

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, December 16, 2014
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Paul Ash, Chair Margaret Coppe, School Committee Members Jessie Steigerwald, Judith Crocker, Alessandro Alessandrini, William Hurley, Student Representative Abigail Schwartz

The minutes were taken by Christine Ashness, Recording Secretary

The meeting convened at 7:35pm

Call to order and welcome: Chair Margaret Coppe called the meeting to order, and introduced committee members.

Public Comments:

None

Superintendent's Announcements:

Dr. Ash spoke about a sad event that happened today. In Pakistan a terrorist blew himself up and 145 school children and staff members died. It is horrible when children are used as political pawns for a larger political message. It is such a terrible tragedy and our hearts go out to the families and community. It is an absolute outrage and truly sad.

School Committee Member Announcements:

Judith Crocker: She had the opportunity to go to swearing in ceremony for Natalie Rice as Town Clerk and welcomed her. Tonight is the anniversary celebration of the Boston Tea Party in Boston and Lexington's William Diamond Junior Fife and Drum Corps are leading the parade. She wished a Happy Hanukah to everyone.

Jessie Steigerwald: The Youth Service Council met last week and it was a great meeting. Some staff people are writing responses to the Ad Hoc Committee for Youth at Risk report and she will have that in January. Thank you to Dr. Ash and the principals for setting up tours in the schools. She will be a better advocate for having seen what is going on. The way we are delivering student education now means that many children are having small instruction in a classroom and that every child can keep up. Several of us took photos so community members can see how critical these spaces are. She is formally requesting to add a discussion on Policy A, Document D.

Dr. Ash agrees and would like to advocate for an opportunity to share their thinking on a few things on Document D.

Agenda:

Vote to Proceed with Planning an Elementary World Language Program

Dr. Ash explained that we have been engaged for a long time in proceeding with this program. He wants to clarify that if the school committee takes action tonight, it does not mean the program will get launched. It is part of a process and we will need to work with Lexington Education Association because it will have an effect on school time and working conditions. Tonight's vote lays out a plan and direction, and the LEA has a major role. The school committee needs to work together with the LEA and collective bargaining.

Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction, and Professional Development Carol Pilarski explained that she and the World Language Committee fully endorses the reinstatement of the World Language Program, knowing it relies on working with the LEA to make things work. The school day will have to be lengthened as 1-2 hours need to be in a students program each week in order to institute a quality program. To do this properly it will take at least 3 years to embrace the conversation and discussion in the community. FY18 is the year that is targeted for implementation.

There were two suggested Motions, but the committee discussed and agreed they would prefer to combine the motions. Dr. Ash agreed.

MOTION: We, the Lexington Public School Committee vote to endorse the establishment of the two Task Forces outlined in the World Language Report of June 10, 2014: The Elementary World Language Design Team and the Implementation Task Force, with the charge to make recommendations for implementing an Elementary World Language Program in the FY18 academic year based on the recommendation of the World Language Committee that current programming not be compromised. (Steigerwald, Alessandrini)

MOTION to table the current motion. (Steigerwald, Hurley)

The MOTION was approved 3-2 with Alessandro Alessandrini and Margaret Coppe opposing.

Members discussed and had concerns about the wording of the motion. Some were concerned about putting a certain amount of time on it and questioned how it worked in previous years without extra time in the day. Other concerns were using it as part of bargaining instead of bringing it to the union and seeing what their thoughts are; middle and high school teachers also possibly wanting additional time if it is part of bargaining. All members agreed that they need to get started because the public wants this program back.

Dr. Ash explained that if we want the program, recognize it will take more time, and negotiations/bargaining will need to take place. By taking out the time component, you are taking out the bargaining piece. The task force looked at the research for a quality elementary World Language program.

Dawn McKenna, 8 Hancock Street: She feels the goal is to reinstate an elementary World Language program and is grateful the school committee supports it. She also reminded the school committee that the committees are ultimately an advisory role, and this is a policy statement. It is important to remember that there is a huge component on how this is funded. Cautioned everyone that discussing this in executive session as there is nothing before you. She thinks FY18 is too far away and you should be able to do it by 2017. Lengthening the day is a huge political issue for many different groups and other committees do it without lengthening the day. She suggested the following motion for the school committee to use: The Lexington School Committee votes to endorse the creation of an Elementary World Language Design team

to make recommendations for the design of an Elementary World Language program to be implemented as soon as possible in a way that current programming is not compromised.

Dr. Ash did not recommend the school committee take action on the recommended motion.

Feedback on November 4, 2014, Lexington Learns Together Program

Carol Pilarski spoke about Lexington Learns Together, a day by educators for educators. She was humbled and inspired by the course of the day with 780 participants, 121 presenters and 131 sessions. People thought it was the very best professional learning day they have ever had. It was a very valuable experience. Mini versions are now happening in our schools- teachers learning from each other.

Members thanked and congratulated Carol Pilarski and K-12 Professional Development Coordinator Len Swanton for their hard work on the day.

School Committee Discussion of SMMA Proposed Elementary and Middle School Master Plan Options

Judith Crocker showed a presentation on the proposed Elementary and Middle School Master Plan options.

Dr. Ash announced that the Massachusetts School Building Authority would not be approving the application for the Hastings reimbursement project. If the committee wishes to go ahead at this time, all costs will have to be by Lexington, unless we reapply a year from now.

Members discussed the need for sufficient space in schools so that programs will be delivered, as they should be. Most schools need added space and direction needs to be given to the architect regarding dedicated space and class sizes.

Items for the Thursday morning Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee meeting: cost of renovating vs. rebuilding of Hastings; preschool - prefer option of preschool staying at Harrington; want to agree about middle school options; high school should be reflected in the Master Plan - phased renovations or complete rebuild; heating system needs to be addressed before the 10-year plan at the high school; Bridge and Bowman need to be right sized; brick and mortar at Harrington and Fiske; Estabrook – could the roof garden be enclosed and made into 2 classrooms; pavement in front of Bridge.

Redistricting: Dr. Ash sees no reason to discuss redistricting until we are far enough along in the process to actually do a large redistricting, and until more space capacity is available. He sees no reason to redistrict to Hastings at this time.

Kathleen Linnehan, 760 Bloomfield Street: Bowman used to have 454 students a few years ago, and it was also a half-day Kindergarten. Now there are more kids and they're committing to more students at Bowman than the building is able to accommodate. This is her last year as a parent at Bowman. It's been amazing but they cannot keep making it work. She wants next year's new kindergarten parents to be able to say their kids had a great experience at that school. Money is better spent building with brick and mortar at Bowman, Bridge and Harrington. Also keep in mind that all of those elementary schools have the ability to walk to Clarke Middle School.

Kate Colburn, 49 Forest Street: There is now a huge opportunity to build any school desired in a short time frame since Hastings was not approved. She hopes the architect really looks at what can be done there. This is the time to be creative. Do not miss the big opportunity.

School Committee Policies

Review and Approve in Form Section E of Policy Manual: Support Services

Review and Approve in Form Section F of Policy Manual: Facilities Development

Margaret Coppe suggested referring to all children as student/students throughout all policies in the manual. Mary Ellen Dunn asked the committee to hold on the emergency plan, it is out of date and they are trying to get current requirements. Members need clarification on students being dismissed for sickness.

MOTION to approve in form Section E Support Services (excluding EBB, first aid, EBC Emergency Plans) and Section F Facilities Development. (Hurley, Alessandrini)

The Motion was approved 5-0.

Consent Agenda

Vote to Accept a \$10,425 Donation from the *Friends of Lexington Music, Art and Drama Students (FoLMADS)* to Provide Financial Assistance to the LHS Students who will be participating in the Choral Department's Cultural Tour of China in April of 2015

Vote to Accept a \$1000 Donation from Raytheon to the LHS Robotics Club

Vote to Accept a \$250 Donation to the Nick Barnett Science Olympiad Team

Vote to Accept a \$100 Donation from Lueders Environmental

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of September 16, 2014, as amended.

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of September 17, 2014

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of September 23, 2014

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of October 7, 2014

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 3, 2014

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 18, 2014

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 19, 2014

MOTION to approve items 1 thru 4, 10, and 11 above. (Crocker, Steigerwald)

The Motion was approved 5-0.

MOTION to approve items 5-9 above. (Crocker, Steigerwald)

The Motion was approved 4-0-1 with William Hurley abstaining.

MOTION to go into Executive Session under Exemption 3 to discuss strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining regarding all Bargaining Units, only to return to open session to adjourn, as holding this conversation in open session would be detrimental to our bargaining position. (Crocker, Steigerwald)

The Motion was approved by a roll call vote.

William Hurley: AYE

Alessandro Alessandrini: AYE

Judith Crocker: AYE

Jessie Steigerwald: AYE

Margaret Coppe: AYE

Dawn McKenna, 8 Hancock Street: She requested to add the World Language decision to Friday's school committee agenda.

The committee agreed. Dr. Ash will not be at the Friday meeting however, if there are any questions.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55pm.

Meeting Materials: Agenda; Elementary World Language Memorandum; Lexington Learns Together Feedback Memorandum; FOLMADS donation letter; Raytheon Donation Memorandum; Daniel Mehr donation letter; Lueders donation letter; Minutes for approval (9/16/14, 9/17/14, 9/23/14, 10/7/14, 11/3/14, 11/18/14, 11/19/14)

Voted by the School Committee February 10, 2015