

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Saturday, February 4, 2012
1605 Massachusetts Avenue
Cary Memorial Building, Cary Hall Auditorium

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.

The Meeting Convened at 10:05 a.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome

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

Janet Tiampo 1 Oakland Street, read a letter from Debbie Zilberman, President of the Friends of Lexington Music Art and Drama Students, Inc. (FOLMADS) applauding the Committee for considering the elimination of the elementary instrumental music fee.

II. Superintendent's Announcements

Dr. Paul B. Ash will hold remarks until the Committee gets to the FY13 Budget discussion on the Agenda.

III. Members' Reports/Members' Concerns

Mary Ann Stewart thanked the Chinese American Association of Lexington (CAAL) for inviting the Committee to their bi-annual Chinese New Year Banquet celebration of the Year of the Dragon held on January 28, 2012. The event was also a fundraiser to help underwrite their annual \$1,000 stipend to the winner of the Lexington Public School's Diversity Award. She encourages members of the community and employees of the Lexington Public Schools to consider nominating an individual; the award will be announced during the 2012 Annual Town Meeting.

Jessie Steigerwald attended Clarke Middle School's production of "Seussical the Musical" last Friday evening and encouraged members of the community to attend. She also reminded everyone that the Town Census has been mailed out and requested residents to complete the form and send it back.

Dr. Paul B. Ash strongly urged residents to send in the annual census and to include all children in the home even if they are not yet school age. He stated the census is important because it helps the school district prepare for future student enrollment.

Alessandro Alessandrini suggested that since there is no longer a contested School Committee race, that the Committee wait until after the presentation of Bruce Wellman's Report to begin discussion of the Superintendent's annual evaluation.

IV. Agenda

1. Public Hearing on the Superintendent's FY13 Recommended Budget

Janet Tiampo, 1 Oakland Street, spoke at the beginning of the meeting as stated above.

2. Superintendent's FY13 Recommended Budget Discussion

Dr. Ash announced that Chris Greeley, Assistant Director of Student Services will retire. Dr. Ash stated that he truly appreciates her many years of service to the school district. Her position is being reviewed to see what level of support and duties her replacement may require and will report back to the Committee when he learns more.

The Committee discussed the financial impacts of and the funding for the elimination of the full-day kindergarten fee, the elimination of the elementary instrumental music fee and the reduction by half of the bus fee for students at the Estabrook Elementary School during construction. It was stated that the \$300,000 being requested from the Appropriation Committee and the Board of Selectmen are not recurring expenses. Eliminating the kindergarten fee would require \$150,000 for one year, and then the Town would qualify for state aid from Chapter 70 Funding. An additional \$150,000 is being requested to help fund the reduction in the bus fee in FY2013. In FY2014 another appropriation of \$150,000 would be required for Estabrook buses.

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance addressed questions from the Committee regarding the school department's subsidizing of bus fees for non-eligible riders, the upgrade of cafeteria equipment, and how LPS is striving for the food service program to become financially capable of supporting its own equipment. Moving some instructional offices from the High School to the Central Office would free up some needed space at the High School.

Dr. Ash explained that moving the Data Team to the Central Office is one small step in a larger plan. He stated that the High School is currently overcrowded and they have brought in architects and others to explore space reconfigurations. The Committee will receive a presentation from Pat Goddard when plans are finalized. He noted students are currently being turned away from Advanced Placement classes because there is not enough room and that is creating stress on some students.

Professional Development (PD) was discussed. Dr. Ash explained the process of aligning students' needs with courses for teachers to support students. PD courses are taught by Lexington teachers, as well as by some outside instructors regarding content and technology.

Special Education funding was discussed, as well as the reduction of special education teachers, and what, if any, impacts there would be on students in those programs. Since the IEP is the legal document that drives the whole educational program for a student, the professionals are telling Dr. Ash that some Special Education programs are over staffed. The Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC) will update the Committee in the near future to discuss the subcommittees looking at criteria for special education programs.

Alan Levine, Precinct 8, Town Meeting Member and Member of the Appropriation Committee gave his thoughts regarding the fee discussion presented at today's meeting.

Finally, Dr. Ash explained the revenue offsets, using FY2012 operating funds to pay for some capital needs, previously shown in the FY2013 Recommended Budget.

3. National School Boards Association (NSBA) Conference

The Committee previously voted to permit the use of funds for Dr. Ash and one Committee member to attend the NSBA Annual Meeting and Conference being held in Boston this April. Since that time, the Committee has learned about reduced registration costs which would permit more members to attend the conference. Committee members felt that this is an important conference to attend, especially considering that they would be saving on the cost of transportation and hotel rooms.

Motion to expend the funds for Members of the School Committee to attend the National School Boards Association Conference in April, 2012.
(Steigerwald, Coppe). **The Motion was approved 4-1** (Alessandrini).

4. Future School Committee Dates

Discussion regarding whether the Committee needed to meet on Tuesday, February 7, 2012 to have further discussions regarding the FY2013 Recommended Budget before the vote on Tuesday, February 14, 2012. The Estabrook Task Force (ETF) made a motion for Chair Michelle Ciccolo to present an interim report to the Board of Selectmen and School Committee. The Interim Report will be presented to the Board of Selectmen on February 13, 2012 and to the School Committee on February 14, 2012.

Margaret Coppe was asked if the Concussion Policy Second Reading could be postponed until February 14, 2012. She stated that would be fine and that Committee members should read the Second Reading carefully because of significant changes made due to new MIAA regulations. An approved policy is due March 1, 2012.

The Chair proposed to eliminate the meeting on February 7th and move all agenda items to February 14th. She will notify the Town Clerk that the February 7th meeting is cancelled.

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

The Meeting Adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Documents: Meeting Agenda

Voted by the School Committee _____ February 28, 2012 _____