

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Thursday, January 26, 2006**  
**Jonas Clarke Middle School Auditorium**  
**17 Stedman Road**

**Present:** Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee: Chair Helen Cohen, Scott Burson, Tom Diaz, Tom Griffiths, Olga Gutttag and student representative Toni Maeck.  
Minutes taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 7:41 p.m.

- I. Call to Order and Welcome:**
- II. Public Comment: none**
- III. Superintendent's Report: none**
- IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns: none**
- V. Discussion Item:**

**Public Hearing on the FY07 Budget:**

**Helen Cohen:** thanked all those that put so much work into the budget.

**Paul Ash:** expressed his enthusiasm over the budget, calling it a very sound budget that was put together in a short amount of time by a lot of dedicated people.

**Olga Gutttag:** encouraged the public to email the committee with their ideas and to cc Dr. Ash.

There was a discussion as to whether the committee would be ready to vote by February 7th.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

**Lucy Wall** (Bowman parent): She is concerned about staffing levels for next year at Bowman, as there will be at least one class over the maximum next year.

The Superintendent responded that there are two unallocated teachers in his budget and that when the numbers are more certain those people will be assigned. Ms. Wall responded that unallocated teachers are often cut to trim the budget. Members of the School Committee assured her that they are committed to the class sizes that they recommended and that on average the school system falls within those guidelines.

**Martha del Nido** (precinct 7): She advocated for more money for the policy debate program, stating that it takes \$120,000 to run program, and that funding from the school system has been \$20,000 for at least 5 years. All who spoke agreed it is a wonderful program.

**Debbie Cunha** (precinct 7): Though all her children have graduated, she spoke in favor of the health programs and said she thought having them meet 4 times a week for a quarter was better than twice a week for a semester.

**David Kaufman** (precinct 6): Commented that the Schools should not prejudge what people will support in an override: should keep enough in the override to give people choices.

1. Debate was very important for his son.
2. Regarding the “surprises” in SPED expenses, has the corrective action been adequate to keep that from being recurring problem? **Paul Ash** stated that he is very grateful for the additional funds from the November town Meeting and that there is money in escrow just in case. In the budget he has requested money for a SPED contingency account.
3. This is a level service budget to students but what about maintenance for facilities. **Paul Ash:** Level services includes mandates and utilities. Also, there is a preventative maintenance program for 4 of the 9 buildings.
4. Is this a level service budget with regard to supplies too? **Paul Ash:** No. There are text book increases in departments that need it.

**Dawn McKenna** (precinct 6):

1. Will the replacement bleachers at Clarke be ADA compliant? **Paul Ash:** Yes
2. She hopes that there will be some support to address needs of youth. **Helen Cohen:** There is the .5 and stipend for peer mentoring.
3. Do we need to do the youth risk survey every year? **Paul Ash:** No, every other or every third year.
4. She is concerned about inequities between Clarke and Diamond in the number of FTEs assigned to insuring struggling students don’t fall behind. **Helen Cohen and Tom Griffiths** both said the middle school principals were both happy with the Learning Center at Clarke and the literacy program at Diamond. Neither Principal felt there were inequities.
5. She is concerned that parents did not receive enough notice about these budget meetings. Why no letters to parents about these SC meetings? You need a letter home to parents to let them know about meeting on Tuesday. Parents didn’t have opportunity to look at budget. **Scott Burson:** We have not put the budget on the web in the past. We have had far more hearings than in the past. The schools will put announcements on list-serves about the meetings.

The Committee agreed to email any questions they had to Paul Ash by the next day at 9:00 am. Helen Cohen stated that they should endeavor to end their meetings by 10:30 pm.

**Motion to adjourn to exec session for the purposes of collective bargaining, not to return to public session** (Griffiths, Gutttag). Burson-aye, Cohen, aye, Diaz-aye, Griffiths-aye, Gutttag, aye. Meeting adjourned at 9:32pm.

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, January 31, 2006, at 7:30 p.m., at Jonas Clarke Middle School Auditorium, 17 Stedman Road.