

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**  
**Tuesday, April 29, 2014**  
**Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room**  
**1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

**PRESENT:** Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Alessandro Alessandrini, Judy Crocker, Mary Ann Stewart and Jessie Steigerwald

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

The Meeting convened at 7:05 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 had no announcements.

**III. School Committee Member Announcements**

Judy Crocker announced (i) Lexington's 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Bike Walk 'N Bus Week on May 9-18; May 15 there will be a Family Paracourse Exploration and School Bus Open House for Elementary Students; and new this year is a Bike Smart for 5<sup>th</sup> Graders. The flyers are going out in students' backpacks this week; (ii) 10 Annual Special Olympics will be held April 30 beginning at 8:45 a.m.; (iii) William Diamond Junior Fife & Drum Corps will perform on Friday at 7:00 p.m. at the Minute Man National Historical Park Visitors Center; (iv) May 3, there will be a parade beginning at Noon and following the parade there will be festivities from Noon-5:00 p.m.; and (v) there will be a lecture on Sunday by Finnish educator Passi Sulberg at the Scandinavian Center in Newton.

Jessie Steigerwald, (i) thanked the Town Celebration Committee for Patriots Day activities; (ii) updated the Committee that she and Margaret Coppe attended two meetings with municipal staff to understand their space needs while their space is being renovated; (iii) the High School production of Kiss Me Kate tickets are on sale; (iv) received a letter from Chief Mark Corr, Lexington Police Department pointing out that the game Assassins is not allowed on school property; and (v) Student Representative Sam Lehn has resigned from the School Committee.

Margaret Coppe shared (i) next School Committee Meeting will be held on Thursday, May 8 at Battin Hall and the agenda will include the Superintendent search; (ii) Lexington Educational Foundation's (LEF) Annual Gala Fundraiser will be held this Saturday night May 3 in the Double Tree Bedford Glen. Tickets are still available.

**IV. Agenda**

1. Vote to Approve Lexington High School 2014-2015 German Student Exchange Trip to Erding and Berlin, Germany, June 23 – July 15, 2015

Ms. Heidimarie Floerke, German teacher and Ms. Marie Murphy, Chair of World Language at the High School, and Mr. Dana Fine, husband of Ms. Floerke and chaperone on past cultural trips presented plans for proposed student field trip to Germany.

Ms. Floerke explained the student exchange trip to the Committee. The exchange is through the German American Program (GAP) and must follow requirements to have students attend school for 10 days, to live in host families, keep journals, and make presentations in the German schools. GAP program is generous in the funding for this program.

Marie Murphy presented the funding piece. GAP is sponsored by the German Foreign Office which funds the U.S. students while in Germany and the U.S. Department of State funds German students while in the U.S.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) will German students be visiting Lexington; (ii) appreciates the length of the program and giving of time during the summer months; (iii) please invite the Committee when the German students visit in November; (iv) this adds to getting kids excited about taking the German program; (v) appreciates the information for funding; (vi) is the selection process oversubscribed; (vii) price per day is excellent as longer immersion time is essential; and (viii) supportive of this trip and interested in funding mechanism.

**Motion to Support the Lexington High School 2014-2015 German Student Exchange Trip to Erding and Berlin, Germany, June 23-July 15, 2015** (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) **The Motion was Approved** (4-0) Stewart Absent

2. Vote on Solar Task Force Recommended Solar Panel Installation

Dan Voss, 10 Hancock Street and Chair of the Solar Task Force presented the Proposed Solar PV Systems on Town of Lexington Schools and Municipal Buildings. The presentation included Ameresco's technical feasibility study which identified seven schools and three municipal buildings. The criteria used to select those sites include roof age, available roof space, and roof coverage by vents, drains, air handling and other units, roof pitch and nearby tree shading. Ameresco has shared that all proposed systems with the exception of the Central Office will be installed with ballasted racking system, eliminating roof penetrations. The Central Office has a pitched roof and will require roof attachments for system installation. Mr. Voss shared the critical milestone dates for the town.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) is the overall goal to figure out quantity of energy to collect; (ii) is there a goal; (iii) is the Task Force keeping in mind which buildings are being considered for renovation or replacement over the next 30 years; (iv) is NSTAR the only utility company; (v) will any battery backup systems be considered; (vi) there are two schools not being considered (Hastings and Bridge); why not the Bridge School; (vii) if Bridge has a new roof, can solar be put on it; (viii) is Bowman on the list; (ix) what is the estimated output that the Task Force hopes to reach; (x) is the Task Force trying to reach some percentage number to determine which school is chosen; (xi) how confident is the Task Force will have them on the schools at the end of August; (xii) what happens if you cannot meet the end of August installation date; (xiii) how can you tell if a roof can handle the weight requirements; (xiv) will the racking be enough for high wind; (xv) will the town have to lay out any money for the construction; (xvi) will there be a credit for uploaded electricity; (xvii) what are the savings (we have long term agreement to purchase electricity) and how much; (xviii) are there any disadvantages; (xix) will this affect the school budget; and (xx) is there an order of magnitude .

Sean Newell, Lexington Public Facilities Department responded that Bridge has no useful life span on it; only looking at buildings with longer life spans.

**Motion to Approve the Solar Task Force Recommended Solar Panel Installation on Lexington Public Schools and Central Administration Office (Alessandrini, Crocker) The Motion was Approved (4-0) Stewart absent**

**3. Youth Risk Behavior Survey**

Dr. Ash introduced Jack McDevitt, Ph.D., Northeastern University and Amy Farrell, Ph.D., Northeastern University who collaborated on Youth Risk Behavior Survey Lexington High School 2013 Results and Jennifer Wolfrum, PE and Wellness teacher.

Dr. McDevitt shared that it is unusual to have 20 years' worth of data to study. The presentation included (i) Background on Massachusetts Youth Risk Behavior Survey (National Survey); (ii) Demographics of 2013 YRBS; (iii) Comparison Groups; (iv) Patterns of Student Cigarette Use; (v) Cigarette Smoking Trends over Time; (vi) Patterns of Marijuana Use; (vii) Marijuana Use Over Time; (viii) Patterns of Other Drug Use; (ix) Patterns of Student Drinking; (x) Student Drinking Over Time; (xi) Sexual Activity; (xii) Sexual Activity – Oral Sex; (xiii) Harassment (mostly freshman and sophomore) – LGBT report higher than any other group; (xiv) Academic Stress; (xv) Academic Stress and Other Stress; (xvi) Coping with Stress; (xvii) Consider Suicide in the last 30 days (females more likely to consider suicide than males and those that identify as LGBT are over 50% consider suicide; and (xviii) Conclusions (a) continued reduction in use of cigarette smoking and drug use; (b) stress remains a challenge for students of LHS; and (c) programs to reduce stress may be having an impact. Students see schools as providing the most accurate information through health curriculum and health teachers.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) does drinking include wine or beer or hard alcohol; (ii) any difference between male and female; (iii) are condoms still distributed free at the high school; (iv) would like to understand the breakdown in gender – females versus males; (v) definition of harassment in the survey; (vi) are there national averages; (vii) how do the grade levels break down in the suicide in last 30 days; (viii) no elementary health education yet; (ix) would like more information before next budget cycle to advocate for elementary health education; (x) not interested in taking away anything, just adding; (xi) what is break down for reasons why students consider suicide; (xii) are eating behaviors in the self-injury category; (xiii) how many questions were about online bullying; (xiv) is there any monitoring on how students feel about tattoos; (xv) where are the suggestions for students go back and know what to say and how to help their friends; (xvi) would like to hear how to address gender and ethnic stress; (xvii) what is the correlation of tobacco smokers and those who smoke marijuana; (xviii) concerned about alcohol use; are there any programs that we don't know about that we could be added; (xix) are students asked about seatbelt and bike helmet use; (xx) put the bike helmet question back in; and (xxi) is this survey being administered in the middle school.

Phyllis Neufeld, LEA President questioned when Dr. McDevitt reported extreme stress in classes went up and extreme stress in homework; do any of the questions drill down to find out where that is coming from in order to assist students.

Jennifer Wolfrum commented on condom use that students engaged in sexual intercourse consider themselves to be in a relationship. There are a smaller percentage of students having unprotected sex – but one partner was using birth control pill. Condoms are in baskets in nurse's office.

Ms. Wolfrum shared that in the future they can adjust the survey to perform a more in-depth survey on student stress. Ms. Wolfrum will review the data and will send to the Committee on Suicide. Ms. Wolfrum commented on sexual discussions between parents and students. A Professional Development afternoon for guidance, health teachers and nurses on self-injury will be held on Thursday, May 1.

Julie Fenn, Prevention Specialist spoke to binge drinking and what the high school is doing about it. The high school provides resources and handouts to students and health teachers. Ms. Fenn recommends starting with 5<sup>th</sup> graders and peer educators talking with kids in small groups about whom they go to with a problem.

#### 4. Vote on Recommendation to Address Fiske Overcrowding

Margaret Coppe spoke on the process for tonight's vote.

Dr. Ash shared that he had received a thoughtful letter from PTO Presidents and acknowledged that the past few months have been stressful.

Dr. Ash, along with Tom Martellone, Principal Fiske Elementary School, recommends if the grade 5 class sizes remain at 27 students, to follow the teachers' contract and assign an overmax aide for 10 hours per week to each grade 5 classroom with 27 students. If any grade 5 class reaches 28 or more students by August 1, the recommendation is for the Committee to authorize Dr. Ash to hire a 0.55 teacher for that classroom and not hire an overmax aide.

The plan he is recommending is an interim plan. At the June Town Meeting; and at the next School Committee meeting, he will recommend a charge for an Ad hoc Committee to hire an educational architect to look at space and enrollment. The Committee will be in a position to appoint people to the Ad hoc Committee.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) appreciates the Fiske Community dialogue and thanks Mr. Martellone for the Committee's various tours; (ii) need more in depth conversation about over max aides in the elementary schools; no written policy on classroom size; (iii) is solution sustainable; (iv) can the co-teaching model be instituted in other schools; (v) is solution equitable across the district; (vi) input from parents, teachers, staff and Committee; (vii) do large class sizes affect learning; (viii) less physical space affects students; and (ix) concerned with stress, morale and workload on teachers.

Judy Crocker is uncomfortable with this recommendation and does not endorse a .55 FTE teacher for 28 students plus. Ms. Crocker would like to utilize an art room as a classroom.

Jessie Steigerwald prefers that the children for the core part of the day have a room that is as small as possible and not plus one or plus 3. Thought it was a creative idea for a co-teaching model but needs to go with smaller class size now and in the future. She will support over max aides but not co-teaching. Ms. Steigerwald supports space mining and hopes to consider structural ideas (such as a new wing) or redistricting students. Ms. Steigerwald stated that it is too late to redistrict now.

Alessandro Alessandrini questioned what was ideal number of students in a classroom? Mr. Alessandrini is glad we are doing a master plan. He disagrees with respect to art and music not being part of the core curriculum. Some students are affected by art and music and they are very important. One parent said he didn't want to see art and music lost and there is a study which shows the effects of art and music on students that shows a 22% increase in Math and English performance. He cannot

accept replacing an art or music room as a classroom. Mr. Alessandrini stated that we are creating a master plan and the Committee should not have a knee jerk reaction at this time. The rooms are much larger that are housing larger class size. Supports short term plan and what the Enrollment Working Group (EWG) report will find. Mr. Alessandrini agrees with this proposal and wants to keep art, music and library separate.

Mary Ann Stewart extended her thanks to Dr. Ash and Mr. Martellone for providing answers to questions and tours of space. She spoke with three 5<sup>th</sup> grade teachers, who are positive about having a .55 teacher in the classroom for individualized instruction. Seeing art, music and library spaces, the children would miss the pottery and ceramics and drums and music. Library space is irregularly shaped and it is important to maintain those spaces as dedicated spaces. Ms. Stewart supports the recommendation and shares the equity aspect but for now this is fine and is happy to support for now and looks forward to space mining and longer term plan.

Margaret Coppe is torn because she thinks that while it is better to have a more manageable class size, across the district there have over-max aides have been used for many years. There have been a lot of concerns about hiring part-time teachers but does not believe this will be a problem, and we may already have some teachers who would like to work part time. Ms. Coppe is prepared to support the recommendation.

Dr. Ash shared that if there is an additional room available, without taking away art, music and library, he would split the class and hire one full time teacher.

Phyllis Neufeld, LEA President, questioned Dr. Ash if overmax aides will be hired by October 1 per the contract.

Kate Colburn, 49 Forest Street, extremely disappointed by the way this conversation is going. Ms. Colburn would like to see the part of the library used as a classroom and the rest maintained as a useable library space. Ms. Colburn thanked everyone for all the time everyone has devoted to this issue.

Stacy Raiche, mother of incoming 5th grader and echoes Kate Coburn's comments and extremely worried that we are setting a precedent that will be repeated for all the years to come. Believes that there is administrative space available and encourages the Committee think about that before the vote.

Alessandro Alessandrini hopes this is a short term solution and not a long term and does not want this to be a precedent and in a year and a half there may be more space available at Fiske and then Hastings. Mr. Alessandrini is looking at this as a short term solution with a long term solution of a wing. If there is a deficiency in learning the Committee will be informed.

Jessie Steigerwald suggested the Committee take a vote. Ms. Steigerwald shared that the Committee does not all agree.

Mark St. Louis, 5 Woodbrook Road, spoke to voluntary redistricting. Mr. St. Louis asked if his family participated in a voluntary redistricting, would they stay at Estabrook for just a year or would it be permanent.

Virginia Casson, PTO, shared she understands we do not know the final numbers, what is the date the administration that they will make a decision and make known to parents.

**Motion to Approve the Recommendation that the Superintendent be allowed to hire a 0.55 Teacher** (Alessandrini, Stewart) **The Motion was Approved** (3-2) Steigerwald, Crocker opposed

5. FY 2014 3rd Quarterly Financial Report

Mary Ellen Dunn presented the FY2014 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarterly Financial Report to the Committee which included a \$573,343 budget surplus, in addition to \$500,000 reserve for unanticipated expenses. The major source of these funds is due to positive balances in the out-of-district tuition and personnel accounts. Ms. Dunn requested the School Committee spend \$300,000 of the surplus on some high priority capital and expense items (a) technology (\$154,849.75); (b) Furniture (\$7,000); and (c) Educational Materials (\$138,150.25).

Dr. Ash is further recommending that the LABB credit not be used.

The Committee engaged in discussion regarding the budget surplus and spending allocations.

**Motion to Transfer \$100,000 from Out-of-district tuition to fund the additional \$100,000 that is projected will be needed in the Legal Services** (Steigerwald, Stewart) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

**Motion to not use the \$400,000 LABB Tuition Credit** (Stewart, Crocker) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

**Motion to permit the administration to spend \$300,000 of the surplus which includes Technology (\$154,849.75), Furniture (\$7,000) and Educational Materials (\$138,150.25)** (Steigerwald, Stewart)

There was further discussion among Committee members.

Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development spoke to materials and supplies that teachers and principals were asked to request and they have come in with priorities for all nine schools and the list will be in by Wednesday of next week. It may reduce the amount spent next year but new needs emerge each year. Capital budget gets submitted in October.

**Motion to permit the administration to spend \$300,000 of the surplus which includes Technology (\$154,849.75), Furniture (\$7,000) and Educational Materials (\$138,150.25)** (Steigerwald, Stewart) **The Motion was Approved** (5-0)

6. Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy (First Reading)

Mary Ellen Dunn presented the First Reading of the Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy. Ms. Dunn shared a brief history and that the first draft of the policy was developed using broad based community and constituency feedback. The town assembled the transportation forum which included the Sidewalk Committee, Planning Board, Traffic Safety Advisory Committee (TSAC), Department of Public Works (DPW), Board of Selectmen (BOS), and also used data from Safe Routes to Schools (SRTS) and some findings and recommendations from World Tech Engineering to document the state of traffic on our school property. Parents were also surveyed. Ms. Dunn stated that this is a new policy and this policy is

being drafted because we have been asked to do this. Ms. Dunn reviewed the three companion documents and some of the contentious points in the draft policy.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) thank you for being proactive; (ii) Line 33 can we add word "idling"; (iii) bicycle and applies to bicyclists be added to policy.

7. Public Hearing on School Choice

Dr. Ash announced that Massachusetts Statute, there needs to be a public hearing on whether the town should vote whether or not to participate in school choice. If the Committee does not take a vote, the town automatically becomes a public school choice community and students from other towns can become Lexington Public School students. He recommends ongoing notification that we do not wish to be a public school choice community.

There were no public comments.

8. School Committee Liaison Assignments

The Committee engaged in discussions and decisions of liaison assignments for organizations and Unions. The Committee decided to eliminate the following organizations from their liaison lists: (a) Chamber of Commerce, (b) Estabrook Advisory Council, (c) Health Benefits Committee, (d) Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and (e) School Transportation and Safety Study Committee.

**Motion to Appoint Margaret Coppe to the 20/20 Committee (Steigerwald, Stewart)  
The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

9. Vote to Establish a Subcommittee to Examine School Holiday Recognition

This item was postponed to the next Committee meeting.

V. Consent Agenda

1. Vote to Approve Lexington High School 2014-2015 French Student Exchange Trip to Antony, France, and Brussels, Belgium, February 5-21, 2015
2. Vote to Accept a \$700 Donation from Weidong Wang and Microsoft Corporation for the Chinese Language Program at Lexington High School
3. Vote to Accept a \$250 Donation from Xiongwei Zhou and Rong Li in Support of the 2014 LHS Science and Engineering Fair

**Motion to Accept Consent Agenda Items 1-3 above, with Gratitude (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (5-0)**

V. Adjourn

**Motion to Adjourn (Stewart, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved 5-0**

The meeting adjourned at 11:05 p.m.

*Meeting Materials:* Meeting Agenda; LPS Field Trip Request Form from LHS German trip to Erding and Bavaria June 23-July 15, 2015; Solar PV Educational Program from Ameresco; Youth Risk Behavior Survey Lexington High School 2013 Results Executive Summary; Memorandum dated April 21, 2014 from Dr. Ash to School Committee re: recommendations on Fiske School Overcrowding – April 29, 2014;

Memorandum dated April 23, 2014 from Dr. Ash to School Committee re Recommended Use of FY 2014 Surplus Funds; Memorandum dated April 24, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Ash re Traffic Safety and Mitigation Policy Recommendation First Reading; Proposed School Committee Liaison Assignments – March 2014 Draft; Memorandum dated April 8, 2014 re Proposal for a Sub-Committee on LPS & Holiday Recognition ; LPS Field Trip Request Form from LHS French Exchange to Paris, France and Brussels, Belgium February 5 – 21, 2015; Memorandum m dated April 14, 2014 from Mary Ellen Dunn to Dr. Ash re Acceptance of Donation from Weidong Wang and Microsoft Corporation in the amount of \$700.00; Donation from Xiongwei Zhou and Rong Li re 2014 LHS Science & Engineering Fair in the amount of \$250.00

The next scheduled meetings of the School Committee are as follows:

- Thursday, May 8, 2014 — 7:30 p.m., Cary Memorial Building, Battin Hall, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue (Discussion of the Superintendent Search)
- Tuesday, May 13 — 7:30 p.m., Town Offices Building, Selectmen’s Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue (Regular Meeting)

Voted by the School Committee September 16, 2014