

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, September 30, 2014
Jonas Clarke Middle School, Auditorium
17 Stedman Road

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

The Executive Session Minutes were taken by Margaret Coppe

The Public Session Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting convened at 7:00 p.m.

I. Call to Order (Clarke Room 137)

Motion to go into Executive Session

Ms. Coppe moved to go into Executive Session to discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining pertaining to all Bargaining Units, to return to open session at the conclusion. Further, the chair declares that an executive session is necessary to protect the position of the School Committee. The motion was seconded.

Alessandrini AYE
Crocker AYE
Steigerwald AYE
Coppe AYE

7:05 PM **Executive Session Convenes**

7:30 PM **Executive Session Ends and Return to Open Session**

II. Return to Public Session and Welcome (Clarke Auditorium)

The Chair opened the meeting and invited public comment.

Katie Wipke, 53 Asbury Street wanted to go on record that she sent an email to the School Committee regarding no agenda packets available on the town website, but there are for other town committees. Ms. Wipke inquired why it was not posted on the town website and could it be.

Margaret Coppe responded that she is aware of the issue but in the interim, the School Committee's packets have been available since February 2014 on the School Committee Website under Minutes and Agendas <http://lps.lexingtonma.org/Page/4316> .

Jessie Steigerwald announced that a resident emailed for assistance finding the Policy Subcommittee Agendas and minutes online. Ms. Steigerwald stated that they are all sent to the web administrator for posting under the Policy Manual Subcommittee page. Posting the minutes has been delayed. If anyone has questions in the interim they should contact Ms. Steigerwald directly, who will be glad to help them.

III. Superintendent's Announcements:

Dr. Ash had the following announcements:

1. Estabrook Ribbon Cutting Ceremony on October 6. Dr. Ash announced that on October 6 beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Estabrook Elementary School Cafeteria/auditorium, there will be an assembly of students, teachers, staff and the community for a short dedication of the new school. State Treasurer Steve Grossman and John McCarthy, Executive Director of the MSBA, and others will speak. The ribbon cutting ceremony will follow outside.

Dr. Ash requested that his second announcement be made after the School Committee Member Announcements.

2. November 4 Professional Learning Day. Dr. Ash invited Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development to speak about the November 4 Professional Learning Day entitled "Lexington Learns Together. " On November 4, 2014 Lexington will bring together 800 educators for the first all day Professional Learning Day. There was a survey sent out to identify topics of interest by the members and they also asked for facilitators. Ms. Pilarski then showed a video of what the Professional Learning Day will be like.

Dr. Ash shared that he would like, if time is available on an Agenda to have Ms. Pilarski return to show what was offered and the feedback from those attending.

IV. School Committee Member Announcements

Jessie Steigerwald requested a moment of silence for the loss of two former Lexington students, Jessica Josie Watson and Rahime Robinson and to extend her condolences to the Robinson, Watson and Boden families for their loss.

Ms. Steigerwald also shared that she attended the No More/Know More Dating Violence Break the Silence Event and thanked Jennifer Wolfrum and Julie Fenn for attending on behalf of LPS.

Judy Crocker shared that she attended the School Based Council Roundtable and thanked everyone who attended the enrollment meeting at the Bridge Elementary School last evening.

Margaret Coppe announced that annual Revolutionary Revelry held in May each year will be holding an initial planning meeting on October 2 at Noon in the Town Hall.

Ms. Coppe also announced the Cary Lecture Series will be held at the Jonas Clark Middle School Auditorium due to the Cary Hall Renovations. On October 25 at 8:00 p.m. Dr. Michael Rich from Harvard Medical School will share on the role violence has on children.

Ms. Coppe announced the Trivia Bee will be held in the Lexington High School Auditorium on November 12 at 7:00 p.m. and inquired if the Committee would like to put a team together.

Ms. Coppe announced that Phyllis Neufeld, President of Lexington Education Association (LEA) would be retiring at the end of the year and that her presence would be missed. Ms. Coppe asked if Ms. Neufeld would like to share a few words.

Phyllis Neufeld, LEA President thanked Margaret Coppe for her kind words. Ms. Neufeld shared that it has been an honor and privilege to work in Lexington for most of her 40 year career helping students reach their potential and for the past 8 years as President of the LEA to help

solve problems and to work with the administration to have the best school system. Ms. Neufeld shared that her decision is bittersweet but it is in the best interest of her and her family.

V. Agenda

1. Overview of School and District Data Needs

Maureen Kavanaugh, Director of Planning and Assessment presented to the Committee her report on Data and Assessment Use in the Lexington Public Schools. Ms. Kavanaugh explained why her position was created. During the summer of 2014 she performed an initial review of district-wide use of data and student assessments. Ms. Kavanaugh met with administrators, principals and other leaders from each school and several departments. She studied key district and school documents, commonly used reports and district data systems to explore (i) what data was regularly collected; (ii) how that data is analyzed and report to stakeholders; (iii) how that data is used in decision making and planning; (iv) what the current capacity to collect, store and analyze data; and (v) what were some of the short and long-range data and planning needs.

Ms. Kavanaugh reviewed the strengths which included (i) having timely data; (ii) clearly established use for data use across the district; (iii) several common measures and data points and benchmark data points; (iv) district is really digging into groups and individual student data to identify strengths and weaknesses of the students; (v) data collection and storage in the LPS; (vi) clear and consistent priority for the social and emotional data of the students; (vii) several data experts in-house in our schools and departments; (viii) ongoing data practices.

Ms. Kavanaugh reviewed the areas that can be enhanced which included (i) not all data is consistent and orderly; (ii) gaps in collection high quality common measures in non-ELA and math subject area; (iii) expressed need to be more efficient in data collection and reports; (iv) not missing connections and opportunities and not consistently flowing to educators; (v) expressed need for more common assessments that are not being collected in current data system; (vi) data archiving; and (vii) restricted access can be a barrier.

Ms. Kavanaugh her areas of focus which include (i) good communication; (ii) use of existing resources are available; (iii) have more user friendly access to data; (iv) explore how this tool can be used across all subject areas; (v) collaboration with other staff members; (vi) provide immediate support for teachers and staff to build their data and assessment literacy; (vii) fuller review of assessment practices to have a balanced system; and (viii) build multi-layers to support the staff.

Ms. Kavanaugh shared the area she would like to explore in the future which include (i) do teachers have the data they need; (ii) what extent do teachers have access to high quality measures aligned to the district standards, values and priorities; (iii) is the LPS using student assessment as a means not an end; (iv) how do we use data to create a dialogue with student and families; and (v) what support can be provided to staff to increase efficiency and effectiveness in their handling and use of data.

2. PTA/O Presidents Council (PPC) Budget Presentation

Bettina McGimsey, PTA/O Presidents Council (PPC) Chair shared with the Committee (i) the PTAs and PTOs volunteer hours and money raised would be best spent on (i) academic enrichment; (ii) innovative teaching methodologies; (iii) community-building activities; and (iv) staff appreciation. Ms. McGimsey thanked the Committee for the \$5.51 per pupil expenditure increase for 2014-2015. Ms. McGimsey then requested the Committee and Lexington Public Schools (LPS) develop the 2015-2016 budgets to cover the following which the PTA/Os have

been covering: (a) standard classroom supplies; (b) standard cleaning supplies; (c) furniture; (d) books; (e) field trips and other financial aid; and (f) landscaping and grounds maintenance. Ms. McGimsey provided a table which was an overview of what representative schools in the LPS district paid for during 2013-2-014 school year.

There were questions and comments from the Committee (i) thank you for the work that the PPC performs; (ii) surprised to see list of funding items; (iii) would the next be to ask the principals to send us what their needs are most enhanced by these resources; (iv) in the furniture category money spent; (v) interested in how PTAs contributing for field trips for students and ask principals what type of trips and how many students; (vi) landscaping - understand what is being purchased and what items could be purchased through the Department of Public Facilities (DPF); (vii) books - are these donations or purchased and where they are located (i.e., library); (viii) classroom and cleaning supplies that Ms. Dunn and Mr. Goddard have helped cleaning supplies and what is being purchased by the PPC; (ix) only 7 schools, ; (x) do teachers routinely give kids supply lists at the beginning of the year; (xi) is the operational budget not large enough or are there things that people over and above and how do you make that distinction; (xii) comment on supply list the materials on them are notebooks and pencils and they are mandatory and there is a one-time expense for a \$100 calculator and students need for most of middle and high school and supply list should be considered \$; (xiii) the Committee is very appreciative of all the work the PTAs and PTOs have done for our schools; (xiv) what you mentioned about flexibility and when we didn't have a lot in the budget thank you mentioning how you stepped up.

3. Discussion of School Capacity and Enrollment Projections

Dr. Ash framed the discussion (i) goal to ensure adequate and high quality space for the long-term; (ii) enrollment increasing and run a risk that enrollment will increase and without additional space our space will not be adequate; (iii) if you want a special town meeting, what options or policies does the Committee want (i.e., modulars, wings, etc.).

The Committee engaged in discussion regarding Dr. Ash's discussion suggestion above. The discussion included (i) an exploration work group and explore adding space at Harrington and possibly moving the new Pre-K to another school or Central Administration Building; (ii) parent concern over modulars being placed at Bridge and Bowman Elementary Schools; (iii) dedicated art and music spaces; (iv) space mining at elementary and middle schools; (v) overcrowding at Fiske and the possibility of adding a wing; (vi) redistricting; (vii) architect consultant's opinion; (viii) Enrollment Working Group's Report; and (ix) modulars that would be ready for next September, would not be the same as what is currently at the high school.

Mary Anton, Principal at Bowman Elementary School shared that if there are currently 26 sections with a dedicated music room and a dedicated art room. There is an overflow room to work with children. Ms. Anton would not be opposed to having 27 sections, for one year only, and the gym's sliding partition could be used to split the gym and music would be on one side and the gym located on the other.

Public Comment:

Kathy Fahy, 6 Todd Road commented on class size and questioned how the Committee determines class size. Ms. Fahy is disturbed by the overcrowding at the Fiske Elementary School.

Jeff Leonard, Performing Arts Coordinator, LPS, 912 Mass Ave. shared on behalf of his colleagues and stated that if the Committee wanted all students go to a dedicated music and art room, then it would be sufficient to have one art room, one music room, and one shared room for the extra sections. Mr. Leonard offered to present to the Committee what could happen and the impact on student learning.

Alison Stevens, 1373 Mass Ave. commented on redistricting and would not like to do it more than once.

Katie Wipke, 53 Ashbury Street commented on redistricting and suggested the Committee keep an eye on the number of new houses being built when considering redistricting. Ms. Wipke is concerned about the overcrowding at the middle schools and the high school.

Harvy Simkovitz, 4 Angier Road, commented on how well the School Committee is addressing this complicated problem and the safety valves at the elementary schools. Mr. Simkovitz questioned why safety valves are not being considered for all elementary schools and to keep cost in mind.

Ann Bobo, 66 Oak Street, she has a daughter at Bowman Elementary School and one at Clarke Middle School and is concerned that the art and music rooms will be used to solve the overcrowding issues.

Ashley Waring, 16 Hathaway Road commented on discussion regarding the Fiske Elementary School, and redistricting and asked the Committee to be thoughtful about the ILP program.

Faith Casperian, 7 Juniper commented that she moved to Lexington exclusively for the school system and agreed with Ms. Bobo and is not in favor of cutting the art and music rooms to solve enrollment problem.

Nancy Timbo, 5 Fairbanks Road, she has one child at Bridge Elementary School and one at the Clarke Middle School and shared that Bridge should not support any further enrollment and is not in favor of modulars. Ms. Timbo urged Committee to look at other options because of safety at the Bridge Elementary School.

Michele Oldershaw, 10 Keeler Farm Way shared her concern for overcrowding and that the Fiske School community has continually attended meetings, held their own surveys, hosted PTO meetings, reported on this issue, and written letters. Ms. Oldershaw is disappointed that this analysis has not been done or for Fiske or any other school for next year. She urged the Committee to support the principals.

Tim Hall, 13 Sheridan congratulated on such a wonderful school district that has this problem. His son attends Fiske and he suggested that the Committee consider occupying the school buildings year round and to have children do three weeks on and three weeks off. He stated that this has worked in other districts.

Brian Cutler, 7 Carving Avenue commented on splitting the gym into two separate areas and is opposed to this idea at the Bowman Elementary School.

Christina Lin, 2 Eustis Street seconded the comment and concern at the middle and high schools. Ms. Lynn hopes that the middle schools and high school begin to be discussed. Ms. Lynn

questioned how redistricting would work and requested the data be shown to see exactly how the overcrowding is impacting the learning of children.

Stacey Raiche, 12 Glen Road commented on the Fiske Elementary School overcrowding wants a plan now to address the overcrowding and urged the Committee for a permanent solution.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street, Precinct 6 Town Meeting Member, shared her history in Lexington and shared her thoughts on why the overcrowding is happening today. Ms. McKenna advocated for more schools several years ago and is unhappy to hear that the Committee did not know there was a problem. Ms. McKenna commented on the Enrollment Working Group and urged the Committee to work with new committees to help solve the overcrowding problems. Ms. McKenna urged the Committee to not rely on the same decision making done in the past but to look to the Enrollment Working Group ideas.

Judy Crocker mentioned that the Ad Hoc Master School Planning Committee is also working on this problem along with the Enrollment Working Group.

Ms. Coppe shared next steps in the process.

Jessie Steigerwald would like to see the reports and recommendations from Jeff Leonard and would like the report from the architect and also asked the architect for modular costs at the Fiske Elementary School.

Dr. Ash shared that the Committee asked for reports from the performing and visual arts if those spaces moved what would be the impact and what would the impact be if they moved into the gym. The architect has also been asked to review the costs of moving the Pre-K into the Central Administration Building and place modulars to the Central Administration Building. They have already asked for two modulars at Bridge and Bowman Elementary Schools and what would it cost to add additional classrooms on to Fiske Elementary School. Dr. Ash is very concerned about Clarke Middle School overcrowding situation.

Alessandro Alessandrini shared that he would also like the impact of the original building if modulars were placed and commented on studies that have shown that dedicated music and art rooms has an effect on learning.

Judy Crocker, would like space mining to begin at the Clarke Middle School, and asked if modulars could be placed for a short term solution and then find a permanent solution to the problems at Fiske Elementary School.

4. Vote on Superintendent Search Committee Criteria

Margaret Coppe shared that the focus groups have been completed and a town wide survey closed last week. The consultant shared 650 responded to survey and the consultant is putting together their advertising and next Tuesday night will present their findings to the Committee.

The Committee engaged in discussion on the numbers and groups which should make up the Superintendent Search Committee. The Committee agreed on 2 School Committee Members, 1 Municipal Finance member, 1 Capital Appropriations member, 1 Special Education member; 1 teacher, 2 parents, 1 principal and 1 union member.

The Committee then discussed dates on the Application for Search Committee Members and Ms. Coppe reviewed the requirements of the applicants. All applicants must attend all meetings. The Lexington Minuteman Newspaper will place the notice on two occasions.

VI. Consent Agenda

1. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of May 27, 2014
2. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of June 10, 2014
3. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of June 17, 2014
4. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of July 21, 2014
5. Vote to Release Approved School Committee Executive Session Minutes of April 9, 2012
6. Vote to Approve and Not Release School Committee Executive Session Minutes of September 17, 2014

**Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 1-6 above (Crocker, Alessandrini)
The Motion was Approved (4-0)**

The Chair discussed future meeting dates and agenda items.

VII. Adjourn:

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

The meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

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

Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; Memorandum dated September 26, 2014 to Paul B. Ash, Superintendent from Maureen Kavanaugh re Data and Assessment Use in LPS; Letter dated September 23, 2014 from the PTA/O Presidents Council to Members of the Lexington School Committee re 2015-2016 budget; Memorandum dated September 26, 2014 to the School Committee from Paul B. Ash, Superintendent re Discussion of Elementary Overcrowding; Email from Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities to Phil Poinelli re Old Harrington, PNUM: 14043

Voted by the School Committee January 6, 2015