

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 30, 2018
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Call to Order and Welcome: 7:01

Chair Eileen Jay introduced committee members and gave a brief recap of the new agenda structure and Community Speak.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Eileen Jay, Chairperson
Kate Colburn, Vice-Chairperson
Kathleen Lenihan, Clerk
Deepika Sawhney
Alessandro Alessandrini
Rosanna Jiang, Student Representative

SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS PRESENT

Dr. Julie Hackett, Superintendent
Peter Rowe, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations
Dr. Christine Lyons, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning

The minutes were taken by Kristen Cronin, Executive Assistant to the School Committee and Administrative Assistant to Superintendent

CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS:

Dr. Hackett awarded three Lexington High School Seniors with the MASS Academic Award Certificate

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

All School Committee members encouraged people to get out and vote at the upcoming election on November 6, 2018.

Kate Colburn: Attended a performance of the *LHS Improv Troupe* on Friday night with her middle schooler. She thanked them for the performance they put on, as it was something fun for students and families to do on a Friday night. She also thanked Performing Arts Coordinator, Jared Cassedy, for asking them to attend. She echoed Ms. Lenihan's reminder about voting.

Kathleen Lenihan: Express her appreciation and thanks to "*Lexington Says Enough*" for organizing a vigil in response to the mass murder at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh. It was a really nice way for the community to come together.

Reminded young adults to go out and vote during the next election on November 6, 2018.

Rosanna Jiang: Informed the committee that a stakeholder group for NEASC is interviewing students and teachers over the last two days of October as part of the NEASC accreditation process.

Excited to report that Dr. Stephens has initiated a recycling collaborative in the cafeteria commons room at Lexington High School.

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Dr. Hackett reported on the following:

OUR THOUGHTS ARE WITH YOU

After a spate of hate crimes had occurred and just prior to the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, Dr. Hackett wrote an article that was published in AASA’s School Administrator Magazine in April, 2018. The words Dr. Hackett wrote are quoted as follows: *“Apathy breeds learned monsters, and indifference to intolerance threatens our very existence. How do we disrupt a generation from repeating the atrocities of the past? If we are serious about helping our children become more human, superintendents and school leaders must tactfully confront issues of incivility both large and small, and settle for nothing less than a culture of respect for all”*

Unfortunately, not much has changed in the six months since the article was published. Our hearts go out to all those affected by the senseless tragedies and this time we mourn with Pittsburgh and Louisville. Thank you to Lexington school community members who have reached out to us to ask whether and how the aftermath of these tragedies will be handled by educators in the Lexington Public Schools. We have received questions about written communication from leaders, open conversation and support for students, and resources available to all parents.

All principals have reinforced the social and emotional supports in place in their schools, and they have worked with their counseling teams who are prepared to support any student who needs to talk more about the tragedy and how it is affecting them. At the elementary level, some parents strongly believe that topics of this nature should not be discussed in schools, while others feel strongly that these conversations need to take place in schools. We too believe that one of the best ways to create a more tolerant, inclusive and loving society is to talk openly with students about the issues. Principals have shared resources, such as the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) prepared suggestions for Talk to Children About Violence. The Anti-Defamation League has developed guidelines called, “Table Talk: Family Conversations About Current Events,” which include a clear description of the events and how best to answer questions.

On behalf of all those in the Lexington Public Schools, we extend our love and support to school community members of the Jewish faith and all those who have been harmed by anti-semitic or hateful rhetoric.

PROPOSED LATER START AND END TIMES AT LEXINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

On August 28, 2018, the School Committee passed a resolution on “Later School Start Times for Lexington High School Students.” The resolution acknowledged the recommendation of the American Academy of Pediatrics to delay school start times until 8:30 a.m. or later for middle and high school students to combat sleep deprivation.

The transportation consultant will share a possible option that is in keeping with the aforementioned parameters established by the School Committee. As a result of his analysis, we believe there is a way to maximize our current transportation contract and implement a 45-minute later school start and end at Lexington High School at the start of the 2019-2020 school year without substantially increasing transportation costs or significantly adjusting the elementary and middle school schedules. Many details need to be worked out, including the possibility of one additional bus for students from Boston (METCO), athletic transportation, and how best to meet the needs of our working families. We look forward to the community conversations and public forums ahead.

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

Avon Lewis, LEA President - 18 Hancock Street, Arlington: Dr. Lewis spoke on behalf of Lexington Public Schools staff who have expressed concerns over the later school start times and changes to the school district calendar.

PRESENTATION: Proposal for Changes in School Start Times for 2019-2020

Transportation Consultant, Mr. Richard Labrie, reviewed the School Transportation Efficiency Study and Later High School Start Time Analysis for the School Committee. The objective of this study was to determine the cost effectiveness and efficiency of the current transportation operation with recommendations for improvement. The study reviewed various alternatives for a later start time for the high school which will:

- start the high school at 8:30 am
- minimize any Elementary and Middle School schedule changes
- maintain the length of school day for all schools
- minimize traffic congestion at the district schools during drop off and pick up times
- minimize student time on vehicles to 30 minutes or less with convenient bus stops
- be cost neutral

Mr. Labrie compared the current school schedules vs. the recommended school schedules (utilizing all 36 current buses):

Recommended School Schedule:

- Middle school - 8:00-2:50; Departure 3:00
- High school - 8:30-3:10; Departure 3:20
- Elementary - 9:00-3:30; Departure 3:35-3:40

The discussion continued around departure time between schools at the end of the day. Some members suggested looking into shortening the length of day by 10 minutes at the middle school. Continued discussions will be had about the METCO program and after-school activities.

Next steps involve Administrators and Principals meeting with their staff to discuss the suggested changes. Lexington High School Administration will be hearing student input and feedback during iBlock sessions in November. On November 5th, a public forum will be held in the LHS Science Lecture Hall at 5-6:00 pm, with another public forum on November 20th. A decision by the School Committee is anticipated on December 4, 2018.

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

Avon Lewis, President of the Lexington Education Association - 18 Hancock St., Arlington, MA - Dr. Lewis spoke on behalf of staff expressing their concerns over the later school change involving the elementary level as well as high school teachers. There is a concern about high school teachers not being able to spend extra time after school with their students because of traffic issues and a concern that teachers will be getting home later in the evening with less time to spend with their families.

Dr. Lewis also spoke on behalf of staff and their concerns with a possible change in the school district calendar for 2019-20.

Other community members spoke on behalf of the late school start time.

PRESENTATION: METCO - tabled

CONSENT AGENDA:

ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS/GIFTS:

1. Approval of donation for Math LexHack for Lexington High School in the amount of \$600.00

Kathleen Lenihan moved to approve donation to Lexington High School for Math LexHack in the amount of \$600.00 - Deepika Sawhney seconded (Approved 5-0)

PAYROLL AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANT APPROVAL

1. Payroll Period Ending October 26, 2018 (\$3,840,432.34)

Deepika Sawhney moved to approve the School Department's payroll warrant dated October 26, 2018 in the amount of \$3,840,432.34 - Kate Colburn seconded (Approved 5-0)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Proposed Revisions to 2019-2020 School Calendar:

Dr. Christine Lyons reviewed suggested options for a potential revision to the 2019-20 school calendar.

The School Committee discussed staggered start time during the first week of school. Suggested some getting feedback from teachers regarding the Friday before Labor Day.

FY2020-24 Capital Project Update: Technology:

Director of Technology, Jenn Judkins, reviewed the FY2020-24 Capital Request for the School Department District Technology. Approval of these items allows the School Department to provide projects to the Capital Expenditures Committee for their review as part of the budget development process.

The School Committee discussed end-of-life use of equipment and how equipment is disposed or options used beyond their usable life. Would like to hear some feedback from parents at each level regarding screen-time use.

Kate Colburn moved to approve transmittal of the attached proposed FY20-24 School Department Capital Projects to the Capital Expenditures Committee for their review - Alessandro Alessandrini seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

FY18 Fourth Quarter Report

Peter Rowe, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Administration, reported on the FY2018 Fourth Quarter Financial Report.

Received and place on file.

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

Dawn McKenna - 2020-19 Calendar - gave a brief background on the reason why the Friday before labor day was a day off.

Avon Lewis, LEA President - Spoke on behalf of LPS teachers

Alessandro Alessandrini moved to adjourn at 10:23 pm; seconded by Kate Colburn (Approved 5-0)

