

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Tuesday, October 24, 2006

Humphrey Occupational Resource Center

40 Malcolm X Boulevard

Roxbury, MA

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Tom Diaz, School Committee Members: Helen Cohen, Tom Griffiths, Olga Guttag and Ravi Sakhuja. Minutes taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 7:23 p.m. (Cheryl Prescott Walden Introduced Superintendent Paul Ash)

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Tom Diaz)

II. Superintendent's Report

A. Paul Ash attended the fortieth anniversary celebration of METCO with Cheryl Prescott Walden. Ninety-two percent of METCO seniors intend to go on to higher education.

B. Last Saturday was a celebration of the best athletes from Lexington with Dr Jones of LHS. In 1980 Cecil Cox, a former METCO student, graduated. He was inducted into the athletic hall of fame, attended Harvard and played football.

C. What is the school system doing to improve safety in schools? We are working with the police and fire departments to improve evacuation plans. Our schools are safe. We have procedures to evacuate students to safe locations and we are updating those this year.

III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns:

Olga Guttag: Thank you for this great turnout. I have a child at LHS and I attend a group every Tuesday at 7:45 am for parents and today we talked about two safety issues: 1). Safety drills are successful; 2). A faculty member and campus safety officer have a club called the law enforcement education club. I'm glad we still have a late bus because it enables LHS METCO students to participate in after-school activities.

Ravi Sakhuja: I am the most recently elected School Committee member. It's great to see your enthusiasm. We will hold each other accountable.

Helen Cohen: Our emails are available. I'm delighted to be here again. Please email us.

Tom Griffiths: I have been coming here for 5 years. I enjoy these meetings. The things on your minds are not very different from what Lexington parents are concerned about.

Tom Diaz: I'm concerned both about the high cost of living in the Boston area and the high cost of public education. We've had to impose fees of various kinds and I hope we can roll back some of

these fees this year. A typical Lexington family could be paying two thousand dollars in fees. I would like a ballot question to roll back fees. Deval Patrick has proposed increasing state aid by 34 million dollars if communities would roll back fees, which shows that those on the state level recognize the burden of fees.

Discussion Items:

1. FY07 Financial Projection (10 minutes). Presented by Dr. Ash with no comments by the School Committee.
2. Hiring and Recruitment Report (10 minutes)

Carol Gregory: Seventy-one new teachers were hired this year including four new teachers of color. Lisa George Cox is related to Cecil Cox and is working in Harrington School. We had challenges this year in hiring because of the failed override. Recruitment fairs end in April and the override is in June.

Ms Gregory discussed plans for the upcoming year. There was a discussion about recruiting people of color. Carol Gregory says that happens through personal contact and requested all present to spread the word that we are looking for minority applicants.

3. Introduction to Action Research (10 minutes)

Paul Ash gave a brief explanation of action research and how it can help the system raise academic achievement for all children. Then Barbara Manfredi and Len Swanton were introduced and Len Swanton gave a presentation on the Bridge School Action Research Project in geometry.

7:55 p.m. Action Items

Vote to Accept Donation for Instrumental Music Scholarships from Friends of Lexington Music, Art, & Drama (5 minutes)

Motion to accept \$2000 donation from FOLMADS with gratitude (Guttag, Griffiths). Motion passed 5-0.

Motion to adjourn (Cohen, Guttag). The motion passed 5-0.

The meeting was followed by break-out sessions with school principals.

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 14, 2006, at 7:30 p.m. at the Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.