

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Tuesday, February 25, 2014
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

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

ABSENT: Mary Ann Stewart and Sam Lehn, Student Representative

The Minutes were taken by Jean M. Curran via LexMedia OnDemand

The Meeting convened at 6:30 p.m.

I. Call to Order

The Chair called the meeting to order and made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to Collective Bargaining regarding Bargaining Units: LEA Units C, D and Tech Unit. Further, the Chair declared that an open meeting might have a detrimental effect on the negotiating process.

A roll call vote was taken:

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

II. Executive Session:

Exemption 3 – To Discuss Strategy with Respect to Collective Bargaining Regarding the Following Bargaining Units: LEA Units C, D, and Tech Unit

A Motion was made and seconded to return to public session.

III. Return to Public Session and Welcome:

The Chair called the Public Session to order at 7:30 p.m. and invited Dr. Ash to speak.

Dr. Ash announced his retirement on June 30, 2015 after 42 years of serving students in schools. He has decided to make his announcement now because he has signed a contract with a national educational company to begin full time consulting work beginning July 1, 2015. This is an extremely exciting opportunity that he could not turn down. In this role, Dr. Ash will have the opportunity to help many students and school districts across the country. Also by making this announcement now, he can help the School Committee plan and conduct a high quality search process. Looking back over his last 8years in Lexington, he is proud of how much has been accomplished working together as one of the highest performing school systems in the country. Students in Lexington score at the highest level in the state and in the country examinations. The

education gap for students of color, special education, low income and English language learner students has been significantly closed. Finances have remained strong despite the difficult economic times over the past several years. School facilities are in excellent condition and the professional learning program has been recognized as a national model. In addition, two Lexington schools were recognized as National Blue Ribbon Schools by the United States Department of Education. He is particularly proud of the outcome of Parker v. Hurley, the Federal Court case Lexington won which establishes all the school districts in the first circuit may be able to use materials which are inclusive of all families regardless of race, religion, color, creed, sexual orientation or gender identity. He looks forward to the next year and a half working together to build an even stronger school system to better serve Lexington students.

Margaret Coppe thanked Dr. Ash for all has accomplished since he arrived in 2005 and is grateful for his continued support for student learning which has led to an outstanding school system and is proud to have worked with him. Ms. Coppe looks forward to working with Dr. Ash over the next one and a half years.

Bonnie Brodner thanked Dr. Ash for his service to Lexington and commented that the school system is much better then when he arrived. There was a fiscal disaster which has been cleaned up and student learning is improving for all students; the highest learners, the lowest learners and all those in between. Dr. Ash has hired some incredibly devoted staff and administrators that have contributed to making the Lexington Public Schools what they are today. Ms. Brodner stated that Dr. Ash will be missed and wished him well in all his future endeavors and looks forward, assuming she is re-elected to the School Committee, to working with him to make the transition to the next Superintendent as smooth and seamless as possible.

Alessandro Alessandrini shared that people tend to forget that Lexington had a revolving door with respect to the superintendent position. Dr. Ash stabilized the budget and created an image that Lexington can keep a superintendent for a long time. He thinks that anyone following Dr. Ash will be lucky to inherit what he has created.

Jessie Steigerwald thanked Dr. Ash for his service and inquired if he was allowed to share who he will be working with next year. Ms. Steigerwald also asked if Dr. Ash would mention the name of his book.

The Chair invited public comment. There were no public comments.

IV. Superintendent's Announcements

Dr. Ash announced the opening of the new Joseph Estabrook Elementary School yesterday. Dr. Ash thanked Sandra Tracht, Principal Joseph Estabrook Elementary School, Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities, Kenneth F. DiNisco, President, DiNisco Design and Suffolk Construction. Dr. Ash also thanked the School Committee, Board of Selectmen (BOS), Town Meeting, residents, and finance committees for getting the vote passed.

Dr. Ash announced the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) has become more focused on standardization and compliance while principals and superintendents are being required to provide more reports to state agencies, perform coordinated review processes and are being held accountable in the state and federal government in ways which had not existed before. Some school districts put their NEASC status on hold because colleges and universities are not requiring the accreditation that NEASC affords. Lexington will still be a member if NEASC meets its needs.

V. School Committee Member Announcements

Margaret Coppe read a statement regarding the three suicides by students in the Newton schools over the past four months. The Ad hoc Committee on Youth at Risk charge, membership, and minutes can be found on LPS website.

Margaret Coppe announced that the next meeting for the Committee for Youth at Risk (AhCYR) will be held on Thursday at 4:00 p.m. Public meetings are posted on the school and town websites.

Margaret Coppe announced A Roundtable Discussion about PTA/Os and Site Councils for Members of Lexington's Chinese American Community Sponsored by CAAL and the PTA/O Presidents Council (PPC) on Wednesday, February 26, 7:00-9:00 pm in the cafeteria of the new Estabrook Elementary School.

Margaret Coppe announced Candidates Night is Thursday, February 27 from 7:00-10:00 p.m. at the Clarke Middle School.

Margaret Coppe announced the next Committee meeting will be held on March 11 at 6:30 p.m. in Battin Hall. Also, the Lexington Public School (LPS) website is still showing Committee meetings on March 17 and 19 at 6:30 p.m. which have been cancelled.

Alessandro Alessandrini provided the background on how and why the AhCYR came about. In March, the Committee will come and present their interim report.

Dr. Ash invited Linda Chase, Director of Student Services and Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development to the microphone to speak specifically on what is going on in the schools now that is more safe, inclusive and responsive and will talk about what the schools are doing before there is a problem.

Carol Pilarski spoke about the various resources at the elementary, middle school and high school.

Linda Chase spoke about what the health and wellness department focuses on such as response and proactive curriculum at all levels that work in tandem in with school guidance. The goal going forward is to provide more clinical and therapeutic support so they can serve as a resource as well. Ms. Chase also mentioned the various programs and support services available.

There were comments from the Committee (i) questions from parents about having enough staff trained so that if a child or parent is concerned that everyone should feel free to reach out to a trusted adult who can direct them to the right resources; and (ii) School Health Advisory Council (SHAC).

Jessie Steigerwald announced the Mock Town Meeting is scheduled for March 8 for all 8th graders at Cary Hall. She thanked CAAL, Lexington League of Women Voters and the Indian Association of Lexington.

Ms. Steigerwald had lunch with a woman who worked as a Data Administrator in Worcester and she has graciously offered to be a resource to Lexington.

VI. Agenda

1. Superintendent's Mid-Cycle Evaluation Report

Dr. Ash presented his mid-year report on his goals as superintendent. Dr. Ash reviewed the seven indicators that the Committee voted on last fall which include (i) Standard I – Instructional Leadership, Paragraph B(3) Diverse Learners' Needs and Paragraph C(1) Variety of Assessments; (ii) Standard II – Management & Operations, Paragraph A(3) Student Safety, Health, and Social and Emotional Needs, Paragraph C(2) Time for Collaboration; (iii) Standard

III – Family and Community Engagement, Paragraph B(2) Family Collaboration, and Paragraph C(2) Culturally Proficient Communication; and (iv) Standard IV – Professional Culture, Paragraph F(1) Response to Disagreement, Paragraph F(2) Conflict Resolution, and Paragraph F(3) Consensus Building. Dr. Ash also provided evidence to the Committee outlining what he has accomplished to date.

The Committee had questions and comments regarding kindergarten orientation materials being written in multiple languages

The Committee engaged in discussion regarding the superintendent’s goals and each indicator.

2. FY 14 2nd Quarterly Financial Report

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent of Business and Finance Operations presented the Committee with the FY14 2nd Quarterly Financial Report which shows the current year-end balance projected to be \$1,226,567. Ms. Dunn highlighted (i) salaries and wages with a projected balance \$713,878; (ii) grant summary which showed the district lost \$86,554 in sequestration funds but was replenished by vote of the special town meeting; (iii) expenses appear to be in balance and they include (a) in-district transportation, (b) out-of-district transportation and (c) Special Education out-of-district tuitions. Ms. Dunn also spoke to the homeless transportation budget and presented two options which she did not recommend.

In prior years when the School had surplus, the Committee asked her to ask principals if they needed capital or expense items that were not known when the budget was built or knew and couldn’t afford them. As a policy matter you would allow administration fund some high need items in the FY 15 budget.

Dr. Ash foreshadowed when the 3rd quarterly report, LAAB credit is monies we can charge to the LAAB Collaborative to reduce our bill and we have \$650,000 credit to be charged.

The Committee had comments and questions (i) do funds have to be used or put back in general fund; and (ii) it would be great if Dr. Ash would reiterate to principals and teachers to bring forward items they would like given the surplus.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, wondered if Dr. Ash, in the 3rd Quarterly Report provides a table of prior turn back money to the general fund over the past several years. Ms. McKenna also requested if the Committee would review if any surplus money would be available for some of the proposed school projects.

Mary Ellen Dunn replied to Ms. McKenna that information is available as last page in the revenue of our budget and states sources of funds where they came from and can be seen online.

Margaret Coppe announced that this information is also listed in the Town Report each year.

3. School Committee Goals

The Chair recommended moving this item to a meeting in the summer when there is lower Committee workload. The Committee agreed with the Chair to table this item until the summer. Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development was thanked for her work on the World Language Committee and for the quarterly meetings updating Margaret Coppe and Jessie Steigerwald on curriculum.

4. Vote to Approve Diamond Driveway Easement

Mary Ellen Dunn, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance Operations presented the Driveway Easement request for 6 Burlington Road. Due to rotary improvements the current driveway will need to be relocated. Ms. Dunn also reported there have been other driveway easements requested over the years.

The Committee had questions and comments regarding (i) when will the Board of Selectmen take a vote on this easement; (ii) are there any implications on snow plowing for the driveway; (iii) are the owners okay with the easement; (iv) is there anything that can be done to lower or remove the hedge which obscures site lines; and (v) are there any regulations that say the school has to plow that road sooner because of the driveway.

Motion to Grant the Driveway Easement to the Property Owner of 6 Burlington Street (Alessandrini, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Stewart absent.

5. Vote to Approve Estabrook Interim Traffic Plan

Mary Ellen Dunn presented the Estabrook Interim Traffic Plan to the Committee. The update included requests for “No Parking Signs”, “No Idling Signs”, a designated fire lane around the building, and a request to authorize permission to obtain a delivery address for the load dock area from DPW Engineering. Ms. Dunn also gave an update on the approved Robinson Road reconstruction and improvements. Ms. Dunn also presented the interim traffic, arrival/dismissal plan. Ms. Dunn would like the Committee to vote on the above and vote to authorize permission for her to obtain a delivery address for the loading dock area from DPW-Engineering.

There were comments and questions from the Committee (i) would each school have two different addresses; physical school address a and delivery address; (ii) will be the signs be in the same location that will be in the permanent plan; (iii) at the Estabrook Elementary School where are delivery trucks presently coming in through; (iv) is there a reason why the bus fee stayed the same at Estabrook; and (v) what will happen when there is no queuing on Grove Street.

Motion to Authorize the approve the placement of “No Parking” signs installed by the Department of Public Facilities (DPF) along the cul-de-sac, and loading dock, “No Idling” signs installed by DPF in loading dock area and along the cul-de-sac and designate a Fire Lane around the building as shown on plans and that we authorize a delivery address for the loading dock (Steigerwald, Brodner)

The Committee and Ms. Dunn had further discussion regarding police on school property.

Motion to Authorize the approve the placement of “No Parking” signs installed by the DPF along the cul-de-sac, and loading dock, “No Idling” signs installed by DPF in loading dock area and along the cul-de-sac and designate a Fire Lane around the building as shown on plans and that we authorize a delivery address for the loading dock (Steigerwald, Brodner) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Stewart absent

VII. Consent Agenda

1. Vote to Accept a \$300 Donation from the Lexington Lions Club in Support of the 2014 LHS Science and Engineering Fair

Motion to Accept a \$300 Donation from the Lexington Lions Club in Support of the 2014 LHS Science and Engineering Fair, with gratitude (Brodner, Steierwald) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Stewart absent

VIII. Adjourn

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

The Meeting adjourned at 10:10 p.m.

Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; Memorandum dated February 20, 2014 from Paul Ash, Superintendent to School Committee re Report on Superintendent Mid-Year Goals; Memorandum dated February 20, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Paul Ash re FY2014 2nd Quarter Financial Report; Memorandum dated February 21, 2014 from Margaret Coppe, Chair to School Committee re School Committee Goals; Memorandum dated February 4, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Paul Ash re Easement Request for 6 Burlington Road; Memorandum dated February 19, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Paul Ash re Estabrook Traffic Plan Policy Request and Interim Plan Update; Lexington High School 2014 Science and Engineering Fair Sponsor Information Sheet from Lexington Lions Club with a \$300.00 donation

Voted by the School Committee September 16, 2014