

**LEXINGTON SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Wednesday, March 29, 2017**  
**Carey Memorial Building, Estabrook Hall**  
**1605 Massachusetts Avenue, Lexington, MA**

**Present:**

Chair, Alessandro Alessandrini; Vice-Chair, Eileen Jay; Jessie Steigerwald; Kate Colburn; Kathleen Lenihan Superintendent, Dr.Czajkowski; Ian Dailey, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations

**Absent:** Student Representative, Matt Campos

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

**The meeting convened at 6:00 pm**

**Call to Order and Welcome:**

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

**Superintendent's Announcement:**

Dr. Czajkowski thanked the parents for their feedback, suggestions, emails, and petitions. As indicated, we have read them and I want to thank Mr. Dailey for responding and getting back to families. Mr. Dailey has spent a lot of his time this past week corresponding with parents and I really appreciate that.

We do understand the value this service brings to your families. As a means to their social emotional wellness, their academic achievement, to have two working parents to be able to reside in Lexington and have your children to attend one of the best school districts in the state. Which places such a high level of quality on education. We also understand that the timing of this communication was not good. It has created a sense of urgency and brought this concern to the forefront for the opportunity to have a full discussion with the parents.

When you have an opportunity such as this it's never a good time to reduce or limit services. It's hard to take something away when it's been so valuable. The purpose of tonight's meeting is to listen to concerns and suggestions from parents who are in favor as well as to parents who are opposed to this service. It's also to provide a brief presentation of the history of this program. Our utmost concern is the safety of the students that we are transporting. It is my fiscal responsibility as the Superintendent to bring this attention to School Committee, as this is a program that is not sustainable. I feel very compelled that it is important to provide them with data, and accurate information. Not everyone will be happy with the decision, no matter what the decision. I want to assure you we are listening, we are taking into consideration your feedback and better understand and take feedback into consideration. No decision will be made tonight. April 12<sup>th</sup> final decision will be made at School Committee Meeting.

## Agenda:

### **1. After-School Transportation Program Information and Discussion (45 minutes)**

Mr. Dailey provided background information on the current Elementary Ride After transportation program from FY12-FY17. He reviewed the current challenges during dismissal plans for elementary students and discussed the safety concern of students at dismissal.

Mr. Dailey proceeded to discuss/review Alternatives/Options for the Elementary Ride After Program:

Option A: Add additional buses/no participation cap/no fee increase

Option B: Add additional buses/ no participation cap/increase fees

Option C: Cap participation (40/school)/fee increase

Option D.: Restrict Vendor participation

Option E (recommended in FY18 budget): No additional buses/participation cap/no fee increase

At the end of Mr. Dailey's presentation discussion continued at public comment:

### **Public Comments:**

Brian Machinist – 234 Concord Ave – My understanding that If bus A makes a route in the morning and picks up 40 children and then makes the same route in the afternoon and regardless if there is 1 child on it or 40 children on it, the cost is the same, is it not?

Ian Dailey: Yes, the cost to and from is the same, but because that student would be part of the after school program we have to reserve another spot for the student on another bus, that's the "double seat".

A few spokespersons speaking on behalf of Lexington families provided petitions. They feel the current system is best for our children, families, and for the town, it's a win/win situation. Believes current transportation is very well run and incident free has been spectacular. Proposes lottery system is not the way to go, it is not fair. All families pay the same for taxes and not fair to leave a child out. Feels this will eliminate a lot of afterschool programs. Expresses the lottery issue does not lower the safety concern.

Tom Griffith – 1364 Mass Ave – Treasurer of Munroe. Wants people to understand that the Vendors have gone through a lot of trouble to accommodate. The lottery cap came as a surprise, thought we had a good operating system. Would like to see a solution that is more satisfactory rather than the one being proposed. Handing out to Members a description of the schools at Munroe – views concerns about a slot assignment.

Claire Sheth 22 Vine Brook Rd. – Reading from prepared statement "in support of cap proposal"

**Alessandro Alessandrini:** Knowing that this is going to be a long discussion, next Wednesday, April 12 is open for further discussion on this topic. Hoping families did not move into Lexington because of the after school programs, but because of the Lexington Public Schools. When we make our decision down the road, if we have to cut a program or not we have to look at preserving a teachers position and preserving programs that kids actually learn and expand. In the end, we have to make

decisions that also impact our programming. That's what you have to keep in mind when we make our decision that you moved to this town because of the schools.

**Kate Colburn:** If we were to delay this cap for one more year, how much would we have to add back into the operating budget to cover the extent of it and where would that money come from? What would we do with operating budget for next year?

**Ian Dailey:** If we were to keep the program exactly as it is, the decision would need to be made as a group as to whether we want to ensure that there is always a seat available each day of the week for the people who have purchased a right to that seat or if we are willing to take on, what I find a risk, as to overbooking the bus, in which case if someone mid point through the year wants to change and we already have 71 students between the base in the afterschool riding that day, we can't accommodate that. If we want to ensure that there are seats for those after school students every day of the week, we might be in the area of 4 buses across the elementary school. It's an estimate based on the information we have today. Base cost of that bus is \$469 a day plus additional 110, 105, 000.

Operating budget for next year – would have to look to see if funds could be reallocated. IDEA is level funded, may be an impact there. If not need to look at other places in the budget if decided to go one year without the cap.

Alessandro Alessandrini: What happens if we go one year without the cap?

**Ian Dailey:** If we go one year without the cap, we want to make sure everyone has a seat everyday of the week. If we are willing to take on the potential of restrictions within that, you could try to manage within the number of seats each day of the week.

**Kathleen Lenihan** – Safety is still a concern even if we were given as many buses as we wanted as a donation in addition it seems there has been a lot of additional cost that goes beyond the bus with staff.

**Jessie Steigerwald** – Some subsidizing to get this off the ground is great, but does not feel comfortable with subsidizing \$1,884. per child. This level of subsidizing is not an appropriate use of tax payer funds at this point. Maybe some time before the next meeting, Mr. Dailey and one or two of us, maybe Mr. Griffith, a parent representative or two could meet with some of the after school vendors to discuss. Maybe a couple of parents that worked on the survey could do a survey to see what are parents willing to pay if we continue the service? Are parents willing to pay the full cost? It still has a staff issue and a safety, but if parents are willing to pay the actual cost it would be useful to know.

***School Committee will remain in session and relocate to Battin Hall for the purpose of participating in Town Meeting.***

**Meeting Materials:** Agenda; **A.1-** Elementary Ride After (After School) Transportation Program Analysis