

Evaluation of the Superintendent
Approved August 27, 2013
Covering the period 2012--2013

Dr. Ash continues to exhibit very strong leadership of the Lexington Public Schools. His clear vision for the best education of our students is driven by his passion for public education. Dr. Ash is proactive in setting goals both in the near and the far term and acquiring the support and the means to meet those goals.

The Lexington School Committee began its annual evaluation of the superintendent, Dr. Paul Ash, in March 2013. The committee members completed their evaluations individually, Dr. Ash wrote a self-evaluation, and a limited 360 evaluation open to the public was conducted. At the School Committee meeting of June 11, 2013, the public evaluation of the superintendent was conducted. Using the member evaluation, and guided by input from the other sources, the chair drafted the annual evaluation of Superintendent Dr. Paul Ash for the 2012-2013 year.

The evaluation tool used by the School Committee has, as the superintendent's contract stipulates, been agreed to by both parties. There are seven major categories, which are comprised of various subsections. Each School Committee member has scored the superintendent's performance individually and provided an accompanying narrative. This evaluation is a compilation of those scores and comments.

Evaluation of the superintendent is based on first-hand observations (public meetings, Town Meeting, executive sessions, collective bargaining sessions, one-on-one meetings), and formal reports and written materials (meeting memoranda and reports, *Superintendent's Bulletin*, budget reports, emails).

A. Meeting of Annual Goals

Dr. Ash rates an excellent on ten of the fifteen indicators, and five on the high side of satisfactory. The year two Social Studies and year two of the ELA curriculum reviews, based on state and national standards with clear learning expectations for all students in all grades were completed. The programs initiated by the Equity and Excellence Committee have begun to close the achievement gap, with especially high marks for the 10th grade scores in the MCAS ELA. This is a commendable accomplishment, but we recommend that attention continue to be paid to those who have not yet achieved levels of at least proficient on the MCAS.

The K-5 report card committee produced a new Standards Based Report Card that was implemented in the 2012-2013 school year.

Dr. Ash supports the Human Resource department in hiring the highest level teachers and has hired high-performing administrative staff and principals. Special attention has been paid to the guidance department with the creation of a new position, K-12 Director of Guidance. Dr. Ash continues to implement high quality professional development.

Contracts have been negotiated that are fair to employees while at the same time acknowledging appropriate fiscal responsibility to the School Committee.

School Improvement Plans are now aligned on a new schedule that should lead to better coordination across the system with the budgeting cycle. We appreciate that the Social

and Emotional goal is shared by all schools. In addition to the name of the principal on each school's plan, we would like to see the entire School Council membership. We asked for, and have received through the year, updates and reports on Student Services, including nursing and guidance. In addition, the Special Education Parent Advisory Committee (SEPAC) completed an extensive survey of parents and presented the results to the committee. We would like to see progress in both assessment and delivery of special education services. An area for further consideration is the transition needs for student with special needs nearing the end of their years in the Lexington school system.

B. Relationship with School Committee

Dr. Ash earned ratings of one excellent and six satisfactory in the area of relationship with the School Committee. Relationships with the members of the School Committee have showed some improvement this year, due to a better understanding by both parties about some of the problems that plagued us last year, as well as more openness exhibited to engage in productive dialogue by all.

Dr. Ash was helpful in supporting the progress of the School Safety and Transportation agenda. There is still more work to be done to safely and efficiently transporting students to school and we expect him to play an instrumental role as a school leader next year.

Two areas that the School Committee has expressed an interest in pursuing are the reintroduction of elementary foreign language and reducing unhealthy stress in our youth. Work has begun in both areas with the establishment of committees and we look forward to hearing how we can move towards these goals.

We asked Dr. Ash to move his seat from the center of the table during public meetings, and he graciously agreed. The committee has noticed an improvement in their ability to interact with the new seating arrangement.

There have certainly been some challenging issues in the past year. We are pleased that Dr. Ash has notified us as soon as he became aware of them.

C. Educational Leadership

Dr. Ash earned excellent marks in two and five satisfactory in this area.

Dr. Ash's insistence on returning significant professional development to the district, which results in improved student learning, is commendable. He provides direction to principals in leading the learning in their schools by ensuring that best educational practices are implemented.

This year saw the publication of his book, co-authored with John D'Auria, *School Systems that Learn*. Drawing on his visits to schools in Finland, one of the world's educational leaders, Dr. Ash continues to model life-long learning as he pursues his goal of increasing student learning.

An area for consideration is the number of students from underrepresented minorities enrolled in higher level courses and certain programs. This was brought out at our meeting in Boston in December with the Metco program participating as an area of concern, both in the numbers in those classes, the expectations of the faculty, and the support provided to students. The committee is interested in what next steps would look like and requests to be kept informed on progress in this area.

The importance of data in our culture today is not disputed, and the committee supports continuing this practice.

Working with the Lexington Education Association, Dr. Ash led the effort to bring the LEA into agreement to pilot the new DESE evaluation process a year earlier than required by the state.

Working with his administrative team, Dr. Ash has begun to develop the mission and vision statements for the district. The committee had the opportunity to comment, and those comments were incorporated.

D. General Management

Dr. Ash earned one excellent rating and four satisfactory marks in this category.

The highest rating is exercising effective organizational skills based on research and best practices.

The committee acknowledges the need for continuous improvement in developing and maintaining a trusting relationship with employees, the School Committee, and the community. Dr. Ash has sought input from principals, union presidents, the Steering Committee on Building Professional Relationships, and professional colleagues.

E. Budget Management

This continues as an outstanding talent of Dr. Ash and an area in which he earned excellent marks in all seven categories. He did a masterful job in putting a budget together this year that was level-service funded, and that continues to provide financial support where needed, especially for the high school debate program. Dr. Ash has proven to be an effective advocate for financial support from the Town Manager, the Board of Selectmen, Appropriations Committee, and Town Meeting. He has consistently recommended balanced budgets and did so for FY14.

In the fall, due to on-going problems with the contractor, the Bridge and Bowman schools were not ready for students' return. Collaborating with the principals, staff, and faculty, those schools were able to open on time and the impact on student learning was minimal.

F. Personnel Management

Dr. Ash received two excellent marks and four satisfactory in this category.

In the areas of professional development and collective bargaining he earns high marks. Some examples of professional development are Primary Source, Project Alliance, embedded high quality courses, support and training for teachers in the collection of student data, the application of appropriate instructional intervention, and implementation of graduate-level courses taught by veteran LPS staff.

We applaud the inclusion of \$60,000 for tuition reimbursement for courses taken by staff to further their individual educational goals and plans.

Over the past year, Dr. Ash has worked hard on the area of promoting an inclusive atmosphere of mutual respect and building employee job satisfaction, where there is room for improvement.

While we see a small increase in diversity in staff hires, we would like to see the continuation of the development of more practices that continue to increase the diversity of the staff.

G. Communications and Public Relations

All seven of Dr. Ash's marks in this area were satisfactory.

Of special notice was the time that Dr. Ash has spent visiting the nine schools as well as attendance at both school and community events. The best way to see and speak with more parents is to attend school and community events where he can be visible. There was good progress on this goal this year.

He is commended for listening to the community when an unforeseen problem with the start of school in September 2013 arose in December. He listened to a solution to that problem put forth by a parent, and working with the LEA, proposed a change to the calendar that resolved the conflict to the satisfaction of all stakeholders.

An area that needs attention is outreach to diverse groups in the community, specifically the formal Asian groups that are in existence. One vehicle for this would be to meet with the town's 2020 Vision Committee, which is looking at increased civic participation by diverse groups in town.

Recommendations include creating and maintaining a close connection with employees at every level, opening communication channels that allow for back and forth discussion, and empowering employees to participate fully in the communication process.

The committee has suggested a series of monthly forums, sort of an "Open House" where members of the community could meet with Dr. Ash to discuss issues concerning the schools that are of importance to them. The committee would also like to see Dr. Ash return to the practice of writing a monthly column for the local newspaper.

Overall

Dr. Ash is a strong leader in a demanding system. He continues to be an educational leader who provides students with outstanding education while managing the budget very well. Areas that need continued work are trust, community relations, and public relations.

Margaret Coppe
Chair
June 11, 2013

**Annual Evaluation of the Superintendent
By the Lexington School Committee**

For the period from February 29, 2012 to February 28, 2013

Superintendent: Dr. Paul Ash

School Committee Members

Signature

Margaret Coppe, Chair

Alessandro Alessandrini, Vice-Chair

Bonnie Brodner

Jessie Steigerwald

Mary Ann Stewart

Date of completion:

A. Meeting of Annual Goals *If a goal directly ties to annual job performance, the evaluation section where it can be found is listed in parentheses.*

A. Meeting of Annual Goals	Excellent		Satisfactory			Fails to meet expectations	
1. Ensures that academic, social and emotional needs of students are identified and matched with appropriate and effective curriculum and instructional experiences	7	6	5.8	4	3	2	1
a. Curriculum review	7	6.3	5	4	3	2	1
b. District goals	7	6	5.7	4	3	2	1
c. School Improvement Plans	7	6	5.5	4	3	2	1
d. Assessment of programs – (Sect. C)	7	6	5.7	4	3	2	1
e. MCAS review – (Sect. C)	7	6.3	5	4	3	2	1
f. Process to identify student needs and deliver services	7	6	5.2	4	3	2	1
2. Ensures that the faculty and staff are of high quality, and are enabled and supported to perform at the highest professional level	7	6.6	5	4	3	2	1
a. Support professional development – (Sect. F)	7	6.0	5	4	3	2	1
b. Implement a more effective hiring process	7	6.0	5	4	3	2	1
3. Obtain and manage financial resources	7.0	6	5	4	3	2	1
a. Work with School Committee, PBC, and DPF on the Bowman, Bridge, and Estabrook projects	7	6.8	5	4	3	2	1

b. Develop a 5-year capital plan	7	6.4	5	4	3	2	1
c. Improve facilities maintenance	7	6.2	5	4	3	2	1
d. Negotiate contractual settlements that are fair and appropriate within the financial means of the Town – (Sect. F)	7	6.7	5	4	3	2	1

B. Relationship with the School Committee

The School Committee relies on the Superintendent in order to make informed decisions that will affect the quality of education for Lexington’s children receiving public school education. In order to promote a climate of mutual respect and trust, a professional working relationship should be maintained. It is expected that the Superintendent will support and implement School Committee policies and directives, and effectively communicate these to the students, staff, and members of the community.

B. Relationship with the School Committee	Excellent		Satisfactory			Fails to meet expectations	
	7	6		4	3	2	1
1. Interprets, supports, and executes the intent of all School Committee policies.	7	6	5.3	4	3	2	1
2. Keeps the School Committee informed on issues, needs and operation of the School District.	7	6	5.8	4	3	2	1
3. Gives a recommendation to the School Committee on items requiring School Committee action, based on thorough research and analysis.	7	6.0	5	4	3	2	1
4. In collaboration with the chair, helps establish clear direction for School Committee meetings, and provides to School Committee agendas and support materials in a timely fashion to allow for informed policy formation and decision-making.	7	6	5.5	4	3	2	1
5. Maintains a professional working relationship with the School Committee.	7	6	5.2	4	3	2	1
6. Seeks and accepts constructive criticism from members of the School Committee.	7	6	5	4.7	3	2	1
7. Remains impartial toward the School Committee; treats all Committee members alike.	7	6	5	4.9	3	2	1

C. Educational Leadership

Educational decisions must address the needs of all students. The Superintendent should keep abreast of the latest research and developments in the field of education. Curriculum evaluation and development, professional evaluation and development, and student assessment should all be considered in the formulation of short and long-range goals and objectives.

C. Educational Leadership	Excellent		Satisfactory			Fails to meet expectations	
	7	6		4	3	2	1
1. Provides direction to principals in leading the learning in their schools and holds them accountable for improving teaching, learning, and achievement.	7	6	5.6	4	3	2	1
2. Ensures current principles and best practices are implemented, based on data collection and on research to foster effective classroom instruction and educational decisions.	7	6	5.8	4	3	2	1
3. Holds principals, teachers and staff accountable for having high and appropriate standards for every student and for helping students to meet them.	7	6	5.6	4	3	2	1
4. Aligns instruction and assessment with state and federal frameworks and with community standards that reflect high standards for learning.	7	6.3	5	4	3	2	1
5. Works to improve MCAS and other standardized test scores for each school and each student sub-group within the district.	7	6.2	5	4	3	2	1
6. Challenges the educational community to raise expectation of students' capacity for learning.	7	6.0	5	4	3	2	1
7. Develops the mission and vision statements for the district.	7	6	5.2	4	3	2	1

D. General Management

The Superintendent has the responsibility for the efficient and effective operation of the school system. With the School Committee, the Superintendent develops goals and objectives that provide the framework and directions for successful leadership and management. It is important that the Superintendent is familiar with the state and federal laws, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education regulations, School Committee policy, and community values and expectations.

D. General Management	Excellent		Satisfactory			Fails to meet expectations	
	7	6		4	3	2	1
1. Implements the mission and vision statements of the District.	7	6	5.3	4	3	2	1
2. Exercises effective organizational skills based on research and best practices.	7	6.1	5	4	3	2	1
3. Models ethical behavior, interacts with others in a professional manner, and accepts responsibility for his/her own action.	7	6	5	4.8	3	2	1
4. Works to develop and maintain a trusting relationship with employees, School Committee and the community.	7	6	5	4.2	3	2	1
5. Ensures a safe environment for all students and employees, including emergency procedures	7	6	5.7	4	3	2	1

E. Budget Management

The School Committee has the responsibility of studying and approving the budget, and the Superintendent has the responsibility to present that budget to the School Committee in a manner that promotes their full understanding. The budget should take into consideration the needs of the entire system based on a formal assessment process. The need to promote the school system and gather community support for school finances is an integral part of the budget process.

E. Budget Management	Excellent		Satisfactory			Fails to meet expectations	
1. Develops a budgeting system that is clear and concise, using a model determined in collaboration with the Finance Office.	7	6.8	5	4	3	2	1
2. Involves staff in budget preparation and setting priorities.	7	6.7	5	4	3	2	1
3. Works collaboratively with Town Manager and the appropriate Boards, Commissions, and Committees to ensure the financial needs of the schools are clearly understood and aligned with other town needs.	7	6.8	5	4	3	2	1
4. Works with the School Committee to make budget documents available to the School Committee and the public in a timely fashion.	7.0	6	5	4	3	2	1
5. Explains and advocates for the school budget to the School Committee, Town Meeting, and the public.	7.0	6	5	4	3	2	1
6. Manages the school budget and ensures adequate internal controls and accounting practices.	7	6.7	5	4	3	2	1
7. Implements and follows meaningful financial reporting system, e.g., provides clear and concise budget status summaries to the School Committee on a quarterly basis.	7.0	6	5	4	3	2	1

F. Personnel Management

The Superintendent is responsible, either directly or indirectly, for the hiring of all school personnel. Personnel decisions should be approached in a non-discriminatory and impartial manner. The Superintendent should foster an environment conducive to good teaching and should be alert to issues that affect staff morale. The Superintendent should develop and lead a meaningful staff evaluation program, and should provide professional development opportunities that meet the needs of staff. The School Committee should be kept informed in appropriate matters of collective bargaining, performance standards, professional development, and grievances.

F. Personnel Management	Excellent		Satisfactory			Fails to meet expectations	
1. Models and promotes an inclusive atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the school system.	7	6	5	4.7	3	2	1
2. Develops and encourages practices that continue to increase the diversity of the staff and supports that diversity.	7	6	5	4.2	3	2	1
3. Is responsible for a professional development plan based upon the needs of the District and aligned with the goal of improving curriculum and instruction.	7	6.2	5	4	3	2	1
4. Serves as a resource to the School Committee on matters of collective bargaining.	7	6.5	5	4	3	2	1
5. Effectively uses a team approach to solving problems.	7	6	5.1	4	3	2	1
6. Builds employee job satisfaction through listening, encouragement and appreciation of good performance.	7	6	5	4.5	3	2	1

G. Communications and Public Relations

Public awareness is vital for the support of education in Lexington. The Superintendent should ensure that staff, students, parents, and the community are kept informed of the mission, the needs, and the accomplishments of the school system. A strong, open and positive posture is needed in building public support.

G. Communications and Public Relations	Excellent		Satisfactory			Fails to meet expectations	
1. Fosters mutual trust and collaboration within the District, and between the schools and the community.	7	6	5	4.4	3	2	1
2. Works to improve internal and external communications.	7	6	5.2	4	3	2	1
3. Ensures that timely communication on important matters is provided to parents.	7	6	5.5	4	3	2	1
4. Works collaboratively with parent/teacher organizations, site councils, and other school groups, sharing ideas, and promoting mutually beneficial projects.	7	6	5.1	4	3	2	1
5. Establishes an outreach to diverse groups within the community.	7	6	5	4.0	3	2	1
6. Is visible to the community, gaining support for the schools.	7	6	5.0	4	3	2	1
7. Handles media relations skillfully.	7	6	5	4.6	3	2	1

Overall Evaluation

Overall Performance – please add any comments	Excellent		Satisfactory			Fails to meet expectations	
	7	6		4	3	2	1
A. Meeting of Annual Goals	7	6	5.9	4	3	2	1
B. Relationship with the School Committee	7	6	5.3	4	3	2	1
C. Educational Leadership	7	6	5.8	4	3	2	1
D. General Management	7	6	5.4	4	3	2	1
E. Budget Management	7.0	6	5	4	3	2	1
F. Personnel Management	7	6	5.3	4	3	2	1
G. Communications and Public Relations	7	6	5	4.8	3	2	1
Overall rating: 5.6							