

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, December 18, 2012
Lexington Town Office Building
Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**Present: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent, Margaret Coppe, School Committee Chair;
Alessandro Alessandrini, Vice Chair; Members Bonnie Brodner, Jessie Steigerwald and
Mary Ann Stewart; and Sam Alpert, Student Representative**

The Executive Minutes were taken by Margaret Coppe, Chair

The Meeting Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order:

The Chair called the meeting to order and moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing Exemption 3 – Collective Bargaining Regarding the Teachers' Contract and to discuss Executive Session Minutes Relative to Litigation.

A roll call vote was taken:

Alessandro Alessandrini	“Aye”
Mary Ann Stewart	“Aye”
Bonnie Brodner	“Aye”
Jessie Steigerwald	“Aye”
<u>Margaret Coppe</u>	“Aye”

II. Executive Session:

Exemption 3 – To Discuss Collective Bargaining Regarding the Teachers' Contract
Exemption 3 – To Discuss Executive Session Minutes Relative to Litigation

The Chair moved to return to Public Session and a roll call vote was taken:

Alessandro Alessandrini	“Aye”
Mary Ann Stewart	“Aye”
Bonnie Brodner	“Aye”
Jessie Steigerwald	“Aye”
Margaret Coppe	“Aye”

III. Return to Public Session and Welcome:

The Chair called the meeting to order at 7:40 p.m. and invited public comment.

A moment of silence was held in memory and honor of the recent shooting victims at the Sandy Hook Elementary School. The Chair read a prepared statement:

“The mass shooting at the Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut has left me and the entire Lexington School Committee indescribably saddened and our thoughts and prayers go out to all the victims and their families. Any school shooting, and there have been too many of those, especially affect us, as school committee members charged with both the education and safety of all our students. We are especially appreciative of the selfless actions of a caring and well trained staff and some of whom gave their lives. The Lexington Public School staff was quickly informed and began communications to parents and preparations for student’s arrival on Monday morning. Our principals worked throughout the weekend so that parents and staff were contacted. Working with law enforcement personnel and safety personnel, the Lexington schools have in place reasonable and prudent security precautions at all schools and conduct regular training of its staff and students.”

The Chair then invited Police Chief Mark Corr and Fire Chief John Wilson to speak. Chief Corr reported that he spoke last evening with the Board of Selectmen and shared the same message that he believes Lexington is a very safe community and that there is no way to be totally prepared for the unexpected and impossible. He believes in the Lexington Public Schools, the Police Department, the Fire Department, the Facilities and Health Departments which have plans and protocols in place for these types of events. Chief John Wilson concurred with Chief Corr’s statements and shared that he and his staff are here to support the citizens and schools to help them feel safe and confident to go to school.

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business, and Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities, spoke to the Schools and Facility Department emergency preparedness.

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business, gave a brief history and background for emergency preparedness which began in 2007 and 2008 with a Stars Grant obtained with assistance from the police and fire departments. All doors and classrooms in each school are labeled and given a room number and are shown on a plan so police and fire departments are able to locate each room and classroom in a building. Lexington also received a federally funded Readiness and Emergency Management for Schools Grant (REMS Grant) in 2009-2010, which was spearheaded by Patrick Goddard. Lexington has an advisory committee comprised of municipal staff, school staff and three parent representatives who have some relationship with emergency response. The results of these grants have solidified protocols, expectations and standardized training for school staff. Ms. Dunn shared that there are incident or crisis teams at each school, and each crisis team member has a Go Bag which she displayed (she also encouraged individual families to research these Go Bags for their own preparedness). Also installed in every classroom and every office area in all of our schools and administration building is an “All Hazards Documents” packet which provides guidance in terms of what to do in

the event of different types of crisis's and protocols to follow for the staff and administrators. This is a confidential document for emergency response teams to have with them and be able to implement should they need to do so. LPS has also been working on implementing an emergency communications plan so that there are plans on who is called and the devices used. The Town is a partner with the use of shared cell phone contracts, two-way radios programmed so that when police and fire come onto school property communication continues on-site. All principals run trainings for their staff, LPS run fire drills, bus evacuations twice a year and specific training at each school building throughout the year.

Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities shared that over the last several years Lexington has been implementing security at the schools as well as the town buildings. The police department grants were received to upgrade security at the Clarke Middle School where security cameras were installed and at the High School. Recently, the availability of grant funds has been limited and he does not believe we will be receiving the funds for the security upgrade at the Diamond Middle School. The Superintendent and he added to the Capital Planning Budget for security cameras and access controls and access control badges. They now feel standardized security should be utilized at all schools and will be implemented this summer.

The Committee had questions and comments regarding (i) timing of implementing video and access control and access control badges at all school; (ii) how it would work at the high school; (iii) do elementary schools have locked double doors; and (iv) lockdown procedures. Each member thanked all principals, teachers, staff, central office, police, fire and facility department members for all their hard work.

Dr. Ash shared his thoughts on the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School and shared that this whole incident was very painful for him personally and clearly very painful in Connecticut and throughout the entire country. Through their pain, our professional staff members rose to the highest possible level and he wanted to publicly acknowledge our principals, especially Sandra Trach, Principal, Estabrook Elementary School and Dr. Mary Anton Oldenburg, Principal, Bowman Elementary School, central office staff and other principals and their teams. Dr. Ash shared how they worked the entire weekend as a team. Immediately, all leaders in the district were on the same email system and were working on how to create an inviting place for students to come back to on Monday morning. What came out of that were the letters that went home to parents and what was placed on the School website and global connect messages. Our goal was to open school and ensure the community that LPS is prepared to invite the children in and be able to deal with any emotional impact that might take place. Dr. Ash reported that they had a wonderful Monday and in a small number of cases some children needed to see the guidance counselors. Dr. Ash is very proud of everyone involved and the job they have done over the past few days.

IV. Superintendent's Announcements:

Dr. Ash had no further announcements.

V. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns:

Alessandro Alessandrini updated the Committee that he and Mary Ann Stewart met with Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development and Principals Sandy Tracht and Mary Anton and went over school schedules for introducing foreign language in the elementary schools. He also requested, if possible, to send all School Committee Members the K-5 Schedules.

Bonnie Brodner shared two items (i) she thought Dr. Ash was aware that the Lexington High School Debate Team is meeting with some Committee members to talk about budgetary concerns and wondered if he knew of any other groups that are looking to get funds from us; (ii) update/question, the Ad hoc Cary Memorial Building Program Committee is getting ready to submit plans at the Board of Selectmen meeting to be held on January 14th meeting. There is also a Master Facility Planning Group and she wondered if she could join Jessie Steigerwald, who is the liaison to that group at the next meeting.

Jessie Steigerwald shared (i) the Ad hoc Facilities Planning Sub-Committee meeting is open to the public and their primary focus right now is looking at the Scottish Rite property and to decide whether the property should be considered for purchase by the Town and what the use would be for that property. The architect, The Cecil Group, and the Subcommittee made a presentation to the Board of Selectmen that the property would be useful to the Town for purposes such as a community/senior center, affordable housing, etc. The Committee's interests have been well served. The next step is to take the different program needs from the department lists and give them to The Cecil Group to integrate them and to figure out the timing of the projects. The next priorities for School Committee would be the Hastings Elementary School and Lexington High School. Ms. Steigerwald suggested that the Committee think about the priorities of these two projects and to decide whether a new high school will be needed and if so, she would need more information before the next Sub-Committee meeting; (ii) the School Transportation and Safety Study Sub-Committee reported that there are bylaws which the police have to follow on school property. If the Committee would like the police to be able to do more than enforcement of fire lanes, there will be a need for either a bylaw change or some kind of official approval either through the School Committee, Board of Selectmen, or the Town; (iii) when the Committee votes on the calendar this year, the start and end times should be discussed regarding bus timing. Ms. Steigerwald stated that she will speak with Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development and Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance regarding the same; and (iv) there was a meeting at the EDCO Collaborative (EDCO) last week where the Superintendent of Weston Schools, with School Committee support, are thinking about a later start time at the high school. EDCO wanted other members to share this information. EDCO would like to collect the start time and end time in schools and have asked Lexington for more information on our Wednesday's later start time.

Mary Ann Stewart shared that she attended the Permanent Building Committee (PBC) meeting last Thursday with regard to Bridge and Bowman Elementary Schools. She

shared that there is currently a review of scheduling of the core rooms located behind the library. A review of the punch list of the work on the Phase I and TLT Construction's approach to scheduling and planning the various trades between now and summer is being reviewed. The work will be conducted during the vacations, along with nights and weekends in the area behind the library. The Estabrook Elementary School project is on schedule and early January is the time when the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) needs to know the Guaranteed Maximum Price going forward with the rest of the project. At the last School Committee meeting in Boston she had noted that the Governor had announced some mid-year fiscal 2013 9(c) cuts and would like Dr. Ash to say more on that, and since we still do not know what Washington is doing, she would like an update. The public can go to www.massbudget.org to see the list of potential cuts.

Dr. Ash shared that there is not a lot more information on this subject to share. The worst case scenario would be a \$100,000 reduction in money received from the state in special education circuit breaker funds. The reason it could be less than that is because the legislature is allowed to increase the amount of funding in this account by up to 75% above four times foundation meaning four times the cost of educating one special education child. The legislature increased the amount in that account and we are operating at a 70% reimbursement and they might reimburse at 72% and it might come down to 70% and Lexington would see no change but if it goes below 70% we would have a small change. It will be between zero and \$100,000.

Mary Ann Stewart shared that there is \$300 million dollars at risk of being cut in the Commonwealth which could impact education across the state.

Dr. Ash shared that none of us know what is going to happen and unless Congress changes their appropriation the funds that have already been appropriated are through October Fiscal Year 2013. Grants go through October 31, 2013. Lexington should be proud of our rainy day accounts and should money be reduced in the middle of this fiscal year the town has enough funds to not layoff any staff during middle of school year. Hopefully after January 1st, we will have more information.

Margaret Coppe shared Dr. Ash's new book entitled "School Systems that Learn" that he co-wrote with John D'Auria, Head of Teachers 21. Ms. Coppe shared that this was in response to the national recognition Lexington received two years ago about our professional development program. Stephanie Hirsch of Learning Forward suggested that they write this book. Congratulations to Dr. Ash.

The Chair Invited Public Comment:

Mark Legore, 385 Marrett Road, shared that he is new to Lexington and came here this evening to hear about school security for his six year old who is enrolled in the Bridge Elementary School. He shared how he and his wife are struggling with how to cope. He had questions regarding school security, why teachers are responsible for security and not the police and how he views school security as the job of the police.

Margaret Coppe responded that the Committee understands his feelings. Ms. Coppe suggested that he watch the earlier presentation by Police Chief Mark Corr and Fire Chief John Wilson on LexMedia On-Demand. He can also contact Mary Ellen Dunn, the Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance who is the point person on this issue. Ms. Coppe also shared that she feels comfortable that Lexington is using best practices and is supported by the North Eastern Massachusetts Law Enforcement (NEMLEC) and Lexington continually update procedures and will be updated again after the tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut.

VI. Anticipated Topics:

1. Vote to Approve the Unit A Contract with the Lexington Education Association

The Chair thanked Mary Ann Stewart and Phyllis Neufeld, President Lexington Education Association for bringing this agreement to the committee. Carl Valente, Town Manager arrived for the vote.

Motion to Authorize the Chair to Sign the Unit A Contract with the Lexington Education Association (Steigerwald, Stewart)

The Chair invited comment.

Mary Ann Stewart shared that as a member of the negotiation team, it was a real privilege to be a part of these negotiations and to see everything coming forward from both sides and she feels we bargained in good faith and feels we have a good result.

Margaret Coppe shared that the union voted to ratify the contract.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, inquired before the vote of the Committee, how long the contract was for and what were the percentages.

Margaret Coppe responded that the contract is for three (3) years (September 2012 to August 2015.) The percentage raises are 2.25%, 2.5%, and 2.75% along with important language that the Committee obtained in terms of transferring teachers.

Motion to Authorize the Chair to Sign the Unit A Contract with the Lexington Education Association (Steigerwald, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0) Valente Abstained.

2. Additional 2012 MCAS Data

Thomas Plati, Director of Education Technology and Assessment presented, as a follow-up to the MCAS presentation he gave at the November 27, 2012 School Committee meeting. The presentation included additional data regarding Lexington's different student population subgroups. The presentation materials included (i) Students with Disabilities in Grades 5, 8 and 10 for English Language Arts (ELA) and Math; (ii)

English Language Learners in all grades for Math and ELA; (iii) Low Income Students in all grades for Math and ELA; and (iv) African American Students in all grades for Math and ELA. There were questions and comments from the Committee regarding the achievement gap and the ways to measure achievement and MCAS.

3. Report on the District-wide Professional Development to Increase Educator Capacity and Student Learning

Dr. Ash shared what he believes is the most important way to make our district better and that way is to have a robust professional development program. He introduced Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development and Len Swanton, K-12 Professional Development Coordinator who would be providing the presentation this evening.

Carol Pilarski and Len Swanton presented an overview and update of the Lexington Public Schools (LPS) Professional Learning Program which highlighted their current work within the district and shared their plans for building capacity and extending professional learning opportunities in the future. The presentation included (i) why Professional Learning (PL) is important, (ii) connecting PL with student learning, (iii) LPS PL Statement of Purpose, (iv) many varieties of PL in the LPS, (v) using the research to guide planning and design, (vi) essential questions for high achievement for all students, (vii) the standards for PL, (viii) 7 strands of PL for LPS, (ix) the PLC is a laboratory for PL, (x) what does the research indicate about PLCs, (xi) leadership standard; (xii) examples of "creating a 'Learning System' for Teachers, Administrators, Support Personnel," (xiii) how we know if our PL program is making a difference, and (xiv) challenges. There were questions and comments from the Committee regarding availability of professional development for special education teachers and specialists, future requirements for ELL teachers, Rethinking Equity and Teaching for English Language Learners (RETELL), reasoning behind RETELL, time and standards for curriculum, what percentage of time is given to PLCs (formal and informal), collective reflecting time and is it formal in PLC or informal, where do they see their outcome, tuition reimbursement for teachers.

Public Comment:

Andrei Radulesco-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, shared that the presentation reflects a lot of work, and he had questions regarding strands, after school offerings and the times they were held, how they select and budget to bring in teachers and do they also cover social studies, music and art.

Thomas Plati responded that he would like to emphasize that because instructional technology specialists are also teachers from the Lexington school district and concentrate on coaching and also instructional technology specialist who works with SPED.

4. Update on Improving Professional Relationships

Dr. Ash updated the Committee on improving professional relationships where teachers feel trusted and safe to do their work. The presentation included (i) Standards Summary, (ii) December 11, 2012 Update on Improving Professional Relationships to the School Committee from Dr. Ash; (iii) Goals to Improve Professional Relationships from Dr. Ash, Carol Pilarski, Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Business, Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources, Thomas Plati, Dr. Mary Anton, Principal, Bridge Elementary School, Meg Colella, Principal, Bridge Elementary School, Sandra Trach, Principal, Estabrook Elementary School, Thomas Martellone, Principal, Fiske Elementary School, Elaine Meade, Principal, Harrington Elementary School, Louise Lipsitz, Principal, Hastings Elementary School, Anne Monaco, Principal, Clarke Middle School, Anne Carothers, Principal, Diamond Middle School, and Laura Lasa, Principal, Lexington High School. There were questions and comments from the Committee which included (i) update on the members, (ii) goal sharing, (iii) determining how goals are met, and (iv) new Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Pilot Program 51.

5. Vote to Accept a \$100 Donation from Lueders Environmental, Inc.

Motion to Accept with Gratitude, a \$100 Donation from Lueders Environmental, Inc. (Brodner, Alessandrini). The Motion was Approved (5-0)

6. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of August 28, 2012

Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of August 28, 2012, as Amended (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

7. Vote to Approve School Committee Executive Session Minutes October 15, 2012

Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of October 16, 2012, as Amended (Steigerwald, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

8. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 19, 2012, as amended

Motion to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 19, 2012, as Amended (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

9. Vote to Approve and Release School Committee Executive Session minutes of August 14, 2012

Ms. Coppe announced that this vote would need to be postponed until corrections were made to the minutes and they will be included in the next School Committee package.

10. **Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of August 30, 2012**

Motion to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of August 30, 2012 (Stewart, Alessandrini) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

11. **Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of October 22, 2012**

Motion to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of October 22, 2012 (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

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

The Meeting Adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Documents: Meeting Agenda; Memo to Dr. Ash from Tom Plati dated December 9, 2012 re 2012 MCAS Analysis; Memo to Dr. Ash from Carol Pilarski dated December 18, 2012 re LPS: Professional Learning and Building Capacity; Memo to School Committee from Dr. Ash dated December 11, 2012 re Update on Improving Professional Relationships; Letter to Dr. Ash dated December 10, 2012 from Michael Lueders, President Lueders Environmental, Inc. re Annual Contribution; Lexington SC Minutes dated August 28, 2012; Lexington SC Minutes dated October 16, 2012; Lexington SC Minutes dated November 19, 2012

Voted by the School Committee February 26, 2013