

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

**Tuesday, March 13, 2012
Cary Memorial Building, Cary Hall
1605 Massachusetts Avenue**

Present: Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Mary Ann Stewart, School Committee Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Vice-Chair; School Committee Members Bonnie Brodner, Margaret Coppe, and Jessie Steigerwald, and Noah Coolidge, Student Representative

The minutes were taken by Jean Curran, School Committee Secretary.

The Meeting Convened at 7:33 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited Public Comment.

There were no public comments.

II. Superintendent's Announcements

There were no Announcements.

III. Members' Reports/Members' Concerns

Bonnie Brodner shared that the SEPAC Subcommittee on Transition has created a survey; she encourages anyone with a child age 14-22 receiving Special Education Services to complete the survey.

Margaret Coppe congratulated Chair Mary Ann Stewart and Jessie Steigerwald on their reelection to the School Committee. She noted the 2012 Boston Globe Scholastic Art and Writing Awards were announced and Lexington High School is well represented; she congratulated all the winners. She also noted that the Science Team won the State Title and will be going to the U.S. Department of Education National Science Bowl in Washington D.C. and congratulated those students. She and Jessie Steigerwald met with Jim Hardy, from the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, concerning updating the Policy Manual; Jim will work with the Policy Subcommittee on May 9th.and the Committee will have some work to do on it after that.

Jessie Steigerwald announced that the Lexington Robotics Team took first place at the State Championships; the High School Jazz Band took first place at the Berkeley High School Jazz Festival; and Destination ImagiNation competed in the Region 4 Tournament. There is another transportation survey coming out and she urged people to complete it when they receive it.

Mary Ann Stewart explained that the School Committee has received a copy of *Healthy Students Health Schools*, a guidance document from the Massachusetts Department of

Elementary and Secondary Education, which is being used by the Wellness Policy Revision Subcommittee as a guide for updating LPS nutrition standards.

IV. Agenda

1. Report on Improving Professional Relationships.

Margaret Colella, Principal, Bridge Elementary School provided the history and context for the report. She introduced Andrew Baker, a Steering Committee member, who introduced Mr. Bruce Wellman, Co-Director MiraVia, LLC. Mr. Wellman was hired as an independent consultant to work with the Steering Committee on the issue of improving professional relationships across the school district. He presented an overview of the history and study process, staff demographics, change drivers, the change process, themes, and his recommendations and thoughts about the road ahead. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

Following Mr. Wellman's presentation, the Chair invited public comment:

Eric Malafeew, 34 Rawson Avenue had questions regarding framing skills, collaboration, autonomy, and relationships between teachers and administrators.

Debroah Zilberman, 9 Forest Street questioned the Committee whether there will be future meetings for public comment on the report presented this evening.

Samantha Allen, Lexington Minuteman Reporter, questioned whether Mr. Wellman was advocating for the removal of teachers in groups.

Catherine Paladino, 45 Reed Street, spoke about a climate of fear and retribution and wanted to know how that will be addressed going forward.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, wants to know what needs to be done going forward.

Susan Kenyon, 17 Parker Street, thanked the Committee for commissioning this report.

Harvey Simkovits, 2 Forest Street, would like the leadership component addressed.

Helen Cohen, 32 Patterson Road, supports the move from autonomy to collaboration and understands the issues raised in the report are big and difficult issues to address.

Druscilla Brown, 27 Patridge Road, shared her thoughts on methodology and encourages the Committee to look at this as the beginning of the process.

Noah Coolidge, thanked the Steering Committee for all their hard work. He believes there needs to be a balance between autonomy and standards. He also believes teacher stress is very similar to student stress and addressing both is necessary.

Phyllis Neufeld, President Lexington Education Association, thanked the Steering Committee for their hard work and believes it is important to keep the human touch in the forefront moving forward.

Dr. Paul B. Ash, thanked the members of the Steering Committee and Phyllis Neufeld. He believes that we have a great school system. He sees from the report that there is a lot of work ahead and embraces it wholeheartedly and looks forward to working to make this an even better school system.

2. Special Education Administrative Reorganization.

Dr. Ash spoke about the retirement of Chris Greeley, Assistant Director of Student Services and whether or not her position should be filled. His thoughts revolve around continuing with a part-time model, which he is not in favor of because Lexington is now providing more in-house services. His recommendation is to create a position of Director of Special Education which would report directly to Linda Chase, Director of Student Services. The new position would handle the many day-to-day functions of the Special Education Department and work with the supervisors to develop better systems, procedures, and more effective departmental functions. There were questions and comments from the Committee.

Diane Biglow, 15 Bellflower Street, supports a full-time Special Education Director.

Elizabeth Sackton, 21 Outlook Drive, believes the most important item should be a complimentary role and adding skills to the department.

Linda Chase addressed questions from the Committee regarding her workload and shared her thoughts regarding the new position.

3. Vote to Accept the Estabrook School Budget, as recommended, so that the budget can be presented to the MSBA Board on March 28, 2012, for MSBA Approval.

Mary Ann Stewart presented the Estabrook School Budget required for submission to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) for funding of the new school. There were questions and comments from the Committee .

Motion to Accept the Estabrook School Budget, as recommended, so that the Budget can be presented to the MSBA Board on March 28, 2012, for MSBA Approval. (Coppe, Alessandrini). **The Motion was approved (5-0).**

4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of February 14, 2012

Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of February 14, 2012, as amended (Coppe, Alessandrini). **The Motion was approved (5-0).**

5. **Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of February 28, 2012**

Motion to Approve School Committee of February 28, 2012, as amended (Brodner, Coppe). The Motion was approved (5-0).

Motion to Adjourn. (Steigerwald, Alessandrini). **The Motion was approved (5-0).**

The Meeting Adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

Documents: Meeting Agenda; Memo from Dr. Paul Ash to School Committee dated March 7, 2012 regarding School Committee Agenda for March 13, 2012; MSBA Total Project Budget; MSBA Project Scope and Budget Reimbursement Rate Certification; Report of Bruce Wellman on Improving Professional Relationships; DRAFT SC Minutes dated February 14, 2012; and DRAFT SC Minutes dated February 28, 2012.

Voted by the School Committee _____ July 17, 2012 _____