

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, May 8, 2007

Cary Memorial Hall Auditorium

1605 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Tom Diaz, School Committee members Helen Cohen, Margaret Coppe, Tom Griffiths and Ravi Sakhuja. Minutes taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 8:20 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Tom Diaz)

II. Superintendent's Report

1. Lexington High School Solar Energy Project:

Efforts to raise money for solar panels for the high school through The Lexington Global Warming Action Coalition have been successful. This is equivalent to \$44K worth of solar power for the high school. The system will power four classrooms for the next 25-35 years with no maintenance and no fossil fuels. It does not cut our energy budget but is useful from an education standpoint and an environmental one.

2. Birthday Recognition of Oldest Living Graduate of LHS

Carol Pilarski: We were recently made aware of the oldest living LHS graduate. He just had his 107th birthday. He graduated in 1923 and then went to MIT and then became a Trappist monk. He is the second oldest monk in the world. Jay Kaufman produced a citation, which his family gave him on his 107th birthday. He has all his wits about him. We had all the records. We are required to keep them forever. Everything was handwritten.

Paul Ash: The abbey gave us permission to discuss this.

3. Safety

I have had discussions with the principals on improving safety. We need to expand what we are doing. Elementary schools are not designed to have the same security that we have at the secondary level. We want the schools to put in what they can for now. Safety is of high concern to us. We are working with the police and fire departments.

III. Members' Reports/Concerns

Tom Griffiths: Next year's AP and honors physics—how many sessions?

Michael Jones: The higher level AP physics will be 6. The honors will be 5. That will change if the override vote passes, then honors will be six too.

Tom Griffiths: I went to the PBC for 50 minutes tonight. Fiske today was air conditioned and comfortable. An ultimate solution for these problems is being pursued aggressively by the PBC.

Margaret Coppe: Regarding solar panels, one of the teachers--Avon Lewis--won an award. Could the School Committee acknowledge this?

Michael Jones: The award was presented by the Secretary of Environmental Affairs of the State of Massachusetts. We acknowledged her along with some other faculty. It would be a wonderful gesture for the School Committee to acknowledge her.

Helen Cohen: I wanted to mention Mary Alice Sami because I am the diversity task force liaison from the School Committee and she does a lot to promote diversity. I went to the HPAC meeting and we had an earnest discussion about cuts in PE and health over the last decade. This is a problem because of stress issues.

Ravi Sakhuja: Override issues have been discussed in the newspapers. Heating or cooling the buildings when not necessary decreases our credibility and efficiency and effectiveness. There is more money to be saved in our power factor. Last year we did not do what we were supposed to do.

Elementary school teachers: I understand the issue but we have to be more creative. I propose keeping them at 126 teachers. In the area of aides and custodians, if we promise we will save overtime by hiring more custodians...the custodial overtime needs to be watched so we can save money. This will not affect education. Elementary librarians: the average child spends 30 minutes with the librarian per week so she can do two schools. I propose an additional \$175K to restore math and science to the high school.

IV. Discussion Items

A. 2008-2009 School Calendar

The calendar discussion included Halloween and the merchants, the speaker who is scheduled to address the faculty town-wide and the

possibility of scheduling a professional day for the November election day.

B. Update on New Transportation Procedures

Paul Ash: Fee for service program. Letters will be going out to parents the week of May 21st.

Mary Ellen Dunn gave a PP report on bus transportation: Clearer expectations of behavior. All students will carry a pass. \$455-\$555 per seat. No family cap.

There was a discussion of the transportation procedures including bus passes, predetermined bus stops, centralized financial waiver applications, fuel escalation clauses, student safety and the duties of the assistant to the assistant superintendent for finance.

V. **Action Items**

A. Vote to Eliminate Weighted GPA, Starting with the Class of 2009, and discussion of the Development of High School Rubrics

Helen Cohen requested waiting until the next meeting to vote on this and Tom Diaz agreed. Dawn McKenna requested that the class of 2010 be the first class affected but Dr. Jones and Dr. Ash both stated that the class of 2009 was always scheduled to be the first class affected.

B. Vote to Elect School Committee Representative to Serve on EDCO Board of Directors

Both Tom Griffiths and Ravi Sakhuja are interested. The Committee will take a vote at the next meeting.

C. Vote on School Choice-Superintendent Paul Ash recommends that the LPS not participate as a school choice district

Tom Diaz: We end up paying more than we are paid.

Motion that The Lexington Public Schools *not* participate as a school choice district (Cohen, Sakhuja). The motion passed 5-0.

D. Vote to Approve Minutes of December 12, 2006 and February 12, 2007.

Motion to approve the minutes of December 12, 2006 and February 12, 2007 (Cohen, Sakhuja). The motion passed 4-0 (1 abstention).

VI. **Motion to go into executive session for purposes of collective bargaining not to return to public session (Cohen, Griffiths). Cohen-aye; Coppe-aye; Diaz-aye; Griffiths-aye; and Sakhuja-aye.**