

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Monday, April 8, 2013**  
**Cary Memorial Building, Estabrook Room**  
**1605 Massachusetts Avenue**

**Present: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent, Margaret Coppe, School Committee Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Vice Chair; Members Bonnie Brodner, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart; and Sam Alpert, Student Representative**

**The Meeting Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary**

**The Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.**

**I. Call to Order and Welcome:**

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comment

There no public comments

**II. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns**

Mary Ann Stewart provided a follow up as the Legislative Liaison regarding the Governor's Budget which was going into a joint conference with the House Ways and Means Committee. This bill is much reduced from the Governor's vision to increase revenue from \$1.9 Billion Dollars to \$500 Million Dollars, with no increase for transportation, human services, or education.

Bonnie Brodner shared that she went to the First Friday League of Women Voters of Lexington Forum on April 5. Ms. Brodner shared that the Massachusetts Municipal Association has come out in support of the Joint Ways and Means Committee Bill and is personally disappointed that they would support this bill.

Alessandro Alessandrini reminded his colleagues that any edits to the Class Size Policy should be sent to Margaret Coppe. Ms. Stewart and Ms. Steigerwald were to obtain language from Brookline, Belmont and Natick for Curriculum Subcommittee and they should send that language to Mr. Alessandrini.

Linda Chase, Director of Student Services introduced Ellen Sugita, the new Director of Special Education who will start on July 1, 2013. Ms. Chase shared that Ms. Sugita is currently the Director of Special Education of the Plymouth Public School system. Ms. Chase and she have talked at length and she feels Lexington is lucky to have her.

Ellen Sugita, Director of Special Education shared that she is very excited to be here and begin working with the town, school committee, teachers and students. She thanked everyone for welcoming her into the community.

### III. Agenda

#### 1. SEPAC Report

Jennifer Yaar, Co-Chair of SEPAC/SEPTA presented the SEPAC/SEPTA Parent Survey results from the November 13, 2012 to November 27, 2012 survey sent to parents. Ms. Yaar stated that the full reports can be found on the SEPAC website at [www.lexsepac.org](http://www.lexsepac.org) as well as a longer presentation than what was presented this evening. The presentation included (a) response rates, (b) placement/services delivery for children with an IEP, (c) placement/services delivery for children with 504 Plans, (d) partnering with parents 'outside experts', (e) staff and training, (f) behavior interventions, (g) communication, (h) initial recommendations, and (i) ongoing program improvement.

There were questions and comments from the Committee regarding (a) how hard it is for parents to advocate on behalf of their children, (b) communication and conflict resolution, (c) funding programs that can be useful, (d) hiring a transition coordinator and improving retention among staff, (e) finding out how the Lexington Education Association (LEA) feels about the results and determine if more resources are needed, (f) determining if the general educators have the proper training to read and understand the IEPs, (g) determining how the athletic department accommodate children with special needs, and (h) scheduling a follow up School Committee meeting to allow more time to review the findings.

Trishia Kennealy, 4 Brent Rd, Town Meeting Member, Precinct 6 shared that she had received emails from people in her precinct who were concerned about the raw data regarding communication and conflict resolutions, timeliness and response. There were people afraid of raising concerns because they feared their children would lose services and their needs wouldn't be met. Ms. Kennealy also shared that she has heard that families have been threatened with legal action by the school system if they disagree with the school system. Ms. Kennealy wanted to know if the school system is using resources dedicated to help these children to circumvent the process and requested information on what actions have been brought against families. Ms. Kennealy also asked who would be the best person to talk to these issues.

Jessie Steigerwald stated that the School Committee does not hear about the legal issues, but suggested that it might be useful to have on another agenda to see a global overview of legal cases Ms. Steigerwald asked Ms. Yaar if she could provide more detailed information.

Holly Boker, 550 Marrett Rd., Treasurer Lex SEPTA and SEPAC shared comments by parents regarding that it is unclear how a child on an IEP deals with issues of bullying, special education and safety.

Osman Babson, 21 Redcoat Lane, and Town Meeting Member shared his thoughts on communication. He referred to his personal experience with his daughter who is on a 504 Plan and how important it is for staff to return phone calls or emails.

Carol Millard, 85 North Street shared her thoughts on how challenging both communication and obtaining the appropriate resources can be. She also shared that she has been a parent of a student on a SPED plan for 9 years and finds it gets harder each time they move to a new school. She has found communication falls apart. She thinks it is important for parents to feel like a part of their child's team through every step of the way, including transition plans.

The Chair moved to recess and reconvene on the floor of Town Meeting at 7:28 p.m.

*Documents: Meeting Agenda; SEPAC Parent Survey Nov 2012 Raw Quantitative Data; SEPAC Survey Nov 2012 Comments—Redacted; SEPAC Parent Survey Nov. 2012 Presentation Final April 8, 2013; SEPAC Parent Survey Nov\_2012 ExecSum Final\_April 8, 2013; LexSEPAC Parent Survey Report April 2013 Final April 8, 2013*

Voted by the School Committee May 14, 2013