

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, June 19, 2007**  
**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room**  
**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Tom Diaz, School Committee Members Margaret Coppe, Tom Griffiths and Ravi Sakhuja. The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.**

**The meeting was convened at 7:40 p.m.**

**I. Call to Order and Welcome (Tom Diaz)**

**II. Public Comment**

**Liz Weiss (Bridge and Clarke parent, parents for Healthy Balance):** There is a homework overload of 2-4 hours of homework for our 6<sup>th</sup> graders. This is quite a discrepancy from the policy on the website. They have limited opportunity for a break to move their bodies. There is no formal recess. Breaks would be beneficial. No snack is allowed. They have a hard time concentrating. They could have a 5 minute time to eat a snack. The length of the lunch break is a problem. Lack of social interactive time for students is a concern. They need a more balanced life.

**Mickey Feldman Simon (Bridge, Clarke):** Clarke has great teachers, my child is an honor student but there is too much homework. He is up until 10:00 p.m. doing homework. Homework has taken over his life. We don't want them to lose their love of learning. At 11 or 12 they are still kids and should still have time for other activities. The middle school homework policy should be enforced.

**Nancy Williams** (lifelong Lexington resident, 2 children at Bridge, 1 child at Clarke): My 6<sup>th</sup> grader has had 4 hours of homework a night. He feels stupid. He wonders why he can't complete his assignments. Not completing the homework affects his grade.

**Liz Weiss:** 2-3 hours a night creates stress. Our group wants to survey parents and students. Dr. Flynn suggested we worked with the Wellness Advisory Board to gather this objective data. We want to do this in the fall. We want to work with you and Dr. Flynn to enforce the School Committee's policy of 1 hour a night for 6<sup>th</sup> 1.5 for 7<sup>th</sup> and 2 for 8<sup>th</sup> grade.

**Tom Griffiths:** One proposal has been adding to the school day. Do you have an initial reaction?

**Liz Weiss:** I would advocate for it if it was a balanced day.

### **III. Superintendent's Announcements**

Administrative Council had its final meeting today. It was a solid ending to the year.

### **IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns**

**Tom Griffiths:** Leora Tec did a great job on the party for David Crump's retirement and Harrington's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

**Tom Diaz:** Praise for State representatives Jay Kaufman and Tom Stanley. The State's METCO program will get an additional one million dollars of State Aid and hopefully we will get more in the future. And thanks to our senators too for their support of the program.

### **V. Discussion Items**

1. Report on the English Language Learner Program  
English Language Learning Program Coordinator Robin Dowling-Grant presented the report.

**Tom Diaz:** What is an example of high-interest grade level material?

**Robin Dowling-Grant:** The content is accessible to the student. In science we just did a unit on the peregrine falcon and the effects of DDT.

**Ravi Sakhuja:** Did you say one textbook in primary and one in secondary?

**Robin Dowling-Grant:** One series. A-F in elementary school. In high school and middle school there are 4 levels.

**Tom Griffiths:** I don't understand the basis for state funding for this program.

**Robin Dowling-Grant:** English learners get about \$1000 per student more if you put SIMS data correctly on top of the foundation formula. There is also Title 3 funding.

**Robin Dowling-Grant:** My goal would be to assign ELL kids to teachers who had been trained but we can't do that yet. Better to just train everybody. We do that over the summers.

2. FY07 Budget Projection (members have copies)

**Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations Mary Ellen Dunn:**

Preliminary June financial report. SPED has been very accurate. \$50K for unpaid bills is included in this projection as is the insurance deductible. Utilities: electricity is declining, projected deficit declined.

**Mary Ellen Dunn** gave the report.

We are getting credits for NSTAR projects. We have another payroll to go. The town wants us to have two warrant signings.

The discussion included the Instructional Assistant projected increase, deficit in building repair and maintenance and energy costs and savings.

The Committee discussed additional motions that might be needed to request funds from Appropriation Committee reserves.

Tom Diaz noted that \$25K was needed to cover the deductible for damage at Diamond from the sprinklers being set off.

**Motion for the School Committee to request a reserve fund transfer for \$25K (Griffiths, Sakhuja). The motion passed 4-0.**

**Motion for the School Committee to request up to \$100K for any unforeseen operating budget deficit (Griffiths, Coppe). The motion passed 4-0.**

3. Report on the New Wellness Policy

**Paul Ash:** Section two of the policy about recess not being used as a reward or a punishment shall be amended to allow the principals flexibility. It was a very active Committee. Thank you to the members of the Committee.

**Margaret Coppe:** I do want to listen to what the principals say. What about saying it shouldn't be used excessively as punishment?

**Tom Griffiths:** It would be nice if it said it were not used in an excessive way.

**Motion to remove the sentence on p.1 that begins *furthermore* and ends *punishment* (Griffiths, Sakhuja). The motion passed 4-0.**

**Liz Weiss:** Thanks to K-12 Physical Education and Wellness Coordinator Kate Cremens-Basbas for her service Who will lead the Wellness Advisory Board and will it reconvene in September?

**Paul Ash:** We will meet tomorrow with PE and Health and talk about leadership.

**Liz Weiss:** There is an opportunity to look at wellness in middle school and create a bridge between the WAB and Parents for a Healthy Balance.

4. Update on Summer Facilities Work (first) Sean Newell, Lisa McGuire and Bob Martin introduced by Mary Ellen Dunn.

Mary Ellen Dunn thanked them for stepping up to the plate. A memo was in the School Committee packet. An insurance claim will be filed for the recent damage at Diamond Middle School

There was a Q & A which covered: the control system at Fiske, job descriptions of the various people in the facilities department, zones in buildings and computers being on at night in Clarke.

**VI. Action Items:**

1. Vote to Accept \$1,500.00 Donation to the Hastings School  
**Motion to accept \$1,500.00 Donation to the Hastings School** (Griffiths, Coppe).  
**The motion passed 4-0.**
2. Units A and C agreed to a 1 year agreement with a 2 .75% cost of living adjustment and contract language that gives teachers the option of getting 26 checks instead of 21 and a study committee to study workloads in the high school. Thanks to Assistant to the Superintendent for Human Resources Carol Gregory and Ravi Sakhuja.

**Motion to ratify the agreement** (Griffiths, Sakhuja). **The motion was approved 4-0.**

**VII. Motion to go into executive session for the purpose of collective bargaining not to return to public session. Diaz-aye; Griffiths-aye; Sakhuja-aye; Coppe-aye.**