

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Wednesday, April 28, 2015
Lexington High School, Library Media Center
251 Waltham Street

PRESENT: Superintendent Dr. Paul Ash, Chair Jessie Steigerwald, Vice Chair William Hurley, Alessandro Alessandrini, Judith Crocker
Member Absent: Margaret Coppe

The Minutes were taken by Christine Ashness, Recording Secretary
The meeting convened at 7:30pm

Call to order and welcome: Chair Jessie Steigerwald called the meeting to order, and introduced committee members.

She recognized Administrative Assistant's Day, expressing her appreciation and thanking all of the people who work behind the scenes serving our students.

Public Comments:

Ann Webster, Treasurer of the Lexington Field and Garden Club updated the committee on their Arbor Day tradition with first grade students. They do a 20-minute interactive lesson on an experience with trees and how trees live and die. They leave seedlings for each child, a 60-foot string to show how large the tree will grow, and slices of tree trunks so students can learn to count rings and determine a tree's age. It is a fun interactive lesson and the teachers have been marvelous partners. They are in five elementary schools. They would love to hear any feedback. She gave out white spruce seedlings to members and people in attendance.

Committee members expressed appreciation for the volunteers who add this academic enrichment for our students.

Superintendent's Announcements: None

School Committee Member Announcements:

Judith Crocker: Next Tuesday the Site-Based School Council and the PTA/PTO President's Council are co-sponsoring an event to explore ways parents can become better involved with the schools. On Patriots' Day Dr. Czajkowski attended the formal ceremonies. There are a number of upcoming and still to be scheduled meetings for the school master plan. Next Monday will be at 7pm for middle schools, and May 7th for Hastings. May 8th is the Bridge traffic meeting. Thanks to Dr. Ash for supporting Safe Routes to School. May 14th is a program for 5th graders tied to the Across Lexington trails. An updated Across Lexington map is now available. Bike, Walk 'N Bus Week is the 2nd week of May. Thursday May 14th will be school bus open house at 1 pm. on Worthen Road, at the bottom of Hayden. School bus registration ends May 19th. This weekend is 13th annual William Diamond Junior Fife and Drum Corp. Muster. People are coming from 13 states and 2 countries, and it is at the National Heritage Museum. The Community Center had an open house and they have a wish list online. The Planning Board meeting on May 20th is at Clarke, 7-9 p.m., and is a listening session to hear what the people of Lexington want.

Alessandro Alessandrini: He asked people to donate to those who suffered in the horrible earthquake in Nepal.

Jessie Steigerwald: There is an upcoming Roundtable event on June 2nd, and she handed out a draft agenda. She has worked with Selectman Norman Cohen and Bettina McGimsey from the PPC to coordinate this meeting. At the end of the meeting, participants will decide if they want to form a Coalition for Lexington Youth. The School Committee will begin the appointment process for two people to serve on the Permanent Building Committee for School Projects. A letter will be in the Minuteman on Thursday, an application will be online, and it will also be distributed at schools today. They are looking for people with expertise in building but also a layperson's view. Thanks to members of the Parent Engagement Subcommittee for their service: Kevin Johnson, Mary Ann Stewart, Alessandro Alessandrini, Jennifer Vogelzang and Nancy Adler. Almost all of their recommendations have been implemented. The Massachusetts Association of School Committees has organized "Day on the Hill" for this Thursday to advocate and lobby elected state officials to provide budgetary support for our schools. J. Steigerwald and J. Crocker will attend.

Consent Agenda

Vote to Dissolve Policy Advisory Committee

Vote to Dissolve Parent Engagement Subcommittee

Vote to Approve Lexington High School 2015-2016 French Student Exchange Trip to Antony, France, and Brussels, Belgium, February 4-20, 2016

Vote to Approve Lexington High School 2015-2016 Student Exchange Trip to Hangzhou, China, April 9-23, 2016

Vote to Approve Lexington High School 2015-2016 Italian/Latin Field Trip to Italy, April 14-23, 2016

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 1, 2015

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 6, 2015

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 7, 2015

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 13, 2015

Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of April 15, 2015

Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of April 1, 2015

Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of April 6, 2015

Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of April 13, 2015

Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of April 15, 2015

Steigerwald said that the Exec. Session minutes for April 15, 2015 were not yet available so she excluded them from the Consent Agenda.

MOTION to approve Consent Agenda as amended. (Hurley, Alessandrini)

The Motion was approved 4-0.

Agenda:

FY15 3rd Quarter Financial Report

Mary Ellen Dunn presented the 3rd Quarter Financial Report. The lowest anticipated end of the year balance would be \$500,000-\$600,000 for May 1st. Members had some questions and comments on the Superintendent's search committee cost, 2-way radios at Bowman, athletics deficit, Substitutes/Special Ed substitute coverage, 9C cuts in METCO and full day Kindergarten grants, grant allocations/FTEs. Dr. Ash stated that the METCO and Kindergarten grants have since been level funded by the House.

Phyllis Neufeld: In next year's budget, Kindergarten Aide time was raised from 15 to 18 hours. If the Senate doesn't agree with what House did in the budget, will those hours still be at 18? Dr. Ash does not know because the amount of money could be large (\$250,000). It could impact the line item more than just the 3 hours. He suggested she lobby to keep it.

MOTION to authorize the transfer of up to \$108,589 from the operating budget for line items to be identified, to offset deficits and state grants for METCO and full day kindergarten.

(Hurley, Alessandrini)

The Motion was approved 4-0.

W. Hurley will follow up with Mary Ellen Dunn and Ian Dailey on this.

Vote on School Choice

Steigerwald noted that a hearing was held at a prior meeting, no one spoke at that hearing and the committee has received no comments from the community. Ash recommends we do not participate in School Choice.

MOTION to not participate in school choice. (Steigerwald, Crocker)

The Motion was approved 4-0.

Discussion of 2016-2017 School Calendar Options

Members have received some input already. Dr. Ash and J. Steigerwald will create a FAQ sheet for the public to understand.

Dr. Ash wants to make sure that the 182 days have the highest possible attendance. Labor Day is sometimes very late and with snow days school can be in session late into June. Parents will then pull students out of school early for camps, vacations, etc. Some families also prefer having time off until Labor Day for the same reasons. He recommends the recent practice of starting school before Labor Day.

Some questions sent by email or phone call regarding the school calendar:

Why do we have 182 days instead of 180? The State sets the minimum, but we exceed the minimum. There would have to be bargaining with unions if it is changed.

Half days: Do they count as full days? Yes. The State doesn't define length of day but allows ½ days to be counted. There are a number of hours of instruction required.

Elementary ½ days: What if we got rid of them? Teacher contracts are allocated for conferences, principal meetings, 18 of them are teacher Thursdays for professional education. You can't change without going through collective bargaining.

Could conferences go before and after school? Yes, if it is consistent with labor contracts.

Would have to be negotiated.

First week of school: Has the School Committee or the Superintendent thought of having school on the Friday before Labor Day, Good Friday, Yom Kippur, etc.? When the committee made the decision to start before Labor Day, they agreed to give families the long weekend before the regular school day begins. This could be evaluated in the future. People could still have their long Labor Day weekend. As for religious days, we would not have maximum attendance on those days with students and staff.

J. Crocker suggested there be a subcommittee for calendar issues.

J. Steigerwald generally prefers an after Labor Day start but does recognize that it would be very late the June in question based on the proposed calendar, J. Crocker, A. Alessandrini and W. Hurley prefer a before Labor Day start. Steigerwald asked the committee if they wished to bring the calendar back in two weeks to allow additional time for community input. The majority of the committee was comfortable and preferred taking a vote at the meeting.

MOTION to approve the 2016-2017 School Calendar with a pre-Labor Day start.

(Hurley, Crocker)

The Motion was approved 3-0-1 with J. Steigerwald abstaining.

Capital Update

Dr. Ash thanked everyone for the \$4,000,080 allocated for overcrowding issues. The Permanent Building Committee then engaged the process on who should become the architect. The money will take the report from SMMA and the options and explore in depth what options would be the best. They unanimously hired DiNisco Designs for their architect. After that the Project Manager, Hill Company was chosen. DiNisco Designs made a presentation for the principals and Central Office administrators with various possibilities for the schools. They will have 3 meetings for the public. DiNisco will do a presentation and have dialogue. May 4th is a middle school meeting for Clarke and Diamond, at Clarke, at 7:00pm. May 5th at 7:00pm at the Fiske School Fiske, Bowman, and Bridge will be discussed. May 12th at 7:00pm will be the meeting at Hastings. Each presentation is a half hour, and the public can ask questions. A second meeting will be scheduled in 5 weeks to do another presentation. And at the June 16th School Committee meeting, he will present his direction. Phase 1 is fact finding, Phase 2 is meetings/school committee approval, and Phase 3 is designs. Dr. Ash stated that Hill and company will be responsible for managing the website, and there will be a link on the LPS website.

J. Steigerwald asked members for their summer plans so they can plan summer meetings. They also want to work on getting updates out to the public.

Lexington High School modulares: The fences are up, foundational work has started, and the project should be completed on time.

Technical Report on Redistricting

Maureen Kavanaugh presented the Technical Report on Redistricting. Members had some questions and comments about buffer zones.

Dr. Ash explained that buffer zones are very new. He wants to know that they work, but that isn't certain yet. He had a great meeting with Joe Pato and discussed if buffer zones had existed 5 years ago, would they have been valuable? It may not show what the future will look like, but it will accomplish and show what would have happened. They are going to try it and they will share the results with the school committee. A. Alessandrini would prefer something more

concrete and see what the growth rate is per district. Look at the data on how the districts are growing and the decisions can be made more intelligently.

Ms. Kavanaugh said they should also be able to incorporate that data.

J. Crocker stated that at the end of the day, everyone is a Lexington student no matter where they go to school. J. Steigerwald asked members to send their comments to Maureen Kavanaugh and copy her.

Fiske School Space Options for 2015-2016

They will need at least 23 classrooms and 2 options are being presented by the administration. Convert the art room into a general education classroom or assign all incoming Kindergarten students who do not have an older sibling already attending Fiske to register instead at Estabrook. If the Kindergarten numbers exceed 90, then they may also need to use a music room as a classroom.

Dr. Ash recommends option 1, converting the art room into a general education classroom, and a music room if needed, as it is the easiest to implement and minimizes need to reassign students. Members discussed the options.

Jeanine Ferrick, co-president of the PTO at Fiske: At a prior meeting we shared PTO survey results that responders preferred to use the specialist space and not redistrict. They still felt that was the view of the parent community. They did not support redistricting. And she also wanted to point out that they may need a 24th room for the upcoming school year.

Tom Martellone, Principal of Fiske: The school is at a great place, but the angst of parents not knowing will eventually have an effect on the climate of the school. He requested that the School Committee make a decision.

MOTION to reject the reassignments of all incoming Kindergarten students who don't have sibling at Fiske. (Steigerwald, Alessandrini)

The Motion was approved 4-0.

MOTION to support the administration's recommendation to convert an art room to a general education classroom for the 2015-2016 school year. (Steigerwald, Crocker)

The Motion was approved 4-0.

Alessandrini said he voted yes but reluctantly. He disagrees with having no art room and perhaps not a music room because he doesn't believe they did the right thing to begin with.

Dr. Ash stated that we will need to purchase some furniture so art materials can be stored appropriately.

Steigerwald told Mr. Martellone his work is appreciated and thanked him for his efforts during a year or longer of very difficult decisions at Fiske.

Superintendent Evaluation Updates

Mid-Year Update/Update on Annual Goals

MOTION to amend the professional practice goal to now state under Standard 2 management and operations: "The Superintendent will ensure smooth transition to the incoming Superintendent." (Steigerwald, Crocker)

The Motion was approved 4-0.

Dr. Ash realized that there were priorities that were more important this year than his original goals. He has added the following goals:

- Work closely with the incoming superintendent in order to provide a smooth transition on July 1. Since the appointment of Dr. Czajkowski in December, he regularly speaks with her on all important matters (filling major vacancies, matters before the School Committee and answering any questions).
- Hiring major positions (Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Business Operations, and Director of Educational Technology)
- Working with multiple constituencies to develop the school facilities plan that was presented at the March 23, 2015, Special Town Meeting.
- Collective Bargaining – Normally, he does not sit at the Unit-A bargaining table until the end of the bargaining process. However, due to the complexity of these negotiations and the retirement of the LEA president and Superintendent of Schools on June 30, he has taken a direct role in all collective bargaining sessions.

He also proposes to amend the following goals:

- Student Learning Goal: Eliminate Key Actions #1 through 4.
- Professional Practice Goal: Eliminate Key Actions # 1, 3, and 5.
- Standard 2 (Management and Operations; Environment Indicator: Develops and executes effective plans, procedures, routines and operational systems to address a full range of safety, health, emotional, and social needs of students.) Reduce the scope of this goal to Key Actions #4 and #5 in Student Learning Goal.

Committee members had comments. Steigerwald and Hurley will follow up with Dr. Ash.

Vote to Appoint Voting Representative to the LABBB Collaborative Board of Directors

***MOTION to appoint Dr. Czajkowski to serve as the voting representative to the LABBB Collaborative Board of Directors effective July 1, 2015. (Steigerwald, Alessandrini)
The Motion was approved 4-0.***

Vote to Appoint Voting Representative to the EDCO Collaborative Board of Directors

***MOTION to appoint Dr. Czajkowski to serve as the voting representative to the EDCO collaborative Board of Directors as of July 1, 2015. (Crocker, Hurley)
The Motion was approved 4-0.***

Policy Section A – Mission/Vision

Review and Approve in Form Remaining Policies from Section J

Dr. Ash is very comfortable with the MASC policies because he's worked on them for many years. He has high confidence in the work that comes out of MASC. He has reviewed the drafts with Crocker and Steigerwald during Policy Manual Review subcommittee meetings and incorporated feedback from appropriate staff members. He supports all of the changes that are in this packet.

School Committee Policies

JB – Equal Opportunity Policy (MASC)

JBA – Student-to-Student Harassment

JCA – Assignment of Students to Schools

JCAC – Student Transfer Policy

JEB – Entrance Age

JF – School Admissions

JFABB – Admission of Exchange Students

JFABC – Admission of Transfer Students

JFABD – Homeless Policy (Lexington’s Current)

JFBB-1 – School Choice

JH – School Absences, Tardiness and Excuses

JI – Student Rights and Responsibilities

JIB – Student Involvement in Decision Making

JICA – Student Dress Code

JICE – Student Publications

JICFA – Prohibition of Hazing

JICFA-E – Hazing (MASC)

JICFB – Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Policy (Lexington’s Current)

JIGG – Tobacco Use by Students

JICH – Drug and Alcohol Policy (Lexington’s Current)

JIE – Pregnant Students

JIH – Searches and Interrogations

JII – Student Complaints and Grievances

JJ – Co-Curricular and Extra-Curricular Activities

JJA – Student Organizations

JJE – Student Fund-Raising Activities

JJF – Student Activity Account Policy (Lexington’s Current)

JJH – Student Travel

JJIB – Interscholastic Athletics

JJICA – Athletic Events and Practices Policy

JJIF – Head Injury Management Policy (Lexington’s Current)

JKA – Corporal Punishment

JL – Student Welfare

JLA – Student Insurance Program

JLC – Student Health Services and Requirements

JLCA - Physical Examinations of Students

JLCB – Inoculations of Students

JLCC – Communicable Diseases (MASC)

JLCD – Medication Policy (Lexington’s Current)

JLCEA – Life-Threatening Allergies

JLD – Guidance Program

JQ – Student Fees, Fines, and Charges

JRD – Student Photographs

Regarding Policy JICE – Student Publications: Dr. Ash explained that there is no money for the Musket. If there is money available, he would urge the committee to allocate money so they wouldn't have to do so much fundraising next year.

MOTION to approve the above listed policies, as amended, in form. (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) The Motion was approved 4-0.

Mission/Vision update: There is one change. The policy doesn't mention the word parent or family. Faculties are now reviewing the policies.

MOTION to adjourn (Alessandrini, Hurley) The Motion was approved 4-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:55pm.

Meeting Materials: Agenda; Memo from Mary Ellen Dunn regarding FY2015 3rd Quarter Financial Report; 2016-2017 School Calendar Drafts; Memo from Maureen Kavanaugh regarding the Technical Study of Redistricting; Memo from Dr. Ash regarding Fiske Overcrowding and Options for 2015-2016; Memo from Thomas Martellone regarding space allocation plan for Fiske 2015-2016; Memo from Pat Goddard on update on School Facilities Capital Projects; Memo from Dr. Ash regarding Report on Superintendent Mid-Year Goals; Field trip Request Forms/Packets for French Exchange, Chinese Exchange and Italian-Latin Cultural Trip; Notes/Agenda for a possible coalition for Lexington youth; Minutes chart from J. Steigerwald; PBC Update from J. Crocker

Voted Approved by the School Committee May 19, 2015