

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Tuesday, June 6, 2016
Town Hall, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA

Present:

Chair, Alessandro Alessandrini; Vice Chair, Eileen Jay; Jessie Steigerwald; Kate Colburn; Kathleen Lenihan; Superintendent, Dr. Czajkowski;

The minutes were taken by Kristen Cronin, Executive Assistant to the School Committee and Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

The meeting convened at 7pm

Call to Order and Welcome:

Chair, Alessandro Alessandrini called the meeting to order, and introduced committee members.

Public Comments:

J. Crocker: MASC strongly recommends that anyone who served on the School Committee be allowed to present feedback on the Superintendent's evaluation.

Superintendent's Announcement:

Dr. Czajkowski invited the School Committee to Laura Lasa's Retirement Reception on June 20.

Dr. Czajkowski updated the Committee on the High School Principal Search.

School Committee Member Announcements:

K. Colburn: Attended graduation on Sunday. It was beautiful and exciting to see the graduates as they start their new journey. Congratulations Class of 2017.

K. Lenihan: Congratulations Class of 2017. Thank you to so many people who organized the All Night Graduation Party. It truly takes an army of volunteers.

J. Steigerwald: Thanked the 5th grade class at Estabrook classroom for the Annual Read Aloud Event. On June 7, the Community Coalition will be having two Welcome Coffee events at the Community Center. Meeting this morning on late start task force with Mr. Ian Dailey was very productive. Survey will be coming out in August to parents, staff and students. Change at one level could affect all levels, so the feedback on this survey is very valuable.

A. Alessandrini: Congratulations Class of 2017.

E. Jay: Congratulations Class of 2017.

Consent Agenda:

1. Request for Approval of Donation to Harrington Elementary from the Harrington PTA on behalf of the Harrington 5th grade class in the amount of \$1,049.00

2. Request for Approval of Donation to Harrington Elementary from Lexplorations in the amount of \$200.00
3. Request for Approval of Donation to Bridge Elementary from Wilson Farms for the “*Shop your day at Wilsons*” in the amount of \$176.00
4. Vote to Approve Lexington High School International Field Trip for the National Science Bowl Team to Sydney, Australia, July 15 through July 20, 2017
5. Vote to Approve Clarke Middle School and Diamond Middle School International Field Trip to Malaga, Spain, March 14 through March 23, 2018
6. Vote to Approve Clarke Middle School and Diamond Middle School International Field Trip to Quebec City, QC, May 30 through June 1, 2018
7. Vote to Approve School Committee Minutes of January 13, 2017

Motion to approve consent agenda items 1-7. (Jay/Steigerwald)

The Motion was approved (5-0).

Agenda:

1. Discussion of 2018-2019 Recommended School Calendar:

The School Committee discussed the feedback that was received on the 2018 – 2019 Calendar. Students from across the district came to speak on how important it is to celebrate Muslim holidays as we would any other holiday in the district. The Muslim community is requesting that the schools be closed in observance of their religious holidays.

Dr. Czajkowski: If the schools were to be closed then the district would need to start before Labor Day. If we don't do that and we add holidays, we would have to build in five additional snow days. Another approach is to eliminate all religious holidays altogether.

K. Colburn: I think that given the climate in our country right now, awareness of all cultures is extremely important and setting the stage in the school can be important. Having these holidays on the calendar would prompt conversation; having students excused from school that day would make sense as well. It should be all or nothing when it comes to holidays., This may be a bigger conversation especially if it involves negotiations. Ms. Lenihan agreed with Ms. Colburn that all holidays need to be recognized or none at all.

E. Jay: It is very important that we as a community recognize all the different cultures and religions. Recognizing Muslim holidays on the calendar is important. This could open opportunities to have discussions around the holiday. If you are celebrating a religious holiday that should be an excused absence.

The School Committee agreed to recognize the Muslim holidays for the 2017 – 18 School Year Calendar. The School Committee also recommends that Dr. Chase form a calendar working group with Administration and a School Committee member to start reviewing the 2018-19 calendar and 2019-20 calendar. Andrew Baker will serve on this working group to start looking at all holidays and the effects of starting before/after Labor Day.

Move to recognize adding two holidays on the 2017-18 calendar. (Steigerwald/Alessandrini)
The Motion was approved 5-0.

2. Discussion on Changing Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day

From the survey that was provided to the School Committee, 77% of students strongly believe that Columbus Day should be changed to Indigenous People's Day because it is highly disrespectful and unjust to celebrate a man who led many horrible events such as Indian removal and destruction of culture.

The School Committee supports the change from Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day. Mr. Alessandrini will be researching the next steps that other districts took to change Columbus Day to Indigenous People's Day.

Move to recognize Indigenous People's Day on the 2017 -18 school year calendar; however, leave Columbus Day on the calendar until the Committee hears back from Mr. Alessandrini.
(Steigerwald/Alessandrini)
The motion was approved 5-0.

3. Science Curriculum Review:

Dr. Jackie Crowe, LHS Science Department Head; Dr. Valerie Franks, Middle School Science Department Head and Ms. Karen McCarthy, K-5 Science Curriculum Coordinator updated the School Committee on their committee's work during year one of the Science Curriculum Review, including K-12 Curriculum Review Goals for year one and K-5 Accomplishments in year one. 37 educators from across the district, represented each grade level, special education, ELL, technology, and administration.

The School Committee thanked Ms. Crowe, Dr. Franks and Ms. McCarthy for conducting this review. The School Committee would like Year 2 and 3 of the Science Curriculum Review to include evaluation of the sequence of science courses at LHS, including what years AP classes should be offered. It was suggested that we survey students about AP classes to see what students would be interest in taking. The School Committee would also like to see a proposal for the elementary level to have more time for Science and Social Studies.

4. Vote to Approve Clarke Middle School and Diamond Middle School International Field Trip to Taipei, Taiwan, May 24 through June 2, 2018.

Anna Monaco, Principal at Clarke Middle School, explained to the School Committee that the high school trip to China was becoming redundant with the middle school China trip. That is why they would like to go to Taiwan this year as a combined trip with both the middle schools.

There will be a working group with School Committee representative the Leadership team to discuss international field trips.

Motion to approve Clarke Middle School and Diamond Middle Schools International Field Trip to Taipei, Taiwan, May 24 through June 2, 2018 (Alessandrini/Colburn)
The motion is approved 4-1 (Steigerwald abstained).

5. Update on Estabrook Homework Pilot

Jeff LaBroad, Principal at Estabrook Elementary School and Maureen Kavanaugh, Director of Planning and Assessment, updated the School Committee on the ongoing pilot at Estabrook that involves no written homework, but encourages reading by students at home. . Provided a summary of data used to understand the effects of this policy.

Dr. Kavanaugh reviewed highlights regarding Self-Reported Impacts on Families and Student Life Outside of Schools (Question 1) and highlights for Regarding Self-Reported Impacts on Students' Social and Emotional-Well being (Question 2) as well as Additional Concerns and Challenges. Mr. LaBroad reviewed the next steps for sharing information with parents and staff. The school will use findings from this pilot to inform future school improvement goals.

6. Cost for Hastings

Pat Goddard and Donna DiNisco reviewed the cost estimate for the Hastings Elementary School building, with the goal to identify recommended options going forward to meet MSBA Deadline on June 29, 2017.

Mark Sandeen, chair of Sustainable Lexington, recommended geothermal as an option because it is low cost, renewable energy. Authorization tonight would be to support 62.5 million include geothermal in the plan that will go to MSBA.

Vote to support 65.28M for Hastings cost including Geothermal. (Alessandrini/Steigerwald)
The Motion was approved 5-0.

7. Homework Policy First Reading – Public Hearing

Kathleen Lenihan read the draft Homework Policy IKB as the first reading of this policy.

- Henna Yang - Proposes to LPS that homework should not be assigned during religious holidays
- Helen Abraham – No definition of homework; some people think homework is a worksheet some people think homework is a project. If it is clearly stated/defined in the implementation guide, it would take some stress off of parents. CPAC most common conversation is that parents do not look at students' IEP or reduction.
- Sara Cuthbertson - 541 Bedford St. – Definition of homework. Feels the first sentence in this draft policy would be confusing.

The policy was drafted from feedback from Lexington Listens and surveys.

The School Committee would like to review the “philosophy” behind the policy. What are the holidays for which we should not be assigning homework?

The School Committee will be sending feedback to the Policy Subcommittee before the June 20 School Committee meeting.

8. Lexington Children's Place (LCP) Building Discussion

Dr. Czajkowski Updated the School Committee on the history of Lexington Children's Place and read a letter from Liz Billings-Fouhy, LCP Director, on the reasons why it would be problematic for the director and the program to wait another year for a new location for LCP.

The School Committee agreed that the LCP cannot be put off for another year.

Motion to adjourn. (Alessandrini/Steigerwald)
The Motion was approved 5-0.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:05.

Meeting Materials: Agenda; A.1- Agenda Item Summary A.2- Agenda Item Summary, Memo, Powerpoint A.3- Agenda Item Summary, Memo, Survey, Powerpoint A.4- Agenda Item Summary, Current Homework Policy, Draft Revised Homework Policy A.5- A.6- Agenda Item Summary, A.7 Agenda Item Summary A.8 – Agenda Item Summary