

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING
Tuesday, October 7, 2014
Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue

7:30 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.)

7:40 p.m. Superintendent's Announcements:

7:50 p.m. School Committee Member Announcements:

8:00 p.m. Agenda:

1. Elementary World Language Update (15 minutes)
2. Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates Report on the Superintendent Search (90 minutes)
3. Vote to Approve Superintendent's Professional Practice and Student Learning Goals for 2014-2015 (20 minutes)

10:05 p.m. Consent Agenda (5 minutes):

1. Vote to Approve Diamond Grade 8 Spanish Field Trip to LaGuácima de Alajuela, Costa Rica, January 28 – February 6, 2015
2. Vote to Approve Lexington High School Community Service Field Trip to Golfito, Costa Rica, February 15 - 25, 2015
3. Vote to Approve Clarke Grade 8 Spanish Field Trip to LaGuácima de Alajuela, Costa Rica, March 4 - 13, 2015
4. Vote to Approve Diamond Grade 8 French Field Trip to Quebec City, Canada, May 26 – 29, 2015
5. Vote to Approve Clarke Grade 8 French Field Trip to Quebec City, Canada, June 3 – 5, 2015

10:10 p.m. Adjourn:

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

- Wednesday, October 8, 2014 — 7:00 p.m., Public Services Building, Cafeteria, 201 Bedford Street. This meeting is a Budget Collaboration/Summit Meeting with the Board of Selectmen, the Appropriation Committee, and the Capital Expenditures Committee.
- Tuesday, October 21, 2014 — 7:30 p.m., Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue (Regular Meeting)

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



Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ♦ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

Carol A. Pilarski
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To: Dr. Paul B. Ash
Members of the Lexington School Committee

From: Carol A. Pilarski

Re: Elementary World Language Update

Date: October 7, 2014

This memorandum is a reminder that a decision will need to be made about the implementation of an Elementary World Language Program and the lengthening of the school day, as was recommended by the World Language Committee in its report of June 10, 2014. I am writing this reminder as there will clearly be budgetary implications for the FY15, FY16, and FY17 budgets that may need to be considered prior to December of 2014.

I have included below, the Elementary World Language Committee's recommendations and possible timetables, as they were suggested in the June 10, 2014 report as a reference for your review and consideration:

I. Recommendations:

- The committee wholeheartedly endorses the reinstatement of an Elementary World Language Program in the Lexington Public Schools.
- Please also note that the World Language Committee feels equally strongly about retaining the highly effective curricular and instructional programs currently in place in our elementary schools.
- The preferred options presented in this report, would require a lengthening of the school day and subsequent extensive discussions centered on a re-design of the current schedule for our elementary schools. This task clearly represents a highly complex and multi-faceted challenge that would need to include the voices of many stakeholders. In order to ensure

high quality, success, and continued sustainability for this program, a thoughtful design and implementation plan must be established. We strongly believe that such a process would require at a minimum three years of planning.

II. Suggested Implementation Plan, Timetable, and Next Steps

- **December 2014:** Superintendent and School Committee vote to endorse the following next steps and implementation timetable.

- **January 2015 – August 2015:**
 1. The Superintendent will establish an *Elementary World Language Program Design Team* to study, develop, and design the world language program requirements; determine associated expenses, including staffing, materials, supplies, and professional learning. In the process, this committee would address the following unanswered questions:
 - Which language(s) will be taught? Spanish, French, Mandarin?
 - If multiple languages were to be offered, how would the possible unbalanced demand for one language over another, impact scheduling?
 - At which grade level/s will we begin instruction in the first year of implementation?
 - Which additional grade level/s will be added incrementally into the progression?
 - Would additional classroom space be required?
 - In what ways might the choice of the World Language impact the availability of qualified teaching staff?
 - In light of current research, what would be the number of minutes per week and/or number of days per week required to implement a high quality World Language program?

 2. The Superintendent will establish an *Implementation Task Force* comprised of district administrators, LEA leadership, and classroom teachers working concurrently with the World Language Design Team to collectively examine the impact of extending the daily school schedule. In addition to providing the time required for a high quality world language program, the extra time would allow for increased collaborative planning, professional learning opportunities, and necessary modifications to schedules that address the changing educational needs of our schools and community. Considerations would include topics such as changes to the school

day, contract negotiations, adjustment of transportation schedules, and more.

- **September 2015 – November 2015:**
 - Public Discussion and Hearings for Community Input
 - Regular Update Reports to School Committee from both the *World Language Design Team* and the *Implementation Task Force*
- **December 2015 – May 2016:** School Committee reviews the required budget to support the collaborative recommendation of the *Elementary World Language Design Team* and the *Implementation Task Force*.
- **May 2016:** School Committee endorsement of the proposed plan
- **August/September 2017:** Launch the first year of the Elementary World Language Program

Please find attached to this memorandum, the complete June 10, 2014 World Language Committee report as a reference and reminder of the information that was shared with you on that evening. I look forward to our discussion this coming Tuesday, October 7.



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To: Dr. Paul B. Ash

From: Carol A. Pilarski

Re: Elementary World Language Committee:
Report on Options and Suggested Next Steps

Date: June 10, 2014

As you know, based on the status report presented to you at the May 13, 2014 School Committee meeting, the World Language Committee (WLC) has been hard at work since its first meeting in October of 2013, addressing and grappling with the many essential aspects required to complete our charge: ***to discuss the process and steps that would need to be put in place in order to investigate and study the possible re-instatement of an Elementary World Language Program in the Lexington Public Schools.***

Needless to say, our journey has been rigorous . . . characterized by research, surveys, and investigations of elementary World Language programs in other communities, coupled with many challenging discussions. Our team came to this charge with a broad spectrum of perspectives and opinions. Over the course of our meetings and our reflections on information acquired and group thinking, we have arrived at several common agreements. We believe that our committee clearly represents an accurate microcosm of our community and our schools. Given the varied thinking with which members came to this task, it has been most interesting and affirming to see how the committee's journey has brought us closer to narrowing our collective understandings and diverse polarities, as we present our options for World Language instruction in Lexington's elementary schools. For me, both personally and professionally, the experience has, once again, proven that hard work and earnest collaboration can yield consensus in even most complex of tasks. I would venture to say, without a doubt, that each member of the committee would agree that our efforts have proven to be productive, fulfilling, and fruitful.

To reiterate from the previous report delivered on May 13, 2014, the research on the early study of World Languages tells us the following and convinces us that World Language instruction should be a necessary component of the overall elementary program:

- Early study of a second language results in cognitive benefits, gains in academic achievement, and positive attitudes toward diversity (Rosenbusch, 1995)
- Providing students knowledge of other cultures augments necessary skills to be citizens of a global society
- Students more seamlessly are able to make inter-disciplinary connections

For ease of reading and clarity of message, this report is broken down into the following categories:

1. The World Language Standards
2. Mission and Vision Statement
3. Core Beliefs
4. Definition of terms
5. Options to be considered
6. Other Alternatives Investigated and Reviewed
7. Unanswered Questions
8. Implementation Plan/Next Steps

1. The World Language Standards

“Language and Communication are at the heart of human experience.”

American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Language – ACTFL

The goals and objectives of an elementary World Language Program in the Lexington Public Schools are very much in keeping with the foundational standards and expectations of any high quality World Language program, as nationally endorsed by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages and fully supported by the World Language Committee. These standards apply to a person/student of any age or grade level and are cited below:

- **Communication**: Students communicate in the target language as they engage in conversation, provide and obtain information, express feelings and emotions, understand, present, and interpret spoken language on a variety of themes and topics. Proficiency levels describe what individuals can do with language in terms of speaking, listening, reading, and writing, in real world situations with native speakers.
- **Culture**: Students acquire cultural proficiency by developing and demonstrating an understanding of the geography, life style, practices, products, and perspectives of the culture studied.

- Connections: Students connect with other programs/disciplines and “link” relevant information.
- Comparisons: Students develop insight into the nature of language and culture as they compare these to their native tongue and personal experience.
- Communities: Students develop and apply insight into the nature of language and culture beyond the confines of the school walls.

2. The Mission and Vision Statement

The above stated standards are reflected in the following Mission and Vision Statement developed and collectively supported by the World Language Committee.

A Lexington Elementary World Language Program will underscore and emphasize the need and importance in today’s global community for our students to become lifelong learners of another language and other cultures, for their personal enjoyment, enrichment, and potential career paths. The program shall provide an articulated proficiency-based plan of study that develops students’ language ability while inciting a passion to develop and nurture a curiosity for, and an understanding of, other people’s traditions, perspectives, and way of life.

3. Committee’s Core Beliefs in the Development of an Elementary World Language Program

The following tenets represent unanimous consensus among the group:

- There is resounding consensus that the Lexington Public Schools should offer an Elementary World Language Program that enriches the overall academic program for students.
- Equity for all students has emerged as a common theme. The program should be equally accessible to all students with limited exceptions.
- Current curricular programming and instructional time should not be compromised.
- The program should draw upon the skills, talents, and resources available within the community.

4. Definition of Terms

In investigating the range of models that are currently being implemented in schools across the country and around the world, the committee researched a variety of possibilities and realized very quickly that it was necessary to come to a common understanding of the terminology used to describe certain programs. These definitions helped provide clarity and consistency in our own understanding and on-going discussions. I have selected to include them in this report, so as to provide the same understandings for tonight's discussion and further conversations.

- **Exposure/Enhancement**
Students are exposed for a limited amount of time to one OR a number of languages and cultures to increase and enhance their awareness of other countries, their languages, and traditions.
- **Content-Based**
A Foreign Language certified teacher gives direct/language instruction to students for a determined time period in accordance with identified and agreed to World Language curriculum standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening and understanding. This type of program is generally a stand-alone program.
- **Integrated**
A Foreign Language certified teacher gives direct language instruction to students for a determined time period in accordance with identified and agreed to Foreign Language curriculum standards in reading, writing, speaking, listening and understanding where language instruction reflects, to the greatest extent possible, the content of other core courses. These sessions may also be co-taught in conjunction with core subject matter teachers and requires a significant amount of pre-planning.
- **Full/Partial Immersion**
An immersion classroom provides children with a learning environment in which the target language is the primary language of instruction throughout the day OR in partial immersion, in some identified portion of the day. Students participate in all regular learning activities in the target language.

5. Options To Be Considered

As you will notice in each of the three options presented below, there are both “benefits” and “challenges” to each option, as well as considerations that will be required to support each program.

Following the three options, we have included information about other programs that were extensively reviewed and discussed by the committee, but not

considered to be viable alternatives for our district for the reasons described on the subsequent pages of this report.

OPTION I

Content-Based World Language Program

This “stand alone” elementary school World Language model essentially organizes instruction around a scope and sequence taught by a qualified World Language teacher. Its goals include developing language proficiency with an emphasis on oral skills, as well as providing a gradual introduction to literacy, building cultural knowledge, and tying language learning to the content of the prior grades' World Language curriculum. Elementary World Language programs vary, especially in the number of meetings per week or minutes per session, but research indicates that the most successful programs vary in duration from one and a half hours per week to two hours in multiple sessions.

It should be noted that this program type, while similar to the one that once existed for more than fifty years in the Lexington Public Schools up until the time of the failed override in 2006, would differ significantly from that program in that it would reflect current instructional methodologies and take advantage of 21st century innovations in technology and available resources.

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Simplest to design and implement • Allows for opportunities for innovation, creativity, and constructivist pedagogy • Does not require additional classroom space • Does not add to current classroom-teacher workload/responsibility • Consistency of curriculum with regard to transition to middle school • Would be the easiest model for hiring quality teachers • Opportunities for natural connections between the WL teacher and the general classroom setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • World Language (WL) teacher may have demanding schedule in moving across classrooms during school day • Challenge of integrating new students coming into the district at upper grades • Would require revision of middle school program as students move through the K-5 program • Need to ensure that the WL teachers feel a part of the school and teacher community – especially when teachers are moving from school to school

CONSIDERATIONS

- Strong consideration would have to be given to extending the school day to avoid negatively impacting current curricular and instructional programs.
- In the process of phasing in the Elementary World Language program, the Middle School World Language program (in the selected language/s) would need to be revised and rearticulated for anywhere between four to six years to reflect the increasing proficiency levels of elementary school students.

OPTION II

Content-Based World Language Program with Subject Matter Integration

Option II is similar to the program described in Option I, and provides the added value of bridging the study of the target language so as to reinforce designated curricular units of study in such programmatic areas as Art, Music, Science, and Social Studies. Its multi-dimensional, multi-modal approach would rely heavily on advancing 21st century skills, utilizing current technology and media to correspond with and learn from students of other countries in order to actively and realistically engage students in our world's expanding global community.

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Demonstrates an even more serious commitment to World Language learning from early age, which enriches overall academic program• Language learning is both separate and integrated, creating greater depth of understanding• Local community members may be available for cultural elements in the integration elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More challenging to design and implement compared to a “stand alone” content-based program• More logistical challenges and planning time required• Requires professional learning time for the World Language teacher to plan for the concurrent implementation of the identified units of study designed to reinforce student learning in both the target language and the specified discipline/s

CONSIDERATIONS

- Strong consideration would have to be given to extending the school day to avoid negatively impacting current curricular and instructional programs.
- In the process of phasing in the Elementary World Language program, the Middle School World Language program (in the selected language/s) would need to be revised and rearticulated for anywhere between four to six years to reflect the increasing proficiency levels of elementary school students.
- This model would require substantial summer curriculum development work for World Language teachers and curriculum specialists and/or teachers.

OPTION III

Optional After-School World Language Program

N.B. this option does not meet the standards or tenets of the committee’s core beliefs

This model would also be taught by a qualified World Language teacher, but would take place after regular school hours and would be based on parent and student choice.

BENEFITS	CHALLENGES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No loss of instructional time and no need to extend school day • Attracts students who are already interested in learning another language • Increases possibility of offering multiple languages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would compete with other after-school programs i.e. sports, Lextended Day, etc. • Equity issues: Not all students would be able to participate based on limitations related to payment of tuition, transportation needs, etc. • Staffing of the program: member of LPS staff, sub-contracted individuals, volunteers? • Substantial articulation issues with middle school program • Difficulties in monitoring the quality of the program • Difficulties with supervision of students
CONSIDERATIONS	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Determination of how program would be funded i.e., operating budget, individual family? 	

6. Other Alternatives Investigated and Reviewed

Besides the options presented above, other possibilities were explored, but ultimately not considered for various reasons.

- **Full/Partial Immersion Program**
As explained in our definitions included on page 4, an immersion classroom provides children with a learning environment in which the target language is the primary language of instruction throughout the day OR in partial immersion, in some identified portion of the day. Students participate in all regular learning activities in the target language.

While immersion may offer students the most “experience” in the target language, it would be very difficult to implement for many reasons e.g. equity across schools, impact on curriculum revision, recruitment of highly qualified staffing with multiple certifications. This program would require a substantive and comprehensive overhaul of both current practice and curriculum.

- Exposure/Enhancement Program
In an exposure/enhancement program, students are exposed for a limited amount of time to one OR more languages and cultures to increase and enhance their awareness of other countries, their languages, and their traditions. The committee overwhelmingly agreed that this type of program would not support the integral elements of the mission and goals of an LPS elementary World Language program that aims at growing proficiency levels in the target language.

7. Unanswered Questions

- Which language(s) will be taught? Spanish, French, Mandarin?
- If multiple languages were to be offered, how would the possible unbalanced demand for one language over another, impact scheduling?
- At which grade level/s will we begin instruction in the first year of implementation?
- Which additional grade level/s will be added incrementally into the progression?
- Would additional classroom space be required?
- In what ways might the choice of the World Language impact the availability of qualified teaching staff?
- In light of current research, what would be the number of minutes per week and/or number of days per week required to implement a high quality WL program?

8. Implementation Plan and Suggested Next Steps

As you will easily conclude from this report, the committee wholeheartedly endorses the reinstatement of an Elementary World Language Program in the Lexington Public Schools. Please also note that the World Language Committee feels equally strongly about retaining the highly effective curricular and instructional programs currently in place in our elementary schools.

It is evident that both Options I and II, presented in this report, would require a lengthening of the school day and subsequent extensive discussions centered on a re-design of the current schedule for our elementary schools. This task clearly represents a highly complex and multi-faceted challenge that would need to include the voices of many stakeholders. In order to ensure high quality, success, and continued sustainability for this program, a thoughtful design and implementation plan must be established. We strongly believe that such a process would require at a minimum three years of planning with an implementation target year of FY18.

For your consideration, please review the following suggested timetable:

- **December 2014:** Superintendent and School Committee decide which option to support
- **January 2015 – December 2015:**
 1. Superintendent and School Committee establish an *Elementary World Language Program Design Team* involving discussions with the community and stakeholders to study and develop the program requirements, determine associated expenses, including staffing, materials, supplies, and professional learning. This committee would address the unanswered questions posed in item #7 on the previous page.
 2. The World Language Committee also foresees the establishment of an *Implementation Task Force* comprised of district administrators, LEA leadership, and classroom teachers working concurrently with the Design Team to collaboratively ensure a high quality World Language Program and to examine the impact of providing additional time in the daily elementary schedule for this program. Considerations would include topics such as changes to the elementary day, contract negotiation, adjustment of transportation schedules, and more.
- **Fall 2015:**
 - Public Discussion and Hearings
 - Regular Update Reports to School Committee from both the *World Language Design Team* and the *Implementation Task Force*
- **December 2015 – May 2016:** School Committee reviews the required budget to support the collaborative recommendation of the *Elementary World Language Design Team* and the *Implementation Task Force*.
- **May 2016:** School Committee endorsement of the proposed plan
- **August/September 2017:** Launch the first year of the Elementary World Language Program

I look forward to our meeting on Tuesday to answer any questions you might have.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Elementary World Language Committee
2013-2014

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Lexington Public Schools LEADERSHIP PROFILE REPORT

**Lexington, Massachusetts
October 7, 2014**

Introduction

This report presents the findings of the Leadership Profile Assessment conducted by Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates (HYA) for the new Superintendent of Lexington Public Schools. The data contained herein were obtained from input the HYA consultants received when they met with individuals and groups in either individual interviews or focus group settings and from the results of the online survey completed by stakeholders. The surveys, interviews, and focus group meetings were structured to gather input to assist the School Committee in determining the primary characteristics desired in the new Superintendent. Additionally the stakeholder interviews and focus groups collected information regarding the strengths of the District and the major challenges that it will be facing in the coming years.

Participation

The numbers of participants, by stakeholder group, in the two methods of data gathering are listed below:

Group	Personal Interviews or Focus Groups	Online Survey
School Committee	5	4
Administrators	24	28
Faculty	46	70
Community	50	38
Support Staff	2	23
Parents	66	466
Students	12	57
Total	215	686

It should be emphasized that the data is not a scientific sampling, nor should it necessarily be viewed as representing the majority opinion of the respective groups to which they are attributed. Items are included if, in the consultants' judgment, they warranted the School Committee's attention.

Strengths of the District

Every group responded that the greatest strength of the school system is the emphasis on excellence, and how the schools endeavor to meet the needs of **all** learners. People point with pride to the outstanding state and national rankings, which consistently place Lexington Public Schools in the highest category. Lexington students score highly in MCAS, SAT, and Advanced Placement examinations and are accepted into many fine universities nationwide.

“We moved to Lexington for the schools, and we are glad we did as it is a wonderful school system.” This sentiment was repeated many times in the focus groups. Parents praise the system for its child centered approach and its ability to challenge all students. The students are equally articulate concerning the system as they praise their schools and their teachers for their growth as scholars and as individuals. Both parents and the students were highly supportive of the efforts of Lexington teachers.

There is rich a K-12 curriculum and extensive course offerings at the high school. People are also quick to respond that to think Lexington is only about academics is a mistake. The school system is student centered and includes many support services for children. The high schools offers many co-curricular activities including sports, music, art and a multitude of clubs. This variety of activities allows Lexington High School students to find an identity as they develop new friendships with students who have interests similar to their own. The emphasis on community service and citizenship makes for a very supportive environment for students to learn. There is something for everyone in the Lexington Public Schools and everyone is welcome.

There was also high praise for the comprehensive staff development program which is closely aligned with district goals. A large number of offerings is available to Lexington staff in the areas of curriculum and instruction, new teacher orientation, technology, and crisis intervention. *Education Week* has recognized Lexington’s staff development program as a national model. Special emphasis is placed on continuous improvement of teachers and the development of professional learning communities. The School Committee has invested heavily in this approach as a vehicle of continuous improvement for Lexington Schools.

The town is also supportive of the school system, and there is excellent cooperation between town and school officials. There is solid financial backing for the schools. The Superintendent has been cited by town officials for his attention to detail and his ability to work within the existing town structures. Teachers and students get what they need to ensure that they will be able to maintain their high academic standing. As one town official said, “We trust Paul and his team to act fiscally responsible.” In fact, in recognition of its sound financial planning the school system received a management award in 2012.

Challenges/Concerns/Issues Facing the District

The most frequently expressed concern was how to cope with the issue of student stress. Like students in many high performing districts, Lexington students face the daily pressure of needing to perform at the highest level. Expectations are high, and students are motivated to achieve in order to fulfill personal goals such as acceptance to a selective college. This leads students to push hard and take on a rigorous schedule with high-level courses and a variety of co-curricular activities.

The school system has acknowledged this stress and along with community partners has created the School Health Advisory Committee (SHAC) where students, educators, parents and the community can discuss wellness issues and make suggestions. The administration has also attempted to address this system-wide issue by requiring in all school improvement plans a goal to "... increase student pro-social behavior and resiliency and reduce sources of unhealthy student stress." Action plans accompany this goal and additional staff members have been hired in support of student services. Still some people feel much more can be done and there is a need to continue to monitor stress levels and be pro-active in designing effective programs to effectively address this issue.

Enrollment growth is also a concern as it is increasing at the rate of approximately 2% a year. People move to Lexington for the schools and are willing to pay a premium for housing. This has created overcrowding in the schools and the need for new or expanded facilities. Eight of the nine schools in the town are over capacity. The high school in particular is overcrowded with an inadequate cafeteria, an inadequate library and undersized classrooms. Modular classrooms have been added as a temporary relief measure, but the problem is still evident and can be witnessed in the crowded corridors during student passing periods. A comprehensive facilities plan will have to be developed to meet Lexington's growth. This could mean a number of capital projects which will translate into a request for a large financial contribution from the town and significant building projects for the school department.

Finally, there is also the challenge of meeting the diversity and the demographic changes within the system. The school system now has a large number of Asian students who comprise about one third of the student enrollment. Even in an affluent town like Lexington there are students who live in poverty and this raises further challenges for the district.

Desired Characteristics

A number of respondents talked of the need to improve the culture emanating from the office of the Superintendent. People talked of the importance of finding someone who would listen and respect the ideas of teachers, parents and community members. There is a desire for a Superintendent who is available, accessible, approachable, and a good listener. There is so much talent in the town of Lexington that the Superintendent should be open to new ideas which come from community and staff. This would make a strong system even stronger. Words like compassionate, kind, humble, collaborative and empathetic are examples of words commonly used in describing the ideal Superintendent. People are looking for a leader who is child centered and looks at children and not just test scores. Respondents were interested in a collaborative leader who will work in a cooperative manner and unite all stakeholders within the community toward a common vision.

At the same time, there is a desire for a leader who will continue Lexington's emphasis on excellence. The term "instructional leader" continually was emphasized as an important characteristic. People want a person who is a scholar and who understands the importance of a rigorous curriculum. Standards and expectations should be kept high and the Superintendent should be held accountable for maintaining excellence. A number of respondents talked of the need for classroom experience and experience as a Superintendent in a high performing district comparable to Lexington.

Finally there is also a desire to have a strong financial manager. Lexington does have a strong town/school financial planning model in which the Superintendent and his team are involved in joint planning. This approach should be continued as a necessity, especially with the need for capital projects such as a new or renovated high school. Experience with budgeting and capital projects was seen as very important.

HYA cannot promise to find a candidate who possesses all of the characteristics desired by respondents. However, HYA and the Board intend to meet the challenge of finding an individual who possesses most of the skills and character traits required to address the concerns expressed by the constituent groups. We will seek a new Superintendent who can work with the Lexington School Committee to provide the leadership needed to continue to raise academic standards and student performance in spite of major financial challenges, while meeting the unique needs of each of its schools and communities.

The consultants would like to thank all the participants who attended focus groups meetings or completed the online survey. Also, we would like to thank all of the Lexington staff members who assisted with our meetings and particularly thank the School Committee and the central office staff for their efforts in facilitating our time in the District.

Respectfully submitted,

John Connolly, Gary Burton, and Stephen Dlott

Consistent Themes

Strengths

- Child centered schools
- Continuity of leadership
- Diversity
- Excellent faculty
- Extensive course offerings
- Financial support for schools
- High academic expectations
- Innovative programs
- Meeting the needs of all students
- Motivated students
- Pride in schools and community
- Staff development program
- Supportive parents
- Town/school district relations

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Addressing the needs of economic and cultural diversity
- Addressing the needs of students in the middle
- Alleviate student stress
- Balance academic excellence and concern for student emotional health
- Communication issues
- Fear of backsliding
- Growth in enrollment which causes overcrowding in schools
- Hire and retain high quality teachers
- Initiative fatigue
- Meeting the needs of expanding special education population
- Needs to build trust
- Needs to hear all voices in Lexington
- Overemphasis on standardized test scores
- Staff morale
- Upgrade technology

Desired Characteristics

- Able to work effectively with town officials
- Believes education is more than test scores
- Builds strong team
- Child centered
- Collaborative
- Concerned about stress and student mental health
- High emotional quotient
- High expectations
- Humble
- Innovator
- Inspirational
- Instructional leader
- Listens well before making decisions
- Open to ideas of others
- Possesses strong moral compass
- Proven record of improving schools
- Respects students, parents and community
- Risk taker
- Skilled in best practices
- “Skin like a rhino”
- Sound financial manager
- Strong communicator
- Strong financial background
- Values innovation
- Visible and accessible
- Visionary

Online Superintendent Profile Survey Results

The Superintendent Profile survey was completed by 686 stakeholders. Over half of respondents were parents with children in the district (67.9 percent). Ten percent were teachers, another 8.3 percent were students, and the rest were administrators, community members, School Committee members, and support staff.

Stakeholder Group		
	Frequency	Percent
Administrator	28	4.1
Community Member	38	5.5
Parent with Children in the District	466	67.9
Student	57	8.3
Support Staff	23	3.4
Teacher	70	10.2
School Committee Member	4	0.6
Total	686	100

The top-rated characteristics respondents selected for a Superintendent were:

- Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members. (CE)
- Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators. (CC)
- Recruit, employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools. (M)
- Have a clear vision of what is required to provide exemplary educational services and implement effective change. (VV)
- Identify, confront, and resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner. (CE)

Percentages of respondents overall who selected each item, as well as percentages by stakeholder group, are given in the tables on the following pages. Benchmark results from over fifty comparable districts, incorporating the ranking of over twenty-five thousand stakeholders, are also provided in the table to allow for a comparison of Lexington Public Schools results to national norms.

Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		National HYA Benchmark	ALL (686)	Admin (28)	Comm. Member (38)	Parent w Children in the District (466)	Student (57)	Support Staff (23)	Teacher (70)	School Committee Member (4)
1	Listen to and effectively represent the interests and concerns of students, staff, parents, and community members.	38%	61%	39%	47%	61%	75%	65%	64%	75%
2	Foster a positive professional climate of mutual trust and respect among faculty, staff, and administrators.	40%	57%	75%	68%	53%	28%	91%	83%	50%
3	Recruit, employ, evaluate, and retain effective personnel throughout the District and its schools.	36%	49%	21%	58%	57%	33%	43%	16%	25%
4	Have a clear vision of what is required to provide exemplary educational services and implement effective change.	36%	43%	57%	32%	45%	33%	22%	44%	75%
5	Identify, confront, and resolve issues and concerns in a timely manner.	35%	39%	21%	45%	40%	49%	43%	26%	50%
6	Lead in an encouraging, participatory, and team-focused manner.	27%	38%	68%	29%	36%	30%	70%	44%	0%
7	Effectively plan and manage the long-term financial health of the District.	34%	37%	50%	34%	37%	28%	35%	41%	25%
8	Hold a deep understanding of the teaching/learning process and of the importance of educational technology.	35%	35%	29%	18%	36%	42%	13%	41%	50%
9	Hold a deep appreciation for diversity and the importance of providing safe and caring school environments.	23%	35%	39%	34%	33%	40%	48%	40%	0%

Key	VV-Vision & Values	IL-Instructional Leadership	CE- Community Engagement	CC- Communication & Collaboration	M-Management
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Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroup)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		National HYA Benchmark	ALL (686)	Admin (28)	Comm. Member (38)	Parent w Children in the District (466)	Student (57)	Support Staff (23)	Teacher (70)	School Committee Member (4)
10	Align budgets, long-range plans, and operational procedures with the District's vision, mission, and goals.	28%	33%	32%	45%	35%	12%	30%	23%	75%
11	Promote high expectations for all students and personnel.	38%	31%	36%	24%	33%	28%	26%	20%	50%
12	Communicate effectively with a variety of audiences and in a variety of ways.	27%	30%	36%	39%	29%	30%	43%	27%	25%
13	Involve appropriate stakeholders in the decision-making process.	26%	30%	32%	29%	30%	9%	43%	46%	0%
14	Encourage a sense of shared responsibility among all stakeholders regarding success in student learning.	36%	27%	32%	34%	26%	11%	17%	47%	25%
15	Guide the operation and maintenance of school facilities to ensure secure, safe, and clean school environments that support learning.	26%	26%	7%	13%	29%	35%	17%	23%	0%
16	Provide meaningful guidance for systematic and comprehensive district-wide curriculum, instructional services, assessment programs, and professional development.	23%	26%	25%	26%	27%	23%	26%	19%	25%
17	Maintain positive and collaborative working relationships with the school committee and its members.	31%	23%	21%	29%	23%	25%	35%	21%	25%
18	Be visible throughout the District and actively engaged in community life.	28%	22%	29%	21%	20%	32%	9%	33%	0%
19	Strive for continuous improvement in all areas of the District.	27%	22%	14%	21%	23%	26%	26%	20%	0%

Key	VV-Vision & Values	IL-Instructional Leadership	CE- Community Engagement	CC- Communication & Collaboration	M-Management
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Percentage of Respondents Who Selected Each Item (By Subgroups)

Number indicates rank order by overall results		National HYA Benchmark	ALL (686)	Admin (28)	Comm. Member (38)	Parent w Children in the District (466)	Student (57)	Support Staff (23)	Teacher (70)	School Committee Member (4)
20	Increase academic performance and accountability at all levels and for all its students, including special needs populations.	30%	20%	11%	18%	23%	23%	0%	14%	25%
21	Seek a high level of engagement with principals and other school-site leaders.	22%	20%	39%	18%	20%	21%	13%	19%	0%
22	Be an effective manager of the District's day-to-day operations.	20%	16%	11%	21%	16%	18%	30%	13%	0%
23	Act in accordance with the District's mission, vision, and core beliefs.	25%	13%	11%	16%	11%	12%	17%	23%	0%
24	Develop strong relationships with constituents, local government, area businesses, media, and community partners.	20%	12%	18%	24%	11%	21%	4%	6%	25%
25	Utilize student achievement data to drive the District's instructional decision-making.	19%	11%	32%	5%	9%	23%	0%	9%	0%

Key	VV-Vision & Values	IL-Instructional Leadership	CE- Community Engagement	CC- Communication & Collaboration	M-Management
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Comments from Interviews and Focus Group Meetings

School Committee

Strengths

- Child-centered schools
- Diversity
- Effective staff
- Financial stability
- High academic standards
- Professional development
- Quality programs for all students
- Special education
- Supportive community
- Teacher evaluation program

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Alcohol and other social issues
- Capital projects
- Continue to upgrade technology
- Demands on town budget
- Emotional stress on students
- Emphasis on test scores
- Enrollment growth
- Initiative fatigue
- Lack of diversity in staff
- Meeting the needs of special education children
- Need for a facilities plan
- Need for an open door policy
- Need for policy revision
- Need for transparency
- Top Down Leadership

Desired Characteristics

- Articulate
- Balances academic excellence and concern for student emotional factors such as stress
- Cares about 100% of students
- Collaborative
- Communicator
- Innovative
- Integrity
- Listener
- Sound financial manager
- Strong decision maker
- Strong leader
- Support arts
- Transparent
- Visionary
- Works well with School Committee

ADMINISTRATORS

Strengths

- Academic excellence
- Address the needs of all children
- Child centered
- Depth of program offerings
- Diversity valued
- Financial support
- High expectations
- High performing students
- High quality staff
- Innovation valued and encouraged
- Open communication
- Parental involvement
- School system's reputation
- Special education
- Strong curriculum
- Strong professional development program
- Support for the arts

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Achievement gap
- Addressing the needs of growing international population
- Building trusting relationships and not fear
- Connection between central office and schools
- Growing student enrollment
- Increasing economic diversity in town
- Increasing special education population
- Meeting diverse needs
- Move district forward to retain number one status
- Parental pressure
- Recruit and retain high quality teachers
- Space needs in buildings
- Student mental health issues
- Student stress
- Too many state mandates
- Work effectively with School Committee

Desired Characteristics

- Can balance state mandates with best practices
- Child centered
- Collaborative (Not top down)
- Compassionate
- Current with educational research and best practices
- Experience as a principal
- High emotional quotient
- High expectations
- Innovator
- Instructional leader
- Listens well
- Open to ideas of others
- Rational
- Reflective
- Stands up for what he/she thinks is right
- Strong moral compass
- Thick skin
- Values innovation
- Visible in school
- Visionary

COMMUNITY

Strengths

- Academic excellence
- Affluent community, which supports education
- Broad course offerings
- Effective teachers
- Excellent facilities
- Extracurricular activities
- High engagement of the community
- High expectations
- High volunteerism
- Motivated students
- Music, sports and clubs
- National and International ranking
- Public engagement
- Safe schools
- School finances well managed
- Special education
- Town values education
- Wealth of talent in community

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Achievement gap
- Addressing the needs of students who are in the middle academically
- Alleviating student stress
- Class size
- Demographic changes
- Fear of backsliding
- Guidance for minority populations
- Increasing diversity
- Keep up momentum
- Need for Superintendent visibility in schools
- Need to balance social and emotional needs of students with high academic expectations
- Need to listen to community
- Overcrowding in schools
- Overscheduled students (academic and extracurricular activities)
- Peer pressure
- Possible redistricting
- Retain quality teachers
- Staff not reflective of the ethnicity of the community

- Success is more than test scores
- Teacher morale
- Tough to be number one
- Trust issues with Superintendent

Desired Characteristics

- Ability to hire and retain high quality staff.
- Able to face community anger
- Address competing priorities and goals
- Attends school and community events
- Be able to hire and inspire
- Believes that education is more than test scores
- Builds consensus
- Business acumen
- Child focused
- Committed to METCO
- Committed to the concept of teacher accountability
- Compassionate
- Concern for special needs children
- Courageous
- Creative
- Culturally aware
- Effective collective bargaining skills
- Experience as a Superintendent in a high achieving district
- Experience with technology
- Humble
- Innovative
- Intellectually honest
- Is not obsessed with standardized testing
- Kids at center of decision-making
- Knowledge of instruction
- Listens to all voices within the community and not just homeowners
- Listens to conflicting viewpoints
- Motivator
- Not dictatorial
- Not harsh and punitive in handling student behavior
- Passion for excellence
- Positive person
- Possesses high ethics and integrity
- Proven performance beyond test scores
- Respect staff and community ideas
- Respectful of everyone
- Sees diversity as a strength
- Spends funds widely

- Team builder
- Team player
- Thick skinned
- Thinks outside the of the box
- Understands community
- Understands finance
- Visible
- Visionary
- Works well with town government

FACULTY

Strengths

- Availability of resources (people and materials)
- Challenges all learners of all abilities
- Clean and healthy environment conducive to learning
- Collaboration among faculty members
- College placement
- Excellent communication with community
- Financial support for schools
- High degree of professionalism among staff
- High expectations
- High student achievement
- Lifelong learning
- Outstanding teachers
- Professional development program
- Special education

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Addressing the needs of the student in the middle
- Controlling number of initiatives
- Developing a greater sense of trust with administration
- Lack of diversity of staff
- New state mandated evaluation system
- Overcrowding in schools
- Overemphasis on standardized testing
- Staff morale
- Student stress
- Teacher stress (difficult to retain status as number 1 district in state)
- Technology integration

Desired Characteristics

- Long-term commitment to Lexington
- Excellent communicator
- Articulate
- Conversant with best practices
- Experience as a teacher
- Humble
- Instructional leader

- Motivational
- Open to new ideas
- People person
- Proven record of success
- Respects teaching profession
- Shared decision making
- Skillful in budgeting and finance
- Strategic planner
- Team player
- Thick skinned
- Trustworthy
- Values input of teachers
- Visible
- Visionary

PARENTS

Strengths

- Continuity of leadership
- Excellent school district and town relationships
- High quality of education
- High quality of student body
- National and international recognition
- Pride in the schools
- Reputation of schools
- Strong and caring staff
- Welcomes diversity

Challenges

- Enrollment growth
- Hearing parent voices
- Improving communication in decision making process
- Need for new or expanded facilities
- Not to get caught up in own success and become complacent
- Overcrowding at all levels
- People continue to move to town for schools
- Starting time for high school
- Student stress, which is greatest at high school
- Students in the middle need attention
- Teacher morale

Desired Characteristics

- Good mentor to principals
- Accessible and available
- Acknowledges the growing Asian population
- Active listener
- Ability to cultivate a good relationship with town
- Courageous
- Effective communicator
- Effective decision maker
- Engages all stake holders
- Independent thinker
- Inspires teachers
- Interested in tapping into Lexington's wealth of talented people within the community

- “Not a job jumper”
- Not a micromanager
- Open-minded
- Passion for excellence
- Proven record of success
- Sees value in extra-curricular activities
- Skilled in best practices
- Strong enough to say “no”
- Strong executive leader
- Strong financial background
- Strong instructional background
- Student centered philosophy
- Successful track record
- Supports teachers
- Teaching background
- Uses data effectively
- Works well with School Committee

STUDENTS

Strengths

- Diversity
- Excellent academic preparation
- Flexible, schools willing to innovate
- High expectations
- High student achievement
- High test scores (MCAS, SAT, ACT)
- Many-curricular activities such as arts and sports
- Motivated students
- Strong faculty
- Students involved in decision making
- Technology

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Competitiveness among students
- Cyberbullying
- Need more focus on electives
- Need to adopt new teaching techniques
- School start times need adjustment
- Stress level too high
- Students are overscheduled

Desired Characteristics

- Approachable
- Approachable
- Available to all
- Cares for the well-being of students
- Connects with students, teachers and community
- Easy to talk with
- Good listener
- Teaching experience
- Interested in whole child
- Listens to students suggestions
- Open to new ideas
- Puts testing in perspective rather than only being concerned about scores
- Understanding of different cultures
- Understands emotional needs of students

- Visible
- Visionary
- Will cancel school if there are safety issues

SUPPORT STAFF

Strengths

- College acceptances
- Community service
- Dedication of staff
- Develop good citizens
- Diversity
- Financial resources
- Parental involvement
- Professional development

Challenges/Concerns/Issues

- Demographic changes
- Development of trust at higher levels
- Emphasis on standardized tests
- Enrollment growth
- Overcrowding
- Recognize some students come from economically disadvantaged families
- Technology

Desired Characteristics

- Communicator
- Empathetic
- Forward thinking
- Intellectual
- Open and approachable
- Positive
- Respects everyone
- Trustworthy
- Works with town government



Lexington Public Schools

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Recommended Superintendent Goals for 2014-2015

Student Learning Goal

In order to improve student pro-social behaviors and resiliency, and reduce unhealthy stress, I will work with community stakeholders, such as the Director of Guidance, Principals, other administrators, and residents to support goal 2 in all school improvement plans (“If we increase student pro-social behavior and resiliency and reduce sources of unhealthy student stress, then student academic performance and well-being will improve.”). This year, I will

Key Actions

1. Work closely with school administrators to support the pro-social objectives stated under goal 2 in all School Improvement Plans.
2. Support staff to connect and share successful pro-social practices among schools.
3. Support the work of the Guidance Department in order to establish a comprehensive PreK-12 guidance curriculum that promotes healthy social skills for all students.
4. Work with principals, other school personnel, and parents to identify ways to reduce unhealthy student stress (e.g., discuss the quality and quantity and timing of homework, timing of examinations among departments, homework on school vacations, ways to increase student awareness of personnel who can help with stress, bullying preventions strategies, mindfulness education, etc.).
5. Explore ways to include FY 16 funds to expand student social services.
6. Work with residents and Lexington and Town employees to discuss ways the schools, municipal government, and local organizations can reduce the risk of student suicide.

Professional Practice Goal

The recent establishment of data teams in US schools is based on the most current research about improving teaching, learning, and leadership to increase student achievement for all students. This year, I will engage in practices to study the research on data teams and learn about practices other school systems have effectively used to improve student learning. This year, I will

Key Actions

1. Focus my professional reading on the effective use of district and school data teams.
2. Participate in data teams and dialogue with staff about effective instructional practices regarding their process.
3. Attend professional learning workshops on the use of data teams.
4. Collaborate with the Director of Planning and Assessment and Principals to share effective practices that strengthen the LPS data team processes.
5. Form a district-wide data team and collaborate with administrators on its design and priorities.

October 3, 2014

Standard 1 (Instructional Leadership), Section E - Data-informed Decision Making Indicator - *Uses multiple sources of evidence related to student learning, including state, district, and school assessment results and growth data, to inform school and district goals and improve organizational performance, educator effectiveness, and student learning.*

Key Actions:

1. Work with the Director of Planning and Assessment to examine:
 - What data do we regularly collect?
 - How administrators analyze and report data to stakeholders?
 - How administrators use data in decision-making and planning?
 - What is our current capacity to collect/store/analyze data?
 - What are some of our short- and long-range data and planning needs.
2. Work with the Enrollment Working Group to develop a more effective methodology to forecast student enrollments.

Standard 2 (Management and Operations), Section A - 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.*

Key Actions:

1. See Student Learning Goal for key actions.

Standard 3 (Family and Community Engagement), Section D - Family Concerns Indicator: *Addresses family concerns in an equitable, effective, and efficient manner.*

Key Actions:

In order to address the preK-12 overcrowding concerns and promote community support, I will

1. Serve as an active member of the Ad Hoc School Master Planning Committee and share the committee's reports with all interested constituencies.
2. Work closely with the architectural firm SMMA to ensure phases 1, 2 and 3 of their studies are complete and on time.
3. Serve as an active member of the Enrollment Working Group and share their reports with all interested constituencies.
4. Make recommendations to the School Committee that will address short- and long-range space needs based on projected enrollments and educational needs.
5. Meet with parents to discuss their school-specific needs and concerns.
6. Work with elected and appointed municipal officials to effectively communicate school facility needs and plan for potential Town Meetings.

Standard 4 (Professional Culture), Section D - Shared Vision Development Indicator: *Successfully and continuously engages all stakeholders in the creation of a shared educational vision in which every student is prepared to succeed in postsecondary education and careers, and can become responsible citizens and community contributors.*

Key actions:

In order to assist the School Committee to develop a district Mission, Vision, and Beliefs statement, I will

1. Participate in the School Committee's subcommittee on Mission, Vision, and Beliefs to develop a draft document.
2. Communicate the draft Mission, Vision, and Beliefs document to all schools, PTAs/PTOs, and School Site Councils.
3. Work with school and parent leaders to ensure that the draft document is discussed and feedback welcomed.
4. After discussions are held by all of the constituencies listed above, create a summary document for the School Committee and include my recommendation.