

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, February 10, 2009
Cary Hall Auditorium
1605 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Helen Cohen, School Committee Members Rod Cole, Margaret Coppe, Tom Diaz, Ravi Sakhuja and student representative Gloria Park. The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 7:40 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Helen Cohen)

II. Public Comment

Dawn McKenna (precinct 6): Why are report cards in the high school so late this year?

Dr. Ash will look into it.

III. Superintendent's Announcements

1. LHS National Ocean Science Bowl Team has won the State Championship. This is the first time our high school has won this competition. Participants were: Chris Teng, Emilie Yang, Noah Paulsen, Josh Leung, Christine Hseih. They will be participating in the national competition. Our kudos to Avon Lewis, Sarah Damassa and Brittany St. Sauveur, who were the teacher coaches.

IV. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Rod Cole: The Financial Review Committee report will be ready in a few weeks.

V. Discussion Item

1. Discussion regarding the Superintendent's Recommendation to Redistrict Avalon at Lexington Hills students to the Bridge and Clarke Schools over a multiple-year period.

The issue was presented by Dr. Ash. Dr Ash recommended putting the discussion on hold for 5 or 6 more weeks until the number of kindergarten registrations is available at the end of March. The administration will continue to refine its projections.

There were comments and questions from the audience. Dr. Ash pointed out that he and Helen Cohen met with the Bridge community. A resident of Avalon invited the Committee to visit them as well.

2. Superintendent's Recommendation to Complete the Transition to Full-Day Kindergarten in the fall of 2009.

The report was presented by Paul Ash, Carol Pilarski, kindergarten teachers and elementary school principals. There were questions and comments from the Committee and from the audience.

3. FY 10 Budget

This item was presented by Dr. Ash. There will be some extra money for the schools: \$303K (health care) because of a smaller increase in premiums than originally projected, and a lower Minuteman assessment-- \$363,539 in total. In keeping with the priorities established by the School Committee at its February 3rd meeting, the SSPs' hours and benefits will be restored, teacher positions at the middle schools and high school will be restored, and the remaining money can be applied to hire teachers at a higher average level. We may also get more funding for new SPED expenses from the federal stimulus package. What happens with state money is more up in the air.

There were questions and comments from the Committee.

Tom Diaz: The state aid available to the library has been reduced.

The discussion included whether or not early retirement stipends are a good idea, as suggested by the LEA president, Phyllis Neufeld. Dr. Ash said that there are situations in which they work well but we don't have the money to make it possible right now.

There were comments from the audience.

VI. Motion to Adjourn (Diaz, Coppe). The motion passed 5-0.