

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, June 2, 2009**  
**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room**  
**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Margaret Coppe, School Committee Members Rod Cole, Tom Diaz, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart. The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.**

**I. Call to Order (Margaret Coppe)**

**II. Executive Session**

**III. Return to Public Session and Welcome (Margaret Coppe)**

(The meeting was reconvened at 8:15 p.m. to a large crowd in Cary Hall)

**IV. Public Comment**

Comments from Superintendent Paul Ash: Dr. Ash thanked the crowd for coming to discuss the METCO program. He gave a background of Lexington's involvement in the METCO program.

**Paul Ash:** I appreciate Cheryl Prescott Walden's long contributions to the district. I have to make tough personnel choices. I have to bring in a balanced budget and in so doing make tough budget decisions. A year ago we were optimistic that METCO's future was finally getting better. The extra million dollars that was voted by the legislature was never distributed because of the collapse of the economy. Then the government made 9C cuts. And though our METCO budget was cut by \$83K I did not make any changes in the METCO budget at that time. Things have since gotten even worse. Our transportation contract for METCO will go up by \$83K. We may lose even more under the senate cut. I cannot legally be in the red. So I need another funding source or I have to make cuts. I was already reviewing the METCO program because we have wanted to improve the quality of this program. The Achievement Gap Report lays out 26 specific programs that we hope will improve things for Boston students. What is the best way to spend money? We discovered that the elementary tutoring program was taught by non-licensed teachers—it is better to have licensed teachers so we shifted \$55K to people who are no longer supervised by the director. METCO used to be responsible for seven buses. Now we have a full-time transportation coordinator. The social workers and guidance counselors report to the METCO Director—they can report to Student Services. So taking away those three responsibilities from the Director allows us to move to a half time Director: A K-12 METCO Liaison for Parent-Home Partnerships and Administration. The kids will get the same services as they are getting now. The budget will be in balance. The goal is to improve the program.

**William Harper:** Will there be a meeting on June 9<sup>th</sup> with Boston parents? You could have told us sooner.

**Paul Ash:** I believe so. At 7:30. I told the METCO social workers and guidance counselors yesterday. I wanted to tell them first.

**William Harper:** Will there be a meeting tomorrow for kids at LHS at 7:45?

**Paul Ash:** Yes.

**William Harper:** How will we know if it's the right decision?

**Deb Strod:** I am standing here to demonstrate the unified communities of Boston and Lexington. It is important to recognize the important role of Cheryl Prescott-Walden.

**Andrea Walker:** Could we see a list of administrators who were recently hired and what their salaries are? Where is the money going? How is transportation going to be run? It is about communication and getting in touch with kids and parents. It is not just about numbers.

**Michelle McWilliams** (METCO alumna): This is not just about the numbers. Ms. Prescott was an example. I never had a teacher of color.

**Gretchen Seekers** (Avalon resident and METCO IA at LHS): This impacted the students today. The students were anxious and got no work done. Students have a strong connection with Cheryl Prescott Walden.

**Sonya Carrington** (Diamond): Is this the only position that was cut?

**Paul Ash:** Also \$117K for teachers was cut.

**Tasha (last name inaudible)** (METCO Lexington alumna): Relationships that directors had with families are very important. My brother was killed by the school bus. What are the tasks of a part-time person?

**Michelle Heist** (Lexington): You were not part of the process, I hope you will be included.

**Dawn McKenna** (precinct 6): I urge you not to make a final decision tonight.

**(Name Inaudible):** I am a Lexington resident and an African American—it is important to have African Americans in the schools.

**Amanda Van Allen (Junior at LHS):** I cannot imagine not having Cheryl Prescott-Walden. Today was a bad day at school I am hurt by it.

**Aaron Holtzclaw (Junior at LHS):** I cannot imagine senior year without Ms. Prescott-Walden.

## V. Discussion Items

### K-12 Technology Report

The presentation was introduced by Dr. Ash. The School Committee had requested a report outlining a comprehensive K-12 review of our technology programs. The report was presented by Thomas Plati, technology consultant.

There were questions and comments from the Committee.

1. Update: Year 3 Mathematics Curriculum Review: postponed until the next meeting.
2. Student Activity Account Policy – First Reading. Presented by Mary Ellen Dunn.

There were comments and questions from the Committee and the audience.

## VI. Action Items

1. Vote to Approve Superintendent's Recommended Calendar for the 2010-11 School Year. The calendar was presented by Dr. Lynne Celli, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development. There were comments and questions from the Committee.

**Motion to approve the superintendent's recommended calendar for the 2010-11 School Year (Diaz, Stewart). The motion passed 5-0.**

2. Vote to Not Participate in the State's School Choice Program. This was presented by Dr. Ash.

**Motion to not participate in the state's School Choice Program (Diaz, Cole). The motion passed 5-0.**

3. Vote to Appoint School Committee Representatives to the Ad Hoc Facilities Review Committee

**Motion to appoint Phil Poinelli, Tom Griffiths and John Wardwell with gratitude as School Committee representatives to the Ad Hoc Facilities Review Committee (Diaz, Steigerwald). The motion passed 5-0.**

## VII. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

1. **Jessie Steigerwald** presented a motion regarding amendment of the LPS website to include a direct link to the School Committee on the Home Page, to state who else reads those emails if anyone else does, and to include the email addresses of individual School

Committee members who want to include their individual emails including a statement that such emails are subject to public records requests.

**Motion to table the issue until the June 16<sup>th</sup> meeting** (Diaz, Coppe). **The motion passed 4-1** (Steigerwald).

2. **Rod Cole:** This is an appropriate time to do financial projections for the next couple of years.

**Paul Ash:** I attended a meeting of the Ad Hoc Fiscal Policy Committee put together by the Selectmen. They are going to accomplish what you are wanting to accomplish. I think we should let them finish their work and then possibly tweak it if necessary.

**Rod Cole:** Let's look at what they have done and then discuss.

**Jessie Steigerwald:** It is better when the Committee sits facing each other. I am very interested in working on process before the next budget season. I regret my vote at the last meeting and I wish we had had more time.

**Mary Ann Stewart:** I assumed we would get to the retreat sooner or later. I will type up reports on the committees to which I am a liaison because of the late hour.

**Tom Diaz:** The Ad Hoc Fiscal Policy Committee is meeting weekly.

- VIII. **Motion to go into executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for contract negotiations with non-union personnel not to reconvene in open session** (Diaz, Cole). **Cole-aye; Diaz-aye; Steigerwald-aye; Stewart-aye and Coppe-aye.**