

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, November 19, 2013**  
**Jonas Clarke Middle School, Auditorium**  
**17 Stedman Road**

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

**ABSENT:** Sam A. Lehn, Student Representative

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

The Meeting convened at 7:32 p.m.

**I. Call to Order and Welcome**

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public comment.

There were no public comments.

**II. Superintendent's Announcements:**

Dr. Ash presented the Four and Ten Year Enrollment. He is interested in setting up a group of residents to look at long term enrollment projections, exam enrollment methodology procedures used in the past and to look at hiring a consultant. At the December 17 School Committee meeting he will report back to the Committee.

**III. School Committee Member Announcements**

Jessie Steigerwald announced that Lexington High School will be performing *Much Ado About Nothing*.

Ms. Steigerwald gave a special thank you to everyone who served on the Lexington Education Fund (LEF) Trivia Bee teams. The School Committee's team needed assistance at the last minute and Todd Rhoades and Jill Hai graciously stepped in to assist.

Ms. Steigerwald also shared that tonight there is a Community Center Committee meeting which is being recorded by LexMedia. She encouraged people to view the recording and have input into the new community center. As the School Committee liaison she was able to have a tour.

Ms. Steigerwald wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Mary Ann Stewart gave a shout out for Abraham Lincoln's Gettysburg Address which still has resonates today.

Ms. Stewart asked Dr. Ash to report at a future School Committee meeting what it will mean for Lexington as the state is changing from MCAS to PARRC.

Ms. Stewart congratulated the Jonas Clarke Middle School for being awarded a National Blue Ribbon school and Anna Monaco, Principal.

Ms. Stewart spoke to a school improvement bill before the legislature.

**IV. Agenda:**

## **1. Update on K-8 Space Needs and Options**

Margaret Coppe outlined the procedure that will take this evening. The Committee is not making decisions tonight; there will be other times to provide comment.

Dr. Ash presented the update on the K-8 space needs and options for specific schools recommended to the Committee. The presentation consisted of (i) both middle schools are at capacity and enrollment is likely to increase by 152 students by 2018-2019 ; he recommended including \$40,000 in the FY 15 capital budget to hire an architect to study how space is being used and to recommend if there are cost effective ways to redesign internal space and create more educational spaces; (ii) elementary schools –Dr. Ash asked Design Partnership to update their 2006 study to show the maximum capacity of each school, including the new classrooms at Bridge, Bowman and Estabrook.

Dr. Ash presented the following 5 space options (i) convert the Fiske School art and music rooms into general classrooms; (ii) convert one of the two Fiske art and music rooms in a general education classroom and increase the size in one grade beyond the recommended guidelines; (iii) increase class sizes in two grades; (iv) redistrict some Fiske School students to Estabrook School for the Fall of 2014; and (v) options 1, 2, 3 and 4 above and seek Town Meeting funding in the Spring of 2014 to design new modular or permanent space for Fiske School in 2015.

The Committee engaged in discussion regarding the space needs at the elementary and both middle schools.

Margaret Colella, Principal, Bridge Elementary School spoke to the question of Bridge going over 600 enrollments..

The Chair opened the meeting for public comment and reminded the audience that no decisions are being made tonight and in tradition of Lexington Town Meeting all comments should be respectful and assume positive intent.

Andrei Radulescu-Banu, 86 Cedar Street had questions regarding the enrollment projections and the Hastings School class sizes He asked if research was done to find out why some numbers are higher or lower and if there are more people coming into town to rent.

Flavia Vidal, 135 Maple Street had questions regarding redistricting and whether or not that included the middle school.

David DesRoches, 12 Idylwilde Road shared that he has a son at Bridge and Clark and the reason he moved to Lexington was because of the schools. Mr. DesRoches reemphasized that the Committee needs to look at class size especially in K-1.

Betsy Sarles, 36 Turning Mill Road had comments regarding Estabrook. Ms. Sarles expressed her opinion that overcrowding is affecting the quality of education.

Karen Griffiths, 15 Harding Road had questions regarding Fiske population and construction being done in the Estabrook area.

Amit Kumar, 12229 Main Campus Drive had comments and questions regarding projections for elementary schools for FY14 and wondered if there was something special happening to affect the enrollment.

Sue Kingsbury, 9 Middle Street, Bridge Co-President PTA shared with Dr. Ash and the Committee that Bridge Elementary School is at capacity with kids sharing lockers, large class sizes, and horrendous traffic.

Michael Mitzenchacher, 33 Cary Avenue shared that he has children in Bridge and Clarke and appreciates the discussion for needs for classrooms. Mr. Mitzenchacher questioned when the discussion of costs come into play, how will these problems be managed.

Denise Moehring, 4 Fessenden Way shared that she has kids at Fiske and she is here because she heard about possible redistricting and is not in favor of that. She had questions regarding children in the ILP classrooms being moved.

Vinod Narra, 341 Marrett Road had comments concerning construction projects affecting the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> graders. They will have construction projects throughout their education and that the impact on students and teachers is not being taken into consideration.

Lilliam Gomez- Martinez, 6 Idylewilde Road shared her shock at learning about the capacity issues at the elementary schools and shared her thoughts on comparing square footage in the different schools. She also expressed her concerns about the Avalon community.

Thomas Martellone, Principal, Fiske Elementary School shared that the Avalon students were redistricted to Bridge Elementary School and that the numbers are the same as in 2010-2011.

Cindy Darcy, 50 Spring Street thanked the Committee and Dr. Ash for looking at enrollment programs before we had a problem. Ms. Darcy shared her thoughts on the classrooms in Estabrook and Bridge Schools.

Meg Colella, Principal, Bridge Elementary School responded to Ms. Darcy regarding space analysis.

Deepika Sawhney, 6 Porter Lane and PTA Co-President shared her sympathies with the Bridge school and shared her thoughts about Fiske school. She believes that the discussion needs framing for the community so people will not get upset unnecessarily.

Faye Chang, new to the Bridge district and questioned whether Bridge and Bowman had equity in art and music to Estabrook.

The Chair ended the public comment portion at 9:40 p.m. and requested a short break.

The meeting was called back to order at 9:47 p.m.

## **2. Interim Plan to Provide Social Work Services for Homeless Families**

Dr. Ash introduced Valerie Viscosi, K-12 Director of Guidance to address the social and emotional needs of the homeless families in the district. It is recommended that a half time social worker be hired for the rest of the year and be reassessed in the spring.

Valerie Viscosi presented her report on homeless families in Lexington and included (i) Scope of the Problem, (ii) current housing status; (iii) current transportation status; (iv) needs of homeless families; (v) school role; (vi) town role; (vii) gap areas of need where the community may be able to help; (viii) role of new social worker position; (ix) further needs/action steps to be addressed; (x) current actions.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) is there an opportunity to share transportation to the same town; (ii) are the homeless families represented at these meetings; (iii) is a 0.5 social worker going to be enough; (iv) clarification of the investigation of cases and case management going forward; (v) interested in identifying gaps and advocacy at the state level; (vi) concerns around confidentiality and dignity; (vii) concerns about developmentally appropriate facilities for children such as playgrounds, etc. in motels; (viii) concerns about nursing services; (ix) interest in scholarships and financial aid; (x) in-migration; (xi) can we funding the social workers position January to June, will it be in the next budget; (xi) providing personnel for this particular need; and (xii) concerned about funding needs of the homeless families and speaking to the BOS; (xiii) concern about having the position supported in the municipal budget as well as the school budget, perhaps in the Human Services Department, if the position is recommended for continuation; (xiv) request for consideration that the pilot of a half-time position serve low-income students as well as homeless students.

Leslie Zales, 7 Page Road, PTA/PTO President, attends Youth Council meetings and shared that she is thrilled with the work the town has done and echoing Dr. Ash's words "it is our duty and now is the time to act as a whole community". She is hoping to have a meeting with the Town and School and having long and short term solutions.

Charlotte Rodgers, Human Service Director, shared that there is a sliding fee structure for town activities. The town abides by federal fuel guidelines and does interviews for financial assessment and The Fund for Lexington. .

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance shared that financial assistance for after school care is provided in the Extended Day lease. However, Extended Day does not currently have any space. The town does not have enough after school programs for all the children. Every school has a waiting list.

Jessie Steigerwald left the meeting at 10:45 p.m.

## **3. FY 14 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Financial Report**

Dr. Ash presented the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarterly Financial Report. He reported that the current year-end balance projected for FY2014 is \$371,594 after transfers. The major source of these funds is due to the normal fluctuation that occurs in the out-of-district tuitions. His report included (i) salaries and wages; (ii) grant transfer requests; (iii) expenses (a) transportation (regular and homeless) and (b)

special education transportation; and (iv) out-of-district tuition. The use the LABB Credit was increased from \$250,000 to \$400,000. The additional \$150,000 is earmarked for (i) FY14 Teacher Evaluation Training (\$80,000); (ii) REMS Training in August (\$30,000); and (iii) other Professional Development needs (\$40,000).

**Motion for School Committee to Approve Transfers Requests as Outlined in Table 3 Identified in Memorandum dated November 15, 2013 of the First Quarter Financial Report** (Stewart, Brodner)

There was discussion by the Committee.

**The Motion was Approved** (4-0) Steigerwald absent.

**4. Vote to Appoint Members to the Ad Hoc Committee on Youth Stress**

Alessandro Alessandrini announced the three new members.

**Motion to Appoint Members to the Ad Hoc Committee on Youth Stress** (Alessandrini, Stewart) **The Motion was Approved** (4-0) Steigerwald absent.

**5. Vote to Approve a Contract Extension for the Period July 1, 2014, through June 30, 2017, for Mr. Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources**

Dr. Ash explained by statute the superintendent recommends the appointments of Assistant Superintendents and enthusiastically recommends Robert Harris.

**Motion to Approve a Contract Extension for the Period July 1, 2014 through June 30, 2017** (Stewart, Brodner)

The Committee engaged in discussion.

Robert Harris, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources shared his thoughts on professional learning, retaining high quality professionals in the school system, diversity in school system, taking a collaborative approach with labor unions. Challenges are always there.

**The Motion was Approved** (4-0) Steigerwald absent

**V. Consent Agenda**

**1. School Committee Member Reports:**

- a. Update on Curriculum and Instruction
- b. Delegate's Report – MASC/MASS 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Conference, November 8, 2013
- c. Legislative Update/Liaison Report

**2. Vote to Accept a Donation to Be Deposited in the Clarke Middle School Gift Account in the Amount of \$3,750 from EA Education Consulting Services LLC**

3. Vote to Accept a 2013-2014 PTC/FTC Grant in the Amount of \$1,000 from PTC/FTC to Help Cover Expenses for Lexington High School's FIRST Robotics Team
4. Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (Revised) – Second Reading

**Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 1-4 Above** (Stewart, Alessandrini)  
**The Motion was Approved** (4-0) Steigerwald absent

**VI. Adjourn**

**Motion to Adjourn** (Brodner, Stewart) **The Motion was Approved** (4-0)  
Steigerwald absent

**The Meeting Adjourned at 11:10 p.m.**

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, December 3, 2013, at 6:00 p.m. at the Twelfth Baptist Church, 160 Warren Street, Roxbury, Massachusetts.

*Materials:* Meeting Agenda; Memo to School Committee from Dr. Paul Ash dated November 15, 2013 regarding K-8 Space Needs and Options; Memorandum from Valerie Viscosi and Tessa Riley to Dr. Paul Ash dated November 14, 2013 re Homelessness in Lexington; Memorandum from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Paul Ash dated November 15, 2013 re FY2014 – 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Financial Report; Update on Curriculum and Instruction dated October 29, 2013 re Social and Emotional; Delegate's Report from the Delegate Assembly, MASC 67<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting, MASC/MASS 49<sup>th</sup> Annual Joint Conference; Legislative Update/Liaison Report from Mary Ann Stewart; Letter dated November 13, 2013 from Anna Monaco, Principal Jonas Clarke Middle School re \$3,750.00 Donation; Letter dated November 8, 2013 from Jeffrey Harris to deposit PTC Grant Money in the amount of \$1,000; Lexington School Committee Policy on Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Policy Second Reading

Voted by the School Committee January 28, 2014