



Lexington Public Schools

1557 Massachusetts Avenue ♦ 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”

Shaping a Vision for Our Schools — Your Turn

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On January 16, I recommended to the School Committee a “Same-Service” School Budget for next year that requires an additional \$6.6 million. Since the recommended budget exceeds the amount of available funding by \$4.9 million, the School Committee asked that I recommend a list of cuts, which Lexington calls an “at-risk list.” The at-risk list includes the positions, expenses, and programs to be reduced or eliminated, unless there is a successful Proposition 2 1/2 override vote later this spring.

On March 6, I presented the at-risk list to the School Committee (<http://lps.lexingtonma.org/08BudgetMarch6.pdf>). These recommended cuts, if implemented, would substantially change the quality of the Lexington Public Schools. The at-risk list would eliminate 23.7 classroom and special education teachers and require substantial reductions in almost every other area of the budget, including 5.7 K-5 literacy and math teachers, administrators, custodians, and other support staff at every level of the school system. For example, these cuts will mean that some elementary classes will approach 30 students per class, the K-5 library program will be eliminated, class sizes in middle and high school will continue to increase, the high school German program will be phased out, and athletic fees will be increased from \$300 to \$500 per sport.

Substantially reducing the quality of the Lexington Public Schools is not my vision, nor is it the vision articulated by the School Committee. However, it is what fits the constraints of Proposition 2 1/2 and what can be accomplished without an operating override.

The recommended Supplemental Budget (<http://lps.lexingtonma.org/LPS08SupBudgetJan16.pdf>) comes closer to the vision I believe we share for Lexington's schools. Although the Supplemental Budget will not restore most of the cuts from last June's lost override, it will fund essential educational needs. For example, it includes funds to reduce some large K-12 class sizes, purchase needed textbooks and supplies, restore Honors Physics to 6 periods per week, and restore lost educational technology support.

During the month of March, I ask residents to examine the school budget carefully and share your thinking with the School Committee members. You may do this by attending the March 13 School Committee Meeting to be held at Cary Hall. The meeting will begin at 7:30 p.m. You may also share your views by e-mailing the School Committee at school-com@silver.ci.lexington.ma.us. The Lexington Public Schools are your schools, so please share your vision for the schools with your elected School Committee members before the final school budget is submitted to Town Meeting in April.

As with redistricting, I believe we can and will come up with the best plan possible after you, as engaged citizens, participate. The recommended Same-Service Budget, Supplemental Budget, and at-risk list can be found at: <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/>.