

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, December 4, 2018
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Call to Order and Welcome: 7:02 p.m.

Chair Eileen Jay welcomed and introduced committee members.

SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT

Eileen Jay, Chairperson
Kate Colburn, Vice-Chairperson
Kathleen Lenihan, Clerk
Deepika Sawhney
Alessandro Alessandrini

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

NOT PRESENT:

Rosanna Jiang, Student Rep

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

SCHOOL COMMITTEE ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Kathleen Lenihan: Wished everyone who is celebrating a Happy Hanukkah. Ms. Lenihan had the pleasure of attending the Lexington High School *A Capella Jam* on Saturday, December 1st. It was an amazing event and thanked the Tufts Beelzebubs for their attendance and performance.

Deepika Sawhney: Ms. Sawhney reported on the LEF Donor event that was held earlier in the evening. Ms. Sawhney was very impressed by the caliber of teachers and staff at the round circle event and came away with a real appreciation for teachers and staff at Lexington Public Schools.

Kate Colburn: Ms. Colburn echoed Ms. Sawhney's comments regarding LEF Donor event. The overall purpose of the event was to bring together teachers and administrators who had received LEF Grants over the years so they could share how they use their LEF Grant Funds. It was a very inspirational and moving event.

Also attended LGBTQ Subcommittee of the Student Health Advisory committee. Julie Fenn is working very hard to revise the puberty curriculum in 4th and 5th grade to be more inclusive to all gender identities. Ms. Fenn is hoping to implement this curriculum early next year and will be holding parent forums to share potential changes. Ms. Fenn inquired if School Committee members would be interested in receiving training on LGBTQ issues in general, the issues that some of our students are facing, and the obligations of schools to comply with all applicable laws.. Ms. Colburn would like to work with the Subcommittee to help make that arrangement. Ms. Colburn thanked all of the health staff and LexPride for their work and for helping to move this forward.

Eileen Jay: Ms. Jay also echoed her appreciation for the LEF reception earlier this evening and express her appreciation for teachers and administrators as well as all volunteers and donors for LEF.

Ms. Jay reiterated that she will be running for re-election to the School Committee in the March 2019 election.

CONGRATULATIONS AND CELEBRATIONS:

Superintendent Hackett extended her congratulations to the LEF Grant recipients. Grateful to LEF for their generosity and donors.

CONSENT AGENDA:

ACCEPTANCE OF DONATIONS/GIFTS:

1. Donation sponsor checks from First Robotics for Lexington High School

Deepika Sawhney moved to approve donation checks from First Robotics to Lexington High School in the amount of \$830.00 and \$1,000.00 - Kate Colburn seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

PAYROLL AND ACCOUNTS PAYABLE WARRANT APPROVAL:

1. Accounts Payable Period Ending November 30, 2018 (\$1,774,465.96)
2. Accounts Payable US Bank Ending November 30, 2018 (\$67,642.54)

Kate Colburn moved to approve the School Department's accounts payable warrant dated November 30, 2018 in the amount of \$1,774,465.96 - Alessandro Alessandrini seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

Kathleen Lenihan moved to approve the School Department's US Bank reconciliations in the amount of \$67,642.54 - Alessandro Alessandrini seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES:

1. October 30, 2018

Alessandro Alessandrini moved to approve School Committee minutes from October 30, 2018 - Deepika Sawhney seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT:

Superintendent Hackett reported on the following:

Equity Audit in the Lexington Public Schools

On September 25, 2018 the LPS Administrative Council presented a draft position paper called, “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Our Call to Action.” In the draft report, the administration indicated their intent to act on the advice of community members to engage an outside partner in a district-wide equity audit. While we are still in the process of analyzing feedback from our community reviewers and constituents, early analysis indicates that the equity audit has been well received. We are currently in the process of selecting an equity audit partner, and we anticipate having a consultant on board and ready to work with our Joint Council to collect preliminary data at our December 12, 2018 meeting.

PRESENTATION:

Interface Demonstration by Valerie Viscosi

Director of Counseling, Valerie Viscosi, reviewed the William James College Interface Referral Service which is available to all Lexington residents and students who attend Lexington Public Schools for supportive needs. Ms. Viscosi reported that this is not a crisis helpline, but a referral service available Monday-Friday where you can call to consult with a mental health professional about resources and/or receive personalized, matched referrals. Ms. Viscosi reviewed the Lexington’s Referral page on the Interface site. The website is available for viewing here: [Interface - Lexington](#)

Some members had questions regarding the availability of the crisis line, Advocates, listed on the website and suggested changing the font size to be similar to other prominent resources on the page. Ms. Viscosi advised that they are still seeking feedback to make the website more Lexington specific. Any suggestions or feedback regarding the webpage or how to publicize the usage of the page can be addressed to Val Viscosi on the school side or Melissa Interest on the town side.

The next Joint Meeting on Mental Health with the Board of Selectmen and School Committee will be held on January 14, 2018 at Estabrook Hall in the Cary Memorial Building.

COMMUNITY SPEAK

Avon Lewis, LEA President: Announced the negotiating team for the Unit A of the Lexington Education Association (LEA) and the School Committee signed a Memorandum of Agreement regarding successor contracts. Ms. Lewis extended her gratitude and thanks to Mr. Alessandro Alessandrini and Superintendent Hackett on countless hours invested in this agreement. The conversation was collaborative, thoughtful and productive. A unanimous vote of the LEA’s Executive Board recommended that Unit A adopt the agreement. Unit A will be voting later this week and Ms. Lewis will keep School Committee updated.

Ms. Lewis had some suggested comments/edits for the the 2019-2020 school calendar.

Valerie Overton (She/her) Co-Chair of LexPride, 25 Emerson Gardens. Echoed Ms. Colburns gratitude and appreciation for Julie Fenn's excellent work with the SHAC LGBTQ Task Force. Ms. Overton really appreciates the work she has done. Also, if School Committee is interested in participating in an anti-bias training, LexPride can provide training for them.

NEW BUSINESS:

Strategic Planning Timeline for Lexington Public Schools

Dr. Hackett Reviewed the Proposed Strategic Planning Timeline for LPS:

Phase 1: Communication (November - January)

- Synthesis team
- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Community Input Team
- Create a communications strategy and an LPS Strategic Planning Process Press Kit
- Hire a Communications Specialist
- Develop paid jobs or internships for students to serve as members of the Student Communications Team for the Lexington Strategic Plan
- Superintendent and Strategic Planning Team works with the Joint Council to begin building the foundation for the Strategic Plan of LPS

Phase 2: Data Gathering (February - May)

- Design and disseminate a Lexington Strategic Planning Survey
- Keep-Lose-Dream-Innovate! Interactive Workshop #1: Boston Students and Parents
- Keep-Lose-Dream-Innovate! Interactive Workshop #2: Parents & PTO Presidents Council (PPC)

Phase 3: Plan Development, Refinements, and Measurements (May-August)

- Superintendent establishes a Planning Team for The Launch
- Synthesis Team
- Joint Council Meeting
 - The Superintendent, Synthesis Team, and the Strategic Planning Committee share a draft vision, mission, and core values based on data gathered. Joint Council members weigh in on the drafts.
- Convene a Student Focus Group
- Convene a Teacher Focus Group
- Convene a Parent/Community Focus Group
- Strategic Planning TEam and Synthesis Team hold a "Measurement Meeting"
- Phase III Update to School Committee

Phase 4: Launch (First Day of School, August 2019)

- Strategic Planning Committee with input from the Synthesis Team members
- Phase IV Update to School Committee (September)

- Student Communication Team, Synthesis Team, and Strategic Planning Team will prepare a Phase IV Strategic Planning Update and PowerPoint presentation for the School Committee

School Committee discussed the timeline presented before them. Superintendent Hackett would like to have an Executive Summary and a rationale to understand the back story behind the actions, stakeholders would find it helpful. Important to prioritize work toward gaining a vision.

Mr. Alessandro Alessandrini moved to have Ms. Eileen Jay and Deepika Sawhney be School Committee's representatives on the Synthesis Team - Ms. Kate Colburn seconded the motion (Approved 5-0)

New Business Con't:

Job Description for Director of Safety and Student Equity (Draft)

Job Goal: Consistently using an equity lens, the Director shall coordinate safety-related activities with school and community officials, where appropriate, for the purpose of ensuring that school safety needs are communicated and addressed. The Director will act as the civil rights coordinator for all student-related issues and services in the district, including but not limited to: conflict resolution, troubleshooting parental complaints, coordination of student services.

Superintendent Hackett will be presenting this job description to the Administrative Team at Joint Council tomorrow and looking forward to hearing their feedback.

One member suggested this person work closely with the SRO. Another member suggested the title be a little more inclusive. Superintendent Hackett likes the Student Equity in the title, important to remember this person works for the kids. Open to feedback and suggestions on the title and hopefully the administrators will have some ideas and we can finalize the job description.

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

Valerie Overton - Emerson Gardens; speaking on behalf of Community Coalition Mental Health Committee and Academic Committee of the Community Coalition: We are in support of changing start time to 8:30 am. We believe such a change could be made for the 2019-2020 school year. By endorsing a start time change, we are taking another step in support of the Coalition goals and helping well being of our students.

Mona Roy; Burtwell Road: Asked School Committee to clarify a couple of issues. Ms. Roy feels strongly to not call the job description "Director of Student Services." Lexington has had a Director of Student Services in the past and people did not feel heard or that equity was ever taken into account.

Susan Barrett - Transportation Manager on municipal side: Knows School Committee has a big decision coming up and wants School Committee to know that whatever decision is made and

wherever the Town goes with their transit planning, that they can work closely together to help with scheduling and make things better. Make staff and after school programs aware of bus schedule.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

Proposed Later School Start in 2019-2020: Superintendent's Reflections and Recommendation:

Ms. Eileen Jay gave a brief recap of the history for the proposed late start time changes and the proposed school start plan from consultant Mr. Richard Labrie.

Superintendent Hackett commented that since her start date in July of 2018 she has focused her efforts on trying to better understand the implications of a later start from all perspectives and to develop a fair process that allows all voices to be heard and to help lead the School Committee to a final decision. Superintendent Hackett reviewed the following:

- Background
- Data Collection
- Superintendent's Recommendations
 - Implement a later school start for the 2020-2021 school year and include the following changes: (1) adjust Lexington High School start times by 45 minutes to an 8:30 am start (2) decrease the length of the middle school day by 10 minutes, making it a 6 hour and 40 minute day consistent with Lexington High School (3) adjust elementary school start times by 15 minutes, moving from an 8:45 to 9:00 a.m. school start, and (4) approve the budgetary increase needed to maintain the 8:15 am drop-off time for elementary parents.

A discussion between the School Committee and Superintendent followed about topics such as, difficult implementation challenges that lie ahead, addressing METCO transportation issues, and the possibility of hiring someone to monitor/study the change in later start.

Alessandro Alessandrini moved to implement a later school start for the 2020-2021 school year and include the following changes: (1) adjust Lexington High School start times by 45 minutes to 8:30 a.m. start; (2) decrease the length of the middle school day by 10 minutes, making it a 6 hour and 40 minute day consistent with Lexington High School; (3) adjust elementary school start times by 15 minutes, moving from an 8:45 to 9:00 a.m. school start; and (4) approve the budgetary increase needed to maintain the 8:15 a.m. drop-off time for parents in elementary- Kathleen Lenihan Seconded the motion - (Approved 5-0)

Amend 2019-2020 School Calendar

Chris Lyons, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Learning reviewed the proposed revisions to the 2019-2020 school calendar. In addition to the calendar revisions presented by Dr. Lyons, the School Committee discussed several changes that were suggested by Dr. Avon Lewis as LEA president. These suggestions included moving the date Lexington Learns Together to a Friday and moving LHS and middle school conference dates.

Kate Colburn moved that the School Committee approve the suggested revisions to the 2019-2020 School Calendar as outlined by Dr. Lyons, specifically having to do with Monday, December 23, Tuesday, December 24 and moving the last day of school to Wednesday, June 17, 2020. Kate Colburn also moved to move the date of Lexington Learns Together (LLT) from Tuesday, November 5 to Friday, November 8; that we move the date of LHS conferences from Monday, November 25 to Monday, December 2 and that we move the date of Middle School conferences from Friday, December 6th to Monday, December 2, 2019.- Kathleen Lenihan seconded (Approved 5-0)

Enrollment Update - Informational Purposes Only

Ms. Colburn noted that Student Assignment Policy has changed slightly and that students are being flexibly assigned a little bit sooner than they had in the past, recognizing that the School Committee guidelines specify that they will try to keep classes within the 24 student preferred maximum. Previously had classes going up to 26 before students were flexibly assigned.

Mr. Peter Rowe, Interim Director of Finance, explained that the process for reporting how class sizes was approaching class limits was not recognizing the School Committee guideline but reflected more of the “rules” within the contract for staffing and student assignment. After working with Central Registration, the internal recommendations and the guidelines for flexible assignment are now consistent with School Committee guidelines.

COMMUNITY SPEAK:

Barbara Hamilton, METCO Director: Ms. Hamilton thanked the School Committee for coming to Boston on Tuesday, November 27. Ms. Hamilton suggested that when School Committee starts discussing the redistricting that METCO be a part of the redistricting decision. School placement is going to be a major factor on how to route buses. Will help to address some of the concerns raised. METCO is a voluntary program and some parents will have to decide with the school change whether or not this still is a workable situation and opportunity for them, that’s the reality of the program. METCO students will not benefit from the school start time changes that the research has spoken about. Ensuring that students will be able to sleep a little later will be key.

Motion to adjourn; so moved by Kate Colburn at 10:00 p.m. (Approved 5-0)