

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Wednesday, April 5, 2017
Cary Memorial Building, Estabrook Hall
1605 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA

Present:

Chair, Alessandro Alessandrini; Vice-Chair, Eileen Jay; Jessie Steigerwald; Kathleen Lenihan; Kate Colburn; Superintendent, Dr. Czajkowski

Absent: Student Representative, Matt Campos

The minutes were taken by Kristen Cronin, Executive Assistant to the School Committee and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

The meeting convened at 6:00 pm

Call to Order and Welcome:

Chair, Alessandro Alessandrini called the meeting to order, and introduced committee members.

Public Comments: None

Superintendent Announcements:

The New York Times article that was written by Kyle Spencer, who visited Lexington for three days in the fall, became available online today. The article is titled "It Takes a Suburb: A Town Unites to Tackle Student Stress." Dr. Czajkowski wants to thank the students, parents, LPS staff, Administration, Central Office personnel, and School Committee members, who were all involved in communicating with the reporter. Dr. Czajkowski feels that Ms Spencer accurately reported the story regarding stress experienced by the youth in Lexington and how we are addressing it as a community.

Dr. Czajkowski, along with some search committee members, will be conducting site visits this week in the school districts of the three candidates for the Lexington High School Principal position.

Dr. Czajkowski is meeting with Mr. Valente tomorrow to discuss Director of Facilities search. Conducting interviews shortly.

School Committee Member Announcements:

Kate Colburn: Attended the METCO Lobby day in Boston. It was a wonderful gathering of METCO students, teachers, administrators, parents, Superintendents and School Committee members from other districts who met to discuss issues about METCO, then moved over to the State House to lobby and encourage legislators to increase the funding for METCO.

Kathleen Lenihan: Attended the Human Rights committee meeting on Racial Justice. Pretty frank conversations regarding race in Lexington. Also attended first meeting about the School Start Time Task Force, and this afternoon attended the Family Youth Services Committee Meeting. On May 17th, Family Youth Services will be sponsoring an afterschool program at the Community Center for middle school students. Met this morning with Kelly Chase and Science Department head to discuss curriculum at the high school.

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Jessie Steigerwald: Mr. Dailey is going to put together a paragraph or two so we will all be on the same page on later start time. This is not going to start this fall. Jessie asks Mr. Dailey if he wouldn't mind giving a brief statement now.

Ian Dailey: Discussion is not about 2017-18. It would be for school year 2018-19 and or later. We outlined a goal: We are researching, identifying priorities, and evaluating all considerations to see if a recommendation should be made to the Superintendent to consider changes to start and or end times to the high school, middle schools and elementary schools. Initial focus is looking at research and developing a survey to send out to the community, including students, parents, and staff. Conduct panel meetings with the committee and outside participants. There are a number of considerations with logistics to work through.

Jessie Steigerwald: Going forward on the Diversity Think Tank, I think it's important to somehow embrace other aspects of diversity. If it is focusing specifically on the Asian families exclusively, and Asian culture, it needs to be transparent and perhaps be called the Think Tank on Asian Concerns. We could possibly bring it up on future agenda. However there is a need to address all aspects of "Diversity" in our community. After meeting next week, we could have a further update.

If Only, a film that addresses opioid addiction, will be shown, followed by a discussion, at Cary Memorial on Thursday, April 6th at 6:30

Eileen Jay: Ms. Steigerwald and I have set up several meetings for the Curriculum Quarterly Updates. We will be meeting on April 13th about the elementary and middle school Science Curriculum and meeting on May 4th with Laura Lasa, LHS Principal, and Jackie Crowe, LHS Science Department Head, on the Science Curriculum at the high school.

On Friday, I had the pleasure of going to the Bridge International Night. Great night. I was delighted that it still going strong, as I attended as a parent 18 years ago at the first International Night.

Alessandro Alessandrini: Thank you to all community members for the NYT article. Community Center Committee Article 16E appropriating money for the town side of Pelham, all voted unanimously. If there is anything you would like to see implemented in this project, send ideas to me and we can discuss going forward. Urges community to call elected officials and ask them not to cut funding for the NPR Public broadcast system.

Agenda:

1. After-School Transportation Program Information and Discussion (45 minutes)

Guorong Zhu, Waltham St – Parent representing 240 families who signed a letter with suggestions for the School Committee. Wants to address concerns from the families to the school. Looked into financials to offer some suggestions and solutions: Evident that school transportation is safer than cars. Looking at capping buses daily will resolve the problem. Do not need to increase rate. Based on their data, kids only use the bus 3 days a week. Suggests stopping the lottery, they think it is unethical. Stop the lottery, start a solution.

Jessie Steigerwald: Is there an update from Administration on this or are we picking up from where we left off?

Ian Dailey: The only real update would be to try to bring some clarity on the Double Seat conversation.

Mr. Dailey reviewed the “Double Seat” slide: Below

“Double Seat” - Visual Example

Bowman Elementary School - Double Seat Example									
Ridership Example - w/ After School Bus						After-School Bus			
	Bus 05	Bus 07	Bus 11	Bus 15	Bus 17	Bus 21	Bus 25	Bus 30	Total
Morning Ridership	51	45	35	38	44	28	43	47	331
Ridership eligible for seat in PM	51	45	35	38	44	28	43	47	331
Riders going to aft. School programs	-7	-4	-4	-4	-3	28	-2	-4	0
Afternoon Ridership	44	41	31	34	41	56	41	43	331
Average Students/Bus:									41.4
Ridership Example - w/out After School Bus									
	Bus 05	Bus 07	Bus 11	Bus 15	Bus 17	Bus 21	Bus 25	Bus 30	Total
Ridership To/From School	54	50	40	41	48	Eliminated	47	51	331
Average Students/Bus:									47.3

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Jessie Steigerwald: Can support cap and lottery; understand it’s difficult for families. This is not just a financial issue, but a safety concern. After school congestion is why we started this in the first place. Large contingent of people think it is a community-shared responsibility for after school hours. Can see some subsidy, but do support a cap and a lottery if needed due to limited capacity.

Kate Colburn: If there are changes the community feels are important, we can make changes. I feel the timing of this decision is very difficult for families. Not in favor of a cap for this coming fall. Concerned that this cap is already included in our budget, want to avoid having to make changes to the budget that would affect our academic programs. Would be in favor of administration to fund a non-capped program through next year. After next year, I have a real concern about schools being involved and making choices and approving certain programs. Long view, for budgetary reasons and logistic, not sure we should be in this business at all.

Kathleen Lenihan: This is very last minute to make this decision for next year because it affects working parents. Support keeping program as is for next year, then look going forward. Agrees with Ms. Colburn, there is a lot of concern at Lexington about being involved in transporting children to for-profit

businesses. Feels Lexington is endorsing the afterschool businesses. Parents think we are in a partnership with the businesses, but we are not.

Eileen Jay: In favor of continuing the afterschool bus program for the coming year. Because of the last-minute decision, it makes cutting back on the program a little unfair. Well worth the time to use the coming year to plan out what the future will be for this program and the sustainability.

Alessandro Alessandrini: In agreement with Ms. Colburn, Kathleen Lenihan and Eileen Jay about the last minute announcement. By continuing for one more year, it will give us time to work with vendors to see if there are other ways to fund after school bus programs. Concerned that with increasing enrollment, we will have to make decisions about programs and hiring teachers. The afterschool bus is a highly subsidized program that will take away from that. In a choice between ridership that profits businesses vs. keeping a school program and hiring teachers, I fall on the side of hiring teachers.

Dr. Czajkowski: Five years ago, no one would have anticipated the cost for the district to be at \$1,800 per student. There is never a good time to bring this discussion up, and agrees timing was not ideal. If we did not bring this to School Committee's attention, it would be fiscally irresponsible of us. For instance, the interest in bringing world language back to the elementary classrooms, we can't do that, but yet we are subsidizing \$1,884.00 to transport students in order to profit after school programs. Most of the School Committee is in agreement that we continue for next and delay the long-term decision for a year. For now, we can adjust fee as an option and then come back with various structures for subsidy. We are in the business of educating students; we are not a transportation service. We need to set a deadline to make a decision.

The School Committee will remain in session and relocate to Battin Hall for the purpose of participating in Town Meeting.

Meeting Materials: Agenda; **A.1-** After School Transportation Double Seat Example