

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, November 5, 2013**  
**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room**  
**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**PRESENT:** Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Bonnie Brodner, Vice-Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart; and Sam Lehn, Student Representative

The Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting Convened at 7:31 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**

Dr. Ash announced that Town Meeting voted to appropriate funds for additional classrooms and special education (SPED) spaces at Lexington High School. Dr. Ash thanked Town Meeting for supporting the students, administration, and teachers.

**III. School Committee Member Announcements**

Margaret Coppe shared that the Lexington Education Foundation (LEF) will host a Trivia Bee tomorrow evening. Sam Lehn has put together a team to participate on behalf of the School Committee.

Margaret Coppe and Mary Ann Stewart will attend the Massachusetts Association of School Committees Conference from November 6-10 in Hyannis

Margaret Coppe reminded everyone about the town observance of Veteran's Day on Monday, November 11.

**IV. Agenda**

**1. Four- and Ten-Year Enrollment Forecasts**

Dr. Ash presented the four and ten year enrollment forecasts. Before beginning his presentation, Dr. Ash acknowledged Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities and Ruth Quinn Berdell for their assistance in producing the Lexington Public Schools (LPS) Report. Dr. Ash presented a PowerPoint presentation for the Four and Ten-Year Enrollment Forecasts to the Committee. His presentation included (i) a brief 30 year history for K-12 enrollment; (ii) Summary of the Four-Year K-5 Forecasts which is based on K-5 enrollment numbers, actual births through September 14, 2013 and the actual Lexington census ; (iii) Ten-Year K-5 Forecast detailing the three methods for projecting ten-year forecasts; (iv) summary of 6-8 Forecasts; (v) summary of 9-12 forecasts; (vi) limitations of the Study; (vii) information sources; (viii) assumptions; (ix) number of Lexington births per year from 1993 through 2013; (x) historical birth-to-k progression rates; (xi) LPS comparison of births and

kindergarten enrollments; (xii) Lexington school enrollments for school years 1980-1981 through 2013-2014; (xiii) progression rates K-12; (xiv) ten-year enrollment projection; (xv) K-5 enrollment and classroom projection FY15-FY25; (xvi) Lexington elementary enrollments (actual and projected 2013); (xvii) elementary, middle school and high school enrollments (actual and projected 2013); (xviii) ten-year enrollment projection; (xix) K-12 enrollment and classroom projection FY15-FY24; (xx) Lexington elementary enrollment (actual and projected); (xxi) LPS 2013-2014 enrollment; (xxii) school by school enrollments actual FY14 and FY15-FY18 projections; (xxiii) school by school enrollments actual FY14 and FY15-FY18 projections; and (xxiv) progression rates by elementary district.

There were questions and comments from the Committee which included (i) will more people move into the Estabrook district once the new Estabrook Elementary School is complete; (ii) what methodology is used to produce the numbers; (iii) the District must take potential increases in SPED needs into consideration as enrollment increases; (iv) what number triggers a crisis; (v) thoughts on why parents send their kids out-of-district or to private schools; (vi) what are the enrollment numbers at the elementary level and what is being done about the space needs; (vii) the average number of students in one classroom; (viii) what is the date on the 1.5 migration rate; (ix) resources available for a different opinion on enrollments in Lexington; (x) thoughts on space and capacity in our schools; (xi) look at the numbers in the 2.05 range; (xii) concerned about moving some Fiske students to Estabrook and the need to think about how many kids to move; (xiii) a work group on enrollment projections; (xiv) consider building a new elementary school; (xv) break out the enrollment numbers for ELL and SPED students; (xvi) when will the Committee hear about planning for Fiske and the capacity for ILP; and (xvii) the need to involve the Board of Selectmen

Margaret Coppe addressed the assumption that the Committee did not know about the enrollment problem and stated that when the Committee knows of issues they address those issues. Ms. Coppe shared that she had a discussion with Aaron Henry, Assistant Planning Director regarding his recent presentation to the League of Woman Voters in which he stated that there are 67 new approved but not constructed houses and 24 that have been approved and in the pipeline. Mr. Henry's report was not about school enrollment but about subsidized housing inventory. Ms. Coppe suggested speaking with the BOS and the 20/20 Demographic Subcommittee.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street thanked the Committee for the meaningful discussion. Ms. McKenna shared her thoughts regarding the enrollments numbers, the lack of confidence of the community's view on the enrollment numbers and why she believed people are moving to Lexington.

Alice Mead, 85 Miriam Street had questions regarding the population at LHS.

Andre Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street shared his thoughts on why the numbers have risen.

## **2. Recommended FY15 Capital Budget (Furniture)**

Ms. Dunn presented the second installment of the FY15 Capital Budget which included (i) upgrading some food service equipment; (ii) cyclical replacement of student, staff furniture and equipment needed for all school buildings; (iii) School Technology Capital Request in the amount of \$1,215,000 for technology equipment to support the District which includes desktops, laptops, mobile devices, printers/peripherals, project systems, network head-end equipment and wireless network delivery systems; (iv) Design Funds for further School Traffic Safety Mitigation study; and (v) School Automated External Defibrillators (AED) Replacement. Currently the District has 14 AEDs purchased in 2000 that are beginning to show their age. This project would replace the 14 AEDs plus install one in the LHS Science building and equip the high and middle school coaches with portable AEDs for sports.

The Committee had comments and questions (i) what furniture is generally counted in the category of classroom furniture; (ii) would music risers be considered furniture; (iii) music and athletics also have needs that should be evaluated when creating a furniture inventory; (iii) would the School Department be out of compliance with any Board of Health regulations with the Board of Health if some of these changes aren't made; (iv) regarding Bowman and Bridge Elementary Schools renovation budgets, did that include any Furniture, Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E); (v) regarding the Bridge Elementary School, would you clarify removable walls; are they created to make large and smaller spaces and would removable partitions help to accomplish that; (vi) when replacing furniture, are the old pieces being reused or donated; (vii) question regarding print shop request for shrink wrap equipment and laminator; (viii) glad to see the request to improve the seating in lunches in Commons 1 and 2 at LHS; (ix) question regarding bus routing redistricting; (x) is there any money to replace FM systems; (xi) was fitness equipment included.

## **3. Clarke Mandarin Student Exchange Program**

Anna Monaco, Principal at Clarke Middle School came before the Committee to request permission to send 18 Grade 8 students and four Clarke staff members to china from April 16, 2014 to April 27, 2014.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) which staff went on the trip over the summer; (ii) comfort with using Education First (EF) as a travel agent; (iii) what happens if connections are missed; (iv) will there be a random selection of students; (v) who will be the chaperones on the trip; (vi) does the total cost of the trip is \$2,770 come from parent contributions or the Asia Society grant; (vii) conflicted about 18 students having an experience of a lifetime and worries that it increases the divide between high and low income; (viii) will there be money for a scholarship for a student that would like to participate but does not have the means; (ix) would you be offering a need blind application or would you have one dedicated slot or two half scholarships; (x) are there independently run trips offered over the summer for a set price; (xi) will the 8<sup>th</sup> graders participating in this trip be prohibited from going on the high school trip; (xii) can you speak more about the Asia Grant; (xiii) will there be any enrichment for the 40 Mandarin students at Clarke who will not be participating in the trip; and (xiv) could the Committee be updated on milestones; and what will be offered to Diamond Students who do not have access to the trip.

Barbara Upson, Reading Teacher at the Clarke Middle School shared how her children participated in trips to France and Costa Rica and were not offered financial aid. Ms. Upson also shared that teachers that went to China over the summer had to pay for the trip themselves. She hopes the Committee will support the program.

Raul Luzio, 220 Follen Road shared that this type of trip makes Lexington a special place. We live in a global village, and most parents will make enormous sacrifices for their kids.

Kara Richmond shared her child went to Greece when she was in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade and today she is a teacher and uses pictures taken on that trip in her classroom. The 18 students can exchange ideas and share information.

Audra Alexandra, English Teacher, Clarke Middle School shared her experience on the trip she took to China over the summer.

Julie Baker, 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> Grade Mandarin Teacher, Clarke Middle School addressed concerns about the students not going on the trip and why some students choose not to go.

Ms. Jane, Clarke Middle School Mandarin teacher shared that Lexington was recognized as one of the 100 best Mandarin programs in the United States.

Bonnie Brodner shared that although it seems like a wonderful trip she thinks it will increase the chasm between the “have’s” and the “have not’s” and cannot support it.

Jessie Steigerwald shared that if the Committee put money into the budget for financial aid or field trip scholarships so any student who wanted to apply could have the chance to go with financial aid or scholarship she would be able to support the trip. In a public school setting, separating those who can afford to go on an academic field trip run by the school from those who cannot afford to go, is not right. .

Alessandro Alessandrini supports the program and shared that we need to start somewhere. This does make Lexington special and opens us up to grant programs. Mr. Alessandrini supports the program.

Margaret Coppe shared that the Committee has started putting foreign trips on the Consent Agenda, but this came before the Committee, since it was a new program

**Motion to Support Clarke Mandarin Student Exchange Program Beijing in April, 2014** (Stewart, Alessandrini) **The Motion was Approved** (3-2) Brodner and Steigerwald opposed

#### **4. Special Education Update and the Coordinated Program Review Process/Entry Plan**

Ellen Sugita, Special Education Director, presented an overview which included (i) Entry Plan Update, (ii) Programs – Areas of Focus and (iii) DESE Coordinated Review process.

The Entry Plan Update included the (a) Information Gathering Process; (b) General Themes and (c) Action Steps.

Information Gathering included (a) 60+ Entry Plan Meetings; (b) review of Parent Survey; (c) review of Wellman Report; (d) touring buildings; (e) meetings with SEPAC; and (f) Surveys – DESE and IEP Meetings.

General Themes included (a) responsiveness of the department; (b) communication (district and community); (c) trust; and (d) concerns regarding litigation.

Action Steps included (a) Theme 1 – Responsiveness of the Department; (b) Theme 2 – Communication (district and community); (c) Theme 3 – Trust; (d) Theme 4 – Litigation Concerns.

Programs – Areas of Focus included (a) plans for Intensive Learning Programs at LHS; (b) studying programs for students with emotional disabilities; and (c) seeking a consultant to study the areas of need with the Developmental Learning Program;

Coordinated Program Review included (a) files reviewed by DESE on October 15 and 16; and (b) site visits to interview staff and evaluate facilities will be conducted the week of November 4.

There were comments and questions from the Committee including (i) definition of the word “community”; (ii) appreciation of Ms. Sugita’s willingness to look at the issues openly; (iii) impressed with Ms. Sugita and her directness; (iv) presentation was great and what we want to see to build trust between staff and community; (v) the SEPAC Report highlighted communication problems; (vi) felt that Ms. Sugita has been very generous with her time and thinks this is a great start; and (vii) when would be an appropriate time to hear from her again.

##### **5. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (Revised) – First Reading**

Margaret Coppe updated the Committee on the state law change. Ms. Coppe shared that the current policy was reviewed by legal counsel Stoneman, Miller, and Chandler. The original “student to student” has been expanded to be any member of the school staff.

The Committee engaged in discussion concerning the proposed changes.

Linda Chase, Director of Student Services stated that a plan was submitted to the State for approval and was approved on the first pass.

Phyllis Neufeld, Lexington Education Association (LEA) President questioned page 1, lines 33-35, and specifically suggested adding “clerical and technical staff” to the list of employees

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street shared her thoughts on student obligation to report, letting parents know finding of bullying and wondered if the Committee should make available anti-bullying training.

##### **Motion to Approve the First Reading of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Policy (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

**6. Vote to Appoint Members to the Ad Hoc Committee on Youth Stress**

Alessandro Alessandrini thanked BJ Rudman, Bill Blout and Dr. Ash. The members proposed include BJ Rudman and Bill Blout as Co-Chairs; Sion Kim Harris, Eileen Jay, two students: Alana Martin and Serena Martel, Laurie Atwater, Linda Chase, Katie Boudreau, Adam Goldberg, Constance Counts; Committee Liaisons: Margaret Coppe and Alessandro Alessandrini; Board of Selectman Liaison: Hank Manz; School Guidance Counselor: Tessa Riley.

Mr. Alessandro also stated that there is one open spot for a community person and he also needs to hear from Town Manager.

The Committee engaged in discussion about the composition of the ad hoc committee.

Ms. Steigerwald advocated for the inclusion of a representative from the PTA/PTO President's Council (PPC).

**Motion to Approve the Ad hoc Committee on Youth Stress Members as named (Stewart, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

**V. Consent Agenda**

1. Vote to Approve Diamond Middle School 8th Grade French Field Trip to Québec City, Canada, May 28 through May 30, 2014
2. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of August 27, 2013, as amended

**Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 1 and 2 Above (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

**VI. Adjourn**

**Motion to Adjourn (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

**The meeting adjourned at 11.22 p.m.**

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, November 19, 2013, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Offices Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

*Materials:* Meeting Agenda; Four and Ten Year Enrollment Forecasts by Dr. Paul B. Ash dated November 5, 2013; FY2015-2019 Summary of School Capital Improvement Projects submitted by Paul Ash, Superintendent and Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Finance Business; Memorandum dated to Paul Ash, Superintendent from Anna Monaco regarding Clark Student Trip to China, 2014; Special Education Program Update dated November 5, 2013 by Ellen Sugita, Special Education Director; Lexington School Committee Policy – First Reading of the Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Policy; William Diamond Middle School Field Trip Request Form for 8<sup>th</sup> Grade French trip to Quebec City, QC on May 28 through 30, 2014; Lexington School Committee Meeting Minutes dated August 27, 2013.

Voted by the School Committee January 28, 2014