

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, June 17, 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 invited public comment.

Pamela Tames, 26 Bertwell Road spoke about the concept of a school based school site council roundtable and having site councils meeting across the district. Ms. Tames shared that it has been helpful to connect across the district. Speakers would present on the school based plan and then go back to site councils and report what they learned and this would help them do a better job of participating. The Superintendent has seen the agenda and what they have proposed and is consistent with what the school district proposes.

II. Superintendent's Announcements

Dr. Ash had no announcements.

III. School Committee Member Announcements

Margaret Coppe shared that Article 5 which \$250,000 for a Design Study Master Plan (DSMP) for all three phases was passed by Town Meeting. Ms. Coppe thanked Town Meeting for funding the DSMP.

Alessandro Alessandrini announced the passing of Rick Abrams. His system of trails, called ACROSS Lexington (Accessing Conservation land, Recreation areas, Open space, Schools and Streets) Lexington, is tangible testimony to the extraordinary impact one motivated man can have on a community. Mr. Alessandrini shared his condolences with his wife and children.

Judy Crocker shared that Rick was unique and shared his passion and creativity with the community and his ability to connect different interests in new ways by bridging the gap. He was a visionary and advocate for our town.

Jessie Steigerwald shared Mr. Abrams' lasting contribution to our schools when he took into consideration how children could access the schools through the trails. Ms. Steigerwald then thanked all the principals, teachers, administration and staff for their hard work this past year and wished everyone a good summer.

IV. Agenda

1. Estabrook Traffic Plan

Dr. Ash announced Chief of Police Mark Corr and Sandy Trach, Principal, Estabrook Elementary School would present the traffic plan. This was put together over a period of years with community input to create a school traffic plan for safety for pedestrians, cars, bikes and buses. Grove Street and Robinson Road traffic will be addressed.

Ms. Trach reviewed the prior Estabrook Traffic Plan (ETF) recommendations in order to connect the updated ETF. Ms. Trach presented the ETF PowerPoint presentation which included the (a) ETF Charge; (b) problems identified; (c) main access recommendation from Grove Street with Robinson Road being a secondary access; (d) why Grove Street should be the main access; (e) ETF recommendations; (f) queue conclusions; (g) final thoughts from ETF; (h) new traffic design and slides depicting the new traffic design was shown (Robinson Road will be a live rotary and is intended for residents of Robinson Road and Turning Mill Road); and (i) ongoing community and school education.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) will the staff and visitor parking lots be one or two ways; (ii) will there be congestion of cars if a second lane is opened; (iii) if Grove Street becomes congested, would drivers be diverted to Robinson Road as a secondary access; (iv) how many busses will there be this coming school year; (v) what are the numbers for bus ridership at Estabrook Elementary School this coming year; (vi) what will happen if queuing happens on Grove Street; (vii)

Chief Corr shared that the public can anticipate emergency only stopping on Grove Street. Police want to help the public understand the options and he encouraged parents to carpool, walk, bike or take the bus. Chief Corr shared that there is a need to encourage voluntary compliance and educating the public is most important.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) parents do their best to carpool, but some need to drive to work after dropping off their children and some cannot afford the \$300 to take the bus; (ii) would not like to see students riding their bikes on Grove Street which is very busy; (iii) would not like to see enforcement being the major component of the plan; (iv) the Town has paved a bike lane and Safe Routes to School worked hard for alternatives to get to school;

Ms. Trach shared how she and Chief Corr have notified parents and the public of the upcoming changes. In August, a packet will be sent out to parent along with the parking procedures. Ms. Trach will continue to collaborate with the PTA in developing where to park on high event days. The PTA and SRTS are working with Principal Trach to start an educational plan and are asking each family to make one change. (i.e. carpool, walking school bus, parent volunteers at Eldridge to help kids cross the street.) Ms. Trach is working with designers and engineers to achieve a good plan.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) if we are successful in increasing ridership, then the bus lane will need to be extended; (ii) add bus lane fencing;

(iii) policy is to make sure students are exiting from the passenger side of the car; (iv) will the turning lane on Robinson Road be available for the whole neighborhood or just Robinson Road residents; (v) is glad that all staff participates in the pickup; (vi) disagrees with comments about a learning process and believes this should be 95% done; (vii) does not understand why this new school has the shortest bus lane and busses should queue and have priority and wants bus lane extended now; (viii) where do students congregate if arriving before 8:15 – 8:30; (ix) is there appropriate signage in the staff and visitor parking lot; (x) is it a good resource using teachers for arrival and dismissal; (xi) reservations about people at the bottom of Estabrook Drive and Grove Street communicating traffic updates ; (xii) grave public safety concern of stacking of two lanes; (xiii) disagrees with using fire lane for any traffic; (xiv) was the canopy in the original plan and what materials will be used; (xv) has never seen an educational campaign start this late; (xvi) community input needed; (xvii) is Chief Corr onboard with using the fire lane if cars are not fitting into the driveway; (xviii) agrees with Chief Corr regarding the need to increase bus ridership and his comments and perhaps the Committee needs to look at lowering the bus fee in the future.

2. Recommendation for 2014-2015 Statewide Testing

Dr. Ash shared his response to the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) statewide testing announcement and why Lexington chose to stay with the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) instead of administering the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) tests in 2015. Dr. Ash recommended that LPS administer MCAS tests in the spring of 2015 in grades 3-8 in English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics. Dr. Ash then shared his reasoning for recommending MCAS rather than PARCC at this time.

Phyllis Neufeld, President, Lexington Education Association (LEA) shared the LEA's position on this issue and supports the Superintendent's position to use MCAS.

Motion to continue with MCAS test for the school year 2014-2015 (Stewart, Steigerwald)

The Committee and Dr. Ash engaged in discussion regarding which test to use, what data needs to be collected, state mandates, and will race to the top communities lose money.

Motion to continue with MCAS test for the school year 2014-2015 (Stewart, Steigerwald) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

3. New Changes to the Student Discipline and Attendance Laws – Chapter 222

Dr. Ash and Anna Monaco, Principal Clarke Middle School reviewed the new changes to the Student Discipline and Attendance Laws – Chapter 222. The review consisted of (I) an overview of Chapter 222 which included (a) ensuring ongoing educational services; (b) alternatives to suspensions; (c) limitation on suspensions; and (d) due process; (II) changes in discipline that Districts must follow; (III) changes in student absences; (IV) what the Chapter 222 Committee has done to date; (V) next steps which includes (a)

revise all Lexington Public Schools (LPS) handbooks for attendance policies; (b) plan both parent and student education programs; (c) further develop consistent system-wide notification letters and procedures; (d) continue to identify and implement alternative education services; and (e) revise School Committee policy to ensure the policy meeting the requirements of G.L. c. 71, §37H3/4, G.L. c. 76, §21 and 603 CMR 53.00.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) if a student cuts a class will that be an unexcused absence; (ii) does it matter if consecutive day absences are excused or unexcused; (iii) who provides the excuses.

Anna Monaco shared that the Chapter 222 Committee has met a few times to go through the law and tackled discipline law first and have more plans (i) define consistent discipline process k-12 which is under review by counsel. (ii) review handbooks and attorneys reviewing and revising language based on the law; (iii) consistent district-wide conduct entry protocol using Aspen; (iv) create consistent district wide notification forms; (v) determine options for alternative educational services (i.e. tutoring, EDCO programs, virtual programs); (A) what will happen next – (i) revise all LPS handbooks for attendance policies; (ii) plan both parent and student education programs and (iii) further develop consistent system-wide notification letters and procedures.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) is there a better way of tracking absences in older students; (ii) does a student receive a zero during suspension; (iii) would that affect the end policy at the high school; (iv) create consistent district wide policy; (v) has tardiness been part of the discussion; (vi) when does tardy become an absence and who will decide if it is an excused or unexcused absence; (vii) glad that the state has come to a position on these issues; and (viii) when tutoring is provided, how many hours in the day is it provided.

4. Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy – Third Reading

Alessandro Alessandrini recommends the Traffic Safety Mitigation Policy

Motion to accept the Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy – Third Reading
(Steigerwald, Crocker)

The Committee engaged in discussion of the Traffic Safety Mitigation Policy.

Motion to accept the Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy – Third Reading
(Steigerwald, Crocker) **The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

5. Fingerprinting Policy

Dr. Ash presented the new fingerprinting policy and reviewed the current CORI policy. Dr. Ash recommended the Committee vote to add the new fingerprinting policy and keep the current CORI policy in place. The Legislature has expanded to make sure students are safe, CORI policy is only in MA (criminal violations) and it is flawed because it doesn't tell us any conduct outside of Massachusetts. The Massachusetts legislature has

passed a bill that all employees in Massachusetts schools be fingerprinted and the policy must be in place by July 1.

The Committee engaged in discussion regarding the statute and when it came out, doing away with the three readings, the differences between CORI and fingerprinting, lack of stakeholder input, the need for input from counsel, who will pay for fingerprinting, do all employees need to be fingerprinted, do volunteers need to be fingerprinted, would contractors and their employees need to be fingerprinted.

Phyllis Neufeld shared she just received the packet over the weekend and has not had time to speak with any one from the LEA. She asked if someone on the Committee would check on the last section: reporting to Commissioner of DESE if that is the same language that applies to the CORI Policy. The LEA has already notified the administration of its intention to bargain over the cost of fingerprinting.

6. Reforming the School Committee Policy Subcommittee

Ms. Steigerwald shared that there will be two members working (i) discharge the existing policy subcommittee; (ii) reforming two entities how will do the same work.

Motion to discharge the existing Policy Subcommittee (Steigerwald, Stewart)
The motion was approved (5-0)

There is going to be a Policy Manual Subcommittee and a Policy Advisory Committee. The Policy Manual Subcommittee will have two School Committee members (Jessie Steigerwald and Judy Crocker) and they will write a charge to review existing policies and create new policies.

The Policy Advisory Committee will consist of two School Committee members (Jessie Steigerwald and Judy Crocker) and other stakeholders who will be asked to agree to serve three years. The BOS has six members, but Dr. Ash recommends having five members.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) are we saying the advisory subcommittee is going to be approved by the School Committee; (ii) will the subcommittee review only existing policies; (iii) will the Policy Advisory Committee only meet if the Committee sends them a policy; and (iv) open meeting law requirements.

Motion to approve the charge for Policy Manual Subcommittee (Stewart, Crocker) **The Motion was approved (5-0)**

Motion to approve the charge for Policy Advisory Subcommittee (Stewart, Crocker) **The Motion was approved (5-0)**

Motion to Appoint Jessie Steigerwald and Judy Crocker to the Policy Manual Subcommittee to end June 30, 2015 (Stewart, Alessandrini) **The Motion was approved (5-0)**

Motion to Appoint Judy Crocker, Jessie Steigerwald and Robert Rotberg to the Policy Advisory Committee for three years (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was approved (5-0)

V. Consent Agenda

1. School Committee Member Liaison Report – Curriculum Work Group

Motion to Accept Consent Agenda Item 1 above (Stewart, Alessandrini) The Motion was approved (5-0)

VI. Adjourn

Margaret Coppe needs dates for BOS and reminded Committee members to work on School Committee goals over the summer, finish up liaison assignments and there will be a meeting in July to interview vendors for the Superintendent search.

Ms. Coppe thanked Adam Goldberg for his service to the Lexington schools; he has been hired as principal at Framingham High School

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; Memorandum from Sandra Trach to Dr. Paul Ash dated June 12, 2014 re Traffic Design for the new Estabrook School 2014-2015; Estabrook School Access Ad Hock Task Force (ETF) Update dated June 13, 2014; Memorandum dated June 12, 2014 from Dr. Paul Ash to the School Committee re Statewide Testing in 2014-2015; New Changes to the Student Discipline and Attendance Laws Chapter 222 of 2012 dated June 17, 2014; Memorandum dated June 13, 2014 from Dr. Paul Ash to the School Committee re Recommended Fingerprinting Policy; Lexington School Committee Policy on Traffic Safety and Mitigation Third Reading; Policy Manual Subcommittee Charge; Curriculum Work Group Meeting Notes dated May 6, 2014; and June 13, 2014 Memo for School Committee regarding Policy Subcommittee

Voted by the School Committee September 30, 2014