

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, January 5, 2010
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.

The meeting was convened at 7:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Margaret Coppe)

II. Superintendent's Announcements

- 1). Dr. Ash explained the lockdown at Fiske, Estabrook and Diamond schools due to the pursuit by police of possible armed bank robbers in the area. He publicly thanked the Lexington Police Department. We will work diligently to get the Global Connects phone system working so each school can call its parents separately. The REMS grant will make the whole town more responsive to emergencies. Assistant Superintendent Mary Ellen Dunn explained this grant.

III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Mary Ann Stewart: The SEPAC and PTA President meetings are coming up. LEF is funding a Lexington Symphony concert for third graders. I will be hosting an office hour at Brewed Awakenings from 8:30-9:30 a.m. on January 14th.

Jessie Steigerwald: How do we want to work on our goal of establishing a School Committee office hour?

Ms. Steigerwald will look into getting a space and then members can sign up for time slots.

Margaret Coppe: LexMedia has put out a request for input. We can certainly encourage them to continue to broadcast our meetings.

IV. Discussion Item

1. Presentation of the Superintendent's FY11 Level-Service Budget. Presented by Superintendent Paul Ash. He thanked Assistant Superintendent Mary Ellen Dunn for all her work on this. He also thanked the many people who participated in putting the budget together. There are sufficient funds to maintain level service. There were questions and comments from the Committee.
2. Presentation of the FY11 Recommended Budget. Presented by Dr. Ash.

There were questions and comments by the Committee.

3. Four- and Ten-Year Enrollment Forecasts Report. Presented by Dr. Ash.

The progression rate jumped when we went to full-day kindergarten, but that did not fully explain the increase. Enrollment is continuing to decline over a four-year period and none of the schools appear to be at risk of being overcrowded.

Rod Cole presented an analysis of the student population projection data and projection methodology used by the school administration. Rod's analysis showed that net in-migration is not accurately predicted by how many births there are in town. He speculated that net in-migration numbers are more closely tied to the number of families that move into town and that it is important to understand trends regarding whether families are moving to Lexington before or after starting families. The net result has been that the model being used by the schools has in the past under estimated net in-migration, sometimes by a wide margin, and this has given rise to some unfortunate perceptions such as Hastings Elementary School being closed in the near future, and has affected the process of evaluating future school renovation needs. It is likely that the current projection continues to overstate the likelihood of a significant decrease in the student population.

There were questions and comments from the Committee.

There were comments from the audience.

4. Race to the Top Funds – Request to Sign MOU (Memorandum of Understanding).

Introduced by Dr. Ash. If Massachusetts were to receive one of these grants, Lexington would receive up to \$27K a year for four years. The funds would not do a tremendous amount for Lexington. Dr. Ash is recommending not signing the MOU. There are many strings attached to the money. A lot of time is involved in administering the grant.

Phyllis Neufeld, President of the LEA stated that the LEA had come to the same conclusion as Dr. Ash on this issue and would also not sign the MOU.

There were comments and questions from the Committee.

V. Action Items

1. Vote on First Reading and Authorization to Temporarily Implement the New Meal Charge Policy. Presented by Assistant Superintendent Mary Ellen Dunn.

There were questions and comments from the Committee.

Motion to adopt the recommended authorization to temporarily implement the new meal charge policy (Diaz, Cole). The motion passed 5-0.

VI. Motion to adjourn (Cole, Stewart). The motion passed 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 p.m.