

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, January 19, 2010
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

Present: Superintendent Paul Ash, School Committee Chair Margaret Coppe, School Committee Members Rod Cole, Tom Diaz, Jessie Steigerwald and Mary Ann Stewart.
The minutes were taken by Leora Tec.

The meeting was convened at 7:34 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome (Margaret Coppe)

II. Superintendent's Announcements

1. The Superintendent outlined the content of the upcoming School Committee meetings with regards to the budget.
2. Kudos to the debate program. We periodically host *Big Lex*, a debate competition. This year there were approximately 600 debaters here from 74 schools. This is a major fundraiser. It was a huge success. Thank you to all who participated.
3. I am pleased to publicly announce the appointment of the new Fiske School Principal, Tom Martellone. He will begin on July 1. He is originally from the Boston area and has been a teacher and principal in Maine. He is a first rate educator. He comes with glowing references.
4. The Bridge School has been selected to be nominated for the United States Department of Education Blue Ribbon Award. This is how the Department of Education honors what they consider to be the finest schools in the United States. My congratulations to Bridge. We will find out next fall if we have won. Bridge is one of nine model schools in Lexington.

III. Members' Reports / Members' Concerns

Mary Ann Stewart: I will provide liaison reports soon, after a computer glitch is fixed.

Tom Diaz: I have not read all the details on the education reform law, but provisions like authorizing more charter schools are risky in this economic climate. However, I don't think Lexington will feel the effects of it.

Jessie Steigerwald:

- 1). I am working on a date for site-based training.
- 2). I had an excellent meeting with Laurie Henry with Youth Services. It would be great if she could come to present to us at a meeting for 15 or 20 minutes to describe what she does to take care of kids outside of school hours.

- 3). Mary Ann Stewart and I attended the PTA Presidents meeting last week. We spoke about the facilities plan. We heard several things: a). Information should be clearly disseminated. b). Hastings was concerned about not being on the plan. Schools may be wondering if the School Committee is looking out for their schools' interests if we do not have a nine-school plan.

Dr. Ash commented that putting an overall plan on paper of what needs to be done to maintain all nine of our schools makes sense.

Dr. Ash gave an update on the Diamond Middle School principal search. The position is being advertised. February 10 is the closing date for applications. We hope to identify finalist candidates by mid-March.

- 4). Thank you to the teachers who have made a teachable moment out of the tragedy in Haiti.

Margaret Coppe: I attended the TMMA Executive board meeting last week. Most warrant articles are pretty traditional. There will be some that we will want to discuss: our budget, our capital budget, the appropriation to the stabilization fund for SPED.

IV. Discussion Items

1. Public Hearing on the Superintendent's Recommended FY11 Budget

Phyllis Neufeld (President of the LEA): The LEA is pleased that Dr. Ash has been able to put together a level service budget with very few lay-offs. However there are a couple of issues that concern us, namely the proposed lay off of a 1.0 FTE speech and language teacher. Looking just at numbers does not necessarily reflect needs. Regarding IAs: we would like to receive answers before budget deliberations conclude regarding the impact on children of the changes already made to the IAs' hours.

2. Proposal to Create a K-5 Social Studies Coordinator Position

Dr. Ash introduced the topic. Dr. Ash would like to be able to add the position this year, before the curriculum review process begins. In order to pay for this position we could change one of the unallocated positions to this one.

Jane Hundley (Lexington parent and Social Studies Curriculum Coordinator for the Burlington Public Schools) painted a picture of what a social studies curriculum coordinator does.

There were questions from the Committee and comments from the audience.

3. School Committee Discussion of the Recommended FY11 Budget

The School Committee discussed the FY 11 budget.

4. Report on Full- and Part-Time Employees Who Are Eligible for Health Benefits

Presented by Dr. Ash. Dr. Ash first discussed what has been done up until now in terms of consolidating part-time positions, in order to eliminate paying unnecessary health benefits to part-time employees. He then discussed what the current situation is.

Dr. Ash does not recommend further consolidation at this time, as it would not save a substantial amount of money.

The discussion was tabled due to the scheduled residency hearing and will conclude at another time.

5. Hearing on Student Residency Issue

Introduced by Margaret Coppe. Present were: School Committee Counsel, Christine Griffin, and the family involved, including Mr. Hsu.

Mr. Hsu presented his appeal of the decision that his daughter Jennifer Hsu is not a resident of Lexington and therefore cannot attend Lexington High School.

The Committee members discussed the appeal before them.

There were questions from the audience.

Motion that this appeal be denied with all sympathy (Diaz, Cole). The motion passed 5-0.

V. Action Item

1. Vote to Accept a \$2,500 Contribution from an Anonymous Donor for the High School Robotics Club

Motion to accept with gratitude a \$2,500 contribution from an anonymous donor for the High School Robotics Club (Stewart, Diaz). The motion passed 5-0.

VI. **Motion to adjourn (Diaz, Steigerwald). The motion passed 5-0.**

The meeting was adjourned at 10:23 p.m.