

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

Saturday, February 9, 2008

**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room (later moved to Cary Hall)
1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Tom Diaz, School Committee Members Helen Cohen, Margaret Coppe, Tom Griffiths and Ravi Sakhuja. The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Tom Diaz) (there was standing room only)

Meeting called to order before the arrival of Tom Griffiths and Ravi Sakhuja who arrived presently. This is a public hearing on full-day kindergarten. Tom Diaz gave background on the full-day kindergarten issue.

II. Public Comment

Lisa Nardone (co-PTA president at Bowman, accompanied by other Bowman parents): The projection of fewer students for FY 09 Bowman is unrealistic. It is inequitable for the Bowman 4th grade classes to be larger next year.

III. Superintendent's Announcements

Paul Ash gave the background on full-day kindergarten as it relates to Lexington.

IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns:

Tom Griffiths: Thank you to Michael Young.

Ravi Sakhuja: Are we charging full day Kindergarten to METCO and is there money in METCO to charge it to?

Motion to recess for 15 minutes to change to a larger venue (Coppe, Cohen). Motion passed 5-0.

*****A Portion of the Meeting was not Taped*****

V. Discussion:

Public Hearing on Establishing One Full-Day Kindergarten Classroom in Each K-5 Elementary School Starting in the Fall of 2008

????: Broadening other programs vs. all-day K. Extended Day is paid for by parents who use it.

Ellen Day (K teacher at Bowman): The pace of the day will change. The haves vs. the have nots. Heterogeneous nature of the classrooms within the lottery. The social/affective curriculum.

Meg Muckenhaut (Mother of a Harrington Kindergartener): Let's take the risk and do the pilot.

Frank Shapfel (Bridge school parent): Full-day K for everyone as a town priority. What other things are a priority? Eventual impact on the operating budget.

Marjorie Daggett (precinct 5): Full-day is a long day for a five year old Boston student. METCO funds will pay for a program that will benefit Lexington students.

Maria Cue (parent of kindergartner): Full-day K is too long a day. Will it eventually be mandatory?

Will Sommers (father of incoming Bridge kindergartner): State guidelines for waivers for those who cannot afford the program.

Sarah Felton (daughter entering K in the fall and one entering in 2010): Possible to do some full days some half days? Will grants continue in coming years?

John Cliff (parent): Why does Lexington not yet have full-day kindergarten? Why not find out how many people really want full-day K and plan for them? How will these proposals affect Hastings?

Edith Sandy (precinct 6): This will be an ongoing operating budget item. Pilot program is not fair if does not include everyone. Waiting until June to know if we have the grant seems like an untenable situation.

Peter Keegly: Can we apply for the grant next year if we don't apply this year?

Dawn McKenna: Funding is the issue. METCO should not be the funding for full-day K. Is this more important than elementary music, science in high school and other priorities? The public should have a say on this. METCO starts in first grade for policy reasons. There is inequality if not all parents can put their kids in the program. The fee policy, while better, does not go far enough.

Alessandro Alessandrini (Town Meeting Member): Student teacher ratios are important. I would rather not have fee-based education and have better student teacher ratios and a greater financial commitment from the state.

Malka Burnt (child entering K in 2010): Won't there be an achievement gap between those who had full-day K and those who did not have it?

Lisa Hebert (Bridge and preschool parent): \$60K of funding is not a zero impact to our operating budget. We are making this choice as opposed to other choices. There are restrictions that come with this grant. We must weigh this program as opposed to other programs we have cut. This changes METCO from a space available program; there must be public discussion about this.

J.J. Krawcyk (father of Bridge 4th grader and incoming kindergartner, TM member): Existing Extended Day programs for kindergarteners—this may make them no longer viable.

Betsy Wilkenson: We need more planning. Financial waivers.

Mark Charney (parent of preschooler): Equity.

VI. Motion to Adjourn (Griffiths, Cohen). **The motion passed 5-0.**