

LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE

**Tuesday, October 7, 2014
Lexington Town Office Building
Selectmen's Meeting Room
1625 Massachusetts Avenue**

PRESENT: Dr. Paul B. Ash, Superintendent; Margaret Coppe, Chair; Alessandro Alessandini, Jessie Steigerwald, Judy Crocker and Abigail Schwartz, Student Representative

The Minutes were taken by Jean Curran, Recording Secretary

The Meeting Convened at 7:35 p.m.

I. Call to Order and Welcome:

The Chair called the meeting to order and invited public Comment

Judy Crocker representing Safe Routes to School (SRTS), a subcommittee of the Sidewalk Committee, handed out the Annual FYI sheet about SRTS and the Annual Bookmark Calendar. The first walking Wednesday is tomorrow but may be postponed due to rain. Ms. Crocker shared what the SRTS has accomplished and their goals for the coming year.

II. Superintendent's Announcements

Dr. Ash announced that yesterday was the ribbon cutting at the Estabrook Elementary School. The project could not have happened without the services of Ken DiNisco, the architect who designed the project, the Shawmut Construction Company, and Patrick Goddard, Director of Public Facilities. He thanked the town for all of its support and a special thanks to Principal Sandy Trach.

Margaret Coppe thanked Witson Culinary Group for providing food before and after the Estabrook Elementary School ribbon cutting ceremony.

III. School Committee Member Announcements

Jessie Steigerwald thanked Reggie O'Hare Gibson who wrote the Estabee song.

Ms. Steigerwald also shared that she and Dr. Ash attended the EDCO Collaborative Board Meeting last Thursday and encouraged members to see the new facility. There will also be a speaker series.

Ms. Steigerwald announced the Holiday Trick or Treat on Friday October 31 from 2:00 pm-5:00 pm in Lexington center. Adults are reminded to please accompany their children during this event.

Ms. Steigerwald also shared that the Policy Manual Subcommittee had a short meeting earlier tonight. She will meet with Jim Hardy of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) to work on Sections C & D for the October 28 meeting.

Judy Crocker would like to distribute a map of the Laconia Street parcel at the end of the meeting.

Alessandro Alessandrini shared that Jill Gasperini, School Nurse Coordinator sent a letter to the Committee stating the schools are prepared for the Enterovirus D68 which can be especially harmful to kids with asthma.

IV. Agenda

1. Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates Report on the Superintendent Search. John Connolly, Gary Burton and Stephen Dlott submitted their Leadership Profile Report. Mr. Connolly reviewed the following (i) Participation which included 215 personal interviews or focus groups and 686 participated in the online survey; (ii) strengths of the School District which includes (a) pride in the outstanding state and national rankings, (b) high student scores on MCAS, SAT and Advanced Placement examinations, (c) rich K-12 curriculum and extensive course offerings at the high school, (d) emphasis on community service and citizenship; (e) high praise for comprehensive staff development program; (f) large number of offerings available to the Lexington staff in the areas of curriculum and instruction, new teacher orientation, technology and crisis intervention; and (g) school committee has invested heavily in this approach as a vehicle of continuous improvement for Lexington Schools; (iii) Town is supportive of the school system with excellent cooperation between school and town officials.

Mr. Connolly then reviewed the challenges, concerns and issues facing the district which include (i) student stress which is the number one concern of the district; (ii) challenge of meeting the diversity and demographic changes within the system; and (iii) enrollment growth which has created overcrowding along with inadequate cafeterias, inadequate libraries and undersized classrooms; and (iv) Lexington is an affluent town, but there are students who live in poverty and that poses challenges for the district.

Mr. Connolly then reviewed the desired characteristics. A number of respondents spoke of a need to improve the culture of the Superintendent's office, a desire for a superintendent who is available, accessible, and approachable and a good listener; and open to new ideas from the town.

The Committee had comments and questions (i) hopes no one believes that the challenges facing the schools are not being met; (ii) with respect to the survey it was disappointing that they were only allowed to select eight items; (iii) students have a large stake in the search and it might be helpful to count them separately from the whole community; (iv) were there any surprises in the data generated; (v) were all groups able to participate in focus groups; (vi) are there data which puts these lists comments and challenges in a particular order; (vii) would you confirm that articulating the challenges of the district is a good thing for the district; (viii) would you confirm respondents by category and go over 60% went on the list; and (ix) what is the Committee's next steps.

Mr. Connolly shared the search process dates and how the process will work. HYA will send to the Committee the draft advertisement for the position.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street inquired whether any preference would be given to local candidates and are any steps being taken to reach out to Lexington residents or Lexington graduates. Ms. McKenna suggested that the School Committee reach out to

Town Counsel to verify if compensation can be discussed once candidates become publicly known.

Harvy Simkovits, 4 Angier Road shared his thoughts on the survey results and categories.

Bill Hurley, 33 Young Street, shared his thoughts on responses to student stress and inquired what other areas would contribute to student stress.

2. Elementary World Language Update

Carol Pilarski, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Professional Development shared the Elementary World Language Committee's (EWLC) recommendations and possible timetables as were suggested in the June 10, 2014. The recommendations included (i) EWLC wholeheartedly endorse the reinstatement of an elementary world language program; (ii) EWLC feels strongly about retaining the highly effective curricular and instructional programs currently in place in the elementary schools; and (iii) preferred options of the of the EWLC.

Ms. Pilarski also shared the suggested implementation, and timetable and next steps.

The Committee had comments and questions (i) appreciates the planning needed to implement change successfully; (ii) does the school day need to be extended for all levels; (iii) one concern from high school students is if you extend the school day, you should consider reducing the homework level; (iv) revisit those questions if decision is to lengthen school day; (v) there is research backing up starting the school day later in the morning would have much more impact on students rather than extending the day; (vi) extending the day by 30 minutes would be helpful for parents; (vii) can this program be done for all six grades of elementary schools; (viii) separate start time for high school; (ix) homework is separate from implementing this program ; (x) longer work day would impact collective bargaining; (xi) can professional learning days alternate instead of each week; (xii) adding a more time to lunch/recess; (xiii) the research team would be teacher only; (xiv) what the benefits for each language which might be offered; (xv) if the school day is extended maybe the starting time can be earlier; and (xvi) the EWLC will speak with the public as part of the process.

Ms. Pilarski responded that there are 18 teacher Thursdays which are for teacher planning; 9 principal days dedicated to professional learning and 4 Thursdays for conferences.

Dawn McKenna, 9 Hancock Street expressed her concerns delaying the implementation of the EWL for three years. Urged the Committee not to wait three years because we have the finances, political support and the learning that will be missed. Ms. McKenna urged the Committee to have a teacher now to come into the elementary schools to begin a language and begin a partnership with our sister city Antony, France because they have requested it.

Tom Diaz, Precinct 4, Town Meeting Member, thanked the Committee for bringing the EWL back. Mr. Diaz inquired would a longer day to provide some stress relief and longer lunches and assumes that that is part of what they would review as part of the process.

Dr. Ash shared his thoughts on implementing the EWLP.

Harvy Simkovits, 4 Angier Road shared that he was on the EWLC and is in agreement with Ms. Pilarski and Dr. Ash in that it will take time to do it right. Mr. Simkovits shared that the Committee should be prepared to answer questions from the community on why it would take three years to implement. If you do it right we will do it in a bigger way other than just doing it one grade at a time.

Alessandro Alessandrini shared his thoughts on why it will take three years to implement a good EWLP that entails several grade levels; would require input and would need an override.

Dawn McKenna, if we ask the school department to come up with a program to cover this three year program and what would it look like and why are other high performing school districts able to implement an elementary world language.

Shawna Paul, representing the PTA, is there an option available to offer foreign language classes either before or after school that people would be willing to pay for.

Margaret Coppe shared that any programs that might be implemented be run by counsel to make sure it is done in a legal way.

3. Vote to Approve Superintendent's Professional Practice and Student Learning Goals for 2014-2015

The Committee engaged in discussion of Dr. Ash's recommended goals for 2014-2015 and they include (i) Student Learning Goals and the key action steps; (ii) Professional Practice Goals and the key action steps; (iii) Standard 1 (Instructional Leadership) Section E – Data Informed Decision Maker Indicator and key action steps; (iv) Standard 2 (Management and Operations), Section A – Environment Indicator and key action steps; (v) Standard 3 (Family and Community Engagement))Section D – Family Concerns Indicator and key action steps; and (vi) Standard 4 (Professional Culture) Section D – shared Vision Development Indicator and key action steps.

The Committee decided to postpone a vote on the Superintendent's Standards.

Motion to Approve Superintendent's Professional Practice and Student Learning Goals for 2014-2015 (Steigerwald, Alessandrini) The Motion was Approved (4-0)

V. Consent Agenda

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

4. Vote to Approve Diamond Grade 8 French Field Trip to Quebec City, Canada, May 26 – 29, 2015
5. Vote to Approve Clarke Grade 8 French Field Trip to Quebec City, Canada, June 3 – 5, 2015

Ms. Steigerwald shared that the Committee should consider a policy which bans students from using swimming pools. Ms. Steigerwald also shared that we don't have a policy on out of country field trips.

Ms. Crocker asked if the busses used on these field trips had seat belts. Ms Dunn said they do. She expressed concern that one airline booking seemed to have been done prior to Committee approval.

**Motion to Approve Consent Agenda Items 1-5 Above (Crocker, Alessandrini)
The Motion was Approved (4-0)**

VI. Adjourn

Motion to Adjourn (Crocker, Steigerwald) The Motion was Approved (4-0)

The Meeting adjourned at 10:17 p.m.

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

Wednesday, October 8, 2014 — 7:00 p.m., Public Services Building, Cafeteria, 201 Bedford Street. This meeting is a Budget Collaboration/Summit Meeting with the Board of Selectmen the Appropriation Committee and the Capital Expenditures Committee.

Tuesday, October 21, 2014 — 7:30 p.m., Lexington Town Office Building, Selectmen's Meeting Room, 1625 Massachusetts Avenue (Regular Meeting) All agenda items and the order of items are approximate and subject to change.

Meeting Materials: Meeting Agenda; Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates Report on the Superintendent Search; Elementary World Language Update; Superintendent's Draft Professional Practice and Student Learning Goals for 2014-2015; Consent Agenda

Voted by the School Committee December 16, 2014