

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, June 10, 2014
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Judy Crocker, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart

The Minutes were taken by Jean M. Curran, Recording Secretary

The meeting convened at 7:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome:

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comments.

There were no public comments.

II. Superintendent's Announcements:

Dr. Ash had the following four announcements:

1. Use of PARCC Versus MCAS Examinations in 2014-2015

The Department of Elementary Secondary Education (DESE) sent a notice to all school districts stating each district can decide whether to administer the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) or administer the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) testing in school year 2014-2015. If anyone has an opinion please email, call or attend the next Committee meeting. Dr. Ash recommended Lexington Public Schools (LPS) administer the MCAS test next year.

2. Update on 2014-2015 Enrollment Numbers

Shared the results of a meeting he and Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development had with the Elementary School Principals this morning, along with Phyllis Neufeld, President, Lexington Education Association (LEA) regarding enrollment numbers as of this morning. The elementary schools have 2,912 students and 138 teachers, but expect the number of students to rise before the fall. There is still one teacher position that is unallocated. Some of these classrooms will have very high need students and a range of Special Education (SPED) students. When Dr. Ash prepares his fall report, he will discuss the issue in more detail. He also indicated that class sizes are currently well within Committee guidelines.

Fiske Grade 5 numbers; as of 6:00 a.m. this morning, they were 28, 28 and 28, and by 9:00 a.m., they were 27, 27 and 27. Dr. Ash thought three families would be moving to another school district and that did happen. Principal Mr. Martellone and he have decided that they will be using over max aides but within a week Dr. Ash will have to make a decision on the unallocated teacher position. If the Fiske numbers rise after the unallocated teacher position is allocated, he will still go forward with additional support for that class.

3. FY 2015 LABBB Member Credits

The collaborative Lexington belongs to (LABBB) will end the year with surplus funds. It has been Lexington's tradition that when that happens, rather than lowering the tuition rates for all of the communities, member credits are voted back to the 5 towns that make up collaborative. Lexington had \$535,696 in LABBB credits going into FY 2014 and will receive \$130,922 for FY14, for a total of \$661,621. Dr. Ash has not used LABBB credits in many years and the credit can be used at any time in the future.

4. Students

Dr. Ash received an email from Alison Brown, Clarke Middle School, that at the Massachusetts Educational Theater Guild awards ceremony, the Clarke Middle School won best drama and overall middle school production for Willy Wonka. Willy Wonka received 15 nominations and Lexington was also selected for best acting, choral and music.

III. School Committee Member Announcements:

Margaret Coppe announced that she and Ms. Steigerwald met with the Director of Public Facilities and town staff to plan for the best use of the new Estabrook gym from September through December. Ms. Coppe thanked everyone involved who put this into place.

Jessie Steigerwald shared (i) Policy Subcommittee is going to ask for an agenda item next week to ask the Committee to approve disbanding this subcommittee. Ms. Steigerwald and Judy Crocker will be asking the Committee to support two new committees (i) Policy Advisory Committee and (ii) Policy Manual Subcommittee and both of them will serve on these committees.

IV. Agenda:

1. Recommendations from the Elementary World Language Committee

Carol A. Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development presented the Elementary World Language Committee's (EWLC) Report on Options and Suggested Next Steps. Ms. Pilarski provided a brief overview of the EWLC's work since October, 2013 along with the previous report delivered to the School Committee on May 13, 2014. The presentation included (i) The World Language Standards; (ii) Mission and Vision Statement; (iii) Core Beliefs; (iv) Definition of Terms (program types); (v) Three Options to be considered; (vi) Other Alternatives Investigated and Reviewed; (vii) Unanswered Questions; and (viii) Implementation Plan and Next Steps. Ms. Pilarski acknowledged the members of the EWLC.

The Committee comments and questions included: (i) commended Ms. Pilarski and the Committee for its thorough work; (ii) comfortable with the proposed schedule presented; (iii) recommended the integrated program, keeping in mind the state standards, where it would be possible to include curriculum areas not currently tested; (iv) excited with the possibility that classrooms could use Skype to talk with other classrooms around the world; (v) happy that elementary world languages will be returning to the curriculum (vi) represents a cultural shift for our community and a different form a school day; (vii) realistic and flexible schedule; (viii) a

peer community voted to add elementary world language and extend the school day; (ix) EWLC meetings will continue through next December; (x) contact Carol Pilarski with any questions.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street :(i) thanked everyone for their work in bringing the elementary world language back to Lexington; (ii) appreciates the mission and vision statement that captures the whole issue; (iii) thrilled with report until page 8 with time frame. She spoke of a whole generation of students that have missed the benefits of elementary language and the importance of using foreign language as learning a core committee. She disagreed with the need to wait 3-4 years to implement the program and advocates for a faster process than the one laid out tonight. Urges school committee not to lose momentum (a) thinks this is a simple issue and that it is being complicated by the suggestion that program implementation will require more time added to the school day, (b) we have the money and consensus and 3 years does not make sense; and (c) suggest to take advantage of sister City of Antony to implement a program now.

2. School District Climate Survey

Dr. Paul Ash and Phyllis Neufeld, President, Lexington Education Association presented the School District Climate Survey. Ms. Neufeld provided a brief background. Dr. Avon Lewis was hired to compare the data over the past two years. In July/August she will finish her work and each principal will receive data and will decide how to rollout the data and next steps. This data is not same for all schools and there is still work to do. First year departments were split off and the department results were very positive with variances observed within departments. It won't be until next year that we will have more data to compare.

The participants identified themselves as either Unit A; Units C/D/Techs, Other or Supervisor. There were over 900 responses to the survey in both years (600 Unit A; 200 Units C/D/Techs; 50-60 Other and Supervisors/Evaluators categories).

Questions and comments from the Committee included: (i) the professional climate has improved over the past year; (ii) is the presented data based on weighted averages; (iii) who is the "other" participant category; (iv) how did the report take into account people working in their first year; (v) would like to see the submitted histogram broken down by units; (vi) there is a 99% confidence level by teachers, staff, and others that principals respond to challenges they face in their work; (vii) participants feel the performance evaluation process is fair in their school; (viii) it would be interesting to know if participants felt the pilot program has resulted in improvements.

Margaret Coppe extended her thanks to Dr. Lewis.

Dr. Ash thanked Phyllis Neufeld for her partnership for 3 years and is proud of work they have done together. Dr. Ash shared the PowerPoint slides will be available on the LPS website soon.

There were questions and comments from the Committee: (i) found comforting that Lexington has less individuals whose results fell into the overall neutral category and therefore more staff feel that they are becoming part of school system culture; (ii) noticed trends to put more energy into Professional Development but positive report seemed to slipped and not sure what this means (iii) "I feel appreciated by my principal for the work I do" – this is encouraging, and "I

feel appreciated by central administrators” could use more work; (iv) appreciate continued use of survey; (v) make it a goal that we would like to see 4 survey scores all next year; (vi) department breakdown for Finance and Business operations – scored 4 and above with Finance-graded almost 4. There have been concerns on the reimbursement process and are glad to see this improvement; (vii) what is the difference between Finance Business operations; (viii) would like to see each histogram broken down into units and for the data to be weighted; (ix) would like to see separated by elementary, middle school and high school data to better examine individual grade levels of school system; (x) were there participant comments this year; (xi) would like to see these comments; (xii) would rather see more 5 scores, or at least more 4 scores on overall survey responses, but there is a pattern showing higher scores at school levels and lower scores at district level which should be explored;; (xiii) not surprised that there is a difference between the district and school scores.

3. Report on the 2013-2014 District Improvement Plan

Dr. Ash provided the report on the 2013-2014 District Improvement Plan (DIP) which included the 2013-2014 District Goals and the Year-End Results for the following major goals categories (i) Curriculum and Instruction; (ii) Supervision and Evaluation; (iii) Professional Learning; (iv) Student Services; (v) Technology; and (vi) Facilities. Dr. Ash will focus on the report and the six goals and sub goals. Dr. Ash’s staff was present to answer questions of the Committee.

There were questions and comments from the Committee: (i) suggestion to align survey with this report and have a report column that identifies each school (exit survey, etc....); (ii) developing teacher and leadership and data could be aligned; (iii) pro-social behavior – one of the goals was from prior year and put on pause and when goals were set for this year (iv) appreciate format of report; (v) what happens to all the work that was put into preparing for the PARCC exam if next week the decision is to go with MCAS; (vi) develop and implement leadership program and give teachers opportunities to be leaders; (vii) many that are still here in the school district as teachers; (viii) thank you for updating and is pleased to read the guidance and technology pieces; (ix) people outside the system are not aware of how many things teachers professionally accomplish during the summer months (x) mentoring program is strong; (xi) Bowman principal presented its XXX program at a national conference (xii) wellness program is fantastic; (xiii) glad to see the suicide prevention programs highlighted; (xiv) congrats on reported successes and strengths of SPED program; (xv) technology – twitter 101 class held by LHS Asst Principal Adam Goldberg successful for parents and students; (xvi) building program is proud of how the Estabrook Elementary School is ahead of schedule, Bridge and Bowman Elementary Schools finished on time, and the modular installation at the high school is on schedule. This concerted effort was successful due to the work of DPF, principals, staff, parents and the community.

Dr. Ash shared that there were some technological problems launching the PARCC testing, but if the Committee decides on implementing PARCC for FY15 that the schools will be ready.

Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent Human Resources reported the Chef of the Month encourages teachers to engage in healthy food habits and teaches food prep techniques. The teachers share in the food preparation and dine together in collaboration with Whitson Culinary Group with the LPS food vendor provides strategies for healthy cooking.

4. Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy – Second Reading

Jessie Steigerwald explained that this is actually the third reading – not the second reading according to current policy and that the Committee does not need to vote to move forward in the policy reading process. The Committee engaged in discussion regarding (i) the need of approving this policy by June 17; (ii) possible problems if there is no vote on the policy this evening; (iii) defining the property manager of school property; (iv) safety on school property; (v) the overarching need for having the policy in place to will guide the community, administration and team in terms of standardization across the district; (vi) policy goal is to improve school transportation safety and to correct what is not working while supporting principals in the operation of the property; (vii) community education; (viii) role of police on school property; and (ix) how the new proposed policy will be rolled out.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street shared her thoughts on (i) hearing that staff is implementing policy that has not been voted on; (ii) the need to change language on page 4, line 9 – the Committee does not have authority over principals, the superintendent and designees; and (iii) wished to have anti-idling be clarified as being no more than 5 minutes.

Craig Weeks, 14 Bicentennial Drive shared that he cannot understand why the Committee is not implementing this policy. Mr. Weeks urged the Committee to vote on this issue tonight.

Mary Ellen Dunn shared that they have applied the policy to planning documents and not to actual documents. Next week the Committee will hear the Estabrook Elementary School final plan for the fall and the Clarke Middle School traffic plan for the fall is not yet finalized.

Margaret Coppe spoke of the importance of appropriate wording in the policy and would like to have counsel review before voting.

5. Request for Proposals for Superintendent Search Consultant

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance shared the draft Request for Proposals (RFP) for Executive Recruitment for Superintendent Search Consultant Services. Ms. Dunn shared that the required public advertisement of the RFP will be published on June 12, 2014 in the Lexington Minuteman Newspaper and the Goods and Services Bulletin, and a direct mailing to known providers. The link for the final version of the RFP will be available June 12, 2014 on the Lexington Public Schools (LPS) website. Ms. Dunn reviewed the RFP document with the Committee.

The Committee engaged in discussion of the RFP which included (i) evaluation criteria, (ii) timeline to vote on the RFP tonight; (iii) minor suggested changes to the RFP; and (iv) final selection process.

Motion to Approve the Request for RFP, as amended (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

V. Consent Agenda

1. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 7, 2014
2. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 9, 2014

3. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 16, 2014
4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of May 8, 2014
5. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of May 13, 2014

Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 1 through 5 above, as amended (Crocker, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

V. Adjourn:

Motion to Adjourn (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

The Meeting adjourned at 10:01 p.m.

Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; LPS FY 15 Projected Enrollment; Member Credit Distribution for FY15; Memorandum dated June 10, 2014 from Carol Pilarski to Dr. Ash re Elementary World Language Committee Report on Options and Suggested Next Steps; PowerPoint Presentation dated June 10, 2014 re Elementary World Language Report presented by Carol Pilarski; Letter dated June 10, 2014 to School Committee Members from Phyllis Neufeld; Letter dated June 1, 2014 from Dr. Avon Lewis to Dr. Ash and Mrs. Neufeld re his comparison of the district wide results from the 2013 & 2014 Climate Surveys; LPS Report on the 2013-2014 District Improvement Plan dated June 10, 2014; Lexington School Committee Traffic Safety & Mitigation Policy – Second Reading; Memorandum dated June 6, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Margaret Coppe re: Request for Proposals (RFP) for Executive Recruitment for Superintendent Search Consultant Services; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated April 7, 2014; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated April 9, 2014; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated April 16, 2014; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated May 8, 2014; Draft LSC Meeting Minutes dated May 13, 2014

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, June 17, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building, Selectmen’s Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

Voted by the School Committee September 30, 2014