

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, February 3, 2009**  
**Cary Hall Auditorium**  
**1605 Massachusetts Avenue**

**Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Helen Cohen, School Committee Members Rod Cole, Margaret Coppe, Tom Diaz, Ravi Sakhuja and student representative Gloria Park. The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.**

**I. Call to Order and Welcome (Helen Cohen)**

**II. Public Comment**

**Cindy Bond** (Estabrook parent): In favor of a half-day kindergarten class.

**III. Superintendent's Announcements**

- A. I am extraordinarily proud to announce that Noah Arbesfeld has been named one of 40 high school seniors in the United States as an Intel Scholar. This is the most competitive math and science contest in the country.
- B. On February 10<sup>th</sup> the administration, in conjunction with the principals and the kindergarten teachers will recommend a complete transition to full day kindergarten. All preschools have received notices about this discussion.

**IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns**

**Margaret Coppe** At Clarke Middle School security cameras will be installed over February break as a result of a grant received by the Police Department.

**V. Discussion Item**

1. How to Address the Overcrowding at the Fiske School

Dr. Ash discussed the alternatives that had been looked into and presented his current proposal: moving the Avalon students over a period of two years from Fiske to Bridge. He stressed that he is deeply committed to continuity for children but this is the only option.

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

2. Public Hearing and School Committee Discussion on the FY10 Budget

**Leora Tec** (precinct one): In favor of the School Support Personnel at the elementary schools and against reducing their hours, which would result in eliminating benefits. Talked about the human dimension.

**Myra Marshall** (Oxbow Road): Against the reduction of Instructional Assistant hours, concerned that students would not get as much continuity of instruction.

**Patrick Mehr** (precinct 3): Asked if parents are allowed to move children from district to district. Also concerned with cuts at the high school and the middle schools. We should know where the \$22 million for health care is going.

**Sue Cusack** (precinct 9): IA discussion. Continuity of support is important to families whose children are on IEPs. Educating families is important.

**Karen Salvucci** (SSP at Hastings): Spoke about the devastating effect a reduction in hours and loss of health care benefits would have on her personally.

**Dawn McKenna** (precinct 6): Clarifying concerns of people from a particular neighborhood who are worried about being forced out of Bridge back to Harrington. Have we had to use the reserve bus? Concerns about #8 on the cut list. Fine to address health care issue through attrition, but not to cut benefits of loyal long-term employees.

**Jesse Steigerwald** (precinct 8): If we hire fewer teachers would we save on the mentoring program? What about cuts in the Central Office? Have they been looked at?

**Diane Biglow** (precinct 8): Questioning Dr. Ash's salary amount.

**Helen Cohen** responded that our experience in Lexington has shown how vital it is to have and retain a strong superintendent to lead a large, complex system such as the Lexington Schools.

**Patrick Mehr:** How many children will be in Avalon? Are we entitled to compensation from the developer?

**Dr. Ash** reported that we are very near the number of Avalon students at which the developer would supply some revenue to the schools.

**Dr. Ash** clarified the following: In line 13 .8 K-5 needs to be changed to .4. The dollar amount will be changed as well. Our Minuteman assessment is \$1.711 million dollars. This will mean an additional \$63K to the schools.

The School Committee recommended that, in the event that new revenue becomes available, Dr. Ash restore items in the following order: hours and health care benefits of school support personnel; high school teachers; middle school teachers; hiring at an average of M5 instead of M6; and finally, half of the IA item line (5 positions) (consolidating IA positions). (Tom Diaz abstained for personal reasons).

**VI. Motion to Adjourn** (Coppe, Cole). **The motion passed 5-0.**