



Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ♦ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

(781) 861-2550
email: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us
fax: (781) 863-5829

Our Schools

High Quality Extended Day Programs for Our Children

March 20, 2008

Paul B. Ash, Ph.D., Superintendent of Schools

Quality after-school programs are a vital component of daily life for many Lexington students and their families. The school department enthusiastically supports and acknowledges the valuable contributions of these programs. For over 25 years, programs such as the three-school Lextended Day (which serves the Bridge, Hastings, and Estabrook Elementary Schools) and the single-school Harrington, Bowman, and Fiske extended day programs have provided exemplary after school care for thousands of children.

Lexington's after-school programs are not operated by the school department and are not funded through the school budget. The programs lease space in our elementary school buildings. The Commonwealth Office of Child Care Services licenses all after-school programs. On-site and nearby facilities enable parents to enroll their children in enrichment activities that include sports, drama, dance, homework time, arts and crafts, reading and skill games, as well as supervised playground and socializing time. The teachers and staff are highly regarded throughout Lexington and have developed strong relationships with the children, their families, and our elementary school teachers to deliver top-notch programs.

I have heard from many parents who are concerned about not having extended day options available in Lexington. They have told me how their families depend on Lexington's after-school programs. Parents need extended day programs so they can work, care for elderly parents, and attend to the many competing demands on their time while giving their children the opportunity to have fun and learn in a safe, supportive, and enriching environment. I want to assure the community that the school department recognizes parents' concerns about the continuity and viability of such programs. Most especially, we recognize parents' concerns about maintaining their high quality. How could we not? The process currently underway to solicit proposals for extended day programs welcomes proposals from all, including our current providers, and should result in an arrangement that abides by state law and provides the kind of safety and quality Lexington parents rely on for their children.

The school department's current request for proposal (RFP) process was set in motion two years ago following a series of meetings between school and town officials and extended day program directors. After the June 2006 School Committee meeting, when concerns were raised about price increases for rental space for the following school year, the extended day directors, their attorney, assistant Lexington town counsel, Town Manager Carl Valente, two school committee members, and I met to come to a mutual agreement.

While our discussions were taking place, town council informed me that the leasing process for rental space going forward needed to be in compliance with state law (MGL Chapter 30B). We could no longer just grant leases to the current extended day programs, even though we are very satisfied with the services they provide. The law requires that we allow any qualified service provider to bid to provide the service. We notified the attorney for the extended day programs of this requirement in late spring of last year, and the memorandum of agreement, signed by all parties last November, includes language that the Lexington Public Schools will commit to issuing a request for proposals (RFP) for the 2008-2009 school year.

The RFP process is designed to achieve excellent extended day care. We are legally obligated to follow an RFP process to establish a new, stable and lawful three-year lease agreement that will allow for extended day services for all Lexington children and families that need it. I sincerely hope and encourage all providers, especially our existing providers, to participate fully in the process. We must all work in tandem to provide the best in extended day services for Lexington's children and their families.