the black, is ironic at best and tragic for all our children and community. More and more examples are coming forward and it is important to understand what is happening, why and it's effect on the entire system. Perhaps Dr. Ash could come out stronger and free of incrimination? But, we won't know unless a committee is put in place to investigate these allegations. I trust since the SC represents all of Lexington, that you will consider the large number of us with serious concerns and will seek out the truth the best and most honest way possible.

Thank you,

Deborah Sanders

Zilberman\_\_\_\_\_

School-com mailing list

School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: "Mary Ann Stewart" <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com> June  
7, 2011 4:04:37 AM  
Subject: RE: [School-com] Different Message  
To: <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Cc: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 11K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Thanks, Bonnie, I appreciate knowing Martha's perspective.

I am copying Paul on this as well.

Mary Ann.

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**From:** school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us [mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] **On Behalf Of** BonnieBrodner@aol.com  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 07, 2011 1:29 AM  
**To:** school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
**Subject:** [School-com] Different Message

I saw this on the Lexington List and thought it was worth forwarding everyone for a different perspective than most of what we've been seeing .....

Bonnie.

---

11. Re: Delay Vote on Extension of Paul Ash's Contract  
Posted by: "Martha Batten" marthabatten@gmail.com  
Date: Mon Jun 6, 2011 10:24 am ((PDT))

Hi Meg,

I can give you some clarification on the issue of half time teachers and/or 50/50 job shares as it has been explained to me by a number of school business managers, not just in Lexington. State employment law apparently requires school districts (and perhaps employees in the private sector as well) to provide the health care plan to any employer who works half time or more. Even if an individual chooses not to take health care from the town, the school budget must set aside/budget for the \$12,000 or so that it costs the district to provide the town share of that individual's health care. It must be budgeted for because an individual's circumstances may change at any moment and they may need and choose to opt for an individual or family plan (the latter cost the district more money).

So let's assume that for every person working half time or more, the current budget holds approximately \$12,000. A job share means that \$24,000 is in the budget, so that in principle every job share costs the schools an extra

\$12,000. When economic times got tough nationally and locally, and we began to look at things like losing the elementary librarians, cutting instructional assistants, and other horrid alternatives, the alternative of eliminating job shares in the instance when one person could do the job, became an option. Was it the way the district wanted to go? Absolutely not. But in all of the budget discussions in which I participated, we were constantly choosing among undesirable alternatives to attempt to save jobs and positions.

I cannot speak to the current morale in Lexington schools or in the high school in particular. I can tell you that morale among veteran teachers generally in the Boston Suburbs and in Western Mass is universally quite low right now. I teach a course in school administration licensure in Northampton. I barely exaggerate when I say that nearly every veteran teacher in my course complains about morale, is fed up with the many demands, and blame their principals and their superintendent (as opposed to the Federal and State level sources). This is not to minimize specific feelings and specifics in Lexington. I just challenge us all to find more than a handful of high performing districts in the state of Massachusetts at the very least who will say that morale is high and they value their superintendents.

I will say that I have been a principal in 5 districts over my professional life and I am not alone in saying that Dr. Ash was the most supportive. Was he perfect? Of course not. Most local districts can no longer find highly qualified superintendents willing to even stay the course.

So by all means, people's concerns and issues should be heard and brought to the School committee, and, for those who have the courage, right to Paul Ash's door. He was always open to criticism of himself and as administrators, we were never afraid to give it. And he listened. When he thought we were right, he changed the plans.

Martha

On Mon, Jun 6, 2011 at 10:43 AM, Meg Muckenhoupt <megm@post.harvard.edu>wrote:

>

>

> Let me add that there is also parent discontent over

>

> - The odd decisions surrounding Harrington's established, successful,  
> popular extended day program, which was on the chopping block this spring  
> because... it was more convenient for Ash not to have to deal with one big  
> company instead of an independent program? To save money somehow? I never  
> did understand what was going on.

>

> - I've heard second-hand that there was pressure within schools to  
> eliminate job-share positions to save money, which ended up eliminating  
> experienced teachers who did not want to teach full-time. I was told that  
> the policy was enacted to save the town money for health insurance--but was  
> enforced on job-share teams where the parties were not receiving health  
> insurance from town.

>

>

> I don't really have the full story on either of these topics; I'd  
> appreciate factual clarification

>

>  
> Thank you,  
>  
>  
> Meg Muckenhoupt  
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>

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From: BonnieBrodner@aol.com June 7, 2011 1:29:21 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Different Message  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 6K  
Attach1.txt 1K

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Bonnie.

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Date: Mon Jun 6, 2011 10:24 am ((PDT))

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- > company instead of an independent program? To save money somehow? I
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- > eliminate job-share positions to save money, which ended up eliminating
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- > the policy was enacted to save the town money for health insurance--but was
- > enforced on job-share teams where the parties were not receiving health
- > insurance from town.
- >
- >
- > I don't really have the full story on either of these topics; I'd
- > appreciate factual clarification
- >
- >
- > Thank you,
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- >
- > Meg Muckenhoupt
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- >

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 6:01:36 PM  
 Subject: Re: [School-com] Teacher departures from Lexington High School  
 To: Noah Mendelsohn <noah@arcanedomain.com>  
 Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us Mary Ann Stewart  
 <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com>  
 pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 9K  
 Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Noah,

We appreciate your comments. By now you are probably aware that the School Committee took it's vote in an Executive Session last Wednesday, June 1 to extend Dr. Ash's contract through June 30, 2015.

Our faculty and staff turnover rate is low and rate of applications for open LPS positions is high. While there are undoubtedly some morale issues, where it is coming from and why remains to be determined.

Dr. Ash is currently conducting focus groups with faculty, staff, and administrators across the system to gather information; he will update the School Committee and the public about what he is hearing at our meeting Wednesday, June 15. We also hope to hear from faculty on morale when we get the results of teacher surveys to be distributed in the fall. There is much to understand: Is the issue particular schools? Administrators? The central office? Paul Ash? And/or, anything else?

We hope you remain engaged with us in this process as it will take some time to get a comprehensive picture and understanding of this complex issue. The School Committee is committed to understanding any and all causes related to the concern this issue has raised.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 7:28 AM, Noah Mendelsohn <[noah@arcanedomain.com](mailto:noah@arcanedomain.com)> wrote:

I'm very impressed that you are up at 4AM reading these emails. Your dedication to this, and your prompt reply is very much appreciated. Thank you too for passing my note on to Dr. Ash.

I expect that you are busy and tired, but for the record, it was Mme. Girondel and >Dr. Fiveash< whom I complimented. Everything I hear is that Mr. Bogart and some of the others who have been "eased out" recently are also very fine teachers, and they too are missed.

Unfortunately, I have a conflict that precludes attending tonights meeting in person, but we all appreciate your efforts to resolve this situation and to improve things in the future. Thank you.

Noah

On 6/7/2011 4:06 AM, Mary Ann Stewart wrote:



Dear Noah,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the School Committee. The Committee has received a high volume of emails on this issue and has been reading all of them. We value your opinions and take your concerns seriously. I have copied Dr. Ash on this reply so that he is aware of them as well.

Mme. Girondel and Mr. Bogart are indeed outstanding teachers. After 38 years each, their decision to retire at this point was their personal decision. I know you join us in wishing them well on their future endeavors.

The presentation and discussion of the issues you raise will be addressed at our meeting tonight. We understand the challenges to busy people in attending our meeting in person and hope you will consider viewing the proceedings via live broadcast on LexMedia ([www.lexmedia.org](http://www.lexmedia.org)) and remain engaged in the on-going process.

Thank you for writing to us.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart,  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

-----Original Message-----

From: [school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
[mailto:[school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)] On Behalf Of Noah Mendelsohn  
Sent: Monday, June 06, 2011 11:51 PM  
To: [school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
Subject: [School-com] Teacher departures from Lexington High School

Lexington High School has recently lost to retirement several of its most talented and beloved teachers. As you know, there is a growing sense that these and other teachers are retiring not primarily for the usual good reasons, but because LHS is no longer a school that supports and welcomes the unique contributions that make these teachers so special. I can think of no greater threat to the long term health of our schools than losing their reputation as places where the best teachers come to teach.

I am writing to ask that the school committee undertake a careful, balanced, thorough and very public study of these concerns. What the community and our schools need is a report that students, parents, faculty, and administration will recognize as fairly presenting all sides of the issues. If possible, such a study should develop suggestions for preserving and even improving the ability of Lexington schools to attract and retain the very best teachers, while of course being sensitive to budgeting, scheduling and other such concerns.

I understand also that Dr. Ash's contract is up for consideration. I do not personally know what role Dr. Ash has played, positive or negative, relating to the teaching climate at LHS. Certainly someone in his position has many important priorities to balance. Given the level of community concern about a situation that many of us view as a grave threat to Lexington's schools, it would seem prudent to defer the decision on his contract until his performance in this matter can be better understood.

Finally, my son had the privilege of taking classes from two recent retirees, Madame Girondel and Dr. Fiveash. I'm sure you know how very deeply hurt students, graduates and parents have been by their departures. I hope you will proceed with care and open minds to understand how we can do better in the future.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely, ,  
Noah Mendelsohn

Waltham Street  
Lexington

---

School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Noah Mendelsohn <noah@arcanedomain.com> June 7, 2011  
7:28:33 AM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Teacher departures from Lexington High School  
To: Mary Ann Stewart <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com>  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

I'm very impressed that you are up at 4AM reading these emails. Your dedication to this, and your prompt reply is very much appreciated. Thank you too for passing my note on to Dr. Ash.

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> attending our meeting in person and hope you will consider viewing the

> proceedings via live broadcast on LexMedia ([www.lexmedia.org](http://www.lexmedia.org)) and remain  
> engaged in the on-going process.

>

> Thank you for writing to us.

>

> Sincerely,

> Mary Ann.

>

> Mary Ann Stewart,

> Chair | Lexington School Committee

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: [school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

> [<mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>] On Behalf Of Noah

> Mendelsohn

> Sent: Monday, June 06, 2011 11:51 PM

> To: [school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

> Subject: [School-com] Teacher departures from Lexington High School

>

> Lexington High School has recently lost to retirement several of its most  
> talented and beloved teachers. As you know, there is a growing sense that  
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> their reputation as places where the best teachers come to teach.

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> and administration will recognize as fairly presenting all sides of the  
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> has many important priorities to balance. Given the level of community  
> concern about a situation that many of us view as a grave threat to  
> Lexington's schools, it would seem prudent to defer the decision on his  
> contract until his performance in this matter can be better understood.

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> Finally, my son had the privilege of taking classes from two recent  
> retirees, Madame Girondel and Dr. Fiveash. I'm sure you know how very

> deeply hurt students, graduates and parents have been by their departures.  
 > I hope you will proceed with care and open minds to understand how we can  
 > do better in the future.

>

> Thank you very much.

>

> Sincerely, ,

> Noah Mendelsohn

>

> Waltham Street

> Lexington

>

> School-com mailing list

> School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

> <http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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School-com mailing list

School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: "Mary Ann Stewart" <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com> June 7, 2011 4:06:47 AM  
 Subject: RE: [School-com] Teacher departures from Lexington High School  
 To: "Noah Mendelsohn" <noah@arcanedomain.com> <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
 Cc: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

Dear Noah,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the School Committee. The Committee has received a high volume of emails on this issue and has been reading all of them. We value your opinions and take your concerns seriously. I have copied Dr. Ash on this reply so that he is aware of them as well.

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endeavors.

The presentation and discussion of the issues you raise will be addressed at our meeting tonight. We understand the challenges to busy people in attending our meeting in person and hope you will consider viewing the proceedings via live broadcast on LexMedia ([www.lexmedia.org](http://www.lexmedia.org)) and remain engaged in the on-going process.

Thank you for writing to us.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart,  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

-----Original Message-----

From: school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
[mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] On Behalf Of Noah Mendelsohn  
Sent: Monday, June 06, 2011 11:51 PM  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Subject: [School-com] Teacher departures from Lexington High School

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Finally, my son had the privilege of taking classes from two recent retirees, Madame Girondel and Dr. Fiveash. I'm sure you know how very deeply hurt students, graduates and parents have been by their departures. I hope you will proceed with care and open minds to understand how we can do better in the future.

Thank you very much.

Sincerely,  
Noah Mendelsohn

Waltham Street  
Lexington

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School-com mailing list  
School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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School-com mailing list  
School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Noah Mendelsohn <noah@arcanedomain.com> June 6, 2011  
11:51:14 PM  
Subject: [School-com] Teacher departures from Lexington High School  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

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Waltham Street  
Lexington

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School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: "Mary Ann Stewart" <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com> June  
7, 2011 4:10:02 AM  
Subject: RE: [School-com] Concern from a teacher  
To: "School Committee Committee" <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us



Dear Jessie,

Thank you for sharing this.

Was there anything else in the email? If so, will you please forward it to us?

Thank you,  
Mary Ann.

-----Original Message-----

From: school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
[mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] On Behalf Of Jessica Steigerwald  
Sent: Monday, June 06, 2011 11:17 PM  
To: School Committee Committee; Paul Ash  
Subject: [School-com] Concern from a teacher

Dear Colleagues and Paul,

I was contacted (tonight) by a staff person who asked that I not use the staff person's name. The staff person says "The climate of fear is real."

This is not a retiring teacher - an active teacher. The teacher is also a resident.

I am gravely concerned about this for several reasons.

I believe we need to address this as seriously as we ask our staff to address reports of bullying.

I'm really dismayed to have more come out. It is unfortunate to hear it at this time, but it is what it is.

-- Jessie

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School-com mailing list  
School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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School-com mailing list  
School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

260  
7, 2011 4:42:23 AM

Subject: RE: [School-com] (no subject)  
To: <mitchkase@rcn.com> <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Cc: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

Dear Mitchell,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the School Committee. The Committee has received a high volume of emails on this issue and has been reading all of them. We value your opinions and take your concerns seriously. I have copied Superintendent Ash on this reply so that he is aware of them as well.

The presentation and discussion of the issues you raise will be addressed at our meeting tonight. We understand the challenges to busy people in attending our meeting in person and hope you will consider viewing the proceedings via live broadcast on LexMedia ([www.lexmedia.org](http://www.lexmedia.org)) and remain engaged in the on-going process.

Thank you for writing to us.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart,  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

-----Original Message-----

From: school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
[mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] On Behalf Of  
mitchkase@rcn.com  
Sent: Monday, June 06, 2011 11:16 PM  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Subject: [School-com] (no subject)

Dear School Committee Members:

I am writing as a parent of three students in the Lexington School System.

I

have great concern regarding the health of our schools, hence I ask you to delay

the contract renewal of Dr Paul Ash.

Significant questions have arisen regarding the morale, as well as the welfare, of

our teachers, students and parents. At the high school departments of

drama,  
 music and foreign language have suffered under the heavy-handed leadership  
 of Dr Ash. You will agree that there is a town-wide level of concern. It  
 would  
 thus be tactically and intellectually improper to make a decision regarding  
 Dr  
 Ash's future without open and measured consideration. The appearance of a  
 quick decision by fiat would be terribly divisive, potentially setting the  
 schools  
 back by years.  
 I therefore ask that you as a group delay a decision until all the facts are  
 on the  
 table, allowing a fuller discussion of this critical issue.  
 Respectfully,

Mitchell L. Kase, M.D.

---

School-com mailing list  
 School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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School-com mailing list  
 School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: <mitchkase@rcn.com> June 6, 2011 11:15:51 PM  
 Subject: [School-com] (no subject)  
 To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

Dear School Committee Members:

I am writing as a parent of three students in the Lexington School System. I  
 have great concern regarding the health of our schools, hence I ask you to delay  
 the contract renewal of Dr Paul Ash.  
 Significant questions have arisen regarding the morale, as well as the welfare, of  
 our teachers, students and parents. At the high school departments of drama,  
 music and foreign language have suffered under the heavy-handed leadership  
 of Dr Ash. You will agree that there is a town-wide level of concern. It would  
 thus be tactically and intellectually improper to make a decision regarding Dr

Ash's future without open and measured consideration. The appearance of a quick decision by fiat would be terribly divisive, potentially setting the schools back by years.

I therefore ask that you as a group delay a decision until all the facts are on the table, allowing a fuller discussion of this critical issue.

Respectfully,

Mitchell L. Kase, M.D.

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School-com mailing list  
School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: "Mary Ann Stewart" <MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com> June 7, 2011 5:03:28 AM  
Subject: RE: [School-com] Delay Vote on Extension of Paul Ash's Contract [1Attachment]  
To: <Meredith.Collura@Alum.MIT.edu> <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Cc: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 35K  
Attach3.txt 1K

Dear Meredith,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the School Committee. The Committee has received a high volume of emails on this issue and has been reading all of them. We value your opinions and take your concerns seriously. I have copied Superintendent Ash on this reply so that he is aware of them as well. The presentation and discussion of the issues you raise will be addressed at our meeting tonight. We hope you will remain engaged in the on-going process. Thank you for writing to us.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart,

Chair I Lexington School Committee

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**From:** school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us [mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] **On Behalf Of** Meredith Applegate

**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 11:05 PM

**To:** school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

**Subject:** [School-com] Delay Vote on Extension of Paul Ash's Contract [1Attachment]

Dear School Committee,

Please consider delaying the decision to renew Dr. Ash's contract. As a new parent in the LPS system (my son was a K student at Hastings this year), I am very impressed with Dr. Ash's background and leadership as Superintendent. Nonetheless, I believe that taking some time to speak with community members and families around town about their thoughts before deciding on this contract would be invaluable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meredith Applegate

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Susan Kenyon <susan.kenyon@mac.com>

**To:** lexington@yahogroups.com  
**Sent:** Mon, June 6, 2011 12:55:04 AM  
**Subject:** [lexington] Delay Vote on Extension of Paul Ash's Contract

Friends,

I am writing to you as a long-time parent in the Lexington school system who would like to see the school committee delay its vote on Tuesday to extend the contract of Paul Ash. Whether you think Dr. Ash is doing a fine job or not, I believe the school committee should delay their vote in order to investigate the serious issues of teacher morale that have recently come to light. I am listing the links to articles in the Minuteman about this issue.

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/lexington/news/x724664778/School-Committee-wont-take-up-teacher-morale-issue-before-fall#axzz1ORNCzmbo>

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/lexington/news/x1826251131/Two-longtime-Lexington-High-teachers-call-it-a-career#axzz1ORNCzmbo>

<http://www.wickedlocal.com/lexington/news/x1908281889/Lexington-High->

drama-teacher-Steven-Bogart-to-retire#axzz1ORNCzmbo

Attached is a copy of the letter that I sent to the school committee. If you agree, I encourage you to send an email to the school committee expressing your desire to have the vote on Dr. Ash's contract delayed. Their email address is [school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us).

The meeting to vote on Dr. Ash's contract is being held at 7:30 this Tuesday, June 7, in the Selectmen's Meeting Room. The public is allowed comments at the very beginning of the meeting. I am hoping there will be a large crowd at the meeting and that one of the speakers will ask people in the audience who wish for the vote to be delayed to rise or raise their hand. Unfortunately, I can not attend the meeting due to our daughter's confirmation at Temple, or I would try to be a speaker myself. I don't know who will be speaking, but I will let you know if I find out.

Below is the address and agenda. I note that Dr. Ash's contract renewal is still not listed on the official school committee website, but is available through another town website. Notice was apparently put on the bulletin board in Town Hall on Friday afternoon so as to just meet the 48 hour notice requirement. The school committee finished their negotiations of the terms of Dr. Ash's contract on Wednesday.

Please contact me with any questions. Thank you for reading.

Susan Kenyon

781.771.8375

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, June 7, 2011

Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room

1625 Massachusetts Avenue



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:

7:45 p.m. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns:

7:55 p.m. Discussion Items:

1. ING /MASBO Finance Award (10 minutes)
2. K-5 Pro-Social Skills Program (20 minutes)
3. FY12 Budget Changes (30 minutes)
4. FY11 Budget Changes (20 minutes)
5. New England Association of Schools and Colleges Two-Year Progress Report
6. for Lexington High School (20 minutes)
7. Superintendent's End-of-Year Report (30 minutes)

10:05 p.m. Action Items:

1. Vote to Approve Jonas Clarke Middle School Field Trip to LaGuácima de Alajuela, Costa Rica, March 8 through March 17, 2012 (10 minutes)
2. Vote to Approve Lexington High School Field Trip to Stockholm, Sweden; Helsinki, Finland; and Tartu and Tallinn, Estonia, April 12 through April 22, 2012 (10 minutes)

- 6/26
3. Vote to Approve Lexington High School Science Team Trip to New Brunswick, Canada, July 24 through July 29, 2011 (5 minutes)
  4. Vote to Approve 2012-2013 School Calendar (15 minutes)
  5. Vote to Accept a \$100 Donation to the William G. Tapply Memorial Fund (2 minutes)
  6. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 11, 2011 (2 minutes)
  7. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of May 10, 2011 (2 minutes)
  8. Superintendent's employment contract

10:51 p.m. Executive Session (Collective Bargaining):

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

Attachment(s) from Sharon Olofsson

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**From:** Meredith.Collura@Alum.MIT.edu  
"Meredith Applegate" <mcapplegate@comcast.net>  
**Date:** June 6, 2011 11:04:48 PM  
**Subject:** [School-com] Delay Vote on Extension of Paul Ash's Contract [1 Attachment]  
**To:** <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
**Attachments:** Attach0.html 17K  
Attach3.txt 1K

Dear School Committee,

Please consider delaying the decision to renew Dr. Ash's contract. As a new parent in the LPS system (my son was a K student at Hastings this year), I am very impressed with Dr. Ash's background and leadership as Superintendent. Nonetheless, I believe that taking some time to speak with community members and families around town about their thoughts before deciding on this contract would be invaluable.

Thank you for your consideration.

Respectfully Submitted,

Meredith Applegate

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Susan Kenyon <susan.kenyon@mac.com>  
**To:** lexington@yahooogroups.com  
**Sent:** Mon, June 6, 2011 12:55:04 AM  
**Subject:** [lexington] Delay Vote on Extension of Paul Ash's Contract

Dear Cathy,

Thank you for sharing your concerns with the School Committee. The Committee has received a high volume of emails on this issue and has been reading all of them. We value your opinions and take your concerns seriously. I have copied Superintendent Ash on this reply so that he is aware of them as well.

The presentation and discussion of the issues you raise will be addressed at our meeting tonight. I hope you remain engaged in the on-going process. Thank you for writing to us.

Sincerely,

Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart,

Chair | Lexington School Committee

-----  
**From:** school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us [mailto:school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us] **On Behalf Of** cathy  
**Sent:** Monday, June 06, 2011 11:04 PM  
**To:** school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
**Subject:** [School-com] Delay in Dr. Ash's Contract

Dear School Committee Members,

Due to the worrisome decisions made by Dr. Ash regarding the management of some seasoned professors, please consider postponing the signing of his contract. I believe that the mismanagement or his preferred management of such individuals may be cause for such serious action. I say this because of the depth, breadth, and richness one of these professors has brought to my daughter and her friends, and the hearsay (and perhaps rumors) that other valuable teachers have similarly been mismanaged. Further investigation may be needed at the least; however, perhaps enough is known but needs to be processed and considered with calmer minds.

Regards,

Cathy Counsell

95 North Street

781-718-7005 cell

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From: "cathy" <cathycounsell@comcast.net> June 6, 2011 11:03:30 PM  
Subject: [School-com] Delay in Dr. Ash's Contract  
To: <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 3K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear School Committee Members,

Due to the worrisome decisions made by Dr. Ash regarding the management of some seasoned professors, please consider postponing the signing of his contract. I believe that the mismanagement or his preferred management of such individuals may be cause for such serious action. I say this because of the depth, breadth, and richness one of these professors has brought to my daughter and her friends, and the hearsay (and perhaps rumors) that other valuable teachers have similarly been mismanaged. Further investigation may be needed at the least; however, perhaps enough is known but needs to be processed and considered with calmer minds.

Regards,

272.

**Cathy Counsell**

**95 North Street**

**781-718-7005 cell**

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Date: Thu, 9 Jun 2011 17:50:02 -0400  
From: [LexingtonPublicSchools-MA\\_scs@gcnotify.com](mailto:LexingtonPublicSchools-MA_scs@gcnotify.com)  
To: [bethgaudette@msn.com](mailto:bethgaudette@msn.com)  
Subject: Superintendent's "Our Schools" Article Attached

**Dear Lexington Parents/Guardians:**

**Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paul Ash asked that the attached article, which appeared in the "Our Schools" section of the June 9, 2011, issue of the Lexington Minuteman, be sent to you.**

**Miriam Sousa  
Administrative Assistant  
to the Superintendent  
Lexington Public Schools**

Do Not Reply. This is not a reply e-mail address.

-----  
From: "Paul B. Ash" <[pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us)>  
scherenson@gmail.com  
June 10, 2011 8:21:05 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Fwd: Our Schools Article  
To: [school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
Attach1.txt 1K

----- Original Message -----

Dear Dr. Ash,

Thank you for writing the Our Schools Article about teacher morale.

279  
This is an excellent article and I am glad you communicated this so clearly to the community.

It is unfortunate that you and the School Committee had to encounter hostilities at the recent School Committee meeting. I am sorry I could not attend, but

I got feedback from Mollie Garberg and I completely agree with the letters that she and Pam Hoffman sent out in support of you and all the work that you do.

We feel very fortunate to have such a wonderful school system and appreciate all the efforts to improve professional development. Please be assured that

many parents feel this way and will continue to work on behalf of the LPS. As always, please let me know if there is anything I can do to help. I will continue

as Co-Chair of the Harrington Site Council next year, and am hoping to be on the Clarke Site Council as well.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Chersonson

-----  
From: Jessica Steigerwald <jess@shininghours.com> June 10, 2011  
8:20:20 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Re: Superintendent Contract Extension Open Meeting  
Law concerns  
To: maryann@redoniondesign.com  
Cc: School Committee Committee <school-  
com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 7K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Mary Ann,

What does item #5 mean?

-- Jessie



On Jun 10, 2011, at 6:50 AM, [maryann@redoniondesign.com](mailto:maryann@redoniondesign.com) wrote:

Dear Dawn,

Thank you for sharing your concerns.

The Public Records Request you have made has been sent to Dr. Ash. LPS has 10 business days to comply. As our meeting Wednesday is only 3 business days away, I am not sure it can be accommodated in time. I will ask Dr. Ash to provide an estimate of time and also the costs associated with your request and forward to you.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

-----**From:** Dawn McKenna <[dawnforlexington@yahoo.com](mailto:dawnforlexington@yahoo.com)>  
**Date:** Thu, 9 Jun 2011 20:39:52 -0700 (PDT)  
**To:** Mary Ann Stewart<[MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com](mailto:MaryAnn@redoniondesign.com)>; Margaret Coppe<[mecoppe@gmail.com](mailto:mecoppe@gmail.com)>; Jessie Steigerwald<[jess@shininghours.com](mailto:jess@shininghours.com)>; Alessandro Alessandrini<[alessandrini@comcast.net](mailto:alessandrini@comcast.net)>; Bonnie Brodner<[bonniebrodner@aol.com](mailto:bonniebrodner@aol.com)>  
**Subject:** Superintendent Contract Extension Open Meeting Law concerns

Mary Ann, Margaret, Jessie, Sandro, and Bonnie:

Before sharing the purpose of this email, I want to acknowledge the appropriateness Mary Ann's conduct of Tuesday's School Committee meeting. Her demeanor, body language, and comments was respectful, especially given the emotions of the moment. I am grateful that each of you were willing to hear audience comments that were uncomfortable at times.

In that spirit, I reiterate that I believe that the actions of the School Committee in approving the extension of the contract in executive session violates the Open Meeting Law. This email provides you with notice of my concerns and asks that corrective action be taken.

Here is a summary of my concerns:

1. It is a violation of the open meeting law to go vote on a contract extension in executive session.

2. There is no detrimental effect of having a contract extension discussion in public

2. There is no detrimental effect of having a contract extension discussion in public.
3. As a matter of precedence, I believe that prior superintendent's contract terms in Lexington have been voted in public session.
4. Whether appropriate and timely notice was given for each public and executive session meeting regarding the contract extension. In addition, the agenda(s) were not sufficiently specific to reasonably inform the public of what was to occur at the meeting.
5. Whether the fact that number of people in the room created a fire safety violation.
6. Whether the fact that at least 30 people could not be accommodated in the room violated the open meeting law.

As I mentioned, I feel strongly enough about this that I am willing to file a complaint with the Attorney General's Office. However, I would prefer that the School Committee take corrective action so that such a complaint is not necessary.

What I propose is that the School Committee and Dr. Ash agree to withdraw the approved extension voluntarily at the June 15th meeting. Public comments be taken at the June 15th meeting, and at a subsequent meeting, with plenty of notice given, in open session, vote whether or not to extend the existing contract.

In addition, I request that at the June 15th meeting, the following actions be taken:

1. provide list of the dates of all meetings at which you voted to go into executive session for the purpose of contract extension with Dr. Ash.
2. provide copies of the minutes for the open session for each of those dates. (The law provides that they must be available whether they are in draft or final form so this can be done without approved minutes being in place.)
3. Vote to release the minutes of each an every executive session at which this topic was discussed. (This can be done since the purpose for the executive session no longer exists. If other items were discussed at those meetings, you can vote to release only the portions that relate to the Superintendent contract.)
4. The meeting be scheduled in a room large enough to accommodate the size of the reasonably anticipated crowd.
5. Copies of all correspondence including emails received by the School Committee member (s) be made available for review by the public.
6. Provide a written summary of the terms of the extension and how that differs from the existing contract.

Please let me know your thoughts.

Dawn McKenna  
9 Hancock Street

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From: "Paul B. Ash" <pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
j.hai@verizon.net  
June 10, 2011 8:18:37 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Fwd: Our Schools  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 2K  
Attach1.txt 1K

----- Original Message -----

Great letter! Let's hope it does the job.

See you this evening.

Jill

-----  
From: "Paul B. Ash" <pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
phschmidt@alum.mit.edu  
June 10, 2011 8:15:27 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Fwd: Re: Superintendent's "Our Schools" Article  
Attached  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 4K  
Attach0.html 2K  
Attach2.txt 1K

----- Original Message -----

Thanks for your message - makes good sense to me. I'm afraid a lot of parents are prone to panic, and worst-case scenarios leap easily to many people's minds.

For what it is worth, it is my opinion that you are doing a very good job overall, and I am glad you'll keep on doing so for Lexington.

Best regards -- Peter

On Jun 9, 2011, at 5:50 PM, [LexingtonPublicSchools-MA\\_scs@gcnotify.com](mailto:scs@gcnotify.com) wrote:

**Dear Lexington Parents/Guardians:**

**Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paul Ash asked that the attached article, which appeared in the "Our Schools" section of the June 9, 2011, issue of the Lexington Minuteman, be sent to you.**

**Miriam Sousa  
Administrative Assistant  
to the Superintendent  
Lexington Public Schools**

Do Not Reply. This is not a reply e-mail address.<Our Schools 6\_9\_11.pdf>

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 10, 2011 7:04:24 AM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] no agenda had notice of negotiations with Ash  
To: Olga <opg1000@rcn.com>  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 7K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Olga,

Thank you for writing to the School Committee.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 11:19 PM, Olga <opg1000@rcn.com> wrote:

Hi again,

I looked up the agendas in my old emails, and the executive session purpose is "contract negotiations with nonunion personnel." This could be any assistant superintendent as well as Paul. So, in spite of what you may think, the public had no clue that you were planning to extend Paul's contract early. Sigh ...

Less than cheery,  
Olga

Agenda for 4/23/11

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEEMEETING**

**Tuesday, April 26, 2011**

**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room**

**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**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. Second Annual LHS Senior Art Exhibit to Be Held in the LPS Central Office Gymnasium, April 27 through May 13

2. The Final Day of School for Students in all Schools except Estabrook Is June 22. The Final Day of School for Estabrook is June 24. Both June 22 and June 24 are Half Days for Students

3. Presentation of Massachusetts School Wellness Awards to Hastings School and Lexington High School Held at the 2011 Legislative Breakfast on Wednesday, April 6

**7:50 p.m. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns:**

**8:00 p.m. Discussion Items:**

1. Plan to Establish Three Special Education Study Committees (30 minutes)
2. Recommendation for Extended Day Child Care Lease Award(30 minutes)
3. Future School Committee Meeting Dates and Tentative Agenda Items (10 minutes)

**9:10 p.m. Action Items:**

1. Vote to Appoint Charles Favazzo as the School Committee Representative on the Permanent Building Committee (5 minutes)
2. Vote to Accept a \$635 Donation from Wilson Farms' School Fundraiser to Hastings School (2 minutes)
3. Vote to Accept \$300 in Donations to the William G.Tapply Memorial Fund (2 minutes)
4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of March 21, 2011 (2 minutes)

**9:20 p.m. Executive Session (Contract Negotiations with Nonunion Personnel):**

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, May 10, 2011, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

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

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Olga P.Guttag  
Guttag Consulting  
273 Emerson Rd.  
Lexington, MA 02420  
Cell: 781 799-4607

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School-com mailing list  
[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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2032

From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 10, 2011 7:02:19 AM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Please correct the comment you made in the meeting; my take on t  
To: Olga Guttag <olga4schools@yahoo.com>  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 7K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Hello Olga,

Good to hear from you. Thank you for sharing your concerns with the School Committee.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Tue, Jun 7, 2011 at 11:04 PM, Olga Guttag <[olga4schools@yahoo.com](mailto:olga4schools@yahoo.com)> wrote:

Hi Members of the School Committee,

Today was the first SC meeting that I have watched since I left the SC in 2007. I don't always agree with Dawn McKenna, but I believe that you need to take her comments about the process by which you extended Paul's contract seriously. She has put into words the concern of many other residents (myself included).

Mary Ann, in your response to Mr. Harris you said that the school web site shows the agenda items for April, including the executive session when the contract negotiations with Paul started. That is NOT the case. There are no minutes posted for any of the April meetings, and no past agenda are accessible. You may want to post a correction on the Lex. list, so you don't get clobbered ...

In addition, your explanation of what Paul's new contract will include was very unclear. I understood that you gave him a 3% annual raise (as was the case in the previous contracts), and you also said that he asked for additional 10 vacation days. You did not



say if he got them.

If he did, that amounts to over \$10,000 in additional compensation. As you know I have been working with the CO for many years before my tenure on the SC, and I have not known a single Superintendent who felt they could even take the vacation days they already had without short-changing the system. If Paul plans to take the days off, the system will be worse off. If he does not, he got more than 3% \$\$ raise. If I were a member of LEA, I would insist that, if the SC thinks that the economy is good enough to pay the Superintendent 3% plus, then I deserve the same. Finally, dropping the clause about a physical could get very expensive for us. If Paul has or will get a medical condition which will qualify for a disability, you'll be paying him AND a new Superintendent. Why would you agree to that?

I think that you have been outfoxed by Paul's shrewd negotiations, and (as many SC's in the past) you are paying way too much. If Paul were universally loved, I'd understand your hesitation to loose him, but given how controversial his tenure has been, the SC was in very strong negotiating position to bring Paul's compensation in line with what you want to (AND can afford to) give the other unions. I know the horse is out of the barn, but you need to hear this unpleasant message from someone who has been there, as well as the public who has no clue what an executive session looks like.

If the staff believe that the current administration is punitive (and I know several principals and administrators who do), then they are not going to give you an honest 360-evaluation. I am very concerned about your lack of willingness to include the faculty, staff, students and parents in the Superintendent evaluation (that is another clause that should have been changed in the contract).

Alas, I suspect that you'll find out a lot more about the perception the faculty have of Paul's administration from the survey the student is taking than you found out from all of your 50 surveys combined. Please listen to the people at the bottom of the LPS pyramid - they are the ones who directly serve our kids. The administration's role is to facilitate the best possible system for the teachers and staff to **teach our kids**. Alas, I don't believe that that is what Paul always sees as his role.

Finally, I expect that if you (or perhaps one of the citizen number-crunchers) did an analysis of \$\$s going to classrooms vs. \$\$s going to non-classroom positions, you would probably see that under Paul's tenure, our resources have been moving from classrooms to administration. I agreed with adding in some administrators early in Paul's

tenure, but every year of Paul's tenure, we get more consultants, overseers, administrators, etc. The teachers see this too, and it (IMHO rightly) frustrates them.

If you'd like to hear more, don't hesitate to call me.

Thanks for doing this thankless job. Good luck!  
Olga

--

Olga P. Gutttag, Ph.D.  
273 Emerson Rd  
Lexington, MA 02420  
781 863-0797

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School-com mailing list  
[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: BEB <bonniebrodner@aol.com> June 9, 2011 11:14:57 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] School Committee Postpones Vote on Superintendent's Contract - L  
To: School Committee <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Cc: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 4K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Jessie,

I noticed that was in the patch as well, but I think they made a mistake .... The most recent agenda I saw was the summary Paul sent us & it definitely wasn't in that one. Plus I can't imagine why we would vote for the same thing for yet a third time .....

Bonnie

Sent from my iPod

On Jun 9, 2011, at 10:37 PM, Jessica Steigerwald <[jess@shininghours.com](mailto:jess@shininghours.com)> wrote:

Dear Paul & Colleagues,

I missed an e-mail where Miriam sent out word that we were putting Vote to Extend Superintendent's Contract to next week's meeting. It is referred to in the patch article below (which someone just sent me).

Can anyone please send it to me?

Thanks,

Jessie

<http://lexington.patch.com/articles/school-committee-postpones-vote-on-super-contract>  
<http://lexington.patch.com/articles/school-committee-postpones-vote-on-super-contract>

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School-com mailing list  
[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Jessica Steigerwald <jess@shininghours.com> June 9, 2011  
10:37:02 PM  
Subject: [School-com] School Committee Postpones Vote on  
Superintendent's Contract - Lexin  
To: School Committee Committee <school-  
com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 2K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Paul & Colleagues,

I missed an e-mail where Miriam sent out word that we were putting Vote to Extend Superintendent's Contract to next week's meeting. It is referred to in the patch article below (which someone just sent me).

Can anyone please send it to me?

Thanks,

Jessie

<http://lexington.patch.com/articles/school-committee-postpones-vote-on-super-contract>

-----

From: Patrick Mehr <patrick.mehr@gmail.com> June 9, 2011  
9:36:16 PM

Subject: [School-com] Anonymous teachers letter to the School Committee  
 To: Lex School Committee <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
 Cc: ncohen@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 email list Lex TMMA <lex-tmma@yahoogroups.com>  
 neufeld@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 2K  
 Attach1.txt 1K

The *Lexington Patch* posts an "Open Letter to the Lexington School Committee" dated May 25, 2011 at [lexington.patch.com/articles/anonymous-teachers-to-school-committee-investigate-environment#pdf-6500379](http://lexington.patch.com/articles/anonymous-teachers-to-school-committee-investigate-environment#pdf-6500379) allegedly from "teachers at the high school and three Lexington elementary schools".

<http://lexington.patch.com/articles/anonymous-teachers-to-school-committee-investigate-environment#pdf-6500379> Has the School Committee indeed received this letter?

Does anyone know how many teachers signed it?

Patrick Mehr  
 Pct 3

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From: "Miriam Sousa" <msousa@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
 LexingtonPublicSchools-MA\_scs@gcnotify.com  
 June 9, 2011 5:47:08 PM  
 Subject: [School-com] Superintendent's "Our Schools" Article  
 Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 4K  
 Attach0.html 1K  
 Our Schools 6\_9\_11.pdf 47K  
 Our Schools 6\_9\_11.doc 60K  
 Attach4.txt 1K

Hi Marianne,

Paul would like the attached "Our Schools" Article posted on the LPS website. Thanks!

Miriam

Miriam Sousa  
 Administrative Assistant  
 to the Superintendent  
 Lexington Public Schools  
 781-861-2550, ext. 212

----- Original Message -----

**Dear Lexington Parents/Guardians:**

**Superintendent of Schools Dr. Paul Ash asked that the attached article, which appeared in the "Our Schools" section of the June 9, 2011, issue of the Lexington Minuteman, be sent to you.**

**Miriam Sousa  
 Administrative Assistant  
 to the Superintendent  
 Lexington Public Schools**

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From: Jessica Steigerwald <jess@shininghours.com> June 9, 2011  
 3:21:45 PM  
 Subject: Re: [School-com] June 15 SC Meeting  
 To: Jessica Steigerwald <jess@shininghours.com>  
 Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 msousa@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
 Attach1.txt 1K

Hi again,

Other note -- I have asked Bob Fraser and Colby to please review the process of negotiating Paul's contract and try to provide us with a brief written statement outlining their reason for maintaining we have complied with the law. As part of that, I have asked them to advise on whether the agenda for this next meeting needs to include anything

specific. Three different agendas went out to the community for this week's meeting. I was confused about what we were going to be doing even as the meeting started. At one point a notice went out with a revision that said we were going to vote next week. Some people think the Chair said, even within the meeting, that we would be doing something at next week's meeting. I don't think I have energy to watch the meeting right now, but as Bob and Colby were sitting there, I am eager to hear whether they think adequate notice was provided, whether a vote was required, in order, or needs to be on the next agenda.

Since Monday will permit 48 hours' notice, I hope they resolve all of these questions clearly in plenty of time for us to be legally protected.

My concern here is for our committee.

-- Jessie

On Jun 9, 2011, at 2:12 PM, Jessica Steigerwald wrote:

Dear Paul,

Thank you for the update and for including the new items. I think everyone will enjoy hearing about the new web-site.

-- Jessie

On Jun 9, 2011, at 1:13 PM, Paul B. Ash wrote:

Dear School Committee Members:

Since the next meeting will be held on Wednesday and Miriam will be taking a vacation this Friday, the

School Committee packet will be delivered on Monday. All of the remaining agenda items from last Tuesday will be on the June 15 agenda. In addition, we will be adding a few more items:

New LPS website (15 minutes)

Follow up on morale concerns (20 minutes)

Authorization for the town manager to sign MSBA documents (2 minutes)

Final reading on Service Animals (5 minutes)

Paul

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Jessica Steigerwald <jess@shininghours.com> June 9, 2011  
2:12:10 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] June 15 SC Meeting  
To: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
msousa@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 4K  
Attach1.txt 1K



----- Forwarded Message -----

From: alessandrini@comcast.net

To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

Sent: Wednesday, June 8, 2011 11:17:18 AM

Subject: [School-com] Fwd: Amy Patterson's Teacher Survey Questions

Hi All,

I'm forwarding you Amy Patterson's survey. I personally think it is impressive.

Our students are amazing.

Thanks.

Sandro

----- Forwarded Message -----

From: "Amy Patterson" <apatterskayak@msn.com>

To: alessandrini@comcast.net

Sent: Wednesday, June 8, 2011 10:28:23 AM

Subject: Amy Patterson's Teacher Survey Questions

Mr. Alessandrini,

Thank you so much for your interest in my survey. I have enclosed the questions from the survey, and I have some preliminary results too, however I think it would be best if I finish my survey and statistically analyze the results before sending them to you.

Also, I am leaving for China on this Friday morning, so you may be in contact with Michaela Shtilman-Minkin for the final results, as I may not finish before I leave.

Best regards,  
Amy Patterson

---

School-com mailing list

School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Susan Schiffer <sueschiffer@me.com> June 9, 2011 11:01:21 AM  
Subject: Fwd: [School-com] (no subject)  
To: Lexington School Committee <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Hi,  
I meant to send this to all of you.  
Keep up the good (but difficult) work!  
Thanks,  
Sue

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Susan Schiffer <[sueschiffer@me.com](mailto:sueschiffer@me.com)>  
**Date:** June 9, 2011 10:45:32 AM EDT  
**To:** Jessica Steigerwald <[jess@shininghours.com](mailto:jess@shininghours.com)>  
**Subject:** Re: [School-com] (no subject)

Sorry about that, Jessie. I was checking your email link on the website because of a posting on the Lexington list and then hit send by accident.

But, I have been meaning to email you all since watching the last SC meeting on LexMedia.

I feel that setting up a task force to get feedback from teachers is really important, especially at the high school. I have not been involved in the PTSA since my

daughter (also Julia, a 9th grader) started because of LEF, so don't know much about the structure there.

I know that Paul Ash doesn't like to micromanage the principals, and it appears that Natalie Cohen and perhaps past LHS principals also don't micromanage the department heads. Some of the grumblings I've heard about recently seem to point to department heads making unpopular choices. Even if choices regarding class assignments are backed up by research, there has to be a better way to manage departments to get buy-in. I think Natalie needs to step in to help.

Despite my feeling that the high school doesn't seem to be operating as smoothly as it should, I fully support the School Committee's decision to extend Paul Ash's contract. He has brought many good programs and made many improvements to our school district. I have every confidence that he will talk to teachers and work hard to address concerns that are in his power to do something about. School systems are very complex and are a work in progress.

Thank you for your dedication and hard work. Let me know if there is anything I can do to help.

Take care,  
Sue Schiffer

By the way, do you know who will be the LEF liaison this fall? Thanks.

On Jun 9, 2011, at 8:52 AM, Jessica Steigerwald <[jess@shininghours.com](mailto:jess@shininghours.com)> wrote:

Dear Sue,

We did not receive a message with your e-mail. Just wanted to let you know.

-- Jessie

On Jun 9, 2011, at 7:49 AM, Susan Schiffer wrote:

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From: Olga Gutttag <olga4schools@yahoo.com> June 9, 2011  
 10:12:30 AM  
 Subject: [School-com] Reasonable expectations for response to calls/emails  
 to the SC; thre  
 To: Edith Sandy <esandy@rcn.com> Lexington List  
 <lexington@yahoogleroups.com>  
 school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 4K  
 Attach1.txt 1K

Hi,

To constituents:

Let me give you a perspective of a former SC member on phone calls, and expected return to constituent communications (email, etc.).

First, please remember that all SC members are volunteers. Some have jobs, others have kids and families. They all work hard for the SC. It is NOT reasonable to expect that they are available to every constituent at all times.

For example, while on the SC, I did not return ANY communications on the days of SC meetings, as I needed the time to read carefully through my SC packet, formulate any questions I had, and perhaps write out a statement I would make; i.e. get prepared for the meeting. I did read all emails as they came in, and they often affected my thinking. However, those emails would not be answered for a couple of days. Personally, I found email communications far better than phone calls, as there was less of a chance for "talking past each other."

Our current SC is not perfect, but please do not fault them for being inaccessible. I believe that Mary Ann mentioned in the meeting that they have a rule of one week for answering emails. I don't know how promptly they return calls, but it should be MORE than one-day delay, especially if they got swamped by emails and letters about Paul's contract.

To members of the School Committee:

I watched the SC meeting on LexMedia (thanks for a live broadcast!), and came away with the following questions:

1) When was a public notice given that Paul's contract was going

to be renegotiated and perhaps extended ahead of schedule?

This should have been an agenda item, and a discussion should

be shown in the minutes of that meeting. Did I miss it? If

such a public notice did not happen, why not?

2) Why was the contract voted in an executive session rather

than in a public one? Is this legal? Minutes of this

particular session should be reasonably detailed to explain

this, and published promptly.

3) What is the language of the new contract extension. Please

publish it on the LPS web site as promptly as you published

the calendar. Thanks.

Please post your answers to the Lexington list, as I know many other are interested in your answers.

Thanks for reading my thought. I look forward to the responses from our SC members.  
Olga Gutttag (SC member 2003-2007)

--

Olga P. Gutttag, Ph.D.  
273 Emerson Rd  
Lexington, MA 02420

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From: f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com June 9, 2011 1:08:32 PM  
Subject: Re: Fwd: [School-com] Request for public information  
To: "Menemsha MacBain" <menemsha.macbain@gmail.com>  
school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
"School Committee" <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>

Dear Menemsha,

I will try to clarify. I contacted Dr. Ash because he is responsible for contacting staff, not the School Committee.

The staff member will be able to collect everything within ten days and has a much better understanding of how quickly our server can complete the search for the items requested.

Dr. Ash wants to know if the information you requested can be collected before the School Committee Meeting this Wednesday (5 days).

Also, an estimate of the costs incurred in any case.

Mary Ann.

Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

-----Original Message-----

From: Menemsha MacBain <menemsha.macbain@gmail.com>  
 Sender: school-com-bounces@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Date: Thu, 9 Jun 2011 12:06:25  
 To: <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
 Subject: Fwd: [School-com] Request for public information

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School-com mailing list  
 School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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School-com mailing list  
 School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

---

From: Menemsha MacBain <menemsha.macbain@gmail.com> June  
 9, 2011 12:06:25 PM  
 Subject: Fwd: [School-com] Request for public information  
 To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 Attachments: Attach0.html 6K  
 Attach1.txt 1K

Dear members of the School Committee,



I sent this to Mary Ann Stewart but she is out for the weekend, could anyone else please explain this to me?

Menemsha MacBain  
60 Liberty Ave,  
Lexington, MA 02420  
1-781-354-6224

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Menemsha MacBain** <[menemsha.macbain@gmail.com](mailto:menemsha.macbain@gmail.com)>  
Date: Thu, Jun 9, 2011 at 11:59 AM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Request for public information  
To: Mary Ann <[f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com](mailto:f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com)>

Dear Mary Ann,

I am confused as to why Dr. Ash is in any way involved in collecting this information, as he is not a member of the school committee, and also as most of the correspondence is about him.

Sincerely,

Menemsha MacBain

Menemsha MacBain  
60 Liberty Ave,  
Lexington, MA 02420  
1-781-354-6224

On Thu, Jun 9, 2011 at 11:54 AM, Mary Ann <[f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com](mailto:f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear Menemsha,

Thank you for contacting the School Committee.

200

I have spoken with Dr. Ash about how best to comply with your Public Records Request by next Wednesday's School Committee meeting. Dr. Ash will be speaking with staff to get an estimate on the time it will take to collect the items, as well as an estimate of the associated costs. As soon as I have that information I will let you know.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Thu, Jun 9, 2011 at 10:00 AM, Menemsha MacBain  
<[menemsha.macbain@gmail.com](mailto:menemsha.macbain@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear members of the School Committee,

I am writing you to request copies, either electronic or hard, of all correspondence received by the school committee in the past two months relating to Dr. Paul Ash's performance, the extension of his contract, the recent forced retirements of Mme Girondel and Dr. Fiveash from the High School, as well as letters regarding teacher morale, including a May 26th letter from anonymous faculty members. I understand that these are all a matter of public record.

I understand that you have ten days to respond to this request, however if at all possible I would like to see copies before the last School Committee meeting next Thursday. I will willingly pay any and all copying fees,

Thank you,

Menemsha MacBain  
60 Liberty Ave,  
Lexington, MA 02420  
1-781-354-6224

---

School-com mailing list

[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Mary Ann <f.m.a.stewart@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 11:54:05 AM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Request for public information  
To: Menemsha MacBain <menemsha.macbain@gmail.com>  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 3K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Menemsha,

Thank you for contacting the School Committee.

I have spoken with Dr. Ash about how best to comply with your Public Records Request by next Wednesday's School Committee meeting. Dr. Ash will be speaking with staff to get an estimate on the time it will take to collect the items, as well as an estimate of the associated costs. As soon as I have that information I will let you know.

Sincerely,  
Mary Ann.

Mary Ann Stewart  
Chair | Lexington School Committee

On Thu, Jun 9, 2011 at 10:00 AM, Menemsha MacBain  
<[menemsha.macbain@gmail.com](mailto:menemsha.macbain@gmail.com)> wrote:

Dear members of the School Committee,

I am writing you to request copies, either electronic or hard, of all correspondence received by the school committee in the past two months relating to Dr. Paul Ash's performance, the extension of his contract, the recent forced retirements of Mme Girondel and Dr. Fiveash from the High School, as well as letters regarding teacher morale, including a May 26th letter from anonymous faculty members. I understand that these are all a matter of public record.

I understand that you have ten days to respond to this request, however if at all possible I would like to see copies before the last School Committee meeting next Thursday. I will willingly pay any and all copying fees,

Thank you,

Menemsha MacBain  
60 Liberty Ave,  
Lexington, MA 02420  
1-781-354-6224

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School-com mailing list  
[School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Menemsha MacBain <menemsha.macbain@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 10:00:45 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Request for public information  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 1K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear members of the School Committee,

I am writing you to request copies, either electronic or hard, of all correspondence received by the school committee in the past two months relating to Dr. Paul Ash's performance, the extension of his contract, the recent forced retirements of Mme Girondel and Dr. Fiveash from the High School, as well as letters regarding teacher morale, including a May 26th letter from anonymous faculty members. I understand that these are all a matter of public record.

I understand that you have ten days to respond to this request, however if at all possible I would like to see copies before the last School Committee meeting next Thursday. I will willingly pay any and all copying fees,

Thank you,

Menemsha MacBain  
60 Liberty Ave,  
Lexington, MA 02420  
1-781-354-6224

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From: "Jenny Richlin" <jenrichlin@gmail.com> June 9, 2011 9:38:11 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Thank you for your service  
To: <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 3K  
Attach1.txt 1K

In the midst of the heated discussions concerning morale and contract negotiations, I'd like to take a moment to thank you for the work you do all year on behalf of Lexington's children. As a parent and pta member, I really value your commitment to providing all our children with the best education possible. I recognize the constant struggle you face balancing resources, school needs, and parent demands. I appreciate the fact that while other districts have suffered from larger class sizes and decreasing services, you and Dr. Ash have been able to maintain and, in many cases, improve our already excellent school system. And, I thank you for the countless hours you spend pouring over budgets, reading emails, talking to parents, and attending meetings.

While it seems to be true that 'no good deed goes unpunished,' I do hope you know that many Lexingtonians support your work and value your contribution to our town.

With appreciation and support,

Jenny Richlin

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From: Jessica Steigerwald <jess@shininghours.com> June 9, 2011  
9:04:01 AM  
Subject: [School-com] Re: Agenda items  
To: maryann@redoniondesign.com  
Cc: School Committee Committee <school-  
com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

Hi Mary Ann,

It's easier to discuss by phone - and I did leave a message for you yesterday. Briefly, I think we are all trying to find constructive ways to work on this. To build our team, we should have some time to discuss it as a team. Given open meeting law, an agenda item seems most appropriate.

In addition, we just heard from many parents. We all have had some time to think about how to be constructive. Now, to build our team, we should work as a team. Yes, I have ideas - and I trust that each member may have some ideas. Let's work together.

Please welcome this topic as a discussion item. I will try to phone you now & hope you will call back.

Thank you,

Jessie

On Jun 8, 2011, at 11:37 PM, maryann@redoniondesign.com wrote:

> Hi Jessie,

>

> What do you think adding this item would accomplish? Do you envision a particular structure? Do you have a proposed course of action at this time?

>

> Paul - what do you have to report? Do you have the makings of a plan? You mentioned surveys of teachers last night, so you could repeat that, but that could also go in your announcements. Was there any feedback today from teachers?

>

> I believe that unless we have something to report we shouldn't add it at this time.

>

> Mary Ann.

>

> -----Original Message-----

> From: Jessie Steigerwald

> To: Home Stewart

> To: Paul Ash

> Subject: Agenda items

> Sent: Jun 8, 2011 7:13 PM

>

> Hi Paul and Mary Ann,

>

> Please include an agenda item on Wednesday so we can have some discussion around teacher morale on Wednesday. Im most interested in making sure committee members can discuss our next steps in responding to concerns. I believe we all have positive ideas and would serve our community well to discuss these ideas in public. Perhaps, as our English Dept quote suggested, we can each identify something we can do as part of a teAm. I would like at least 20 minutes for us. Paul, if you have ideAs too, we will need more time!

>

> Possible topic heading: Assessing and Addressing Community Concerns around teacher morale. - or, the more positive-- Assessing and Improving Teacher Morale.

>

> I wrote to Bob and send the question your way as well - we should be sure to include Supt. Contract and or vote to ratify again in case we are challenged. N

>

> Jessie Steigerwald

>

> Sent from my Verizon Wireless BlackBerry

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School-com mailing list

School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

-----  
From: Susan Schiffer <sueschiffer@me.com> June 9, 2011 7:49:52 AM  
Subject: [School-com] (no subject)  
To: "school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us" <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>

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School-com mailing list  
School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: Norma Wyse <norma.wyse@gmail.com> June 9, 2011  
6:47:19 AM  
Subject: [School-com] independent commission to investigate teacher morale  
To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Cc: Mark Ramseyer <ramseyer@law.harvard.edu>  
Attachments: Attach0.html 2K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear School Committee--

I attended the last school committee meeting because I have been hearing my two high school children talk this year about little gripes their teachers have been making in class about "the administration". My children were not students of Mr. O'Connell, Ms. Girondel, Dr. Fiveash, nor Mr. Bogart. They have had, however, other very fine teachers who have inspired them and encouraged greatly their creativity in science, math, and art classes and so I want to do all I can to help ensure that such teachers feel welcome and appreciated at LHS. I send LEF STARS every year to many of the teachers both at the high school and at Diamond, and even to Hastings, even though my kids are long gone



from there.

I was surprised on Monday that my daughter, who has not been at all active in student government at LHS, came home saying she had been helping Amy Patterson do a survey of how LHS teachers liked their jobs. Some of the comments collected were shared last Tuesday evening at the school committee meeting by Ms. Patterson. I did not see the survey instrument they had created, but they had already contacted 60 teachers. Some of the teachers told them that they had already filled out a survey form put out by the administration, but I do think it's important that the school committee vote for an independent commission to study this issue of teacher morale in detail. So I urge you to put teacher morale on your agenda for next week, and to vote to set up an independent assessment of this.

Norma Wyse  
parent of an LHS 2011 senior and a sophomore

-----

From: Alessandro Alessandrini <alessandrini@comcast.net> June 8, 2011  
11:36:25 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Extended Day Disaster  
To: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
tmartellone@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 6K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Paul,

Thanks for looking into this.

Sandro

On Jun 8, 2011, at 10:55 PM, Paul B. Ash wrote:

Sandro:

I have not heard this, but will look into this concern.

Paul

**Alessandro Alessandrini <[alessandrini@comcast.net](mailto:alessandrini@comcast.net)> writes:**

Because of the many half days that Lexington

> has along with the half day on Thursdays we have been able to use  
> Extended Day when we needed it and when they had space available.

>

> Now I hear that they no longer will do this, Extended Day will only  
> offer space to kids who sign up for the whole week every week.

>

> This again creates an undue hardship on two full time working  
> parents when it is your schedule that has caused the problem in the  
> first place. It also has to be financially better for the  
> Extended Day company as they get more billable time when they have  
> space

-----

From: "Paul B. Ash" <[pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us)> June 8, 2011  
11:02:16 PM  
Subject: [School-com] Re: Extended Day Disaster  
To: [henry25@rcn.com](mailto:henry25@rcn.com)  
Cc: [school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us](mailto:school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us)  
Attachments: Attach0.html 6K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Dear Mr. Stevenson:

Thank you for your email. I have forward the email to principal  
Tom Martellone to find out what he knows.

Dr. Ash

Henry Stevenson <[henry25@rcn.com](mailto:henry25@rcn.com)> writes:

Dear School Committee & Dr. Ash,

I hope my information is wrong but if not I hope you can do something about this.

My kids go to Fiske and over that last couple of years have used the Extended Day program sometimes a lot and sometimes when needed.

Right now we are in a period of needing it sparingly but when we need it we need it. Because of the many half days that Lexington has along with the half day on Thursdays we have been able to use Extended Day when we needed it and when they had space available.

Now I hear that they no longer will do this, Extended Day will only offer space to kids who sign up for the whole week every week.

This again creates an undue hardship on two full time working parents when it is your schedule that has caused the problem in the first place. It also has to be financially better for the Extended Day company as they get more billable time when they have space

Sincerely,

Henry Stevenson

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From: "Paul B. Ash" <pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us> June 8, 2011 10:55:35 PM  
Subject: Re: [School-com] Extended Day Disaster  
To: alessandrini@comcast.net  
Cc: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
tmartellone@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us  
Attachments: Attach0.html 5K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Sandro:  
I have not heard this, but will look into this concern.  
Paul

**Alessandro Alessandrini <alessandrini@comcast.net> writes:**

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- > has along with the half day on Thursdays we have been able to use
- > Extended Day when we needed it and when they had space available.
- >
- > Now I hear that they no longer will do this, Extended Day will only
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- > first place. It also has to be financially better for the
- > Extended Day company as they get more billable time when they have
- > space

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From: Alessandro Alessandrini <alessandrini@comcast.net> June 8, 2011  
 10:29:31 PM  
 Subject: Re: [School-com] Extended Day Disaster  
 To: School Committee <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
 pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

Does anyone know if this is true?

Sandro

On Jun 8, 2011, at 7:48 PM, Henry Stevenson wrote:

- > Dear School Committee & Dr. Ash,
- >
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- > something about this.
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- > space
- >
- > Sincerely,
- >
- > Henry Stevenson
- > \_\_\_\_\_
- > School-com mailing list
- > School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us
- > <http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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 School-com mailing list  
 School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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 From: Henry Stevenson <henry25@rcn.com> June 8, 2011 7:48:22 PM  
 Subject: [School-com] Extended Day Disaster  
 To: school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us  
 pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

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Sincerely,

Henry Stevenson

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School-com mailing list

School-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us

<http://comet.ci.lexington.ma.us/mailman/listinfo/school-com>

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From: "Jeri Zeder" <jeri.zeder@zpato.net> June 8, 2011 8:56:23 PM  
Subject: [School-com] RE: Thoughts on Last Night's Meeting  
To: "Eileen Jay" <beanyjay@yahoo.com> <school-com@comet.ci.lexington.ma.us>  
Cc: susan.kenyon@mac.com  
Attachments: Attach0.html 13K  
Attach1.txt 1K

Please remove me from this list. While I support the effort to explore the issue of teacher morale, I do not want to be associated with the suspicious tone of this present campaign. I support the School Committee and believe that they have not only acted legally, but also honorably. And I believe that they will take serious steps to address these issue.

Thank you.

Jeri Zeder

**From:** Eileen Jay [mailto:beanyjay@yahoo.com]  
**Sent:** Wednesday, June 08, 2011 5:47 PM  
**To:** undisclosed recipients:  
**Subject:** Fw: Thoughts on Last Night's Meeting

Report on what happened at last night's School Committee meeting.

Also see article at <http://www.wickedlocal.com/lexington/news/x832283813/Lexington-Public-Schools-Superintendent-Paul-Ash-gets-contract-extension#axzz1OiTJ0iX3>

If you wish to be removed from this distribution list, please reply to this email.

----- Forwarded Message -----

**From:** Susan Kenyon <susan.kenyon@mac.com>  
**To:** Susan Kenyon <susan.kenyon@mac.com>  
**Sent:** Wed, June 8, 2011 3:13:03 PM  
**Subject:** Thoughts on Last Night's Meeting

Hello,

I feel like I should send out an email to let people know about the SC meeting last night. I have watched part of the LexMedia recording and will finish watching the rest this evening, but I wanted to get out this email sooner rather than later.

Apparently, the SC voted in Executive session last week to extend Dr. Ash's contract. The discussion at the meeting last night was somewhat confusing on this point, but it seems as though the SC was advised by counsel to put the approval of the contract on the agenda and did so on Friday afternoon. The SC received a significant number of emails asking for a delay in the vote, and Mary Ann Stewart, the chair of the SC, sent replies to people who wrote letters asking for the delay thanking them for writing. As far as I am aware, she never replied that the contract had already been approved.

Yesterday afternoon, the agenda for the meeting was changed to say that there would be a discussion of the contract rather than a vote, and the timing of the discussion was moved to 8. I and many others misinterpreted this to mean that the SC had listened to the outpouring of emails requesting a delay. 75 or more students, parents and citizens showed up to listen to and participate in the discussion. Mary Ann Stewart announced that the discussion would be delayed until after 9 in case people hadn't received notice of the change in the time. This caused many people who had hired babysitters and made other arrangements to leave.

For the patient people who stayed until after 9, most (all) were surprised to hear the chair announce that there was already a de facto contract in place and that a vote wasn't really needed, but they would take a vote to authorize its signature. There are many legal questions raised by this vote. Did the vote last week in executive session violate the open meeting laws? Did they need to take a vote last night in order to "cure" the illegal vote of last week?

Regardless of the legality of the vote or when it was taken, there are two questions that arise due to the way this vote was announced.



1. Did the SC owe a duty to the public to let us know prior to the meeting that there was a de facto contract already in place and that they could not even consider our request to delay a vote?

2. Could the chair have announced at 7:30 that the SC had already voted on the contract and that those people waiting to address that issue could go home?

I know that many people will conclude that this whole grass roots campaign was a waste of time because Dr. Ash's contract appears to have been renewed. However, I am amazed that on a few days notice, there could be such an outpouring of emails and such a large attendance at a SC meeting. I would love to know the exact number of emails sent to the SC - has the SC ever received so many emails on a subject? When was the last time more than 75 people showed up at a SC meeting? Doesn't this show that there is a deep seated concern that people have with teacher morale and Dr. Ash's performance as it relates to teacher morale and perhaps in general? The question is what to do now that it is clear that people have shown their concern.

I hope that the members of the SC will put the issue of teacher morale on the agenda for next week - they are having a meeting on Wednesday, June 15. I believe the SC announced that Dr. Ash would conduct a survey about teacher morale, but is this sufficient to determine whether there are serious concerns about his actions as it relates to teacher morale? I hope people will write to the SC members and encourage them to put teacher morale on the agenda and vote in favor of the appointment of an independent committee to investigate these concerns.

1. The committee could determine that morale among teachers is high and that it is only a few vocal teachers who are disgruntled - that would be welcome news as we all want to

have a strong school system.

2. If the committee determines that there are other factors besides Dr. Ash's leadership that have led to a decline in teacher morale, then they may come up with recommendations for addressing those issues.

3. If the committee determines that there is a significant problem with teacher morale and that the morale issues relate to Dr. Ash, then the SC could take steps to address these concerns and for instance, hire a consultant to provide necessary coaching to Dr. Ash about how to improve his performance (just one idea).

4. If the committee finds that there are serious allegations of malfeasance on the part of Dr. Ash, the SC could vote to terminate his contract for cause (in which event the town will not have to pay Dr. Ash for the remaining years of his contract).

I don't know whether people are interested in continuing this campaign and what ideas you might suggest. I would like to hear back from you. Even if it ends now, I think we can all feel proud of the fact that we have shown how much we care about our teachers and our community. If teachers are indeed feeling like there is an atmosphere of fear, I hope they will feel less fearful knowing that many of us are very concerned about this issue and will be paying attention.

Thank you for all your support and for reading. Please pass this on to other citizens concerned about our community.