



Lexington Public Schools

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SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT DR. JULIE HACKETT - DECEMBER 18, 2018

I. Administrative Searches Underway

Last year, several interim administrative appointments were made, including the appointment of two Interim Principals (Estabrook and Harrington) and one Interim Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations. Thanks to the good efforts of many, at the start of the school year, I was able to appoint Ms. Jackie Daley as the new Harrington Elementary School Principal. I would keep Rick Rogers (Interim Principal of Estabrook) and Peter Rowe (Interim Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations) on my team forever if I could, but unfortunately they are on waivers from the State, so it is time to fill their positions. The search is underway for a new Principal of Estabrook Elementary School, and we hope to recruit many qualified applicants to the position. We are currently in the process of selecting members of the Search Team, and we hope to name a new principal by the first week in February.

The Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations position has been posted, and we are in the process of recruiting qualified candidates. As you know, the hiring authority for the Assistant Superintendent rests with the School Committee. For your convenience, I have included an excerpt from Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 59.

Assistant or associate superintendents: On the recommendation of the superintendent, the committee may establish the positions of and appoint assistant or associate superintendents, who shall report to the superintendent. The superintendent recommends to the school committee candidates for appointment to the position of assistant or associate superintendent. The committee shall approve or disapprove the appointment, but shall not unreasonably withhold its approval. If the superintendent requests, the committee shall explain its disapproval of a recommended candidate. The committee sets the compensation of the superintendent and the assistant or associate superintendents. (G.L. c. 71, [[section]] 59)

If any Lexington School Committee members have an interest in serving on either Search Team, it would be helpful to formalize with a motion. My recommendation would be to have one Lexington School Committee member serve on the Estabrook Search Team. I recommend at least two School Committee members serve on the

Assistant Superintendent Search Team with final interviews held in open session and conducted by the Superintendent and the full School Committee.

Reference Materials: Letter from Superintendent of Schools to Estabrook Elementary School Staff, December 4, 2018

II. Hastings Elementary School Value-Engineering

Due to a significant concern with the quality of the soils below the school and road, there is a need to reduce the overall costs of the Hastings Elementary School construction project by \$400,000 to ensure that we stay within budget. The \$400,000 value engineering item list was derived from standard, non-programmatic items that were recommended by the architects and reviewed by the Director of Public Facilities, the Interim Assistant Superintendent for Finance and Operations, and the Superintendent of Schools. The Director of Public Facilities rejected some of the architect's recommendations, appropriately identifying those items that are most important to schools. We agreed with the majority of the recommendations, nearly all of which were aesthetic in nature and will largely go unnoticed.

The basis of concern is directly related to the poor quality of soils that were found while excavating the site for the new Hastings. During excavation for the foundations, poor quality soils were discovered requiring the material to be trucked off site and suitable soils to be trucked onto the site, resulting in a cost to the project roughly \$450,000 above contract. On November 17, 2018, test pits were dug around the school and the soils were tested. The area in question will be the site of the new parking lot, which is a pervious pavement, therefore, the drainage quality of the soils is critical. The quality of the soils discovered was substandard and less than what the specifications required, resulting in a concern of the project team. We are recommending the VE items to offset the expected increase in costs for removal of soils and replacement.

Reference Materials: Hastings Elementary School Value Engineering List

III. Redistricting Efforts Underway

In response to our Request for Proposals, on November 27, 2018, the Lexington Public Schools Redistricting Team conducted interviews with two potential redistricting vendors: Applied Geographics, Inc. (AppGeo), a local vendor, and one out-of-state vendor. AppGeo worked with the Lexington Public Schools as recently as 2015. While the out-of-state vendor had interesting demographic data collection methods that were worthy of consideration, we felt that AppGeo was a better fit for the Lexington community. AppGeo is a Boston-based company with nearly 30 years in the business and experience working in similar districts in Massachusetts. We recognize that we are about to undertake a significant redistricting effort, and we anticipate such a

challenge to be easier to manage given AppGeo's reputation for facilitation skills and community outreach efforts. The total amount of the contract is \$40,032, and the redistricting effort commences now through June 30, 2019. Ms. Maureen Kavanaugh, Director of Planning & Assessment, is the project lead for our redistricting effort.

Reference Materials: Student Redistricting Analysis and Technical Support Services Contract with Applied Geographics, Inc.

IV. Lexington Later Start, 2020

On December 4, 2018, the Lexington School Committee unanimously voted for a later school start to be implemented at the beginning of the school year in 2020. In the near future, I will finalize a project implementation timeline and send a communication to all Lexington Public Schools families, formally announcing the School Committee's decision to (1) shift the start times at Lexington High School to 45 minutes later; (2) shift the start times of all elementary schools to 15 minutes later; and (3) reduce the length of the middle school day by ten minutes, making it consistent with the six hour and 40 minute length of day for the high school. As previously discussed, I will appoint a project manager in the near future, and we can utilize funds from the Transportation Revolving Account if needed. I have included a copy of the final report from Consultant Richard Labrie. There are several recommendations in the report that administration will need to address in the future, including:

1. Transportation Routing and Scheduling - As the District considers both implementation of school start time revisions and future school redistricting, it may wish to consider the purchase of a more robust routing software, such as Traversa, a Tyler Technologies program. This software will provide the Coordinator with additional analytical tools and reports, currently not available on Transfinder. In our opinion, it would allow the Coordinator to work smarter and better utilize the analytical tools available.
2. School Transportation Contract Costs - For future bid specifications (contract) we recommend the following changes
 - a. Request a cost per bus for a half day, either A.M. or P.M.
 - b. To allow more scheduling flexibility, request costs for additional sizes of buses, in addition to the current 71 passenger buses
 - c. Consider multi district bidding with neighboring school districts in order to create a larger economy of scale which may provide additional competition for the participating school district contracts.

3. Route Time and Loading Summary - In order to increase overall transportation efficiencies, bus stops should be located within a reasonable and safe walking distance from a child's residence. School attendance outside of the child's assigned school should be discouraged and should be at parent transportation.
4. Insurance - District management may wish to review the Contractor's automobile liability insurance policy and request the Contractor add insurance coverage for Underinsured and Uninsured Motorists and the Excess Liability coverage extends to both of those lines in the event of any excess damages. In addition, District management should check to see that both the District and the municipality are included as additional insureds under their general and vehicle liability insurance policy. This would provide protection to both the District and the municipality in the vent of an accident and resulting financial damages.

Reference Materials: Final School Transportation Efficiency Study and Later High School Start Time Analysis Report from Richard Labrie