

**Lexington Public Schools  
School Committee Meeting – February 8, 2005  
Clarke Middle School**

Members present were Olga Gutttag, Scott Burson, Tom Diaz, Helen Cohen, Tom Griffiths via phone conference, Student Representative Janette Ekanem, and Interim Superintendent William Hurley.

Helen Cohen called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. Thanks were extended to Dana Ham for setting up the conference phone so Tom Griffiths could be involved from his home. Thanks were also given to the consultants who have helped in this search process.

Ms. Cohen indicated the search was narrowed down to three highly qualified candidates. Dr. Paul Ash, Dr. Richard Hoffman, and Dr. Richard Silverman. She touched upon what the superintendent search process entailed and addressed the leadership profile and criteria. Tom Griffiths expresses what he feels we need in a superintendent stressing the need for a good communicator.

The School Committee is happy to report that they have three finalists who meet all the qualifications on the leadership profile. The leadership profile and expectations as a community are high but all three were excited to take this on as a challenge. The role of superintendent is very demanding. In spite of the large managerial responsibility, we look to specific items for leadership. Lexington is perceived as a difficult community and this has presented some problems. Based on the interviews, resumes, visits to Lexington, site visits, public forums, emails, and feedback forms, the School Committee made their decision.

Tom Griffiths said although all the candidates to one degree or another virtually meet all of the leadership qualities that have been talked about, he feels there is one that best fits. He recommends Paul Ash of Westwood.

Scott Burson also feels Paul Ash is the best match for our needs. He is personally very impressed by his strength, intelligence and flexibility. He feels with Paul Ash we have the best chance to give a balanced, informed leadership and at the same time build capacity in the Central Office and administration.

Olga Gutttag concurs that Dr. Ash is the best match for our current needs. She spent a lot of time thinking about the options we have. Our current needs require specific skills. She tried to see where we could build the best team and where we can have a vision for the long term. Ms. Gutttag feels Mr. Ash is direct, honest and an educator at heart who is very kid-centered. He understands how to take our organization in the direction we need to go. In order to succeed, we have to support our superintendent and our system. For a system to move forward, educators have to take risks. This is why she is happy to have Dr. Ash leading out system.

Based on the early parts of the superintendent search process in regard to reading resumes, semi-finalists and interviewing finalist, Tom Diaz formed in his mind a strong impression that the three finalists were highly qualified candidates but it is his feeling that Paul Ash would be the best match for Lexington.

Helen Cohen said Paul Ash is the candidate she would like to support. It was a hard decision for her to make but after taking all the information and then talking to members of the site visit team, she feels Dr. Ash has the experience in all the areas that we need.

Tom Griffiths noted it would be important as we move forward with the new superintendent to understand that there will be stumbles but we will move forward as a community. He hopes that we all unite behind our new superintendent.

Janette Ekanem commented that the last paragraph of the leadership profile sums it up best. She feels Dr. Ash meets all the criteria.

A motion was made that the School Committee authorizes Scott Burson to go into negotiations with Dr. Ash for an employment contract as the Superintendent of Lexington Public Schools. (Diaz – Gutttag; 5-0)

Helen Cohen hopes that the School Committee will appoint Dr. Ash some time next week.

A motion was made to adjourn at 6:25 p.m. (Diaz – Griffiths; 5-0)

Submitted by,

Lisa McGuire

cc: William Hurley  
Tom Griffiths  
Olga Gutttag  
Scott Burson  
Helen Cohen  
Tom Diaz