

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Thursday, December 19, 2013
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

PRESENT: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Bonnie Brodner, Vice-Chair; Members: Jessie Steigerwald, Mary Ann Stewart and Alessandro Alessandrini; and Sam Lehn, Student Representative

The Minutes were taken by Jean M. Curran, Recording Secretary

I. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order and moved to go into Executive Session for the purpose of conducting a strategy session in preparation for contract negotiations with Superintendent Ash. Further, the Chair declared that an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the negotiating position of the Town.

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

Strategy session in preparation for contract negotiations with Superintendent Ash. **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”
<u>Margaret Coppe</u>	“Aye”

III. Return to Public Session and Welcome

The Chair called the Public Session to Order at 7:50 p.m. and invited public comment.

Judy Crocker, Currier Court, Chair, Ad hoc School Transportation Safety Study Committee, shared that with the pending successful passage of school traffic mitigation request in the FY15 LPS Budget and Town Meeting warrant articles the Committee will have met its full charge and requested to be placed on School Committee Agenda in March or April. The same request will be communicated to Board of Selectmen (BOS).

IV. Superintendent's Announcements

The Superintendent had no announcements.

V. School Committee Member Announcements

Margaret Coppe shared that she was upset about school shooting at the Arapahoe School in New Mexico. The School Committee has publically supported gun safety laws and written to legislators to communicate that position.

Ms. Coppe shared that she had received numerous emails from the Joseph Estabrook Elementary School community stating a desire to name the gym after a long time beloved physical education teacher. Ms. Coppe provided guidance to Sandy Trach, Principal, Joseph Estabrook Elementary School on how to proceed.

Bonnie Brodner shared her thoughts on the passing of Nelson Mandela.

Jessie Steigerwald thanked the music department for their Seasonal Concert 2.

Ms. Steigerwald shared that the Bridge PTA, with very short notice, met with Dr. Ash, Ms. Colella, Principal, Bridge Elementary School and herself along with parents concerned with enrollment and space issues.

Mary Ann Stewart shared that the School Committee started getting electronic newsletters from schools and the district email account from their site councils and questioned if all Site Councils have district accounts. If they do not, Ms. Stewart wants to formally request that they get accounts and have the Committee receive updates at the midyear point.

VI. Agenda:

1. Update from the Solar Task Force – Presentation by Dan Voss

Margaret Coppe announced that Mark Sandeen, Chair of the Sustainable Lexington Committee would present the update from the Solar Task Force representing Dan Voss. Mr. Sandeen reviewed (i) Economic Model (incentives from federal and state); (ii) potential solar sites; (iii) potential to save between \$2,000,000 to \$14,000,000 over the next 20 years; and (iv) next steps – in the process of developing an RFP.

There were questions and comments from the Committee: (i) when will the RFP go out; (ii) any voting action needed by the Committee; (iii) would the Committee need to approve anything that goes onto school rooftops; (iv) will companies review the structural analysis before placing anything on school rooftops; (v) willingness to work with the science curriculum coordinators in order to educate our students; (vi) consideration of our buildings that may be under review for renovation or new building; and (vii) if a new roof is needed, would the companies take off the panels during the roofing project.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street had questions regarding the status and operation of schools that already have some sort of solar panels. Mr. Radulescu-Banu also questioned why Joseph Estabrook Elementary School (“Estabrook”) will not be part of the RFP. Mr. Sandeen responded that due to the new construction, Estabrook was not included, but now will be looked at again.

2. Estabrook School – Transition Plan to Move Into the New School

Sandy Trach, Principal, Estabrook, and Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities, provided an update on the Transition Plan to move into the new school, and update which included (i) status of the project; (ii) timeline; (iii) auction; (iv) public safety antennas; (v) February 2014 move; (vi) drop off areas; and (vii) demolition abatement.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) will teachers need to come in over vacation in order to set up their classrooms; (ii) are there flexibility with these dates due to weather constraints; (iii) when do teachers have access to the new building and do they have to unpack during vacation; (iv) do teachers receive compensation for their time; (v) need to vote to give the Lexington Historical Society certain requested items so they will not be available for the upcoming auction; (vi) will proceeds go towards general furniture; (vii) use of some of the furniture that may be contaminated with PCBs; (viii) will library books be available to be taken out during the transition; (ix) how long will this transition plan be in effect; (x) will the traffic configuration change substantially after the summer; (xi) what is the cost for the covered walkway and where would funds come from; (xii) do all the other schools have sidewalks and has the police and fire reviewed these plans; (xiii) will the soccer field be done by September; (xiv) what contingencies are in place for unknowns; (xv) is EPA approval in place for this plan; (xviii) is there interest in using municipal and school buildings by private groups; and (xix) who would track this type of request.

Alessandro Alessandrini cautioned the Committee about being cognizant of the Open Meeting Law and that the past two questions are not on tonight's Agenda.

Ms. Steigerwald explained the need to include the police in the creation and review of transition traffic plans because the Committee depends on them for assistance enforcing traffic rules on the streets leading to school property and potentially for infractions of Lexington Public School or School Committee rules on school property.

Diane Biglow, 15 Bellflower Street had questions regarding teacher compensation during the transition phase.

Judy Crocker, Courier Court questioned Dr. Ash if the State was asked for a two day allowance to compensate staff and to make up those days and where is the compensation money coming from. Ms. Crocker also had questions regarding additional striping of new lot, would residents on Estabrook Drive have access, is the gym regular size and recommended that Pat Goddard add the Harrington Auditorium for planning because she believes it is an underused site.

Alessandro Alessandrini, for the second time cautioned the Committee about the items on the Agenda and felt that the Committee was deviating from it.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street asked that the Committee consider the use of the facilities on a future agenda because there are other buildings that have use. Ms. McKenna also had questions regarding the transition plans, teacher compensation and certain items contained in the construction budget.

Judy Crocker, Ad hoc Safe Committee had concerns regarding (i) communication of the interim plans; and (ii) questioned whether the Committee should work with the town on no parking signs on Robinson Road.

3. 2013 MCAS Report and Update on the Transition to the PARCC Test

Thomas Plati, Director of Education Technology and Assessment presented the 2013 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) results and an update on the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) exam field testing. The MCAS review included (i) MCAS 2010 through 2013 comparison performances in all the different grades and subjects; (ii) MCAS Student Growth Model; (iii) School Median Student Growth Reports for 2013 for different grade levels; (iv) MCAS data on four student sub-groups (a) MCAS comparison performances 2010 through 2013 for Grades 5, 8 and 10 special education students; (b) MCAS comparison performances 2010 through 2013 for Grades 5, 8 and 10 low income; (c) MCAS comparison performances 2010 through 2013 for Grades 5, 8 and 10 African-American; (d)

comparison performances 2010 through 2013 for Grades 5, 8 and 10 English Language Learners (ELL).

Mr. Plati then provided a brief update on the PARCC exam that is to be field tested in some Massachusetts school district this year including Lexington.

There were comments and questions from the Committee (i) what is the percent of students with disabilities; (ii) did the subgroups take the MCAS alternative exam; (iii) is there a slide that shows the breakdown; (iv) explanation for decline in special education (SPED) students in math 5th and 8th grade; (v) loss of any Federal funding if we choose not to participate in PARCC; (vi) since the students taking the field tests are not shown results, will they have additional assessments; (vii) concerned about instructional time; is there a plan to send letters to families letting them know they will be in the group for field testing; (viii) concerned about students not having time for touch type; (ix) compared to other communities how do our salaries compare; (x) PARCC will test English Language Arts (ELA) and Math and MCAS will test science..

4. Superintendent's Contract

Margaret Coppe stated that there is a notice provision in the Superintendent's Contract about the possibility of a one year extension and the Committee met in Executive Session this evening to discuss strategy. On October 20, 2013, Dr. Ash requested a three year contract extension and the Committee were asked why it did not appear on an earlier agenda.

The Chair reminded the audience of the tradition that all comments should be respectful or civil to any person or group and to assume positive intent and opened the meeting up for public comment:

Theodora Martin, 60 Liberty Avenue shared that the Agenda does not state that you will vote tonight and does not feel the public was properly notified.

Diane Biglow, 15 Bellflower Street stated that she agreed with Ms. Martin and after reading Dr. Ash's individual evaluations by Committee members she is not in favor a 3 year extension.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street questioned why the Superintendent's Contract is not posted online and asked if the Committee would post it online. Ms. McKenna also stated that she believes tonight's Executive Session was a violation of the Open Meeting Law and will pursue this alleged violation. She urged the Committee to share what was discussed and also stated she was not in favor of extending the Superintendent's Contract.

Margaret Coppe responded to Ms. McKenna stating that the School Committee consulted with legal counsel and went into Executive Session for a specific stated purpose which is permitted under the Open Meeting Law.

Leslie Zales, 7 Page Road, Chair of PTA/PTO President Council which meets on a monthly basis with presidents from all nine schools, METCO, SEPAC, and LexFun. Ms. Zales stated that she has learned a lot from these meetings and feels comfortable having conversations with Dr. Ash and she encouraged the community to have dialogue with him and his administration. She is appreciative of his collaboration with the PTA/PTO President and he has attended parent coffees, Lexfun, spaghetti dinners, bingo nights. All of Dr. Ash's staff have made themselves available and thinks that they truly care about our community.

Judy Crocker, Currier Court shared her feelings about the Committee's individual evaluations of Dr. Ash and feels work need to be done.

Diane Biglow, 15 Bellflower Street shared her thoughts on the Committee's individual evaluations. Dr. Ash not willing to share all the data from the Wellman Report with Committee makes her feel that Dr. Ash is the boss and the Committee is working for him.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street, without seeing the contract, would you please explain the contract.

Jessie Steigerwald responded to Mr. Radulescu-Banu that the contract extends through June 30, 2015 and either party may give notice 18 months prior notice if either party wants to end the contract on that date, otherwise the contract automatically extends for an additional year. If the Committee did not meet and vote, then the contract would automatically extend.

Diane Biglow shared her unhappiness that Dr. Ash gave the Committee two months' notice for an extension and stated that it should have been brought up by the School Committee in a public meeting earlier than tonight's meeting.

The Chair ended public comment.

Motion to Provide Notice to the Superintendent that the School Committee Wishes to Provide Notice to Dr. Ash to Discuss His Contract (Stewart, Brodner)

The Committee engaged in further discussion.

The Motion was Approved (3-2) Steigerwald and Alessandrini opposed

Dawn McKenna questioned if the Committee would place this topic on a future agenda for the public to comment on before a vote is taken by the Committee.

Jessie Steigerwald shared that after the Committee speaks with their attorney the Committee can then update the public on procedure and include a timeline to have conversations take place.

Margaret Coppe will speak with the attorney and will set up a session and then the Committee can discuss a timeline and put it out for public comment.

5. Working Group on Enrollment Forecasting and Space Options.

Dr. Ash presented the Working Group on Enrollment Forecasting and Space Options (Working Committee). He was pleased to announce the members of the Working Committee who are Tim Dunn, resident and former graduate of Lexington High School (LHS) who is also a graduate of MIT; Rod Cole, former Chair of the Lexington School Committee; Joe Pato, member of the BOS; Dan Krupka, member of the Lexington 2020 Committee; and Mark Andersen, resident. Dr. Ash shared that the Working Committee met on December 5 and discussed (i) methodology used by Lexington Public Schools (LPS) to forecast enrollments, (ii) limitations of the methodology, (iii) what might be fruitful changes to the methodology, and (iv) a proposal from an outside consultant. The goal of the Committee is to work with Dr. Ash with reviewing additional proposals from other qualified experts and to receive and discuss the first phase of the consultant's report by early March in order to make space recommendations for the 2014-2015 school year.

Pat Goddard and Dr. Ash met with Mr. Finney from Design Partners to review the Fiske school site to see if there is any space to add permanent space or modulars. His task is to come back in

seven weeks with the feasibility, timeline and costs and roll it all into report to be presented to the Committee in March to have many options for the community to consider.

Margaret Coppe shared that on January 22 the Committee will have a meeting with the Fiske PTA to talk with them. The Committee sent a lengthy list of questions and concerns and Mr. Martellone has answered some of those questions. Ms. Coppe encouraged other schools to reach out Dr. Ash to speak with him.

Dr. Ash shared that he will meet with any schools and will reach out and ask PTA Presidents if they would like him to come to a meeting and make sure opportunity for dialogue to get ready for next year.

Renata Celichowska, 39 Woburn Street shared her thoughts on the arts and on the overcrowding and hopes that as a curricular decision that this gets parsed out because the colleges and universities are looking for arts and she does not believe that this should be negotiable.

Leslie Levitan, 10 Adams Street shared her concern regarding the models used to predict the overcrowding issue and is pleased that Committee is looking into this problem. She is especially concerned about redistricting.

Alessandro Alessandrini thanked Dr. Ash for quickly responding to the Committee's concerns and asked that this plan be distributed to PTAs. Mr. Alessandrini stated that redistricting will be the last option of the Committee.

Jessie Steigerwald spoke to (i) the topic of relocating students that live at the Avalon community to Estabrook school to alleviate crowding at Bridge and that she was not in support of that suggestion, (ii) would Dr. Ash consider moving or having a similar ILP program like Fiske at another school since he has stated the program is full, (iii) there should be equity in schools for art rooms, and (iv) reminded the Committee that they had committed to having art in our schools, and (v) that it was important to schedule a time to discuss our definition of "capacity" to provide equity across schools – to reflect our priorities for dedicated space for art, music, cafeterias, etc.

Bonnie Brodner commented about some people thinking of moving the Fiske ILP program and students who live at Avalon and gets upset that they talk about subgroups as if they are not a part of our community. Ms. Brodner believes the Committee should not look at Avalon separately and hopes we can look at it as one community.

Alessandro Alessandrini agreed with Ms. Brodner that the students who live at Avalon are part of our community and does not want to hear people talking like they are a subgroup.

Judy Crocker, Currier Court stated it would be wonderful if the community were informed of these meetings with individual PTAs and schools.

6. Vote to Approve the Transfer of Three Items from the Old Estabrook School to the Lexington Historical Society

Margaret Coppe reviewed the three items the Lexington Historical Society would like to preserve from the Estabrook Elementary School (i) the "Estabrook School" lettering that appears on the

façade at the school entry; (ii) a hanging pendant light from the hall or other space; and (iii) a “Bomb Shelter” sign. Ms. Steigerwald requested providing the Historical Society with an additional hanging pendant light to protect from breakage.

Motion to Approve the Transfer of the Three Items to Lexington Historical Society which (i) the “Estabrook School” lettering that appears on the façade at the school entry; (ii) up to two hanging pendant lights from the hall or other space; and (iii) a “Bomb Shelter” sign (Steigerwald, Brodner) The Motion was Approved as amended. (5-0)

7. Vote to Authorize the Superintendent to Submit a Statement of Interest to the MSBA for the Hastings School

Margaret Coppe shared that the entire Authorization to Submit a Statement of Interest to the MSBA Regarding Hastings Elementary School needed to be read aloud.

Authorization to Submit a Statement of Interest to the MSBA Regarding Maria Hastings Elementary School

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on December 19, 2013, the School Committee of the Town of Lexington, in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest dated January 14, 2014, for the Maria Hastings Elementary School located at 7 Crosby Road, Lexington, Massachusetts 02421 which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which the Lexington Public Schools may be invited to apply to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future:

Priorities

- 2. Elimination of existing severe overcrowding.**
- 5. Replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, windows, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in a school facility.**
- 7. Replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state and approved local requirements.**

and, hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this State of Interest, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the Town of Lexington to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority (Coppe, Stewart)

So Moved (Coppe, Stewart) The Motion was Approved (5-0)

VII. Consent Agenda

- I. School Committee Member Reports:**
 - a. Youth Services Council Meeting Minutes**
 - b. Liaison Report – Solar Task Force**

2. Vote to Approve Lexington High Spanish Immersion Program Trip to Santiago, Chile, April 17-24, 2014
3. Vote to Accept a Donation in the Amount of \$1,000 from Fidelity Charitable to Be Deposited in the Bridge School Gift Account
4. Vote to Accept an OfficeMax Gift Card in the Amount of \$100, which Was Presented to the Hastings School as Appreciation for Participating in a Research Project with the Early Math Research Lab at the University of Buffalo
5. Vote to Accept a \$250 Donation to the Nick Barnett Science Olympiad Team
6. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of September 24, 2013, as amended
7. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of October 8, 2013
8. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of October 22, 2013
9. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of November 4, 2013

Motion to Accept Consent Agenda Items 1 through 9 above (Stewart, Steigerwald) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, January 7, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Offices Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

Materials: Meeting Agenda; Letter dated October 3, 2013 from Susan Bennett to Margaret Coppe re Estabrook School items; New Estabrook School Update dated December 17, 2013 from Sandra Trach and Mark Barrett; Update on the Working Group Studying K-5 Space Options and Future Meeting Schedule; Memorandum dated December 6, 2013 to Paul Ash from Tom Plati re 2013 MCAS Analysis; Memorandum dated December 17, 2013 from Carol A. Pilarski to Dr. Paul B. Ash re Update: Educator Evaluation System; Authorization to Submit a Statement of Interest to the MSBA regarding Hastings Elementary School form; Letter dated December 5, 2013 from John K. McCarthy, Executive Director of the MSBA to Paul Ash, Superintendent re MSBA FY 2014 Statement of Interest Opening; Youth Service Council Meeting Meetings dated December 4, 2013; Solar Task Force/Liaison Report by Mary Ann Stewart; Lexington Public Schools Field Trip Request Form for Lexington High School Spanish Club to go to Santiago, Chile dated April 17-24, 2014; Letter dated November 18, 2013 from Margaret Colella, Principal Bridge School to Lexington School Committee re \$1,000 gift from Fidelity Charitable Grant; Letter dated December 3, 2013 from Louise Lipsitz, Principal Hastings Elementary School to the Lexington School Committee re OfficeMax gift card in the amount of \$100.00; Letter dated November 25, 2013 from Early Math Research Lab at the University of Buffalo to Maria Hastings School re TRIAD/Building Blocks project; Letter dated November 26, 2013 from Daniel Mehr, LHS Class of 2003 to Dr. Paul Ash re \$250 donation to the Nick Barnett Science Olympiad Team; Lexington School Committee Meeting Minutes dated September 24, 2013; Lexington School Committee Meeting Minutes dated October 8, 2013; Lexington School Committee Meeting Minutes dated October 22, 2013; Lexington School Committee Meeting Minutes dated November 4, 2013; Memorandum dated December 15, 2013 to School Committee from Dr. Paul B. Ash re Working Group on Enrollment Forecasting and Space Options; and PowerPoint Presentation Entitled 2013 MCAS Results dated December 17, 2013 by Thomas Plati

Voted by the School Committee January 28, 2014