

## Community Student Assignment Feedback Collected During the Spring 2016

**Please add any questions below that parents or community members have raised with you that we want to be sure are addressed at the two public forums on March 12th and 16th.**

### GENERAL STUDENT ASSIGNMENT QUESTION

- Why are you considering moving some existing Hastings K students to Estabrook while other new students take their place in Hastings? These students have just finished a major transition in their lives adapting just a year ago - now they will have to start over again - without most of the friends (if not all) that they have formed bonds with. I am scheduled to be part of Hastings project as a Hastings family, now not sure if we remain Hastings family or not - when the book will be published. Please reconsider moving existing Hastings children to Estabrook - because very few of them will be moved in isolation.
- I have a current Kindergartener and a current first grader who would both be at Harrington next year. We live in a location that may be redistricted. Can you confirm that under the proposed Moderate and Larger Scale scenarios, that my children would not be affected?
- If the new Hastings is going to be larger and a child can only be moved one time, why is any Hastings family being redistricted out of Hastings? Also, will there be classroom flux during the construction leaving less classroom space? If so, has this been considered as part of the redistricting?
- I have a child in Harrington already. Are they going to split my family?
- I live so close to Harrington, am I going to be driving to Estabrook?
- What happens when the new Hastings is built? Will my family or neighbors be moved again?
- I currently have children in 5th grade and kindergarten. Will my current kindergartner be subject to redistricting since their sibling will be moving on to middle school?
- If I have to enroll my younger child to another school while my older goes to Hastings, that will be an inconvenience - but we can live with inconvenience. However, asking a handful of six-years olds to adapt to new environment/schools leaving behind a school that they have made their own, two years in a row, this time with three month's notice, is a serious emotional burden and should be a cause for concern for everyone involved.
- The maps show movement of incoming kindergartners and rising 1st graders. What happens if a family moves into one of these reassigned districts (or buffer zones) who is in an upper grade? Are they assigned to the new school designated for their zone? What is the impact on the receiving school if they don't have room for an upper-grades student? What is the impact of not having the option to reassign to the new school on the previously assigned school?
- What happens to students in district-wide special education programs? How are they impacted when district boundaries are changed? What happens to their siblings if they face being separated according to redistricting?
- Can we see school enrollment projections - including % of capacity and # of sections required to support projected population - for each school for each scenario on a year by year basis?
- For each scenario, can we see what its impact is on the planned modulars at Fiske, Bridge and Bowman?

- I have a child that is supposed to be attending Kindergarten at Fiske this Fall. The Large Scale Scenario places my child at Estabrook instead. My main concern for my family and my son is the added time and inconvenience this move would cause. Currently, Fiske is 1.3 miles from our house (5 minute drive). My neighborhood (Lowell St, Fulton, Douglas) is at the corner of the Fiske district that is the farthest away from Estabrook, depending on the route and traffic, the 3.5-4 mile drive could take anywhere from 10-20 minutes if I were to drive my son to school (one-way). We have not ruled out my son taking the bus, but again my concern is being this far away from Estabrook, how much time would this add to his day? Also, why wasn't another neighborhood closer to the Estabrook line selected for potential redistricting? We would have to drive by Fiske everyday to go to Estabrook....
- Has analysis been conducted to see what the impacts are on Diamond and Clarke?
- How will these proposed changes affect middle school districting?
- Elaborating on the question above. If my child attends Hastings elementary school due to redistricting (instead of attending Bridge), will she be assigned Diamond middle school (Hastings feeds into Diamond) or will she be assigned Clarke middle school (Bridge feeds into Clarke)?
- For the plans that involve moving new students to Hastings and Estabrook, there was a large emphasis on the need to fill the additional classroom in 2016 (2 at estabrook and 1 at Hastings). The impact for 2017-2018 is still unclear to me. For the 2016 projection, there was one scenario an impact of ~16 new students at Hastings filling the open classroom. If you assume that you have approximately the same number of extra incoming kindergarteners in 2017 and 2018, but now without that extra rooms, that will significantly increase the kindergarten class sizes in 2017-2018. Has this been considered?
- If the Armenian Sisters Academy school is purchased in the near future and is used as a school, would there be a plan to move students into that location by 2017-2018? Would areas that are currently being looked at for redistricting be effected? Has any analysis been done to see what neighborhoods/areas might be impacted by this?
- My wife and I attended the Wednesday night meeting at Clarke. At that meeting one of the AppGeo consultants said that you would not be "plucking an individual student out of a class" and redistricting them. Under the Variation 3 of the Larger Scale scenario, that would be the exact result. We are an "existing family" as you define it, and live in the Harrington element by the high school. Our son, Peter, is in Ms. Little's Classroom at Harrington and under Variation 3, he would be the only one taken out of the class, because he is the only one without an older sibling in Harrington. We feel this is wrong and, for that reason, would strongly urge the committee NOT to pick Variation 3 of the Large Scale Scenario.
- Will there be a formal process for parental appeal of the scenario and variation selected?
- Will there be a request for families who would like to be volunteer to be re-districted?
- There appears to be a knock on effect from redistricting Elementary Schools to Middle Schools. Has any thought been given to the likely outcome of this in 5 years time, when children who could potentially walk/face a short journey to Clarke then need to be bussed across the middle of town to Diamond? Will children who end up being redistricted this year, have the choice to go to the more convenient Middle School in the future, regardless of Elementary feeder?
- The grandfathering of current students should not stop with sibling currently in the school. In our case our son's older sister has just left for Diamond and he will be transitioning from Kindergarten to

1st grade in the fall. He has essentially grown up at Fiske and spent many nights at the events and the playground. He has many friends in the school not only in his grade but others as well. As parents we are familiar with the teachers, the routines, etc. and this gives us great comfort. For this reason I would like to recommend extending the grandfathering to include siblings who have “recently” been in the school as this will further reduce the impact to current students.

- Who do I contact if I am willing to volunteer my children to redistrict to Estabrook from Fiske?
- We live in a component in Fiske that would be redistricted to Estabrook in the larger scale scenarios. We are walkable to Fiske – 1.1mi – as well as Harrington – 0.7mi. Estabrook is 3.7mi – and the route would take us right past Fiske. We would need to add 45 minutes to our daily commute or have our daughter spend about an hour and a half a day on the bus, keeping her from her current afterschool activities. She is currently surrounded by friends in our neighborhood, but with the redistricting, would be the only first grader in our component moved. We either don’t meet the criteria presented at the forum – contiguous, walkability, transportation – or would face all of the “don’ts” that the consultants said they’d avoid – plucking out a sole child, having to drive past an old school to get to the new, etc. Last, any scenario that has us moving from Fiske has Estabrook facing significant overcrowding.
- Are the modulars at Fiske still intended to be used to restore the Art Room as the number of kindergarten rooms drop by one and existing students are redistricted?
- What is the target classroom size at Fiske being used to determine the number of students to be moved?
- Is the criteria being used to determine number of relocated existing students from a single set of criteria districtwide, or is it at the discretion of the respective principals? The ratios of students being moved don’t seem to foot, and the differences become even more dramatic five years out.
- Are there single-site district-wide programs or other more turnkey elements that could be relocated as a temporary measure until a comprehensive, large scale and more equitable redistricting could take place? The current plan appears to be addressing short-term problems but creating long-term consequences, with an outsized burden being placed on very few families.
- Has anyone undertaking an analysis of the socio-demographic breakdown of those being redistricted? There seems to be an imbalance.
- As recently as January 2015, a Fiske Enrollment survey completed by 211 parents shows that parents overwhelmingly supported allowing class sizes to rise, using the art room as a general education classroom, using the music room as a general education classroom or using part of the library as a general education classroom over redistricting to Estabrook - by a factor of 2. Redistricting was overwhelmingly unpopular, with respondents selecting that only as a last choice. This survey considered the addition modulars. (The results are also consistent with a similar survey completed the year before.)

<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/524217e0e4b0c8e9efdcc249/t/54b60b16e4b054d2822466d0/1421216534052/Fiske+Enrollment+Survey+Data+Results.pdf>

Clearly, these are difficult decisions to make, and none of the outcomes is ideal. But why aren’t the wishes of the parents being taken into account here? What is the method for gathering parent input on this current plan? (The Fiske PTO website news page leads information on the box top contest, but there is no mention of the redistricting anywhere on the site.) There is an immediate need to fill three classrooms in the next year, with relief within sight when the new Hastings is completed.

Surely there is a less disruptive way to bridge those two years - one that is palatable to the entire community - without without penalizing select families permanently.

- Relocating current K children to another school seems to be in direct conflict with the curriculum these children spent their first half of school year on during this important transitional period: developing social and emotional skill sets by creating connections with peers. Have any child psychologists weighed in on the impact such a move would have on these children? They will discover they have been singled out, and moved to another school( unlike their peers); they will have to spend valuable first grade learning time on creating connections and breaking through student bonds formed amongst these new classmates the year before. Just how many hurdles should we expect such young children to have to take on?
  - Great point above (and I agree as a clinical psychologist).
- Overcrowding at Lexington schools is a town-wide issue, but to forcefully redistrict a neighborhood (Lowell, Fulton, Douglas) that is located the furthest (3.7 plus miles) from Estabrook is putting a great burden on one neighborhood. It violates all four criteria for defining components considered for boundary changes, especially walkability and ease of transportation! To the young children and their families who will be affected by it, it is cruel!

It changes our youngest school age children's lives by forcing them commute about 7.5 miles each school day--over 1.5 hours each school day if they take bus--taking the fun time out of their lives with their families and friends! This is not right!

This neighborhood is NOT "Geographic – contiguous with district boundaries "(one of the criteria of defining a component) for Estabrook, but is currently continuous and located within 1.2 to 1.3 miles distance to the current schools (Fiske & Diamond). Kids here walk and bike to school all the time in spring and fall! When the parents drive to drop off and pick up, the route is usually to Grant street--a shorter route to the back of the school; it minimizes the traffic in the morning time at East & Adam Streets and in the front of school! To displace this neighborhood from the walking / biking distance to a much more distant school located at the other end of the town (3.6 to 4 miles away) is unthinkable! This also will have a great impact on the neighborhood's property values (for everyone, including seniors).

The proposed large scale scenario redistricting of this neighborhood will not move many kids in the short run, and it seems like a great hardship for minimal benefits. Art education has never stopped at Fiske. Although art on the cart is not ideal, none of the schools in Lexington is in ideal condition! In order to get one separate art room or to make the classroom size smaller at Fiske, the redistricting will punish a few young kids and their families who live in a nearby neighborhood. This does not seem equitable or reasonable! Also, Estabrook has available rooms but already has a huge parking & traffic problem that may never be fixed but will certainly worsen with aggressive redistricting!

To create a great burden and disrupt lives of one neighborhood to address a town-wide overcrowding problem--especially at the expense of the youngest and senior citizens of this neighborhood in Lexington--is CRUEL, and abuse of power!

Most importantly, the proposed "larger scale scenario" of the redistricting plan is a horrible plan for the reasons described above, and it will inevitably cause bigger overcrowding issues in other schools in a just few years!

Stop burdening one neighborhood with the town-wide overcrowding problem! Please do not make a monumental mistake like the former superintendent nearly made: remember just a few years ago he said we would need to close Hastings. Clearly there was inadequate consideration given to the

future effects of such a decision!

- I'm appalled that Fiske School Leadership would even consider a proposal that takes young children from the Lowell-Fulton-Douglas neighborhood and moves them to Estabrook. Though our family is not personally affected I see the impact that this has on these children and their families. I can't understand why these children are being placed into a situation where they can no longer walk or bike to school. Is the school leadership comfortable in requesting that a bus come to the neighborhood to pick up children attending Fiske, then a second to pick up those attending Estabrook, each adding to the congestion on East and Adams Streets? As pointed out in a previous post, the parent survey that was conducted at Fiske demonstrated parents' desire to find alternatives to redistricting. Obviously, our input was not considered when rolling out proposed solutions. One can appreciate the complexity of finding a solution to our overcrowded schools. However, targeting one neighborhood with an illogical proposal which sends young children beyond schools within close proximity over a highway on congested roadways is puzzling.
- I would like a **CLEAR** and **RATIONAL** explanation as to why the Lowell/Fulton/Douglas neighborhood would be considered for redistricting to Estabrook. As far as I can see it does NOT meet the criteria components. It is **NOT** contiguous with Estabrook district boundaries, it is **NOT** in close proximity...Estabrook is over 3 miles away, there are 2 other elementary schools that are closer and Estabrook is **NOT** walkable from this neighborhood, nor is it easy to drive to.
- In the various scenarios provided on the maps, it appears that the Five Fields neighborhood could be split into two zones - is this the case? If so, it seems against the idea of keeping neighborhoods together with clear boundaries.
- Have you considered asking all parents of current and incoming elementary schools if they want to volunteer to relieve pressure, not just the ones in the components to be Redistricted?
- I can maybe see how these plans will relieve some of the pressure for the coming year or so and fill the three empty classrooms, but according to the projections the forecast is continued growth in the Lexington area. How will this problem be solved over the long run?
- Instead of inconveniencing certain neighborhoods and adding buses and commutes onto families why are out of town children considered to fill some of these spaces. It won't change the commute for them.
- Some attention must be made to make sure K and 1st graders that will be redistricted will not be singled out from their neighbourhood.
- In conversation with the LPS Director of Planning and Assessment - the central source of current and expected enrollment data - she described **the redistricting from Fiske as *prospective*, intended "to stem off future growth."**

**Her numbers and supporting math appears below, but how does the forward looking nature of this plan reconcile with the guidance that this plan is only to provide immediate relief? The numbers don't support it.**

Analysis to support this appears below, with all data coming from the LPS Director of PLanning and Assessment, the ESE site, or the SC policy manual

**Rising 1<sup>st</sup> graders**

There are currently 87 children in Fiske K (net of 1 that just moved out of the country), with three new 1<sup>st</sup> graders pre-registered for next year, so a total of 90. The current proposal would reduce Fiske 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 79 students from 90, for a class size averaging 20.

**The proposal would not secure an additional classroom: Four classes would remain dedicated to this 79 students in this class year. The modulars will still be used to restore the art room and to relieve existing dedicated ILP undercapacity.**

SC Policy targets a ratio of 22 1<sup>st</sup> graders for every teacher. A teacher's aide is required in 1<sup>st</sup> grade when there are greater than 24 students in class. The maxima for 1<sup>st</sup> grade is 29 students.

**Under the proposal, this average Fiske class size is 20:** 2 students per class below the target size of 22 per class, and 9 total students below a target class size of 88. **The Director referred to this as “an ideal class size.”** This average class size is 9 students per class below the number of students that would trigger the need for a fifth classroom – or 37 students total below the max number of 116 that could be allocated across four classrooms. **This suggests that there is a max buffer capacity of 37 in this current class year.**

### **Incoming K**

Admittedly, 1<sup>st</sup> grade doesn't exist in a vacuum. The Director did provide data around incoming K and progression numbers.

Through February, there are 40 children captured in the census or pre-registered. Typically, there is a yield of 75% from February through September, so it's believed that 30 of these children will matriculate. Between now and September, and additional 20 will likely enroll. This puts the expected 2016-2017 class at 60.

SC Policy targets a ratio of 18 Ks for every teacher. A teacher's aide is required in K when there are greater than 20 students in class. The maxima for K grade is 24 students.

The Director also provided the same data for last year as a comparison. At this time in 2015, 73 students were captured in the census or pre-registered. About 75% of those – or 54 – enrolled, and then another 34 were added to the class by September, resulting in 88. (I use 87 as a current number because the a Fiske family just moved back to Japan, reducing Fiske Ks by 1.)

The additional 170 new kindergarteners that arrived districtwide last summer must have been a shock. There does seem to be a certain amount of lingering PTSD on this. This year's incoming class at Fiske, however, is tracking at 55% of what it was a year ago. The numbers seem not just to have normalized, but significantly reduced.

### **Other Classes / Progression**

Other class populations range from 73 to 95, with the 95 being exiting 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The average of class populations for the rising 2<sup>nd</sup> graders through rising 4<sup>th</sup> graders is 83, with classes in these grades targeting a ratio of 24 under SC policy, with a maxima of 31 (which does sound squishy ) There are four classrooms for each current grade, except 4<sup>th</sup>, which has three rooms.

With the arrival of a three-room K and the exit of a four room 5<sup>th</sup>, through simple progression, **there should be a net gain of a classroom before the addition of 2 modulars.**

Grade sizes beyond first at Fiske are remarkably stable, according to the Director, with the most variability in class size from pre-K to K and then K to 1<sup>st</sup>. Nothing in historical progression rates suggest oversized vulnerability to population swings in later years.

I realize that Fiske is part of a district and that there is a severe capacity problem districtwide. **The data above, though, is not consistent with the guidance that this proposal provides immediate relief, versus long term. The moves are prospective and used to achieve aspirational goals of ideal class size. I'd be curious to know the rationale for creating such disruption for a few students as a pre-emptive move.**

I won't go through the math of Estabrook, but the proposal does seem to simply transfer the concerns at Fiske to Estabrook. **I have also heard varying opinions on whether the same criteria was applied equally across the elementary schools. Some believe there was considerable principal discretion.**

**Please provide a clear and transparent rationale for the apparent gap between the stated purpose of this proposal and the numbers.**

- From the Lexington K-12 METCO Academic Director, **the current non-resident enrollment in Lexington Elementary Schools is 122 students.**

According to Dr. Mary Czajkowski at the March 23 SC meeting, **there are is interest from 16 non-resident kindergarteners and 19 non-resident 1st graders in attending Lexington Elementary Schools next year.** (Total expected to be added next year is 20, which by policy is a 12 year commitment)

**The proposal as presented only showed residents and where they were being moved.** The SC policy shows a clear preference for resident priority in school placement.

This is an important program, **but how does the non-resident population factor into this plan?**

From the Lexington K-12 METCO Academic Director on the breakdown of 2016-2017 enrollment:

Bowman - 17

Bridge 26

Estabrook - 31

Fiske - 12

Harrington - 21

Hastings - 15

Clarke - 23

Diamond - 33

LHS - 74

**Total Number of METCO students in the district: 250**

- I live on Cooke Rd. with two children at Fiske. While our family would not be directly impacted, under the Large Scale Scenarios our neighborhood would see children assigned to Estabrook, despite that fact that both Fiske and Harrington schools are significantly closer. It appears that a similar situation exists for some students in south Lexington, who would be sent to Hastings, rather than Bowman or Bridge, which are both closer. **I think that a core principle of any redistricting**

**plan should be to have students attend an elementary school that is as geographically close as possible to their homes**, even if doing so initially affects a greater number of students.

It seems patently unfair to saddle a few neighborhoods with a disproportionate impact of redistricting, rather than redrawing lines that made more sense. I feel it would make more sense and be more equitable to move an entire neighborhood (including my own) to a different adjacent school, than to grandfather some children and send others to a distant school. The buffer zone proposal, while complex and potentially splitting up neighborhoods, at least addresses the proximity of the schools involved.

- We recently moved from a town in CT where school choice is allowed - families elect to attend a school other than the one they are districted for on a space available basis (transportation not provided). Does Lexington offer a similar program? Have you considered asking for volunteers first?
- Non-residents should ONLY be considered on a space available basis. Other towns already take this approach & it is only fair to resident taxpayers. How are the projected enrollment figures at each school impacted if no new non-resident students are accepted?
- Lowell/Fulton/ Cooke/ Douglas neighborhood can walk & bike to Fiske & Diamond schools! We have sidewalks ( not need to cross East Street) all the way to Fiske, and a traffic light on Lowell street so it make the walk & bike easier than you think! Everyday there are kids walking and biking down East street, rain or shine! Including kindergartners!! To single out this owner- occupied neighborhood which located within walking / biking distance and then forcefully send their young children to a very far school to fill a classroom is wrong! Redistricting this neighborhood has very slim impact of relief overcrowding at Fiske but you are losing the voters in this neighborhood and the friends of this neighborhood for the school funding! Seniors and residents who don't have school age kids here believe there is a real impact on their home values so they will not vote for anymore tax increase even though they have been advocates for Lexington education! Other families are exploring the plans of sending their children to private schools when they reach middle school so they will not vote for DE for the middle schools neither! Friends of theirs are losing faith in our district and leadership after examine the redistricting plan so they are changing their votes too!
- I see that Lowell/Fulton/Cooke/Douglas neighborhoods are upset but we are also alarmed over on Parker/Clarke/Forest streets(center/high school location) with 2 scenarios suggesting to send children to Estabrook. We are 2.5 miles from Estabrook and have 3 schools that are much closer "HASTINGS/BRIDGE/FISKE". I Don't understand how streets/neighborhoods were selected? Why would any parent on this committee agree to sending elementary age children to schools where they can no longer reasonably walk/bike and endure long bus rides. As stated above sending our neighborhood to Estabrook could have a negative impact on our home values. I believe we should hold off on redistricting: use the modulars in the best possible ways to attain general education classrooms, complete the New Hastings, and then proceed with thoughtful redistricting.
- In the revised redistricting plan of **12 April 2016**, the island in the center of town remains districted to Harrington (instead of being moved to Hastings), while the eastern corner of the current Fiske district (which deceptively looks small--currently 3 first graders and 1 kindergartener) is redistricted to Harrington. The ticking time bomb here is that I understand that **a new ~50 unit (if I remember correctly) development is sited within this patch**. In which case, Harrington may soon be gaining a multiple greater number of kids from this patch. Yet, Harrington is already at capacity with no extra space, and Harrington was not allocated any prefab classrooms, so it looks like you are creating a situation where Harrington is going to "blow up" as soon as that new development comes online. **Is there any safety valve here?** It looks very puzzling that we seem to have moved from shifting kids to schools with space to shifting kids primarily to Harrington, which does not.
- It appears that Bowman, Bridge and Harrington will all lose art and/or music rooms well before the new Hastings open if the latest plan is put in place absent further redistricting. You should know



whether the Armenian Sisters school will be an option for a seventh elementary school and whether the state approves funding for a 30-section new Hastings by this time next year, so are you going to engage in further redistricting (e.g., to start at least shifting kindergarteners) next year once you have further clarity on those issues? It seems unfair and irresponsible not to do so.

## BUFFER ZONE QUESTIONS

- The School Committee has a policy of trying not to redistrict an address more than once every 5 years. What does this mean if the address is in a buffer zone? If a family moves out of that address and a new family with elementary-aged children moves in, must they be assigned to the same school as the student that departed?
- If a family is in a buffer zone, will they be able to choose, or “preference” one of the schools designated to the buffer zone?
- What has been the experience of other families in towns with buffer zones in terms of splitting their neighborhoods across two schools?
- Who will manage the assignment of students in buffer zones? If it is central office, does central office have the capacity to manage this?
- The proposal calls for moving only incoming kindergarteners and possibly 1st graders in the buffer zones. Is it possible to volunteer to redistrict our older elementary-aged children in the buffer zones?
- Why is the only owner-resident neighborhood in a buffer zone the Reed Street area? That impacts home prices extremely disproportionately to one area. I understand that redistricting is a necessary evil; / adjustment that occurs periodically. Why should only one group of property owners deal with that permanently? Sure, feel free to periodically redistrict this neighborhood as necessary, but I am not clear how that will impact the overcrowding on the East end of town.
- When will this buffer zone concept be voted on? Since it impacts far more Lexington owners than any particular redistricting option (which only impacts school aged families), how will this decision be communicated to non-school families?
- Please consider looking at sparsely populated areas with more spread-out populations of children as buffer zones, rather than areas where there is a strong neighborhood community element.
- If buffer zones are going to be introduced into our town I feel that it's only fair that the entire town become a buffer zone, not just specific neighborhoods. That way property values throughout town would not be affected.

## PROCESS QUESTIONS

- How do I give feedback on what I see at the forums? Do I have any say in changing district lines?
- When will we know if our family is impacted?
- Enrollment for Lextended Day opens on April 1 and capacity goes almost immediately.

Redistricting decisions are being made around late April and communicated in May. How can affected families be sure to get afterschool care?

- I second this Lextended day opens registration on April 1st. If a decision has not been made how can families affected by this get a fair share to sign up if they don't know where

they will be. Can this be communicated to Lexington to postpone their registration date until a decision is issued? These after school care spots get filled very quickly.

- Many parents were caught off guard by the proposal - and many still seem unaware given recent conversations.

Can there be a stronger and more centralized attempt to publicize this proposal and ensure community-wide buy-in?

Can there be established channels for *getting* information - for example, what factors went into school specific decisions? It is hard to ask informed questions when there isn't a good way to the *get* information.

## OTHER/MISCELLANEOUS QUESTIONS

- What is the status of purchasing the old Armenian Sisters school and making it an elementary school? Is that still on the table?
- It appears that the biggest issue facing the elementary schools is CAPACITY, i.e. while there are some available classrooms, the overall class size is still growing, thereby reducing the amount of attention on a per student basis. Instead of spending the money to build a new Hastings, essentially keeping the same capacity, why not use these funds to build/acquire a new school, to increase the overall capacity, which would make reassignment that much easier, if even necessary still?
- What will happen to the Metco Program?
- As discussed at the meetings, it is widely agreed that all Lexington schools are academically excellent. The challenge of redistricting lies in breaking student and family relationships that have developed as families settle into a school community. For scenarios that consider moving current Kindergartners, it is very critical to acknowledge that these are students and families newest to their schools, have been disadvantaged by large class sizes, and are worn by a year of uncertainty. The quantitative data must be discussed, but please remember there are sweet little 5-6 year olds behind each one of those dots. There have already been very emotional responses by families that are being considered for redistricting. Please provide a plan with emotional support resources to help students and families that will be redistricted. And support for students in grades that will have their friends removed.
- Please do larger scale redistricting and buffer zones for the 2016-2017 school year. Many children in overcrowded schools have yet to see equitable services in their entire elementary school experience. Relief and flexibility would really help for this coming school year.
- If the school committee approves buffer zones, please consider instituting them on a widespread basis. Don't just put them just between two overcrowded schools. Every school should have buffer zones with at least two adjacent schools. For example, Bowman should have a buffer with Bridge and another buffer with Harrington. This more wide spread approach will diminish any negative effects people may perceive about living in a buffer zone. Widespread buffer zones would help the entire community shoulder the burden of overcrowding more equally.
- The current proposed redistricting map does not reflect the fact that there is currently a very large strip of homes between Mass Ave and the bike path that feed to Bowman. These homes are on the

Harrington side of Mass Ave and are accessible to Harrington without crossing Mass Ave. This might be a good additional buffer zone.

- Please keep in mind physical classroom sizes and the differences in both sq ft/student on a per classroom and an overall sq ft/student basis when deciding which schools can handle larger class sizes.
- PLEASE consider voluntary redistricting, and allow that across all grades at the parent's discretion (and obviously taking into account where there are spaces). Some kids are flexible and could easily handle a transition, others would struggle much more. The more choice you offer families, the less painful the change will be to implement because there will not be nearly as many unhappy families. Some may prefer to stay at an overcrowded school that is closer, others may rather go to a newer/less crowded school building that is a little further away. Some families may prefer a different school for other reasons. Buffer zones are the ONLY way to go here otherwise we end up with severe overcrowding at Hastings during the construction, and at Estabrook in the long term. Voluntary movement of current students to ease today's overcrowding would decrease the pain.
- How exactly will the following be addressed: Avoid creating socio-economic disproportionality in student assignments. In addition, how will the needs of non-English speakers be addressed. Specifically, with several apartment complexes in East Lexington, the Bowman school has always been more likely to have new immigrants, non-English-speaking students, causing disproportionate needs in the classrooms.
- Have the following 3 strategies been considered? **(1) NO MORE DISTRICTS IN LEXINGTON, SCHOOL ASSIGNMENT AT THE DISCRETION OF THE LPS ADMINISTRATION WITH ONLY A PREFERENCE FOR FAMILIES WITH A CHILD ALREADY IN AN ELEMENTARY (OR MIDDLE) SCHOOL BUILDING HAVING THEIR OTHER CHILD(REN) IN THE SAME SCHOOL; (2) COMBINED GRADES** E.G. INSTEAD OF K, 1, 2, 3, ETC, CREATE EACH YEAR 1/2 OR 3/4 OR 2/3 ETC CLASSROOMS DEPENDING ON HOW BEST TO FILL EXISTING CLASSROOMS IN EACH BUILDING; **(3) ASSIGN A WHOLE BUILDING TO A SINGLE GRADE**, FOR EXAMPLE ALL K STUDENTS AT BUILDING 1 (E.G. FISKE), ALL GRADE 1 STUDENTS AT BUILDING 2, ALL GRADE 2 STUDENTS AT BUILDING 3, ETC. Please let me know the answer at [patrick.mehr@gmail.com](mailto:patrick.mehr@gmail.com) Thanks!
- Why is yes4lex marketing on the Google Doc page?
- There are a lot of good questions raised on this forum. Will they be answered? If so when? Where and how can we know about it?
- My kids will not be impacted by any of these new re-districting criteria. **I am speaking from an unbiased position.**

The current "components" of redistricting have not considered the potential "traffic" issues on some of the busy streets: East street (if people are moving from Fiske to Estabrook"), Mass Ave. (from Harrington to Hasting) etc. This could significantly impact the commute for kids (either by car or by school bus).

I believe the fundamental **criteria** of re-districting should be "**geographical**" proximity. Why not pick the component area close to the schools which were re-districting to? For that reason, I cannot find a reasonable justification to assign the area north of Lowell from Fiske to Estabrook.

My suggestion: assign the district based on 2-3-mile radius of a close-by school. Any overlapping areas should be considered as buffer zone to have "dual" or even more options. The

parents will fill-out a preference survey (based on their location, their previous relationships with a certain schools, i.e. even older siblings have moved to middle schools, they should still be “grandfathered” to a certain school”). The school district will assign based on these considerations. And finally, there should be an appeal process if the parents think the assignment is “unreasonable”.

The space issue should **NOT** be considered as “first” priority over “geographical” preferences of a family. I would rather place my kid to an “overcrowded” school than spend 30min more on commuting to a new school. In the end, we want our kids to be “happy”, not to add new stress to their “daily commute”. There are always ways to make new rooms in existing school (less art room, music room, smaller libraries etc.). Also, having 23 or more students at one classroom (with additional teacher) will still be better (and financially reasonable) for LPS, than spending multi-million dollar building new schools. The essential factor for “quality” school is not space, rather the efforts from teachers. Japanese schools have much less space than ours, but still maintain good (if not better) educational standards.

We have not considered “reducing” the non-resident program. I believe it is an important program adding diversities to LPS. However, if the residents (the tax payers) are significantly impacted, and the schools are suffering overcrowding issues. Why should we still have a significant number of “non-resident” students? We should reduce the number.

If Hasting school has less student enrollment, which suggests that communities close to Hasting have less new families, why build a big new school at Hasting? Replacing or improving old buildings at Hasting is reasonable and is OK, but DON'T have to add 9-new classrooms at a school which has significant less enrollment than other schools. Why not reduce the budget at Hasting building, but spend the money at other sites which requires expansion? Adding modular rooms at Fiske, Harrington, Bowman, Bridge will solve almost all of our problems.

- I think it is very bad idea to move students to completely fill the capacity of schools like Estabrook that were (with specific purpose) originally built bigger than was immediately necessary. I know that you have been asked to do so before requesting money for new capacity, but this will lead to a second round of redistricting later as Estabrook soon runs out of its capacity, and so on. A short-run perspective here is going to lead into a lot of inefficient bussing and excessive school commuting that should be avoided if at all possible. Second, if you do decide to redistrict, then you **MUST** also change the middle school feeding patterns. While the change of primary school may have minor impacts on school commutes for some children, the impact on them at middle school transition can be quite dramatic.
- We live presently in the Fiske district (and are walking distance) and are slated to be redistricted to Estabrook. Given our work (in Boston and Cambridge) and that our after school child care providers don't always have cars for pickups from extended day, moving us to Estabrook is simply unworkable for us. We carefully selected a locale Lexington to allow for walkability to school, and, this represents a bait and switch well after the fact. The only way to do this fairly is to allow for choice - and to specify this redistricting for any **new** families that move here. If the district makes these redistricting decisions “binding”, we will need a clear appeals process in a timely way. Making this voluntary and for new families will save the district a lot of time and hassle in having to deal with those of us who simply cannot switch schools. By dealing with this expeditiously, they can move on to the bigger issues - this demographic trend is making its way through the schools. Also, I am seeing more and more families pulling their children out of LPS in favor of private schools. Is this factor in the district's calculations?
- The redistricting of Kindergarteners and first graders ignores that there has been physical inequity in the schools for over a decade. We are a town that needs to make decisions based on what is best

for the entire town and have therefore continued to prioritize projects based on need, etc. We have tried and should continue to try to make decisions about what is best for the most students. When Fiske was rebuilt, it was far superior in physical plant to the older schools, but that was understandable. However we cannot ignore that this resulted in high demand in the Fiske area. House values increased and the desirableness of Fiske resulted in a higher proportion of school-age families purchasing homes in this area. This is one of the factors resulting in overcrowding and has been ignored. Punishing schools that have been less desirable because they are old will lead to much more division within the town, resentment and arguments about whether the schools truly are equitable. It seems completely unfair to make students who are geocoded for Hastings go to Estabrooke when there is room at Hastings! We can do better than this. We all want the best for our kids, and we all want property values maintained.

- Estabrooke was purposefully built with the intent of having excess “swing space” in the short term. What was the original idea behind how that space would be used? Why are family preferences not a factor? When will these decisions be made? Late May is too late!
- Communities are not just based on attendance at the school. Unless the administrators are backing away from all previous statements regarding the importance of community and home-school partnerships, plans that redistrict students away from their peers/neighborhoods should be reconsidered. Elementary schools work hard to create partnerships with parents, neighbors and the movement of the students away from these communities is detrimental and will cause adjustment and transition challenges that we are not prepared for.
- As I understand one of the proposed plans (the “larger” plan), incoming K and rising 1st graders for Hastings would be moved to Estabrook so that other K and 1st graders from a different district can go to Hastings. I don’t understand how this makes any sense at all. You are inflicting changes on more children than is necessary. A family that is literally across the street from Hastings and walks to school will have to now take a bus or drive over 3 miles to Estabrook under this plan. This plan is very short-sighted, especially given Hastings will be so much larger in the future. Please think long term and minimize the changes being levied on our children and families. School assignment should be geographically done and either Buffer Zones or some other solution like that should be introduced to allow flexibility if particular class sizes are going to be unacceptable. From what I have read, many parents will accept larger class sizes if it means their children do not have to change schools.
- My kids will not be impacted by any of these new re-districting criteria. So, from another unbiased position: Please remember that schools like Bridge and Bowman were build for a maximum capacity of 466 students 50 years ago and they are the smallest schools in town (62,968 SF). Bridge has 576 students and Bowman has 580 students! At Bridge, we have one of the smallest gym in town ( k-1 have gym at the cafeteria), a small cafeteria with a very creative schedule (that has to be free at 1pm for with k-1 gym classes), smaller than average classrooms (not ideal for our children with special needs), definitely not enough bathrooms (actually the schools are violating a code here), the ever growing need of classroom space has lead us to transform every windowless closet at the school in a office/educational space (mostly used for specialists). Also, we already have large classes at bridge. After their kindergartner year, my older kids have been in classes with 24-26 kids (a real challenge for any teacher), with a part time AID. My kindergartener's class has 22 kids in her class (not ideal at all).....These school's leadership have been amazingly creative with the space while maintaining the quality of education, but enough is enough these schools and our teachers need some relief now. We need to bring parity to all the elementary schools in town and without redistricting and implementing buffer zones in all the schools districts (to balance enrollment between all schools in a permanent basis) it will be impossible to close the gap.

- I am very concerned that due to a vocal, and relatively speaking not so large, group of parents who feel they will be inconvenienced by possible redistricting changes, that both their children, as well as other people's children will be negatively impacted if they succeed in halting the redistricting effort that aims to relieve pressure on our most overcrowded schools. LPS has waited too long to reduce numbers at Bridge/Bowman/Fiske - the longer they wait, the more problems these schools will continue to experience. We are way past 'ideal' solutions - we should not punish children by having them in overcrowded classrooms or without sufficient space for programming because their parents or someone else's parents don't want their children to take the bus, etc. Furthermore, continuing to under-utilize existing space will put both the middle school and Hastings debt exclusions at risk by giving the community at large good reason to question if the situation is really so dire if the administration will not even make the changes necessary to fill up all existing space.
- If it is indeed true that we are gaining a classroom in Fiske due to the incoming K class size (3 classrooms anticipated) and the drop-off of a large 5th grade cluster (currently 4 5th grade classes, anticipating needing only 3 5th grade classes next year) then it seems Fiske is gaining 2 additional classrooms on top of the modulars. Why are we solving this over-crowding at Fiske by stripping out a few K kids going into 1st grade and moving them to a new school over 3 miles away? They have already made friends and gotten used to their current school. Taking the kids in 1 specific neighborhood (that is NOT close to Estabrooke) when we are theoretically gaining 2 new classrooms along with 2 modulars seems unnecessary a burden on these families. Fiske is currently accessible to them by biking or walking, or a 3 minute drive. Turning that 3 minute drive into a 20 minute drive during the morning commute is a burden on the kids, but also to the parents that drop off their kids and head straight to work.
- If Fiske no longer has an overcrowding issue, that is great, but Bowman most definitely does. My children have been overcrowded there for years, in classes of 25-27 students. It desperately needs relief for the 2016/17 school year. Please do not lose sight of this need just because a few families are upset. This year 4th grade students at Bowman have half of a tiny gym for their gym classes because 2 classes have to be run simultaneously. Children can't safely get the aerobic exercise they need for their health and well-being the way 4th graders in the rest of the town can. If we are really saying all our schools are equally excellent then please reduce the population at Bowman to really be sure services are delivered equitably.
- It would really help the overcrowding in East Lexington if neighborhoods from the center of town were not bussed east to Harrington. East Lexington desperately needs the capacity in the schools nearby for students who reside there, since there are no other options for relief in the most densely populated part of town. If the non-contiguous neighborhood from the center of town that is currently bussed to Harrington could be redistricted to Hastings (which is closer to it than Harrington) much needed capacity could open up in East Lexington to relieve Bowman overcrowding. This is a change that could be started now and would help fill Hastings in the future.
- Here is a concrete example of why adding extra classrooms by itself will not solve the problem: My daughter goes to Bowman. She is in Kindergarten this year, and she eats lunch at 1:25 pm. This is not a joke, this is an actual fact. The Kindergarteners eat lunch at 1:25 in the afternoon. It's crazy, and I have no idea why they were the age group that got stuck with this time slot, but they did, and that is the reality of what we have been dealing with this year. The fact is, the school population at Bowman is too large for the school. This issue is not about classrooms. It's a quality of life issue for these kids. They have lack of ample common spaces needed for lunch, assembly, gym, art, music, etc. Lunches start at 10:30 in the morning and end at almost 2pm. There are 6 lunch periods. Adding more classrooms or modulars does not solve the issue here, or at least not at Bowman. There has to be a combined plan for expansion AND redistricting. That's the only way this is going to work. Nobody likes it. But it is true. And building a new school is expensive, but this town

probably needs another elementary school. Especially if the population of children keeps growing. I wouldn't want to uproot my child but Estabrook looks pretty nice from this vantage point, with two gyms, a cafeteria, and an auditorium. I certainly would not complain if the plan was to bus my entire neighborhood over there. Sure, it would make getting to some after school activities a little more complicated, but worth the trade-off for sure.

- I would like to add my voice as a concerned Bowman parent with a 2nd grader who feels we need relief from the overcrowding in the school. I second these comments from above: "I am very concerned that due to a vocal, and relatively speaking not so large, group of parents who feel they will be inconvenienced by possible redistricting changes, that both their children, as well as other people's children will be negatively impacted if they succeed in halting the redistricting effort that aims to relieve pressure on our most overcrowded schools. LPS has waited too long to reduce numbers at Bridge/Bowman/Fiske - the longer they wait, the more problems these schools will continue to experience. We are way past 'ideal' solutions - we should not punish children by having them in overcrowded classrooms or without sufficient space for programming because their parents or someone else's parents don't want their children to take the bus, etc. Furthermore, continuing to under-utilize existing space will put both the middle school and Hastings debt exclusions at risk by giving the community at large good reason to question if the situation is really so dire if the administration will not even make the changes necessary to fill up all existing space." We live 2 miles from our school and we've always felt like we're part of the community.
- I am a Bowman parent whose children will not be affected by redistricting but my children ARE and will continue to be, as will all the students and staff of our school, deeply affected by intense overcrowding. I add my voice here as a Bowman parent and also as a major arts advocate for the state of Massachusetts to say that our children have very little space for their tremendous potential for personal and community growth at Bowman. The movement toward creating more space for Bowman and Bridge was and **is** the right thing to do, and one small group of outspoken Fiske parents concerned only for their children do not have the right to drastically influence the outcome for the elementary schools on the whole. We need to balance the attention given to the needs of the schools equally. As it is, Bowman and Bridge have received the least amount of renovation, etc. of all of the schools and it is time that the attention is equalized.
- According to DiNisco's capacity analysis, Bridge, Bowman and Fiske are overcrowded by a combined 14 classrooms. We have only 3 classrooms available in the entire system that are not full. So, even if we were to provide equal relief to each overcrowded school, at most we would remove one classroom of children from each school. This is a drop in the bucket. Plus, AppGeo has shown that filling those classrooms will only accelerate overcrowding at Estabrook. This exercise has demonstrated that redistricting is not a solution; it is merely a distraction from the core issue which is that we need to add more space ASAP. Please discuss what the School Committee is doing to add more capacity at the elementary school level aside from Hastings, which will be insufficient.
- I agreed redistricting by itself will not solve the problem. Redistricting plus buffer zones will do something. At one point in this multi year process, it was agreed that the only way for Bridge, Bowman and Fiske schools to have parity with the other schools in town, was if LPS uses a combination of: using all the space available in the district, create more space in the system (new construction), modular space (to be use by specialists), and redistricting in probably in 2-3 stages (that was the main reason for creating a redistricting committee last summer). Also, it is my understanding; that the thought of redistricting some kids now (especially the children who have never been in the school district) is to have the least impact possible for the big redistricting that will happen once a new Hasting is ready (hopefully 9 new classrooms). Parents who are not familiar with the process should be aware that many of us (with future K-4 graders) would be facing redistricting in 2-3 years. For the parents who are claiming that redistricting a Preschooler or

kindergarten is not fair and it would affect their families deeply (I understand your pain), please keep in mind that you might not have a choice but accept redistricting for your then 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> grader (which I personally find it very disruptive for kids and families) in the near future.

- I would like to add my voice to the interest in exploring the development of buffer zones around every elementary district. It seems like Lexington faces challenges in anticipating growth and population shifts; we should create a system by which many options are possible in the future, a system that does not focus exclusively on one or two neighborhoods.
- Is the document still accepting?
- It seems that the current redistricting plan has the only rental community that currently feeds to Fiske and the new Manor house both being moved out of the Fiske district. This creates higher socioeconomic disproportionality at Fiske.
- By moving two 50 unit complexes out of Fiske into Harrington, the School Committee will make Harrington greatly overcrowded. Harrington is near full capacity, cannot add another classroom without losing art/music rooms, is not getting modulars, and growing 2% per year like everyone else. Adopt buffer zones or expand Harrington's boundaries in a way that creates less of an impact on its population.
- Given the challenges you are encountering in finding students to fill Estabrook, I urge you build a hypothetical district map for new Hastings now. Can you fill a school with 9 more classrooms without reaching across town or into areas walkable to other schools? If you can create what you believe to be a reasonable map, use this map as the basis for relief for the 2016/17 school year.
- a. Does it reach into the center of town to the area that now gets bussed to Harrington? If so, begin the transition of the Harrington area in the center of town to Hastings now, so that space can be freed up at Harrington for Bowman children. Alternatively, does it reach to Avalon on Waltham Street? If so, begin that transition now to give Bowman some relief, as was proposed in an earlier plan. I would like to point out that if you change the Middle school feeder pattern and use Mass Ave as the dividing line Hastings would feed to Clarke, which would make sending students from Avalon on Waltham Street to Hastings less problematic. They could then feed to nearby Clarke with their Hastings peers. Such a new feeder pattern also solves the problem of separating Hastings ILP children from their peers in 6th grade.
- b. Is the hypothetical Hastings map feasible without stretching to bussed areas? If not, accept that bussing is a fact for the future and don't dismiss current solutions that require bussing for relief now. I would like to point out that many busses drop off their last students just before 4 pm. It is not uncommon already for children to be on the bus for 40 minutes.
- c. If it is not possible to fill a very large Hastings in a reasonable way, that is information that is critical to know now rather than after it is built. Given the challenges of filling Estabrook without reaching to walkable parts of Fiske or deep in the Hastings district I am very concerned about the wisdom of building a large Hastings so close to Bridge and in a less dense part of town. Empty classrooms at a new Hastings would be extremely unfortunate.
- Given the lack of classroom space in East Lexington I encourage you to begin preparations to request funds for construction of a Harrington addition in the same debt exclusion vote as new Hastings. Without clear action and viable space solutions on both sides of town voters may be very divided.
- The note that administration placed in incoming kindergarten packets about flexibility of placement was very wise. I urge you to take advantage of that foresight by examining every known incoming kindergarten student in the Bowman district. Wherever possible I encourage you to place incoming students with no previous Bowman connection in other schools to allow for only 4 reasonably sized incoming kindergarten classes to Bowman, for once you start these students in the school you are making a 6 year commitment to those children and you are impacting ALL current



students in that building for 6 more years. Experience with this process shows us that families lay down roots quickly and don't want to be moved once they are in a school. If we are honoring those sentiments, I urge you NOT to allow 5 full classes of kindergarten students to start at Bowman. This is not a sustainable level of enrollment for the next 6 years.

- With hindsight, the 5 first graders proposed for redistricting from Fiske to Estabrook would have been much better off if they had started at Estabrook last year rather than being moved now. Please don't make the same mistake twice. Please limit Bowman's K enrollment to 4 appropriately sized classes.
- Policy makers strongly stated that these modulars were NOT for redistricting, but rather for decompression. This is already not true for Bowman, before they are even in place. Already, both modulars seem to be spoken for as general ed classrooms rather than allowing for decompression of core spaces. This will result in further compression, not decompression. Please step back and see the flaw in the current plan. Find other welcoming schools for any new students who have no prior connection to Bowman so that the students who are there now can get services closer to equitable to their peers in other schools across town. A Bowman with 29 sections is 2 sections larger than a FULL Estabrook, with double gym, art and music spaces and much larger classrooms. That is not fair.
- If policy making is too involved for implementation of buffer zones this year, I would like to encourage you to pursue the request made Tuesday night to give the superintendent temporary and immediate authority to place students in educationally appropriate schools outside their zoned districts. This will give you time to make thoughtful decisions about policy without penalizing current students. This temporary trial run may also help inform policy decisions.
- **LPS ASSIGNMENT COMMITTEE IS RACIST!** Its unreal that you would cow-tow to the Miriam Hill crowd to move the high density 50 unit complex immigrant children out of their darling Fiske and into the over capacity Harrington school! The school committee and the Fiske neighborhood aren't being inclusive...shameful. This is just the latest plan De Jure as you try to move deck chairs on the SS LPS TITANC. The folks at the Boston Globe, Patch and MinuteMan will run with this! You need to start coming up with some real solutions.
- As a Harrington parent, I am troubled by the redistricting plans to give Harrington the two complexes on Woburn Street - Manor Houses and Countryside - comprising over 100 units. The Manor Houses will bring a quick influx of families to Lexington this summer since it is a new development. The Countryside rental complex will increase the population of Harrington significantly as well as cause disruption to the school community given the nature of the population (short-term). This affects the culture of the school and the ability of children to learn. With the inclusion of these complexes in the Harrington district, the school population projection for 2019/20 of 457 – a decline from current enrollment - seems highly unlikely. I fear this puts Harrington in danger of being under-resourced as well.
- The Fiske crowd on Miriam Hill is all in favor of "inclusion" except "not in my backyard." Moving the large number of students all to Harrington is DOA. It just doesn't work at Harrington. The school has no more room, we're already going to loose art and music rooms, the traffic is at a complete every grid lock already at Woburn & Lowell and Lowell and Maple...the plan is simply unworkable. You cant put 6 lbs of s\*#t in a 5 lbs bag.
- I would like to reiterate the concerns raised about redistricting the condos from Fiske to Harrington, and strongly voice my opposition. In the Assignment Analysis Proposal

(<http://lps.lexingtonma.org/cms/lib2/MA01001631/Centricity/Domain/565/StuAssignmentPublic%20Forum12Apr16.pdf>) the map is misleading: it shows that the redistricting would only move 4 students into Harrington. I was shocked to find out, however, that with the building of new condos, that potential number is much higher. This is particularly concerning given that redistricting cannot happen more than once every 5-6 years - so if/when the influx of families into the new complex pushes Harrington over the edge, there will be no way to change that (vs. using buffer zones or finding alternate options). This plan seems to be more of a shuffling around of the problem rather than a sustainable solution.

- As a Harrington parents, I strongly object to redistricting the condos from Fiske to Harrington. It's moving the problem from one school to another and favoring one school over another.
- In terms of redistricting, I, like many parents that have written here, believe this most important principle should be geographical proximity, which will bring convenience and less traffic. The current plan of moving buffer zone families to whichever schools that have space is unfair. One should be able to redraw the school zones to maximize geographical proximity.
- Does the town take school enrollment numbers into consideration when they permit the building of additional condos?
- If you look at historical enrollment data for Hastings (as recently as 5 to 10 years ago) you will see that the school has had much higher enrollment in the past, with the same facilities. While no one wants to simply pass one school's problems off to another, I believe Hastings can definitely handle a gradual increase in enrollment (up to 3 additional classes) without having to sacrifice services. Therefore, wouldn't it be much better to start a gradual transition to the new feeder pattern for new Hastings now (allowing relief from Bridge and Bowman). Hastings April 1 numbers seem extremely low, including the departure of a 4 section fifth grade. Starting the transition now means that fewer students have to get yanked from their schools in 1st, 2nd, 3rd or even 4th grade to fill the new school in the future, and relief to overcrowded schools can start sooner. If traffic during construction becomes an issue with a larger population you could consider mandatory bussing for that year. Furthermore, the town is obligated to maintain the current Hastings facilities for proper education until the new school can be built, for the town owes that to the children who are there now. So why not make full use of the current building until the new one is built. The debt exclusion for new Hastings is extremely likely to pass, due to the attractiveness of MSBA funding. If the debt exclusion for new Hastings doesn't pass, a relief valve for Hastings could be found on the other side of Hastings district allowing children to feed to Estabrook. Please let a transition to fill new Hastings start now so that Bridge and Bowman can see relief sooner.
- Please do not leave Bowman out of this conversation! We are currently feeling the the pressure of overcrowding and it doesn't seem like there will be relief for our students and teachers in the near future. The school needs relief now. As one person commented earlier, the school is too small for the number of students currently enrolled. Because of the large numbers, many of the students' activities have been limited because there isn't enough space for them. Art class is in their main classrooms and not a dedicated art room. Some might not take issue with this scenario, but please keep in mind that this leaves the classroom teacher without a dedicated, quiet space to plan the rest of the day, or meet with parents. It also limits what the students can do. Academics hands down is important, but so are the specials. The specials help students relax, they provide a creative outlet, and they develop fine and gross motor skills in children. We need to dedicate adequate and appropriate space for them in our schools. If we do nothing about the overcrowding issues at Bowman now, we are doing an educational disservice to its students, teachers and administration.
- I would like to voice my disappointment and opposition to your consideration of a move away from the Buffer Zones (and all of the analysis associated with this plan) to an exceptionally heavy handed move that would see the shift of the portion of Fiske that includes Woburn Street complexes to

Harrington Elementary. We know that Buffer Zones have been successfully implemented in other towns, so I am perplexed as to why you would consider a shift in approach to single out a population in one part of town to move it to another school that is already maxed. I fear that this type of handling of a sensitive issue is the kind of thing that ends up in the Globe as an exposé that will make Lexington look bad. We ask that you remain with the much more balanced and well-thought-out plan of implementing buffer zones in the Woburn Street area or expand Harrington's boundaries in another part of town so the impact on our population will be more moderate and predictable.

- I would like to applaud the Student Assignment Committee for its hard work for so long and for coming to the hard realization that the right choice in our current dilemma is to wait on any large-scale changes. There is a lot of pressure in these types of situations to do SOMETHING even if that something is a short-term fix to please some very vocal constituencies and ignores the long term impact. It's clear we have a capacity problem here and we should focus on that for our solution. No amount of redistricting will give us the relief we need in our current situation, but it does have the very real possibility of long term damage to our children and neighborhoods. Let's wait for sweeping change until we have more capacity and make sure we get this very important decision right.
- I agree with the comment above, it does not make sense to take action for the sake of taking action in advance of a sustainable capacity management plan in place -- this includes the "small scale" plan to move established kindergarteners out of Fiske, which would clearly not **solve** any capacity problems. The most responsible action at this point is to notify families moving into town that they will receive school assignments based on the Student Assignment Committee's criteria, including school/class capacity
- As a Harrington parent, I wanted to express my opposition to the planned redistricting of the two 50 unit complexes from Fiske into Harrington. I am opposed to this falling into Harrington's hands as I feel that the overcrowding issue is not being addressed but rather shifted. We need to fully understand the impact of how these complexes impact the schools population and until we do, it seems like a hasty decision. I personally have nothing against the people themselves as my kids have made several friends who reside in these apartment units. I understand that Harrington is at near capacity and with this move, Harrington is at risk to losing their art and music rooms. I feel it is a hasty decision that will just shift the problem from one school to the next. .
- I agree with the comments above, **I strongly oppose to the plan of moving the two 50 unit complexes from Fiske into Harrington.** It is not a real solution, it is not fair that shift the problem from one school to another overcrowded school. Based on the growth of population in Harrington, what will happen in next a couple of years? Those kids will be moved out again? Or separate the new/existing students in Harrington neighborhood into other schools? Solve the problem for the future, not leave it for the future.
- I agree with the comments above, **I strongly oppose the proposal to move two 50 unit complexes from Fiske into Harrington.** This proposal undoubtedly leaves Harrington students exposed to overcrowding in the very near future. Not only do the recent growth rates indicate that the student population is steadily increasing, the trend of large homes being built in place of small homes in the Harrington district (attracting more and more young families) seems to be as strong as ever. Taking action without confidence that secure, long-term solution will result is NOT the answer to Lexington's overcrowding problem.
- I agree with the comments above, **I strongly oppose the proposal to move two 50 unit complexes from Fiske into Harrington.** Harrington is already near overcrowding. A lot of family even can not enroll the afterschool program in Harrington even sign at the same day when the

website is open. This is never happen before. I could not image move another 2 50 unit complexes to Harrington. It is not fair at all!!!!

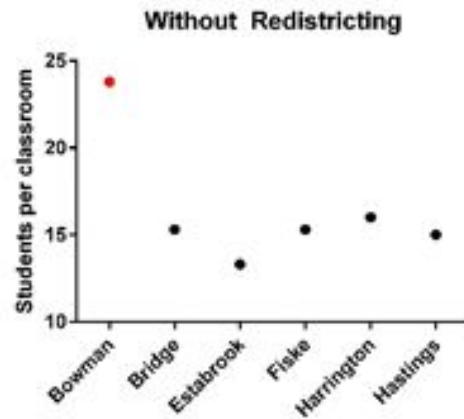
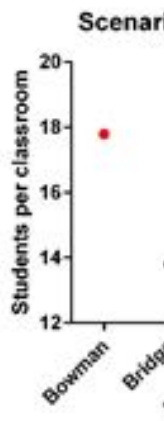
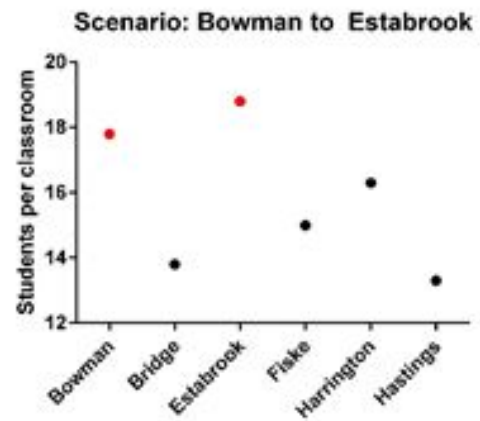
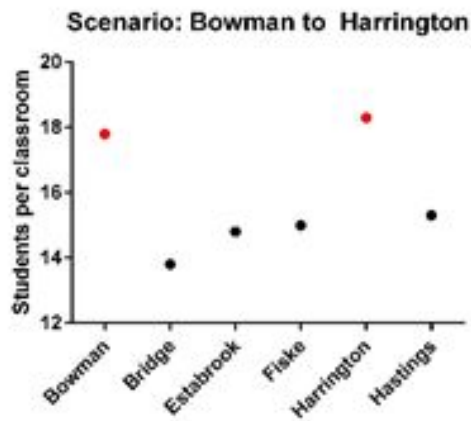
- I recognize that the Student Placement Committee and School Committee are contemplating long-term capacity management approaches and policies, which will likely require implementation of buffer zones and/or redistricting. As the committee and superintendent considers ways to address the immediate capacity constraints, please move forward with only those options that do not involve moving established children and families out of their current schools, as this seems unnecessarily disruptive.
- As a parent of two Harrington students, I **strongly oppose to redistrict the two apartment complexes from Fiske to Harrington**. It will only make Harrington another overcrowding school, which is absolutely a very unreasonable. We should look at long-term, cost-effective, rational solutions!
- **I absolutely oppose the redistricting of two 50 unit complexes into Harrington!** 1. Harrington is also at near capacity and moving more kids from other school only shifts the problem to Harrington. 2. Why is Harrington becoming the **"apartment complex school"**?? Emerson Gardens and Captain Parker Arms complexes (both with over 100 kids) are already being sent to Harrington. There are real and serious issues which will emerge from moving apt populations to our school such as a transient community that is a strain on school resources, a challenge in forming a community, hampering the ability for children to establish long term friendships, more two-parent working families that tend to volunteer less and become less involved in school activities and community building. I am a staunch supporter of diversity and acceptance, but the town is turning a blind eye on how certain population moves can affect school culture and neighborhood dynamics. 3. If children must be moved from Fiske and Bowman districts move them from single-family neighborhoods where population growth is easier to forecast and populations are less transient. Put an end to Fiske snobbery!
- **Please consider keeping the entire Liberty Heights neighborhood together at Bowman**. We are a very tightly knit community, and it would be a shame to fracture our neighborhood in the way that the latest proposal (4/26/16) shows it with incoming kindergarteners shipped off to Harrington (I'm assuming the plans that show moving our kids over to Hastings or Estabrook are just there for show because that plan would make no sense at all). Most of our kids pay to ride the bus (i.e. more revenue for transportation), but there is also a whole group of kids who WALK and RIDE BIKES together to Bowman when the weather permits. Our demographic is mainly middle income with two working parents, so we rely on each other for support with carpools to after school activities. The kids that go to Bowman together also have strong supportive friendships outside of school and they really do look out for one another. Our neighborhood is the kind of community where parents hang out on a saturday evening while kids play in the back yard, where there are bike swaps, three different neighborhood book groups, neighborhood-wide yard sales, book swaps, block parties, and sports teams. It would devastating to many of the families in the area to break up this community into two separate schools and it could really change the character of our Neighborhood. (I say this a parent of children who will NOT be redistricted in the current plan, but with neighbors who would be.)
- I strongly support the above statement: **Please consider keeping the entire Liberty Heights neighborhood together at Bowman**. As current Bowman parents whose children would not be affected we are well aware of overcrowding issues. Ours is a large, distinct neighborhood with a large group of children at Bowman. We walk and ride bikes to Bowman. We pick up each other's children from after school activities. When redistricting was first proposed we were assured that it would be based on distinct, geographic neighborhoods staying together. Liberty Heights is exactly such a neighborhood and it makes no sense to divide.

- I would like to third the comments above about Liberty Heights. The tight knit community should not be divided, especially because the proposed movements are either not acceptable at all (moving children to Estabrook!) or won't actually help (moving children to Harrington is just going to overcrowd that school). It may seem like not a big deal to go to a different school than your neighbor, but as others have said when you rely on your neighbors and they rely on you, it does matter. Further, has anyone considered how this will distribute students based on socioeconomic factors, English language learners etc? To me it seems like there will be significantly more apartment complexes and less expensive houses all together at Harrington with this proposal. It's something to consider if you are going to claim that every child gets the same education at all of the schools. Harrington may need to add additional resources especially to support English Language Learners.
- Thanks for your continued work on this difficult problem. I observed that the school committee seems to have dismissed the Bowman to Estabrook proposal from the 26 April 2016 iterations, while the Bowman to Harrington proposal seems to have received a more favorable reception, though it surely needs more tweaking. I can see the logic in moving some of those areas to Harrington for next year; but **moving (a) the Woburn Street complexes, (b) the long stretch on Mass. Ave., and (c) Liberty Heights to Harrington is way too much** given that Harrington already has the second largest kindergarten class in the district and that Harrington cannot accommodate five kindergarten sections both in comparison with other three-section grades and in view of the absence of any open classrooms or incoming modulars, particularly since it seems these changes will be difficult to undo the following year when the outsized bubble kindergarten class may well be at Harrington, instead, if they absorb all of these areas. Transferring the island in the center to Hastings helps a little, but that shift is absolutely dwarfed by what we likely will ultimately see come September from these other three areas. Please consider any combination of the following: keeping the Fiske section at Fiske (they currently have a comparatively small kindergarten class) and/or breaking up the Mass. Ave. and/or Liberty Heights area so that maybe the northwestern-most Mass. Ave. section is combined with the center island transferred to Hastings (you may need to add all of that to the Hastings district in 2019 anyway to fill the 9 extra classrooms--Liberty Heights is a long way from Hastings, but the other end of Mass. Ave. is not) or the area around Liberty Heights stays at Bowman or some other combination. With the new Woburn Street complex coming online this summer and other kids moving into the other areas, it's reasonable to think the "+9" shown on that slide would be a much higher number come September in this scenario, and who knows what it might be in 2017 and 2018. Thank you for your consideration in finding a solution that doesn't just dump the problems from both Fiske and Bowman onto Harrington. I know we can find a better balance across all six schools.
- It doesn't make any sense to move kids from Liberty Heights, which is walkable distance from Bowman (and some of us do walk!) to already overcrowded Harrington. The families of Liberty Heights are invested in Bowman, they are the volunteers, the PTA members, and the room parents. They are working families but somehow still find time to do all of this, and more, for Bowman.
- As a parent to a Bowman first- grader, and an incoming kindergartner in the 2018 school year, I appreciate the town's efforts to provide immediate relief to our overcrowded school. I am also a proud resident of the Liberty Heights neighborhood and I was dismayed to see the proposed maps that would target families in our community **I strongly support the above statements that advocate LH stays together at the Bowman.** I moved to LH almost 5 years ago and my family quickly realized that we struck gold. This is the type of neighborhood I dreamed of living in. I know the names of almost all my neighbors, I know their kids. My neighbors are among my closest friends, and their children are among my children's closest friends. We have a very strong sense of place and neighborhood identity, and our shared experience of sending our children to Bowman is

part of that bond. I strongly urge the members of the school committee to reconsider the plans shared on April 26th. For me, the key question is whether the Liberty Heights redistricting is temporary or permanent.

If it's temporary, what is the plan for getting our neighborhood back into Harrington or Bowman within a year? If it's permanent, the plans are totally unfair to kids in our neighborhood. All of the districts need to be redrawn so that kids can go to a nearby school. LH is walkable to Bowman, something many families enjoy. I second the comments from above: ***When redistricting was first proposed we were assured that it would be based on distinct, geographic neighborhoods staying together. Liberty Heights is exactly such a neighborhood and it makes no sense to divide.***

- While I believe it is lovely that many Liberty Heights residents are able to walk to school with their kids and many want to keep the neighborhood together, there are incoming Liberty Heights families who, if given a choice, would prefer to send their children to Harrington. As opposed to making a hard district line for this area, would it be possible to create this area as a buffer zone and give families the choice, space permitting, as to where to send their child to school?
- If the goal of redistricting is to relieve overcrowding, the three proposed plans from April 26 appear to be insufficient. In each plan, the two schools attended by Liberty Heights kindergartners (Bowman for kids with older siblings, plus the redistricted school for kids without) will be the two most crowded kindergartens in Lexington. The difference in class size between the most and least crowded kindergartens is 4.5 kindergartners per classroom (Harrington plan), 5 kindergartners per classroom (Estabrook plan), and 4 kindergartners per classroom (Hastings plan). All plans under consideration require the children of Liberty Heights to make three sacrifices: (1) splitting the neighborhood into separate schools, (2) attending the most crowded schools in Lexington, 20% more crowded than other kindergartens in town, and (3) having a long commute, no longer walkable. We strive to achieve parity among all schools in Lexington, but how can we do that when children from Liberty Heights are asked to make three sacrifices while children from other neighborhoods make none? I believe the School Committee should develop alternative redistricting plans that result in students from Liberty Heights being treated more equally to students from the rest of Lexington. While redistricting the students from Liberty Heights is not ideal, if it is necessary to do so, please ensure that our children are sent to a school close to our neighborhood (Harrington) and please develop a plan where the class size at the school is comparable to the class sizes in the other elementary schools in town.



• Liberty Heights

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- I live in the Liberty Heights neighborhood and my daughter is a current Kindergartener at Bowman, so under the current proposals her school placement would not be affected. However, personally she would be affected because some of her friends in the neighborhood would be moved to another school.

After attending last week's (4/26/16) School Committee meeting and the informational meeting held at Bowman School this past Monday night (5/2/16), it became very clear to me how reactive and off-target this process of determining student assignment has become.

As I understand it, the original goal of the reassignment committee was to move some students into Estabrook School in order to fill the unused classrooms there before asking the town to vote on an additional debt exclusion to rebuild Hastings School. Somehow this process seems to have gotten completely off track when Liberty Heights was added to the list as a neighborhood targeted for reassignment in the latest set of proposals (4/26/16). We should be looking at a long term solution, not reacting to a one-year bump in enrollment. The negative aspects of this latest recommendation are not worth the space gained by removing one classroom worth of kids from Bowman.



Here are some reasons why I think the Liberty Heights neighborhood should not be moved:

1. It makes absolutely no sense at all to consider moving our neighborhood, of all the ones in town, to either Estabrook or Hastings. This neighborhood should be the last one to be considered in a move to either of those schools. And moving our neighborhood to Harrington does nothing to help the original goal of filling Estabrook.

2. It seems very random to target this neighborhood for a potential future permanent move to Harrington school based on one set of statistics (incoming K without siblings in the system). This is especially the case when Harrington is already crowded and there is a whole new set of apartment buildings near the Woburn line that will soon be full of kids going to Harrington. Why break up a neighborhood in order to move kids from one crowded school to another crowded school?

3. Liberty Heights is a walkable (1.2 miles) distance to Bowman, and many families do walk. Given the traffic along Mass ave and (2+ miles) distance to Harrington, it would not be safe for Liberty Heights kids to walk there.

4. Sending two sets of school busses through this neighborhood with its narrow streets and tight corners will create a logistical nightmare for the transportation department.

5. Nobody seems to have considered the fact that Liberty Heights and the adjoining Peacock Farm and Mason Street communities are really one cohesive neighborhood. Somehow this has been completely overlooked in the current proposal. Moving Liberty Heights without moving Peacock Farm and Mason would eventually create a hard line division between these areas.

6. Assuming the vote goes through to rebuild Hastings School, there will need to be another hard line redistricting that will occur in another 3-4 years, and at that time I feel that it will probably make much more sense for the Liberty Heights kids to be at Bowman anyway.

Personally, I think keeping a neighborhood together at one school is more important than making space. The current recommendations involve moving only 9 children from our neighborhood, and this number does alone will not make a difference in the number of classrooms needed to house incoming kindergarten at Bowman. Please let the 9 from Liberty Heights go to Bowman and let the principal and staff at Bowman plan and make room for these kids. The staff there doesn't seem at all concerned about the numbers and they will figure it out. And for anyone who wants to volunteer to go to Harrington I'd say let them go.

All of this aside, if you do break apart this neighborhood, how are you going to explain to those kids who have been best friends and played together since birth that they can't go to the school movie night together, or go to the ice cream social or school picnic together, or be on the same sports teams, or collaborate in the school talent show together? Please think



about that.

Ultimately our town may need an additional school to accommodate all of these extra kids that are moving into town. Let's keep neighborhoods together and maintain walkability. Let's come up with a good overall plan for the future instead of creating what could in the end become a bad short term solution.

- We strongly disagree with the short term solution that was brought up by redistricting small targeted areas to geographically adjacent elementary school district. Carl/Myrna/North areas have been brought up as a new targeted area for new potential scenario after months of discussion. This is a really short term solution targeting a small area that was not considered for the past months, and brought up as a temporary and quick solution and it brings nothing but back to the starting point of the issue that's been discussed for months. We understand the redistricting is necessary for overcrowding issues, but considering all the factors that were mentioned, walkability within safe route for kids or additional time for driving or cost for transportation, how much of those factors were really considered for this new scenario and how the families in this neighborhood would be better than other areas that was brought up for potential scenarios.
- Like the dozens of other households who have written letters, emails and added to this thread, I too live in the Liberty Heights neighborhood. My daughter will be entering Kindergarten at Bowman this fall. Along with the 70+ signatures on the petition to not redistrict the Liberty Heights community, I am strongly opposed to the plans that will move our neighborhood from Bowman to Harrington or beyond. After participating in almost all of the public discussions and school committee meetings on this issue I would like to again raise my concerns about the ineffectiveness of these proposed ideas and their irreversible impact on children, families and the community we call home.

First: the original goal of the reassignment committee is not being met. The latest proposals do not fully utilize the available spaces at Estabrook. The focus has somehow shifted away from making the most of our classrooms across the entire district and now falls on one year, one class, one school. This does not look or feel like a long-term solution, rather a bandaid to deal with a problem that could happen again at any of our schools in years to come. The negative impact of these are significant...maybe not for the families who aren't moved, but they are devastating for those of us who will be. Simply stated, the downside far outweighs the upside of this short-sighted plan.

I ask the Superintendent and School Committee to take into consideration the following:

1. Walking to school is a basic right, it's not a privilege. It's why many of us bought our homes and choose to live here. For families like ours in Liberty Heights who do this on a daily basis, this is time you can't replace, you can't make up, you can't find it somewhere else...in other words you don't get this back. This is as important as sitting down at the dinner table every night and asking your kids while looking them in the eye "so - how was your day?" Moving

Liberty Heights to any other school other than Bowman takes this entirely off the table or sends kids walking to Harrington (which we can go ahead and simply refer to as the "death march" as they cross Mass Ave, go through the dangerous Pleasant Street / Mass Ave intersection, and ultimately walk along the Maple Street Raceway with it's exposed and narrow sidewalks).

2. Based on what was discussed at the Bowman meeting last week, there won't be as much growth in September enrollment numbers (apparently the work has been done to get the data about the coming year already). The "kindergarten crisis" of 2016-2017 is likely not as dire as it seems.

3. If I'm not mistaken, we're going to do a town-wide redistricting again in 3 years when (and IF) Hastings comes online. If that is the case it is unacceptable to do this twice. Isn't the more prudent approach to first see IF Hastings is approved / funded and THEN make all-encompassing decisions about these things?

4. The administration at Bowman is already prepared to deal with this larger Kindergarten class size in the fall. The lens has shifted to solve 1 class size problem for 1 year at 1 school...and they don't even need a solution as badly as it's being presented. This is a completely reactionary / band-aid approach when the problem could shift again the following year. We need strategic, long-term solutions and not knee-jerk reactions to a "crisis" that doesn't exist.

5. Shifting kids from Bowman (over crowded) to Harrington (soon to be over crowded) doesn't feel right to anyone. Can you say with absolutely certainty this is going to solve the problem of an overcrowded school?

6. What is currently being proposed is an absolutely unfair solution for one neighborhood. Liberty Heights is TRULY is a model community in every respect. It seems that only one school is carrying the burden of this effort. Fiske is doing nothing (which is unacceptable) and Estabrook isn't getting classrooms filled (as was the original intent). This is unfairly isolating children from their peers in a neighborhood that truly needs to stay together. We have an overwhelming majority of households in Liberty Heights with dual income earners who rely on their neighbors to be there at bus drop off times. In our home we currently rely on parents in the neighborhood already for pickup at daycare and certainly plan to have our daughter feel safe getting off the bus to be greeted by her peers and parents of friends.

7. Lastly - Why is there an absolute policy of not moving existing students? This has happened in the past, and - correct me if I'm wrong - but it will happen again when Hastings comes online. We're trying to solve a coastal flooding issue by moving grains of sand. Parents who are up in arms about the current overcrowding issues at Bowman don't get it....moving a handful of Kindergarten kids this year doesn't solve the problems during lunchtime and won't make gym class any less crowded. This is a larger problem that can and should include current students and incoming if we're looking at fundamentally addressing the overcrowding issues at Bowman.

8. There needs to be greater distribution of the burden of redistricting on the whole town to solve this problem...make the entire town a buffer zone. The entire town, all neighborhoods, should be impacted by this and share the burden, not just one school or one neighborhood. The sacrifices and changes need to be shared as a town.

Please, please don't rush this decision. There is no danger in doing nothing for now. I believe the School Committee and Superintendent should take their time and do this once, to include the pending changes coming to Hastings in the future. Disrupting families, children's lives and neighborhoods is not trivial. The gains that come from this are not worth the disruption.

Liberty Heights represents hundreds of voting households who are standing together to preserve something that rarely exists in today's towns (including Lexington): the power of "the neighborhood." We are asking that you do not destroy the bonds of love between our families and take away the friendships that our kids have from growing up - and going to school with - their peers next door.

- Thank you to the School Committee and Student Placement Committee members who have spent many hours considering ways ensure all children in Lexington have access to the best education. It seems to me that the fairest approach would be to make redistricting decisions based on prioritizing potentially impacted families. First priority, I believe, should be given to established LPS students as they are already invested in their school and associated community; established children should not be moved (this aligns with the 5/10 redistricting proposal). In my opinion, the next priority should be given to current residents of the town, as these folks have already invested in their neighborhoods and many have established strong relationships within their communities, which often extend to the schools. I would suggest that new families moving into town over the coming months should be subject to potential school placement changes and be assigned to schools based on capacity, proximity, and transportation. Most families just moving to Lexington do not yet have established connections with a particular school or strong neighborhood bonds. I think the School Committee should vote to essentially implement a town-wide buffer zone effective immediately, and assign all new students based on capacity, proximity, etc (real estate agents would need to be notified and information posted on the LPS website). Thank you for your consideration.