

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Tuesday, October 21, 2014
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

PRESENT: Dr. Paul Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Jessie Steigerwald, Judy Crocker, Abigail Schwartz, Student Representative

The 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.

II. Executive Session

Motion to go into Executive Session

Ms. Coppe moved to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining regarding ALA negotiations, to return to open session at the conclusion. Further, the chair declares that an executive session is necessary to protect the negotiating position of the School Committee. Ms. Steigerwald seconded the motion.

Alessandrini **AYE**
Crocker **AYE**
Steigerwald **AYE**
Coppe **AYE**

7:05 PM Executive Session Convenes

7:14 PM Executive Session Ends

III. Return to Public Session and Welcome

The Chair called the Public Session to order and invited public comment.

There were no public comments.

IV. Superintendent's Announcements

Dr. Ash presented the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Award for Academic Excellence to two Lexington High School Students, Sonia Rowley and Noah Golowich. On behalf of entire school district and teachers he congratulated the students and their families. Dr. Ash invited Mr. Goddard to share information regarding study of PCBs at Clarke Middle School Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities provided an update to his report four weeks ago to the Committee regarding PCBs at the Clarke Middle School. Mr. Goddard reported that consultants were hired and they redid a sampling on September 25, 2014 and he received the results today. The results showed that the one classroom with the highest level of 171 now reads 117. On average , the school results ranged from 45-41. Mr. Goddard shard that the next steps are to work with the consultant to create a maintenance plan to submit to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The intent of that

plan is how the district intends to operate that school while caulk with PCBs is in place and when it may be mitigated. He will report back in the future.

V. School Committee Member Announcements

Ms. Coppe announced the Cary Lecture Series begins Saturday night on October 25 at the Clarke Middle School auditorium. Dr. Michael Rich of Children's Hospital will present on the role of children and media violence.

Ms. Coppe shared that the School Committee Meeting Agendas and packets will finally be on the town website and anyone interested must subscribe for the notifications and agenda packets. Ms. Coppe hopes it will begin this Friday.

Judy Crocker shared she had a great time at the Professional Teacher's Award Ceremony a few weeks back and found it welcoming and exciting.

Judy Crocker read a statement she prepared regarding the editorial published on October 16, 2014 in the Lexington Minuteman. Ms. Crocker disagrees with the published editorial and made suggestions pertaining to the overcrowding issues in schools.

Jessie Steigerwald thanked Margaret Coppe on getting the link to the School Committee Agendas and packets onto the town website.

Ms. Steigerwald shared an update on the Policy Manual Subcommittee meeting agendas and minutes and their location.

Ms. Steigerwald shared that the Town's Halloween Trick or Treat will be held on Friday, October 31 from 2:00-5:00 p.m. in Lexington town center. Retailers have asked that parents chaperone their children and to be mindful of traffic on Massachusetts Avenue.

Ms. Steigerwald shared that she will attend a statewide meeting of Town Meeting moderators to discuss the Mock Town Meeting program. She will report back with an update.

Alessandro Alessandrini announced he and Ms. Crocker met with the Lexington Parent Advocacy Group. This is a group that wants to educate and act as a bridge to the community on issues that are coming up or the Committee is talking about.

VI. Agenda

1. 2014 MCAS Report

Dr. Ash shared that tonight's presentation is going to be high level, but that the full report will be available on the website.

Maureen Kavanaugh, Director of Planning and Assessment presented the 2014 MCAS results, including highlights at major grade levels as well as results for subgroups. The data shows that Lexington Public School (LPS) students continue to grow and reach high levels of achievement in English Language Arts (ELA), Mathematics and Science.

Ms. Kavanaugh discussed how the data was used, along with other indicators to (i) evaluate school and district performance and progress toward improvement targets; (ii) identify programs, school and district strengths and weaknesses; inform and improve curriculum and instruction; and (iii) identify individual student strengths and areas for improvement; inform and improve service delivery for individual students.

Ms. Kavanaugh then reviewed the LPS's Spring 2014 Highlights which included ELA, Mathematics and Science (i) what is reported; (ii) 2014 Performance Levels for all students; (iii) 2014 Performance Levels

Grade 5; (iv) 2014 Performance Levels Grade 8; (v) 2014 Performance Levels Grade 10; (vi) 2014 percent advanced comparable communities Grade 10; (vii) 2014 percent advanced special education comparable communities Grade 10; (viii) 2014 percent advanced African American comparable communities Grade 10; (ix) 5-year trends in proficient and advanced special education Grade 10; (x) 5-year trends in proficient and advanced African American Grade 10; (xi) 5-year trends in proficient and advanced METCO Grade 10; (xii) student growth percentile (SGP); (xiii) annual growth 5-year trends all students Grade 10; (xiv) growth 5-year trends special education Grade 10; and (xv) growth 5-year trends African American Grade 10.

There were comments and questions from the Committee (i) is it possible in the future to break down by school and also show trends as it correlates to enrollment; (ii) feedback from some parents who say their children have anxiety over taking the MCAS test.

Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development, shared that she was very proud of staff and students with regard to the MCAS results. Ms. Pilarski also reiterated that the MCAS test is just one part that is used to evaluate students. In Lexington, the focus is also on the social and emotional success of the children. Ms. Pilarski then shared how the subgroups such as METCO, English Language Learners (ELL) and Special Needs Students scored and what the strengths and weaknesses are that were discovered and how that data is used to help narrow the achievement gap.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) feedback from some parents who say their children still have anxiety over the MCAS testing; (ii) concerned about Grade 10 African American scores showed a downward trend; (iii) requested a breakdown of the data on the subgroups in order to see where the focus should be; (iv) concerned that African American students who have been in the school system for their entire school career should be scoring the same regardless of race; (v) what trends are seen regarding the African American subgroup.

Dr. Ash responded that the students in Lexington have done well on the MCAS test over the past five years. The mean is highest in Massachusetts for three different tests and also subgroups. For instance, African American Americans went up 53 points for an entire subgroup. Dr. Ash shared that he has reviewed it year after year and the students are performing extremely high. Dr. Ash believes that it is time to shift the priorities and see more resources on (i) struggling students to reach proficiency; (ii) put resources supporting students with social and emotional needs.

Maureen Kavanaugh shared that it is helpful to break down the numbers by grade levels, schools and then use the information to divert resources from the Central Office to where the data is telling us.

Tom Diaz, Town Meeting Member, congratulated principals on closing the achievement gap. Curious about Dr. Ash's remarks and would like to know what does he mean by struggling students and what does the administration see for those students.

Dr. Ash responded by stating the one subject that he would like to see struggling students focus on is literacy. Some children, especially in the ELL program and low income students come into kindergarten with low literacy skills. Literacy (reading, writing and speaking) is his number one priority because one cannot excel with low literacy skills.

Margaret Coppe asked Dr. Ash what the schools are doing for those individuals that have been identified and what programs are available to help those students.

Dr. Ash would like to bring this topic back at a future date.

Ms. Kavanaugh also shared that across the district, English language learners demonstrated very high annual growth, all schools had large proportions of students with high annual growth, state commendation for high achievement awarded to Lexington High School, and all schools among the top 8% in based on state ranking which considers both growth and proficiency.

2. FY 16 Capital Recommendations

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance presented a short overview of the projects before the committee tonight, the FY 2016 School Capital requests which included (i) Furniture Equipment Replacement Program (\$200,000); (ii) Time Clock Implementation Costs (\$208,000 based upon un-awarded RFP, Spring 2014); and (iii) Traffic Safety and Mitigation (no FY 2016 request). The Committee inquired if it was possible to include the walkie talkies in the budget.

Thomas Plati, Director of Education Technology and Assessment, presented the Technology Program requests (\$1,378,000). Mr. Plati explained that Maryann McKenna had a family emergency and could not attend tonight's meeting and he highly values her and her support staff. The technology equipment included technology workstations (desktops, laptops and mobile devices), printers/peripherals interactive project systems, network head-end equipment and improved wireless network delivery systems for the high school and middle schools. Mr. Plati showed a video to show how iPads are being used in the classrooms and the positive results of the iPad program. Mr. Plati would like to expand the iPad Program to provide each student at the Clarke and Diamond Middle Schools. There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) can you describe the projectors (ii) could you update the Committees on the use of e-books; (iii) is there a quantity discount through iPad Apps; (iv) are there items you feel that parents would be expected to purchase or are you telling the Committee that the teachers have what they need; (v) wondering if there are any type of technology 101 classes offered to parents; (vi) would it be possible to have high school students teach the twitter classes to fulfill volunteer requirements; (vii) are we taking into account the technology requirements for the PARCC Assessment Test.

Phyllis Neufeld, Lexington Education Association, asked Mr. Plati if there were any other surveys sent to teachers and students other than the Kindergarten teachers.

Harvy Simkovitz, 5 Angier Road, asked if there has there been any progress in making the school websites more user friendly regarding the new technologies and how parents can use this technology.

Bill Hurley, 33 Young Street, asked Mr. Plati (i) as you move into FY 17 and include grades 8, 9 and 10 do you need to increase the access points in the other schools and (ii) where do you see us going in the future long range plan; (iii) do you see any new technologies that may be released soon.

Mr. Plati thanked the community for the funds for the technology plan and everyone involved in teaching, coaching, etc.

Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities (DPF) provided a brief review of the FY 2016-2020 Summary of DPF Capital Improvement Projects (\$3,415,125). Mr. Goddard shared that the town is working on a master plan in the community and several projects that will be affected the projects towards top half of list are recurring programs done over the past several years. The DPF is finishing up the interior painting

programs. The bottom half of the list, Items 905-955 are projects initiated by the school department that the DPF will provide. Four projects for FY 2016 that have zero dollars listed at this time include (i) Item 900, Renovation and Update of Diamond Kitchen and Cafeteria; (ii) Item 959, Elementary School Short Term Capacity Increase ; (iii) Item 960 Pre-K Short Term Capacity increase; and (iv) Lexington Public School Educational Capacity Increase. On a larger scale, the need to maintain all of our buildings based on life cycle updates and two Mr. Goddard wanted to highlight include (i) Hastings Elementary School renovation replacement, (ii) Clarke Middle School circulation and parking improvements. The Committee had comments and questions (i) can you explain what the science and performing arts program is at the middle schools; (ii) is there a request on the municipal side to view multi-screens with security cameras at the police station; (iii) what are your thoughts for work needed to be done at the high school on their interior systems if the Committee does not address the high school for a period of time; (iv) supports fixing the high school heating and ventilation; (v) could the roofing budget include more covered walkways; (vi) does the flooring portion of the budget include the stair coverings; (vii) the MSBA will choose the projects to be funded in November – we should consider the fact that the MSBA may not approve the project and start thinking about having to ask the community for money; (viii) does the Statement (SOI) of Interest include more than \$40,000,000; (ix) can you explain the solar panels; (x) is the school paving program just paving and could we tie two projects together; (xi) it was reported that there is excess locker space at Clarke and Diamond will you be working with SMMA and architect on space mining; (xii) Estabrook Traffic Plan – a permanent dedicated bus lane, would it include extending dedicated bus lane in the budget; and (xiii) design funding for high school and Bridge Elementary School traffic plans.

Margaret Coppe requested a 5 minute recess.

3. Discussion of K-12 Space Needs

Dr. Ash provided the history of what has been done to date to address the K-12 space needs and outlined topics for discussion for the Committee to discuss the possible ideas on dealing with the enrollment issues of 8 schools and options.

Dr. Ash also stated that there will be a meeting on Thursday from 8:00-9:30 a.m. The architect will provide an update on Phase I which is a determination of what the capacity of is for all 9 buildings based on current usage. On October 30, the architects will come back with the Phase II Report which will answer the questions (i) what would be the cost of adding two modulars onto the Bowman Elementary School; (ii) what would be the cost of adding one modular to Fiske Elementary School; (iii) what would be the cost of moving the pre-school over to the Central Administration Building; (iv) or moving all of the pre-school over to the Harrington. That information is critical if the Committee decides it can't wait and the modulars need to be in place for next fall. On November 3, you could take a vote and ask for a Special Town Meeting in January to appropriate funds for additional space. The timetable is important if the Committee wants to have this completed and in place for next fall, the first week of January is the time period of have a reasonable expectation that modular classrooms could be built and in reasonable quality. The Board of Selectmen (BOS) and the community would need to weigh in. The options depend upon the policy questions given that enrollment is going up and schools are at capacity. What will be done to relieve space; (i) add instructional assistants and an additional teacher; (ii) add modulars at one or more locations; (iii) art and/or music room is taken for a general education classroom for an indefinite period of time; (iv) dividing the gym in half at Bowman (half music and half gym); and (v) redistricting. What is important is that the Committee provides the architect and School Master Planning Committee (SMPC) guidance on what the Committee wants. Tonight is a discussion and not a vote. The October 28 Meeting on policy and then a vote on November 3 at the Clarke Middle School.

Jessie Steigerwald and Judy Crocker shared other towns' redistricting policies and explained what buffer zones are and directed the public to look up the Brookline buffer zone policies. Ms. Steigerwald also shared her thoughts on redistricting and how to deal with growth from those living in apartment buildings. Ms. Steigerwald shared her assumptions. Ms. Crocker shared her thoughts on moving the pre-k to the central office.

Joe Pato, Chair of BOS and member of Enrollment Working Group (EWG), shared that Ms. Steigerwald interpreted their report incorrectly and shared that from 2003-2013 growth came from apartment buildings, but for the past five years it is coming from all areas of Lexington. It is a system wide issue.

Dr. Ash shared his comments on redistricting and his current thinking and would redistricting help for next September instead of a number of years. He may include moving a portion of the Fiske School into the Estabrook School for next September. For the remaining five schools he does not recommend redistricting. His view is redistricting is a small piece of the problem.

Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities, the architect is evaluating moving the pre-k into the old Harrington Elementary School and that would not be able to happen by September.

Jeff Leonard, K-12 Performing Arts Coordinator and Sean Hagan, K-12 Fine Arts Coordinator shared that they also spoke with Eamonn Sheehan, K-12 Physical Education and Wellness Coordinator and Harriet Wallen, Head Librarian, LHS Library and shared their input on the impacts for not having dedicated art, music, gym and library space. Messrs. Leonard and Hagan took comments and questions from the Committee (i) comment that one Committee member's children had art on a cart and were not affected; and (ii) what, if any impacts to students by dividing the gym and music; (iii) if we move towards a policy that is stated in a way that these are not discretionary spaces and would like to know Mr. Leonard's view.

Alessandro Alessandrini believes that the Committee needs to focus on next September and to ease some of the overcrowding modulars should be put in place.

Claire Sheth, 22 Vine Brook Road, is a member of the Lexington Parents Advocacy Group share her thoughts on (i) image problem about the modulars and impression that they will be permanent and if there are stipulations in parallel with a clearly defined long-term solution the public will be behind them; (ii) with respect to the discussion of the art and music spaces, and is concerned that those spaces will be used as full time instructional space as a classroom. Ms. Sheth stated that there are no good short-term solutions and once the public and Committee accepts that, everyone will be able to move forward with a solution.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street reminded the Committee that you have policies in place and suggested the Committee may want to amend them. Ms. McKenna shared her thoughts on the Estabrook Elementary School art and music rooms and class size policy. Ms. McKenna also shared her frustration that the Committee is still talking about art and music and feels that it should be treated as part of the core curriculum. Ms. McKenna then shared her thoughts on modulars.

Harvy Simkovitz, 5 Angier Road, shared his thoughts on school policies, capacity, curriculum and what the hierarchy of the choices the Committee needs to consider.

Sue Kingsbury, 9 Middle Street, shared what she wants the committee to keep in mind.

4. Vote to Approve EDCO/LABBB Articles of Agreement postpone

The Committee decided to postpone this Agenda item.

5. Vote to Approve Superintendent's Evaluation Standards for 2014-2015

The Committee decided to postpone this agenda item.

VII. Consent Agenda

1. Vote to Approve School Committee Meeting Minutes of August 26, 2014

Motion to approve School Committee Meeting Minutes of August 26, 2014 (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) **The motion was approved** (4-0)

VIII. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) **The Motion was approved** (4-0)

The meeting adjourned at 11:20 p.m.

Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; Memorandum dated October 17, 2014 to the School Committee from Dr. Ash regarding October 21 School Committee Meeting; Memorandum dated October 16, 2014 from Maureen Kavanaugh to Dr. Ash re 2014 MCAS Highlights; Memorandum dated October 15, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Ash re FY2016 School Capital Requests – Transmittal Form; Memorandum dated July 17, 2014 from Colleen Dolan to EDCO Member District Committees re EDCO Articles of Agreement and Capital Reserve Fund; Recommended Superintendent Evaluation Standards for 2014-2015.

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, October 28, 2014, at 7:30 p.m. in the Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue.

Voted by the School Committee February 10, 2015