

## **LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**

**Tuesday, October 3, 2006  
Lexington Town Office Building  
1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

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

**The meeting was convened at 7:35 p.m.**

### **7:30 p.m. I. Call to Order and Welcome**

#### **II. Superintendent's Report:**

1. Paul Ash presented the M.A.S.S. Academic Excellence Awards to two high school seniors who exemplify high academic scholarship and high character and received praise from faculty. These awards are given every year. This year's recipients are Yuga Cohler and Si Chang. The Superintendent described the students' impressive accomplishments.
2. The Superintendent continues to collaborate with the Fire and Police departments about a multi-hazard crisis plan for evacuations. We have plans now but we want to make sure they are the most up to date and that people are fully trained and we are fully coordinated with the Fire and Police departments.

**Olga Gutttag** asked whether the schools that had needed their PA systems updated had had that work done. Bridge School Principal Barbara Manfredi stated that at Bridge the rooms that had had intercoms previously had the new system working, but that rooms that had never had them were not yet hooked up. Dr. Gutttag requested an update on communications at a later date.

#### **III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns: (15 minutes)**

**Tom Griffiths:** As part of the Legal Services Committee they visited Burlington and discovered something interesting about the way they handle SPED: they handle out of district placements as part of the town budget. So when there are SPED out of district overruns the school system doesn't have to "raid the supply budget" to fund the overrun, but the school system may have less incentive to solve problems by creating programs to keep kids within the system.

**Tom Diaz:** I attended an Appropriation Committee meeting and brought them up to date regarding anticipated overruns of SPED for FY07 Oct 24. They suggested that the School Committee continue to analyze SPED as a special project.

#### **IV. Discussion Items:**

##### **1. School Improvement Plans (30 minutes)**

**Paul Ash:** Site councils were established by state law. They advise the principal. In a year the formats will be identical or very similar in every school, each needs to have an academic goal, a safety goal and a way to measure progress.

Each school principal presented his or her school improvement plan for this year.

Questions were posed by School Committee members and answers were given by principals regarding the site council goals.

There was a discussion of everyday math materials bought by PTAs.

**Olga Gutttag:** Shouldn't Harrington get the technological advances that Fiske is going to get?

**Paul Ash:** The Fiske plan was developed based on what is at Harrington.

**Jesse Steigerwald** (Parent, Hastings Site Council) would like the School Committee to consider offering a workshop with parents of site councils.

##### **2. K-12 Curriculum Review Presentation (40 minutes)**

**Lynne Sarasin** gave an overview of the six year process for each of the academic areas and then described what will happen in the first year.

Year 1 is the review year. A chart included in the packet outlined what would be accomplished each year. After the whole process is finished it is started all over again. Then Dr. Sarasin discussed what will be accomplished in year one (there was a handout in the packet). This includes looking at our accomplishments, among other things.

**Olga Gutttag:** With the failure of the override our resources for buying textbooks and for this plan have evaporated, will we be able to put in the resources to support this plan? This will involve a lot of subs for example.

**Paul Ash:** This 6 year plan requires additional resources. We can do year one but it's not clear we can do the rest. It's not acceptable to turn a 6 year plan into a 10 year plan; there is some sense of urgency. This is the core of our business. I will lay out options in my plan. We won't have a plan with so many substitutes that it's disruptive.

**Kate Cremens-Basbas (Newly Appointed Director of PE and Wellness):** I am happy to be here. We are implementing a community and school-based wellness model, with representatives from the community and every school. There has been a lot of change in the last 10 years in PE. We had to get people on the same page. We took information from both Massachusetts and national standards, and work already done in Lexington as well as the Youth Risk Behavior Survey for the last 10 years. For the curriculum frameworks we will be working on: gym, social and emotional wellness, safety and prevention and community advocacy. It's not just gym. We will look at some other communities. Thanks to all who have put their time and energy in already.

There were questions from the School Committee.

**Carol Pilarski:** The Math Curriculum Review Task Force met during the summer months, which is a good time to meet. There are about 37 people on it. The principals selected the participants. They met for two days. The committee members all had to understand certain principles before they could begin their work. The NCTM standards were presented. Then math with regards to content and process was discussed.

Then they needed to come up with a mission statement. What is essential mathematics learning? It's not only about math in the classroom but also about the power and beauty of math out in the world. The statement of purpose is in the packets and was unanimously agreed on by the committee.

Carol Pilarski described how the group will go forward in the future.

### 3. Facilities Reorganization

**Motion to encourage the Town Manager and the Superintendent to continue discussions in pursuit of unified facilities management (Guttag, Griffiths). The motion passed 5-0.**

Susan Kleinmann (prec 8): What happens if there is a disagreement?

The members of the committee expressed doubt that there would be a problem between Carl Valente and Paul Ash, and state law provides for termination if the School Committee feels the system is not working.

## **V. Action Items:**

1. Vote to Approve CORI Policy – Third Reading (10 minutes)

PA: One change from prior version. Now employees who refused to sign the form will be subject to dismissal proceedings

**Motion to approve the CORI Policy (Guttag, Sakhuja). The motion passed 5-0.**

2. Vote to Approve FY08 Budget Guidelines (30 minutes)

**Paul Ash:** Level service means basically what we have today, if something is taken out we will replace it with something of equal cost.

**Olga Guttag:** People won't understand level service to be what you are saying.

**Tom Griffiths:** How about amending it to, "Continue the current level of services with the understanding that School Committee will consider equal cost substitutions in the recommended budget with all assumptions clearly defined."

**Motion to approve the budget guidelines as amended.** (Guttag, Sakhuja) **The motion passed 5-0.**

3. Vote to Approve FY08 Budget Calendar (5 minutes)

**Paul Ash:** I will have draft by end of October. I will make a recommendation to the School Committee by November 14 about capital needs.

**Tom Diaz:** Our 1<sup>st</sup> meeting in 2007 should be January 9. Take out Jan 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**Olga Guttag:** PBC is meeting Jan 9<sup>th</sup>. Let's meet on the 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:30.

**Motion to approve budget calendar as amended** (Guttag, Sakhuja). **The motion passed 5-0.**

4. Vote to Approve Voting Delegate to MASC Annual Business Meeting (5 minutes)

**Motion to approve Ravi Sakhuja as the delegate to the MASC Annual Business Meeting** (Griffiths, Diaz). **The motion passed 5-0.**

**Motion to go into executive session for purposes of potential litigation not to return to public session** (Guttag, Cohen) **Cohen-aye; Diaz-aye, Griffiths-aye; Guttag-aye; Sakhuja-aye.**

**VI. Executive Session:**

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, October 24, 2006, at 7:00 p.m. at the Humphrey Occupational Resource Center Cafeteria, Roxbury.