

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Tuesday, March 11, 2014**  
**Cary Memorial Building, Battin Hall**  
**1605 Massachusetts Avenue**

**PRESENT:** Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Jessie Steigerwald and Judy Crocker

**ABSENT:** 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 announced that Mary Ann Stewart could not be here this evening because she is in Washington DC attending a National Conference with PTA leaders. She will meet with members of the Massachusetts delegation.

Margaret Coppe wished Dr. Ash a happy birthday. Ms. Coppe then invited public comment and announced that there is a citizen who wanted to come forward to discuss medical marijuana dispensaries and to find out how the Committee feels about this issue.

Tom Diaz, 354 Waltham Street, Lexington congratulated Ms. Crocker on her election to the School Committee. Mr. Diaz shared that he was a member of the School Committee that hired Dr. Ash. Mr. Diaz recognized a few of Dr. Ash's accomplishments (i) in 2005 when Dr. Ash was hired, there were financial problems in the schools with an overrun of over \$1,000,000 ; now the school department is being managed within its budget; (ii) Dr. Ash heard the interest of the school committee in the METCO Program that involved closing the achievement gap; he helped revise and improve this program; and (iii) in 2005 Dr. Ash stood tall in support of our welcome policy for families headed by same sex parents and other diverse families in the face of provocation and threats to him and his family. Mr. Diaz thanked Dr. Ash for his 10 years of service to the Lexington community.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, asked about the foreign language study committee and requested updates from that Committee and its work to date.

Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development responded to Mr. Radulescu-Banu that that committee will present to the School Committee on April 25 and at the very last meeting of the School Committee in late June.

Charles Hornig, Chair, Lexington Planning Board, presented the Planning Board's proposed article to rezone certain areas in the town for marijuana medical treatment centers before the moratorium on local zoning expires in July, 2014. The amendment would allow production, manufacturing and distribution in the CM District and only distribution in the CRS and CB Districts.

There were comments and questions from the Committee for Mr. Hornig which included (i) what will these facilities be like; (ii) research has shown that liquid marijuana to be very effective for patients; (iii) have you spoken with the MBTA or Lexpress to see if they would provide a bus

runs down Hartwell Avenue; (iv) does not support having distribution center so close to the high school; and (v) would you know if these centers would act like pharmacies and pharmacists.

Margaret Coppe announced that Tom Fenn, a Lexington resident, will be proposing an amendment on the floor of the Town Meeting to the Planning Board. Ms. Coppe invited Mr. Fenn to speak to the Committee.

Tom Fenn, Precinct 9, Town Meeting Member, shared his proposed Amendment to the Committee which would place restrictions on where Lexington's medical marijuana treatment center could be located.

Mark Corr, Chief of Police for Town of Lexington, shared his opinion on why a medical marijuana treatment center should be considered a high risk business.

Ms. Coppe also announced that the Planning Board will meet tomorrow at 7:00 p.m. in the Selectmen Meeting Room and Mr. Hornig, Mr. Fenn and Chief Corr will all be presenting comments. On March 17 the BOS will vote whether to take a position on Article 30 and the Fenn Amendment and then on March 24, the Committee will vote on whether or not to take a position on Article 30 and the Fenn Amendment.

The Committee had comments and questions (i) 500' buffer zone; (ii) Article 30 is a zoning issue and not a school issue; (iii) not comfortable having the MMTC in the center of town; (iv) liquor stores are located in the center of town, so why not MMTCs; and (v) concerns regarding location near schools.

## **II. Superintendent's Announcements**

Dr. Ash shared (i) Sunday March 16, 2:00-4:00 p.m. there will be an open house at the new Estabrook Elementary School and all are invited to visit the new school; and (ii) alerted the Committee that the High School will not be able to offer X Block because that practice is in violation of the State Board of Education's regulation that mandate there be 990 instructional hours per school year. Lexington must use that period as an instructional period. The Coordinated Review document will be placed on the school website as soon as it is released.

Ms. Steigerwald questioned whether it would be possible to have an extended homeroom instead.

Dr. Ash replied that Lexington must follow state regulations and it must be instructional time.

## **III. School Committee Member Announcements**

Margaret Coppe announced (i) Saturday, March 15 from 10:00-5:00 pm, Lexington will host Voyages En Francophonie in Battin Hall; (ii) tomorrow night the moderator meeting to decide the order of Town Meeting Articles will be held in Estabrook Hall; (iii) Thursday night in Battin Hall, the Town Meeting Members Association (TMMA) information meeting on the (iv) meeting next Monday to discuss enrollment; (v) midyear update on the school improvement plans (a) every school is working on new teacher evaluations; (b) professional development (i.e., cultural diversity, unconference (teachers are doing professional development for other teachers and co teaching collaboration; and (c) Mr. Alessandrini commented on the extra time available to do this work.

Alessandro Alessandrini shared that the Ad Hoc Committee for Youth at Risk met with the Student Health Advisory Council (SHAC) and asked SHAC members for input and Ms. Zales for

PTA/PTO comments; (ii) thank our former colleague Bonnie Brodner who helped champion restructure of special education; welcomed Judy Crocker .

Judy Crocker shared she (i) attended Massachusetts Safe Routes to School 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Forum last week and Lexington was highlighted during one of the presentations for its success for working with many stakeholders; (ii) tomorrow is the March Walking Wednesday; (iii) Celebration Read Aloud Month; (iv) congratulations to Lexington Public Schools (LPS) students participated in the William Diamond Jr. Fife and Drum Corp; they had a photo-shoot with Joe Perry of Aerosmith for Boston Magazine; and(v) thanked Ms. Brodner for her work on the School Committee.

Jessie Steigerwald (i) thanked Ms. Brodner for her work on the School Committee; (ii) enjoyed working with Judy Crocker on the School Transportation Committee; (iii) at the last Community Center Advisory Committee (CCAC), Jon Himmel asked if the Committee would work with him on the Facility Use Project as the Community Center will not build a gym in phase I; (iv) this past Saturday the 8<sup>th</sup> grade Mock Town Meeting was held and she thanked everyone in town for this assistance; (v) this weekend was Destination Imagination Program Tournament where eight teams participated and made created solutions to challenging problems; (vi) suggested topics for the short meetings in March (a) Julie Fenn presentation on marijuana use (b) PTA/Os Presidents' Council (PPC) strong feedback that the PPC would appreciate it if the Committee do something issues on suicide prevention and health issues and perhaps someone from guidance would be willing to come and present, and (c) school councils mid-year reports.

Alessandro Alessandrini shared that the Ad Hoc Committee for Youth at Risk will be presenting during one of the short meetings in March.

#### IV. Agenda:

##### 1. Superintendent Search Update

The Chair announced that she had received feedback about the retirement of Dr. Ash and wanted the public to know that no committee has been formed and apologized for any confusion. Because no current Committee member has been part of the a superintendent search process, the Committee has asked Glenn Koocher, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) to come on April 10 and hold a presentation. Later on, the Committee will take up the discussion of forming the search committee and next steps. The search committee would not begin work before the fall of 2014. The Committee welcomes all suggestions, comments and information. The Committee will inform the community of all dates as they received them. The Committee wants to make the best possible decision for our students and town.

##### 2. Report of the Working Group on Enrollment Study

Dr. Ash discussed the working group and how it was developed. Dr. Ash introduced the six members (i) Joe Pato, Member of BOS; (ii) Dan Krupka, Member of the 2020 Vision Committee; (iii) Tim Dunn, graduate of LHS and newly elected member of the Planning Board; (iv) Mark Andersen, Senior Director, Manufacturing Analytics at Vistaprint, holds a doctorate in education and has a background in mathematics and statistics; (v) Rod Cole, former Chair of the School Committee; and (vi) Ruth Quinn Mandel who worked with Dr. Ash when he developed the former methodology.

Joe Pato presented the Interim Report of the Ad Hoc Enrollment Working Group (EWG) which included (i) challenges facing Lexington; (ii) Presentation Objectives; (iii) EWG History; (iv) Enrollment and Population Trends Lexington 1950-2013; (v) Enrollment Change Drives Resource Use (1950-2013); (vi) where will enrollment be in 5 years; (vi) Cohort Survival Model (model used nationally for mature communities); (vii) Lexington Birth Rates; (viii) current forecasting model no longer works in Lexington; (ix) net in-migration; (x) possible growth factors; (xi) findings: accounting for increasing enrollment 2003-2013; (xi) change in number of LPS Students by Resident Type (2003-2013); (xii) change in number of families by residence type (2003-2013); (xiii) LPS Students by apartment complexes; (xiv) unexpected volatility in student tenure; (xv) drivers; (xvi) proposed next steps for EWG; (xvii) what would EWG do with enrollment scenarios; (xviii) conclusion.

There were comments and questions from the Committee (i) flexibility – what does it mean with use of our facilities; (ii) a Statement of Interest (SOI) for Hastings Elementary School has been submitted with the Massachusetts State Building Association (MSBA), what timeline will be followed ; need to consider a larger school than the MSBA is willing to pay for based on research; (iii) discussion with other stakeholders regarding financing; (iv) it would be wise to put Hastings on an agenda item soon to think about reaching out to other boards and committees, keeping in mind the timing of Hastings; (v) have an architect to look at possible classroom mining; (vi) question on the net amount of students coming from apartments and condominiums; (vii) were these students coming in kindergarten, middle school or high school; (viii) look at the ages of people moving in and out; (ix) the out-migration at what grade level are they leaving and why; (x) do a parent exit survey and a survey for graduating students; (xi) are there any best practices other communities are using; (ii) any idea when the next report might be; (xiii) this should be a high priority and look at the neighborhood of Hastings; (xiv) would like to see work done on individual elementary schools and report on current districts and what is being seen in the demographics; (xv) look at all the schools to see what can be done right now; (xvi) modify the 10 year plan (xvii) comment on needing a new school and a reminder that the town needs a new police and fire.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, asked (i) will the underlying data be available at the end of the EWG's work; (ii) is there a way to look at in-migration data when the Fiske Elementary School as built and (iii) suggested that the EWG focus on apartment and condominium complexes to obtain data on those children.

Kate Colburn , 49 Forest Street, new Town Meeting Member and parent at Fiske Elementary School asked (i) does the EWG envision when enrollment may go down; and (ii) commented on Hastings Elementary School overcrowding and urged the committee to look district wide and not school by school.

Dr. Ash commented that the Massachusetts State Building Authority (MSBA) determines those numbers, but we have provided reasonable numbers in the past and the MSBA has responded. Redistricting will not work if you have no capacity.

Jean Hung, 6 Idylwilde Road, shared (i) it is useful to people to give input and is there an email address for the Committee; and (ii) glad the problem of overcrowding is being discussed. Ms. Hung then shared her comments on seniors retiring and selling their homes and families moving in.

### 3. Recommendation to Address Fiske Overcrowding

Margaret Coppe announced that this is the first time the Committee will be talking about this recommendation tonight and there will be no vote tonight.

Dr. Ash thanked the Citizens Committee for their work and thanked the Committee on their notes. Dr. Ash discussed (i) one school will be over capacity by one room in 2014-2015; and (ii) there will be potentially four classes over capacity in 2015-2016. Dr. Ash presented four options to consider tonight for the Fiske Elementary School (i) Option 1 – Redistricting students from Fiske Elementary School to the new Estabrook Elementary School and the advantages and disadvantages; (ii) Dr. Ash rejected Option 2 - Add Modular Classrooms in 2016-2017 at Fiske Elementary School. Dr. Ash and Thomas Martellone, Principal, Fiske Elementary School both rejected this option because (a) they do not want children walking back and forth through new England weather; and (b) adding two modular classrooms too close to fire lane and safety needs to be studied or add three modular classrooms close to fire lane and safety needs to be studied and a costly retaining wall required. This is still on the table but is highly unlikely by September 2015 and can't recommend this option for the fall. But by next fall we will have had time to work with the architect and fire department and would cost approximately \$1,600,000. Timeframe may be possible, but the risk of not completing the project by September 2015 is high; (iii) Option 3 - use art or music rooms and the impact is in the quality of instruction; lack of equity with programs in other schools, music classes may disrupt nearby classes and all Fiske Students will be impacted; or (iv) Option 4 - Add Additional Part-Time Teachers to Grade 5 which has the largest amount of students (28-29 students in each class).

Dr. Ash recommended Option 4; he would hire 3 licensed teachers that would be working part-time in each class. Mr. Martellone we would try to schedule music, library and art to the morning and the educational instruction in the afternoon. This would be co-teaching which is done in a lot of private schools. Clarke Middle School feels like it is at capacity and Diamond Middle School is approaching capacity and a master plan needs to show 3, 4, and 5 years out.

Kathleen Cardona and Deepika Sawhney, Co-Presidents, Fiske PTO presented the Report on Fiske School Overcrowding which included (i) the problem; (ii) the process; (iii) options; and (iv) next steps.

Kathleen Cardona and Deepika Sawhney, Co-Presidents, Fiske PTO, shared that the PTO had conducted a brief survey regarding potential solutions to the classroom shortage issue at Fiske. Their presentation included (i) who responded to the survey; (ii) opinions regarding the potential solution options; (iii) responses to Short Term Option 1; not great support; (iv) responses to Short Term Option 2; very little support and least popular among respondents; (v) responses to Short Term Option 3 – voluntary redistricting by families; not strong support; (vi) responses to Short Term Option 4 – construction; 90% would support construction as a long term solution. Conclusion all short term options least favorable; redistricting generally unfavorably unless done voluntary, 30% indicated redistricting the district should be undertaken but not people who expected to be affected by redistricting themselves. There is strong support for long term solutions. 5% of respondents feel the METCO program should be eliminated and 5% want to move the Intensive Learning Program (ILP) from Fiske.

There were comments and questions from the Committee (i) the transportation coordinator for school system has software and they are able to tell where families live and may be useful tool to use going forward; (ii) hiring an architect to determine space, is there any definition of capacity per school and what guidelines are used; (iii) firm numbers on families who would consider redistricting; (iv) how would class sizes of 28-29 impact our ILP program at Fiske; (v) would not like to see students in the ILP program that would not be able to participate in the inclusion program; (vi) would appreciate if all the children on those programs needs are met; (vii) master

planning committee – capacity; Committee should speak about capacity before going to any working group; (viii) architect presented to School Committee regarding master planning; (ix) what the numbers in grades 3 through 5 when an overmax aide would be used; (x) class size of 28-29 are too high and supports co-teaching; (xi) would like refinement between working with you and PTO on families voluntarily for redistricting; (xii) under recommended model with second teacher in classrooms – are there places that 10-15 teachers could move students to teach; (xiii) talking about the short term solution and the long term solution; needs more information so Committee can go to the BOS for more money; (xiv) can a step modular project be done; and (xv) were METCO parents included in the survey; (xvi) how are students selected from Boston.

Tom Martellone shared the students in the ILP program at Fiske and those students in regular classroom have some inclusionary time together.

Pam Winters, Thoreau Road, thanked everyone for a great presentation and shared her thoughts on each of the options presented.

Ashley Waring, 16 Hathaway Road, shared her thoughts on moving the library and possibly using it as a classroom.

Michelle Oldershaw, 10 Keeler Farm Way inquired (i) when would modular be ready, (ii) how would the Committee prefer to receive feedback, (iii) suggested a newsletter to the PTO community.

Alissa O’Shaughnessy, 6 Brookwood Road, shared her thoughts on short and long term solutions and wanted to know what the lifespan of a modular is.

Kate Colburn, 49 Forest Street shared her thoughts on moving the art and music to the library. Ms. Colburn shared that parents prefer regular size classrooms.

Zoe, Coolidge Avenue shared Lexington has amazing facilities.

The Chair announced that the Committee will continue the discussions and people should feel free to speak with Mr. Martellone.

4. Draft 2014-2015 District Goals

The Committee decided to postpone the presentation of the 2014-2015 District Goals.

Mary Ann Stewart provided her Liaison Report on the Homelessness Working Group.

**V. Consent Agenda**

1. Homelessness Working Group Liaison Report
2. Vote to accept a \$322 Donation from Wilson Farms’ *Shop at Wilson Farms* School Fundraiser to Be Deposited in the Maria Hastings School Gift Account
3. Vote to Accept a \$1500 Donation from Cubist Pharmaceuticals in Support of the 2014 LHS Science and Engineering Fair
4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 7, 2014
5. Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session #1 Minutes of January 28, 2014

6. Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session #2 Minutes of January 28, 2014

**Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 1 through 3 above** (Alessandrini, Crocker ) **The Motion was Approved** (4-0) Stewart Absent

**Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Item 4 above, as amended** (Crocker, Steigerwald) **The Motion was Approved** (4-0) Stewart Absent

**Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 5 and 6** (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) **The Motion was approved** (3-0-1) Crocker abstained, Stewart Absent

**VI. Adjourn**

**Motion to Adjourn** (Crocker, Alessandrini ) **The Motion was Approved** (4-0)

**The Meeting adjourned at 11:25 p.m.**

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Monday, March 24, 2014, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cary Memorial Building, Estabrook Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue.

*Meeting Materials:* Agenda; Interim Report of the Ad Hoc Enrollment Working Group PowerPoint Presentation dated March 11, 2014; Report on Fiske School Overcrowding PowerPoint Presentation dated March 11, 2014; Fiske Enrollment/Classroom Shortage Survey Summary Report dated March 5, 2014 from Fiske PTO; Draft FY 2015 District Improvement Plan; Homelessness Working Group Liaison Report by Mary Ann Stewart; Letter dated February 24, 2014 to Lexington School Committee from Louise P. Lipsitz, Principal, Hastings Elementary School with a \$322 donation from Wilson Farms; letter dated February 19, 2014 from Amy Reilly, Director, Employee Communications & Philanthropy of Cubist to Jacalyn Crowe, Ph.D., LHS Science Department with a \$1,500 check in support of the 2014 LHS Science and Engineering Fair; Draft School Committee Meeting Minutes dated January 7, 2014

Voted by the School Committee May 13, 2014