

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Monday, March 31, 2014
Cary Memorial Building, Estabrook Room
1605 Massachusetts Avenue

6:30 p.m. Call to Order and Welcome:

Public Comment – (Written comments to be presented to the School Committee; oral presentations not to exceed three minutes.)

6:35 p.m. School Committee Member Announcements:

6:40 p.m. Agenda:

1. Vote to Support Proclamation Recognizing February 21 as *International Mother Language Day*
2. Ad Hoc School Transportation Study Committee – Final Report

7:30 p.m. The School Committee will remain in session and relocate to Battin Hall for the purpose of discussing Annual Town Meeting Articles.

The next meeting of the School Committee is scheduled for Wednesday, April 2, at 6:30 p.m. in the Cary Memorial Building, Estabrook Room, 1605 Massachusetts Avenue.

All agenda items and the order of items are approximate and subject to change.

From:  "Ahmed, Noha T." <Noha.Ahmed@tufts.edu> 2/24/2014 8:36:4... 
Subject: follow up
To:  **Miriam Sousa**

Attachments:  Mother Language Revision 2 pdf.pdf / Uploaded File (62K)

Hello Dr. Ash,

Thank you so much for meeting with us yesterday on the 21st of February. We really appreciate the time you put in to speak with us about International Mother Language Day and are excited that you share the same passion to preserve and celebrate not only language, but culture and diversity too, in Lexington. Attached is the proclamation we submitted to the Board of Selectmen at their February 2014 meeting; for more information, the UN website listed in the References of the attached document is a good place to start for more background information about the UN recognition of International Mother Language Day.

Again, thank you for working with us to advocate for International Mother Language Day. We hope that the School Committee votes in favor of its recognition within the public schools whether through an announcement over the loudspeaker, as a note in the school calendar and student planner, or both! We are also open to any other ideas the members of the School Committee may have in order to integrate the core values of International Mother Language Day in the schools. Please let us know when the School Committee is meeting to vote and whether or not they would like us to attend. Thank you again for all your help and it was a pleasure to meet you yesterday. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Best,
Zahin and Noha Ahmed

January 2014

Revision 1

To the Selectman of the Town of Lexington,

We, Noha and Zahin Ahmed, are writing to you to express our interest in the formal recognition of the 21st of February as International Mother Language Day by the Town of Lexington. We have been in contact with the offices of Congressman Mike Barrett and Congressman Karen Spilka since our original submission of this proposal in April 2012. A representative of Mike Barrett, Josh Basseches, has asked us to resubmit a revised proposal for the upcoming meeting of the Board of Selectmen in February 2014.

The history of the Language Movement in Bangladesh begins in the late 1940s when the differences between Pakistan (modern day Pakistan) and East Pakistan (modern day Bangladesh) began to raise violence amongst the two communities. This ongoing conflict escalated when Urdu was officially recognized as the national language of the two nations, and Bangla, the language spoken by individuals in East Pakistan, was to be abolished. This abolishment of Bangla raised outrage amongst Bengali communities who were denied their right to speak their mother tongue. Although over fifty percent of the population lived in East Pakistan and already spoke the Bangla language, there was a skew in political power favoring the opinions of individuals in the West. Power was centralized in West Pakistan and often silenced the opinions of Bengalis living in the East. Bengalis had little representation in government and even smaller influence in political and social matters. Thus began the Language Movement in Bangladesh.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) officially recognized the first International Mother Language Day on the 17th of November of 1999 in hopes to “promote the preservation and protection of all languages used by the people of the world” (1). UNESCO celebrates International Mother Language Day on February 21st not only as commemoration of the Bangladeshi student protesters who gave their lives in order to regain the right to recognize Bangla as their national language, but also as a symbol of the importance of language and culture in the modern world.

My younger brother, Zahin, and I are both first generation Bangladeshi-Americans. We are multilingual, speaking three languages each, and speaking Bangla, the mother tongue of Bangladesh, with fluency. Both in school and at home, we have been taught to hold culture and language to the utmost importance as defining factors of ourselves. We are certain that other Lexington families, too, share a similar emphasis on the preservation of both culture and language within their homes.

The recognition of Mother Language Day in the Town of Lexington would highlight the town's unique interest in celebrating culture. Even in the public schooling system, foreign languages are taught to students at a very early age. This early introduction to various cultures and languages gives children a wider sense of cultural awareness and makes them more worldly citizens in their future.

Lexington is the birthplace of Independence. This is where the first shot of the Revolutionary War was fired and "heard 'round the world." Let our recognition of the 21st of February as International Mother Language Day resonate with the same glory and pride and let us celebrate the diversity we cherish in this town by officially recognizing this very special day.

We believe that the value of diversity, language, and culture are very relevant in modern society. Formal recognition of International Mother Language Day supports these ideas and will be not only historic but momentous for the Town of Lexington. We hope you consider this proposal and vote to formally recognize the 21st of February as International Mother Language Day in the Town of Lexington. We appreciate your consideration. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Noha Ahmed (Undergraduate at Tufts University and Lexington High School Alum)

Zahin Ahmed (Sophomore at Lexington High School)

Works Cited

1. United Nations. "International Mother Language Day." 2012. <http://www.un.org/en/events/motherlanguageday/>

Proclamation

Whereas: In 1999 the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO proclaimed February 21 as International Mother Language Day; and

Whereas: International Mother Language Day recognizes the preservation and protection of all languages used by people of the world; and

Whereas: Lexington has long recognized the importance of cultural preservation and acceptance in the world, fostering peace and freedom of speech; and

Whereas: The number of international residents in Lexington has grown by 26.3 percent within the last decade

NOW THEREFORE, WE THE LEXINGTON BOARD OF SELECTMEN recognize February 21, 2014 as:

International Mother Language Day

As a measure of the Town's belief in the value of diversity and the growth of culture within our community.

November 18, 2013

Ad hoc School Transportation & Safety Study Committee

Final Report

March 31, 2014

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Members

December 16, 2011– April 2014

- Judy Crocker, Safe Routes To School Coordinator
- Elaine Celi, LPS Transportation Coordinator
- Elaine Dratch, TAC
- Mary Ellen Dunn, Asst Superintendent of Business and Finance
- Captain Manny Ferro, LPD
- Sharon Kendall, PTA/PTO representative
- Deb Mauger, Board of Selectman liaison
- Jessie Steigerwald, School Committee liaison
- Craig Weeks, community member

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Philosophy for Effecting Positive Change

- ✓ Best practices
- ✓ Define level of expectation
- ✓ Shared objectives among stakeholders

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“The difficulty comes in not grasping new ideas, but rather in escaping from the old ones.

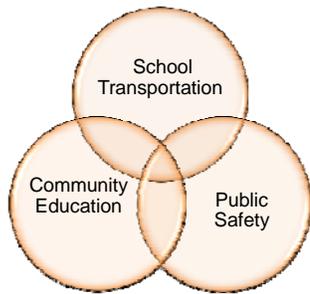
John Maynard Keynes

“If people are treated as special, sacred even, they behave that way. This creates a different kind of society.”

David Byrne

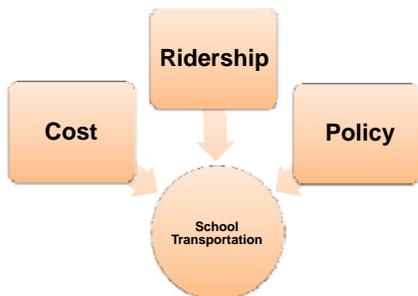
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Traffic Safety on School Property

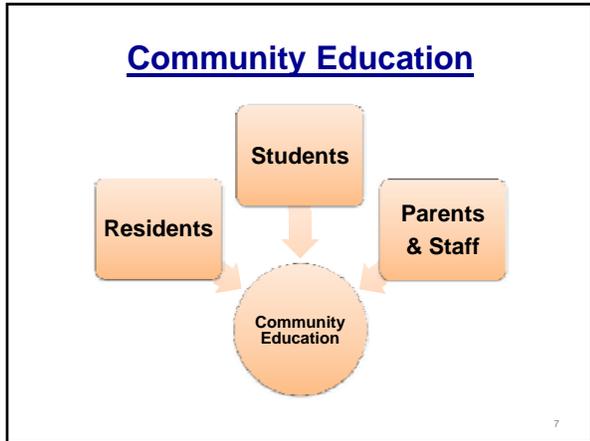


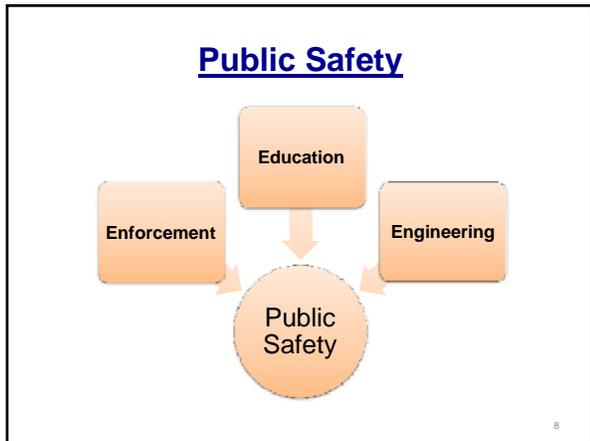
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School Transportation



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Charge #1: Identify proposal(s) to reduce the cost of school bus service.

- ✓ Successful Safe Routes To School sponsored Article 17 at 2012 annual Town Meeting requested one year of funding to lower parent bus fee by half to \$300/student.
- ✓ Formed economic subgroup to study bus contracts as LPS entered into new contract cycle.
- ✓ Based on Article 17's success, School Committee adopted a new transportation budgetary price point for FY13-present.

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Charge #2: Identify ways to increase school bus timeliness.

↑# Students = ↑# Buses
↑# Bus Routes = shorter bus routes

- ✓ Student ridership is directly proportional to the number of buses.
- ✓ The more buses, the shorter the routes, the fewer tardy buses, and the less time students spend on buses.
- ✓ LPS has added 7 buses since FY12 (39% increase) and 17 routes (39% increase).

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Charge #3: Propose initiatives to promote school bus ridership.

- ✓ Created Flexpass program: a partnership with Lexpress to provide a late bus for MS and HS students.
- ✓ Created *Ride After* program: a partnership with local afterschool elementary enrichment programs to provide direct school to program transportation.
- ✓ Conducted LPS student art and slogan contest on why it's cool to ride the bus.
- ✓ Worked with LHS Marketing class to create Public Service Announcements.

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Charge #3: Propose initiatives to promote school bus ridership.

- ✓ Work with Lexington's Bike Walk 'n Bus Week to coordinate bus registration and conduct a school bus open house.
- ✓ Promote bus subsidy during identified bus registration period via Kindergarten Orientation, school posters, list serves and school newsletters, LexMedia, and Distance Eligible Housing locations.
- ✓ Bus Registration improvements including online registration, school site management, staff communication, bus pass, and the fee structure centered on renewals and subsidy.

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Charge #4: Propose approaches to address traffic and pedestrian safety concerns in and around our schools.

- ✓ Safe Routes To School and DPW-sponsored 2013 School Zone Evaluation grant.
- ✓ Created Safety Greeter Kits, which included OSHA vests.
- ✓ Introduced concept of School Committee being property owners and as such directly affect many stakeholders.

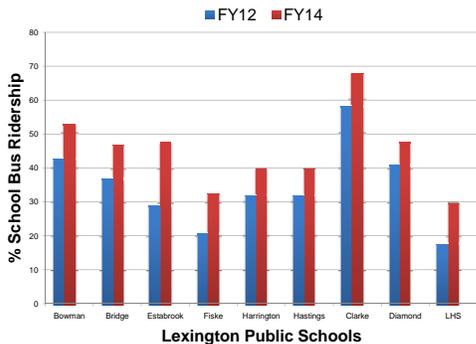
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Charge #4: Propose approaches to address traffic and pedestrian safety concerns in and around our schools.

- ✓ WorldTech Preliminary LPS Traffic and Mitigation Study
- ✓ Work with BoS and LPD to codify school and municipal signage
- ✓ Clarke Bus Loop Study
- ✓ Draft School Traffic and Mitigation Policy

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FY12 vs FY14 School Bus Ridership



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FY12 vs FY14 School Ridership

	FY12	FY14	Change
Bowman	43%	53%	+10%
Bridge	37%	47%	+10%
Estabrook	29%	48%	+19%
Fiske	21%	33%	+12%
Harrington	32%	40%	+8%
Hastings	32%	40%	+8%
Clarke	58%	68%	+10%
Diamond	41%	48%	+7%
LHS	18%	30%	+12%

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FY12 vs FY14 School Bus Ridership

	FY12	FY14	Change
Total Ridership	31%	43%	+12%
Ridership Range	18%-58%	30%-68%	10%-12%
# Students	2065	2876	811
# Buses	18	25	+7
# Routes	44	61	+17
MS & HS Flexpass	211	270	+ 706
ES Ride After	NA	240	+415

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Work In Progress

- Draft School Traffic and Mitigation Policy (Spring 2014)
- Coordinated safety communication between LPD & LPS (Spring 2014)
- LPS Infrastructure improvements (2013-2016)
- Appropriate placement of Safe Routes to School Coordinator (Fall 2014)

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Work In Progress

- Continue to communicate uniform behavior expectations to staff, administration, parents, and students (ongoing)
- Create GIS mapping of school property signage and pavement markings (2014-2016)
- School zone improvements (Summer 2014)
- ES Bus captains to improve site management of student arrival & dismissal (FY15)

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Recommendations to SC, Superintendent, BoS, DPF, DPW

- Update School handbooks to communicate school hours, traffic individual school plans, and LPS policy
- Communication – bi-annual parent reminders
- Continue to embrace Safe Routes To School as a means to encourage student walkers, bikers, and bus riders

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**Recommendations to
SC, Superintendent, BoS, DPF, DPW**

- Continue to fund Sidewalk Committee and DPF as a means to improve town and school infrastructure
- Propose quarterly meeting between DPF, DPW, SRTS, LPS, and LPD to continue a working collaborative for addressing shared responsibilities of short-term and long-term goals
- Continue to support principals
- Continue to create incentives for walkers, bikers, bus riders

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**2013 LHS Marketing Class
Public Service Announcements**

Credits: Bill Cole, LHS teacher

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/9ose5kydwlq6vij/Safe%20Routes%20Ad.mov>

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