

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, June 9, 2015
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Paul Ash, Chair Jessie Steigerwald, Vice Chair William Hurley, Alessandro Alessandrini, Judith Crocker, Margaret Coppe

The Minutes were taken by Christine Ashness, Recording Secretary
The meeting convened at 7:00pm

Call to order and welcome: Chair Jessie Steigerwald called the meeting to order, and introduced committee members.

Steigerwald asked Mary Ellen Dunn to come forward to be recognized for her incredible contribution to the town. She helped recognize the need for financial aid/scholarships, addressed community concerns regarding recycling, oversaw food services, transportation, and so many other things.

Joe Pato, Selectman: The Board of Selectmen also wanted to express their appreciation for Ms. Dunn's invaluable services to the town.

Crocker: Also wanted to recognize Ms. Dunn for her work on emergency readiness and the nursing program. On behalf of everyone who likes things to be done more efficiently, Ms. Dunn will be missed Crocker wishes her the best of luck.

Alessandrini: Thanks Ms. Dunn from the bottom of his heart, while others were making cuts, we were lowering fees and keeping jobs.

Hurley: It was a thrill for Hurley to join Ms. Dunn in Lexington, as he had known her for many years. Her job is very complex and we appreciate her years here helping to guide the Superintendent and administrators.

Coppe: Coppe is going to miss Ms. Dunn. She has been recognized statewide and should very proud. Coppe wishes her all the best.

Dr. Ash: Last week Ms. Dunn received the President's Award from the Massachusetts Association of School Business Officials. She is one of the finest in Massachusetts, and others look to her as a tremendous leader. He thanked Ms. Dunn for all of her hard work. We have a very fine business office thanks to Ms. Dunn and we wish you well.

Committee members presented her with a gift.

Steigerwald: Ms. Dunn has also been very helpful with the policy review work by helping to codify the finance department practices and it will be a legacy in Lexington for many years to come.

Mary Ellen Dunn: Thanked everyone very much. Leaving is bittersweet. Some challenges have happened but she has loved working here. She loves a challenge and is ready for some different ones. She will miss her relationships here and she will treasure them.

MOTION to go to into Executive Session under Exemption 3 to discuss strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining regarding LEA Unit-A negotiations and Exemption 6 to consider the purchase, exchange, lease or value of real property regarding Lexington Children's Place.

We will return to open session and, further, the Chair declared that an open session would be detrimental to the bargaining and negotiating position of the School Committee. (Steigerwald, Hurley)

The Motion was approved 5-0 by a roll call vote.

M. Coppe - AYE

J. Crocker - AYE

W. Hurley - AYE

A. Alessandrini - AYE

J. Steigerwald - AYE

Executive Session started at 7:11pm

Return to open session at 7:36 pm

Steigerwald asked Phyllis Neufeld to come to the microphone. Steigerwald expressed heartfelt thanks and extended good wishes to Ms. Neufeld on the occasion of her retirement. The committee thanked her for 40 years of service to the students in Lexington, beginning with her years serving as a classroom teacher. In her role as LEA President, her advocacy for teachers and staff has contributed back to the classroom and children. Ms. Neufeld put children's interests at the front. She was presented with flowers and a card.

Phyllis Neufeld: Ms. Neufeld thanked the School Committee, the community and everyone. Her 40 years have been a labor of love and she has loved every minute of it. Almost her entire career was in Lexington. Thanks to the School Committee for your collaboration. Andrew Baker will be a good advocate and is willing and eager to work with you.

Agenda:

Proposal to Name the Estabrook Gymnasium in Honor of Former Estabrook Physical Education Teacher Jim Banks

Former Principal of Estabrook, David Horton and current Principal Sandra Trach acknowledged Jim Banks on behalf of the Estabrook community and gymnasium naming

committee. Mr. Banks was a Physical Education Teacher of 43 years, 1985 teacher of the year for the Lexington Public Schools, and still serves as a Lexington coach and youth volunteer. Nearly 1,000 parents, staff and members of the community signed a petition to have the gymnasium named after him. Mr. Banks has always had a commitment to all children. He has a long history of supporting students in and out of the school. He has exceptional teaching skills, and is known for celebrating health and wellness well before it was part of the health curriculum. He leads the international dance night at Estabrook each year. He is known for his extensive volunteerism in the Lexington Public Schools. He is an outstanding role model and is loved by students, staff and parents. He is deeply respected and lives by example. He is a legend, and an excellent human being. On behalf of the Estabrook community, they respectfully request that the new Estabrook School gymnasium be named after Jim Banks.

School Committee members also shared comments and compliments about Mr. Banks.

Steigerwald noted that though some other areas in schools have been named after people, it is a very rare and high honor reserved for those who have made truly exceptional contributions and who have vast community support.

MOTION that Estabrook gymnasium be named in honor of former Estabrook Physical Education teacher, Jim Banks (Steigerwald, Alessandrini)
The Motion was approved 5-0.

Public Comments:

Meghan Soens, 42 Bartlett Avenue: She is reemphasizing from her previous visit and comments made at a prior meeting. How do we find additional space and facilitate the expansion of the program for longer after school program hours?

There were no other Public Comments.

Steigerwald stated that after announcements they will go to agenda item 9.

Superintendent Announcements:

Following the spring Town Meeting Members Association tour of Hastings, the School Committee received complaints of a musty smell at the Hastings School with questions of whether there could be mold or water damage. EHE was hired to inspect and identify the cause of the odor. The entire report will be on the Hastings website. With the exception of a corridor, no mold was found in the modular classrooms. Since that was not the source, they have begun to remove ceiling tiles from the hallways because some were wet. They now think they have gotten to the bottom of the problem.

School Committee Member Announcements:

Steigerwald: Lexington High School's graduation was wonderful. Thank you to Laura Lasa and the entire staff for coordinating the ceremony and for supporting students through their high school years. The next School Committee meeting is June 16th. There will also be one on July 7th, with summits July 14th and 16th.

Crocker: Tomorrow morning the Site-Based School Council Roundtable is having a meet and greet breakfast at Central Office. Permanent Building Committee ("PBC") update: There is a DiNisco public forum about Hastings proposals on Thursday night at Hastings.

Thanks to all parents for the success of the All Night Graduation party. The DiNisco middle school meeting is June 15th.

Allocation of School Space for Before/After School Care

Mary Ellen Dunn, William Hurley, Jessie Steigerwald and Dr. Ash met this afternoon and the committee all agrees that they need to investigate the issues surrounding community requests to add space and consider extended hours for before and afterschool care, and to explore adding middle school afterschool hours. June 16th from 3:30-5:00pm is the next meeting to explore a Youth Coalition where people can come and share any concerns they have for youth and Steigerwald encouraged people who were concerned about the need for increased childcare options to consider sharing their concerns at that meeting to reach a broader set of town staff and community organizations. Steigerwald noted the large volume of email received and asked the audience generally whether there was a contact person or contact list so the members might be able to respond when more than 100 email messages come in one day.

Pamela Tames, Lextended Day Board President: She has access to a current list and a list of people interested in Lextended Day and could help distribute or forward a message.

Mary Ellen Dunn: Regarding the question of whether it is possible to identify additional space to be offered for before/after school care, the town needs to publicly bid public space and it is the highest bid, based on market value and other factors. The current 5-year lease expires June 20, 2016. It is a competitive bid process required by statutes. We are cognizant of the quality of the current program but it has to be an open and objective process.

Starting tomorrow through the end of September the district needs to look at the impact on the space. Principals will need time to think about the impact on their buildings. Other considerations include whether we have any type of staffing requirement, and what space would actually be available. While we in part believe that Lextended day is part of us, the reality is that they are a renter. They have been great partners and it has been a positive relationship. There needs to be an understanding of what the goals are and their impact. We know there is not enough childcare in this community. The demand is great and our space is not going to meet the demand that they have. There are 2 factors for not being able to open space for September 2015 – not enough time to thoughtfully plan and do it well and right; and we can't add more than 25% to the procurement of a contract because you would have to go out to bid.

Members agreed it is a complicated issue. Some believed there is potential space, others noted that work on the master plan could include adding additional space for this type of program, and others said they would like more information including hearing from the principals of the schools. Crocker and Coppe agreed to do more fact finding on the subject and to provide an update to the full committee at upcoming meetings.

Malka Burnt, 57 Spring Street: She has a 4th grader at Bridge. She thinks the committee is trying to address entire problem at once, but she asks that they try to accommodate a smaller section.

Pamela Tames, 26 Bertwell Road: She is President of the Board of Lextended Day. She thanked them for putting time into the issue. The memo shared is just the tip of the iceberg and raises as many questions as answers. She offered to share what and where the

discrepancies are. The policy you shared in the packet is very outdated and not consistent with culture and practice. Please don't approve it without reviewing the current practices.

Melanie Taliones, 30 Wachusett Drive: In addition to the wait list for Lextended Day, there are 76 families on the waiting list at Hayden.

Update on Minuteman Regional Vocational Technical High School from David Horton, Minuteman School Committee Member

Mr. Horton reviewed the current options for a new building for Minuteman. The current building is in Lexington and the future one would be in Lincoln. 16 towns participate in the regional school and Minuteman would have 50% of the cost covered by the state through MSBA if they gain approval from participating towns in time. They could do major educational and structural projects and students could stay in old building until new one is built. There were questions and comments from committee members.

Dr. Ash asked about going to a single ballot question in all 16 towns instead of having all towns vote. He would strongly recommend this approach.

Alessandrini asked about having the Minuteman students offer childcare, as it would be an option for the needs of Lexington.

Lexington Education Foundation Update

Janice Litwin, Board Member for LEF, updated the committee on the grants and programs that LEF has supported for the Lexington Public Schools. Litwin also described LEF's major fundraisers. Some of the awards made for next year: \$281,518 dollars in grants. \$158,485 program grants and \$57,750 for school community grants.

They received a record number of fellowship grants (28) this year. They have close relationships with the teachers in each school. They have been working on improvements to their website and are making it more accessible for teachers trying to apply. Their mission has always been putting every dollar raised back in to the schools.

Litwin answered questions from the committee and also described the LEF Star Award program.

MOTION to accept LEF commitment to donate \$281,518 for the 2016-2017 school year (Hurley, Alessandrini)

The Motion was approved 5-0.

Motion withdrawn.

MOTION to accept the LEF commitment to donate \$281,518 for the 2015-2016 school year (Hurley, Alessandrini)

The motion was approved 5-0.

MOTION to accept the LEF donation to Lexington Public Schools of \$154,521 for program grants. (Steigerwald, Alessandrini)

The Motion was approved 5-0.

Update on 2015-2016 K-5 School Enrollment Numbers

Maureen Kavanaugh: The FY16 projected enrollment as of June 1, 2015 is 2920. There were questions and comments from the committee.

K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Review – Year 4 Report

Ms. Jane Hundley, K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator presented the report. Members had some questions and comments, thanked Ms. Hundley for her presentation, and extended thanks to the team who had worked on the extensive curriculum review.

K-12 World Languages Curriculum Review – Year 1 Report

Marie Murphy, High School World Language Department Head and Catherine Brooks, Middle School World Language Department Head presented the report. Members had some questions and comments, thanked Ms. Murphy and Ms. Brooks for their report, and thanked the team who had worked on the initial year of the curriculum review.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street: Given that the School Committee has articulated that there will be elementary world language, as chair of the Tourism Committee she doesn't think we do a good enough job with the programs. They want to partner with us and work with our sister city group. She hopes the School Committee will support blending together those relationships.

Revisions to the Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 5 Space Plan

Dr. Ash presented a memo to the School Committee:

He recommends that a Superintendent's Advisory Committee be established to study this question and make a recommendation to the School Committee by July 8, 2015. The charge of the committee will be to:

*Work with available members of the former Enrollment Working Group and the Superintendent to project the number of general and specialized classrooms needed in each school through June 30, 2019 (general education, art, music, English language learners, and special education). The committee's recommendation on the location of the new spaces may take into consideration the reasonableness of possible short- and long-term redistricting plans.

*Recommend by mid-September a redistricting plan(s) to be implemented at the beginning of the 2016-2017 school year.

Alessandrini thinks that as a school committee, what we are doing here is premature, creating a committee is premature, and drawing the lines is premature. He thinks it will create tension between communities. He will not vote or support it and thinks we are pushing the costs down the road.

Hurley explained that it is a "what if" scenario. He doesn't disagree with anything Alessandrini said. He thinks we would have the input from families of what makes sense for redistricting. And doesn't see it as making prejudgments.

Coppe thinks that if we form the committee it should be a Superintendent's Committee. This is a fast moving process. She would also urge that the people selected be aware that they have to make a commitment.

Dr. Ash stressed the urgent issue of what we will bring to the summit. The committees (Selectmen, etc.) will want to know how many rooms we want and to prove it.

Crocker wants to have the committee, but thinks it should work under the open meeting law.

Kate Colburn, 49 Forest Street: DiNisco is now going through the process of what space they have and need, and they are trained to do it. She worries about whether the parents would be the better decision makers. DiNisco is already doing the work.

Committee members discussed the focus for parents is on the possible redistricting situations, not the need for space for educational purpose, which is a staff role and not really for this group, though they might be updated about DiNisco's process.

***MOTION to establish the Superintendent's Advisory Committee (Hurley, Coppe)
The Motion was approved 3-2 with Alessandrini and Crocker opposing.***

Steigerwald asked for two volunteers to serve on the group. Crocker and Hurley volunteered. Steigerwald said she was willing but would miss the first meeting as she would be out of town the 24th. There were no other volunteers. Crocker and Hurley will serve.

Hurley explained that we don't want people to have the impression that because four classrooms will become available we don't need ultimately need to add four later. It's just that it is speeding up some of the process by potentially having four available sooner and the goal is to see the best way to have that space contribute to alleviate overcrowding.

Report on School Professional Climate

Maureen Kavanaugh presented the report. Members had some questions and comments.

Budget Transfers

MOTION to authorize the use of up to \$159,000 in furniture, equipment, and unforeseen expenses at the close of FY15. (Crocker, Hurley)

The Motion was approved 5-0.

MOTION to authorize the use of up to \$115,000 from the Food Service Revolving Fund for a dishwasher and related installation expenses subject to \$10,000 or more in new fund balance generated by the FY15 program year (Alessandrini, Crocker)

The Motion was approved 5-0

Vote on 2015-2016 District Goals

This will be moved to next week's meeting.

Report on 2014-2015 District Goals

This will be moved to next week's meeting.

Review and Approve in Form the Following Policies:

IJND – Curriculum and Instruction: Access to Electronic Media

IJNDB – Standards for Acceptable Use of Technology

IJNDD – Policy on Use of Social Media Sites

IJNDC – School and district Web Pages
IHBG – Consideration of Home Schooling Policy
IJOC – School Volunteers Lexington Public Schools IJOA – Field Trips
IKE – Promotion and Retention of Students
IKB – Homework
AD – Mission/Vision
KF – Facilities
FF – Naming New Facilities
GCBB – Employment of Principals
GCRD – Private Tutoring for Pay
MOTION to approve the above policies in form, as amended. (Alessandrini, Coppe)
The Motion was approved 5-0.

MOTION to adjourn (Hurley, Coppe)
The Motion was approved 5-0.
The meeting was adjourned at 11:35 pm.

Meeting Materials: Agenda; LEF Spring 2015 Awards List; Memo from Jane Hundley regarding K-5 Social Studies Review; Memo from Catherine Brooks and Marie Murphy regarding the World Language Curriculum Review; Memo from Maureen Kavanaugh updating projected enrollment; Memo from Dr. Ash regarding revisions to the PreK-5 space plan; LPS Professional Climate Surveys; Memo from Fary ellen Dunn regarding school space for before/after school care; Memo from Mary Ellen Dunn regarding use of available funds and update to food service revolving fund; 2015-2016 District Improvement Plan; Policies I, K, G; World Language Curriculum Review Year 1; K-5 Social Studies Curriculum Review Overview; Memo from LEF regarding STAR Awards; Memo from LEF regarding grant activity; Copy of the Minuteman presentation; PBC Update from J. Crocker

Voted by the School Committee _____ July 7, 2015 _____