

January 2016



Superintendent's Newsletter *Lexington Public Schools*

Welcome to 2016!



Dear Colleagues and LPS
Community Members,

Welcome to the year 2016! I hope you enjoyed the holiday season and had the opportunity to spend time with family, friends, and loved ones.

As we begin the new year, Lexington Public Schools continues to be involved with projects related to facilities and enrollment growth. Key dates for community members are on the right side.

Multiple school building projects will be on the agendas.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the newsletter and I encourage you to provide feedback and suggest topics:

mczajkowski@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us

Special Town Meeting

Monday, February 8, 2016

7:30 PM

**Margery Milne Battin Auditorium
Cary Memorial Building
1605 Massachusetts Avenue**

Annual Town Meeting

Monday, March 21, 2016

7:30PM

**Margery Milne Battin Auditorium
Cary Memorial Building
1605 Massachusetts Avenue**

Lexington Ranked in Top 25 Best School Districts in America!

Lexington Public Schools is ranked #15 by Niche, an organization that provides data and reviews about neighborhoods, public and private K-12 schools, and colleges. Lexington is the only district in Massachusetts in the top 25!

The ranking included academics, administration, educational outcomes, health & safety, resources

and facilities, student culture and diversity, and teacher domains.

For more information, please visit their website:

<https://k12.niche.com/rankings/public-school-districts/best-overall/>

A proud day for Lexingtonians!

2016-2017 Budget

FY2016-17 Budget Theme

Ensuring on-going program excellence in light of continued growth...

It is with great pride that I present an FY17 school budget in the amount of \$97,727,216 which represents an increase of \$5,666,900 or 6.16%. Through the continual assessment of our student needs as well as the review of our programs, resources have been allocated and reallocated to provide all students with an education that ensures academic excellence,

support for their social and emotional well-being and in a culture of caring and respectful relationships as outlined in our district's mission statement.

During the last 5 years, the district has experienced the addition of 641 students representing an 8.3% increase in enrollment.

I am confident that this proposed budget is both educationally sound and fiscally responsible. I would like to thank Ian Dailey, Interim Director of Finance, our administrative support staff, our central office administrators, administrative team, staff, parents and school councils for their input in the development of this proposed budget.

FY17 Recommended Budget

FY16 Budget	\$92,060,316
Funds Requested	\$5,666,900
FY17 Budget*	\$97,727,216
Percent Increase	6.16%

*Includes \$483,917 to be transferred to the Town's Unclassified Account for the purposes of benefits, Medicare, and worker's comp insurance associated with new positions being requested.

Current District Goals



FY17 Budget Timeline

- February 2, 2016 – FY17 Operating and Capital Budget Vote
- February 22, 2016 – BoS vote on FY17 Budget
- February 29, 2016 - FY17 Brown Book distributed to TMMA
- March 21, 2016 – Opening of Annual Town Meeting



Lexington High School Youth Risk Behavior Survey—2015

Stress (sample size=1732)

- Students report very little stress from sports, extracurricular activities or clubs.
- Students express the most stress associated with academics
 - 14% report classes cause “extreme stress”; 14% report homework cause “extreme stress”
 - 91% report their stress has increased since starting high school
 - 95% felt pressure from themselves to do well in school; 80% felt pressure from parents to get good grades; 62% felt pressure from teachers to get good grades
- Young women report more academic stress
 - Doing poorly on a test bothers young women more than young men (51% of women “bothered a lot” compared to 38% men)
- Planning for the future causes extreme stress
- 33% of students indicated feeling “extreme stress” planning for life after high school

Coping with Stress

- Programming at LHS designed to help reduce stress may be having a positive impact
 - Proportion of students who report classes cause them extreme stress continues to decrease from 2004 to 2013
 - Students report a number of healthy responses for dealing with stress:
 - 61% indicated they listen to music when they experience stress
 - 44% reporting they exercise when they are feeling stress.
- Only 7% of students indicated that they dealt with stress by using alcohol and drugs
- But only 24% of students thought their teachers were aware of their level of stress

Redistricting Plan

Lexington Public Schools has contracted with a company from Boston called Applied Geographics, Inc., or App Geo to partner with Lexington in developing a redistricting plan. Their background includes working with Newton, Winchester, and Dedham school systems. Here are the overview and next steps of the project:



Phase 1

- Maximize use of available classrooms (Estabrook (2-3) + Hastings (1))
- 6 modulars (site placement TBD) to relieve compression
- Stay mindful of long-term development

Phase 2

- Redistricting plan for a new Hastings School in either 2018-19 (without MSBA funds) or 2019-20 (with MSBA funds)

Next Steps

- Building potential scenarios for review
- Continued collaboration with:
 - Elementary School Principals
 - Working Group
 - Superintendent’s Ad Hoc Student Assignment Committee
- Scenario presentation to the School

Public Forum Dates:

March 12, 10:00-12:00 a.m. at Estabrook School Cafetorium
 March 16, 7:00-9:00 p.m. at Clarke Middle School Auditorium

Middle Schools Youth Risk Behavior Survey—2015

This is the first year that the Youth Risk Behavior Survey was given to students in the middle schools. The middle school survey is a modified version of the high school Youth Risk Behavior Survey.

Academic Stress (sample size=970)

- 23% of 7th grade and 8th grade students report that classes cause them “a lot of stress” (18%, n=174) or “extreme stress” (5%, n=50).
 - 11% of Hispanic students report that classes causes them “extreme stress” compared to 6% of White students, 5% of Black students, 2% of Asian students, and 6% of Southeast Asian students.
 - 7 % of females report that classes cause them “extreme stress” compared to 4% of males.
- 39% of 7th and 8th grade students report that homework causes either “a lot of stress” (32%) or “extreme stress” (7%)
 - 13% of Black students report that homework causes them “extreme stress” compared to 9% of White students, 11% of Hispanic students, 4% of Asian students, and 6% of Southeast Asian students.
 - 10% of female students report homework causes extreme stress compared to 4% of males.

For the complete middle and high school survey summary, please see the School Committee packet dated January 19, 2016.

United States Presidential Scholars Program

17 Lexington High School Students Selected

The United States Presidential Scholars Program was established in 1964 to recognize and honor some of our Nation's most distinguished graduating high school seniors. In 1979, the Program was extended to recognize students who demonstrate exceptional talent in the visual, creative, and performing arts. In 2015, the program was again extended to recognize students who demonstrate ability and accomplishment in career and technical education fields. Each year, up to 161 students are named as U.S. Presidential Scholars, one of the nation's highest honors for high school seniors. The Scholars represent excellence in education and the promise of greatness in young people.



Congratulations to our awarded seniors!

Learning Walkthroughs

Lexington Public Schools has begun the process of utilizing a professional learning tool called Learning Walkthroughs. A Learning Walkthrough is a brief classroom visit using a researched-based tool that provides principals and teachers opportunities to reflect on what students are learning, learning strategies, student interaction with the content, and student engagement.* During the walkthroughs, a team of teachers and administrators visits a sample of classrooms for a brief period observing a variety of teacher and student behaviors related to specific learning goals. At the end of the walkthrough day, the team meets to debrief about their observations and discuss what they learned.

The Learning Walkthroughs enable the school and district leadership teams to gather information about classroom practice to identify high quality professional development needs at the school that will strengthen the student learning process.

Our next steps will be to form a task force this summer including various administrators and educators to determine common language, establish protocols, and institute communication methods.

**Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education*



Performing Arts Activities

Clarke Middle School's Production of "The Lion King"

Students at Clarke Middle School will be performing the musical "The Lion King" beginning with opening night January 28th and running through January 30.

Come learn about the circle of life!



All Town Orchestra Concerts: February 3 and 4

Elementary, middle, and high school students will be performing in two concerts at the Lexington High School gym. Both performances start at 7:30 and will have a cost of \$5.

Improv Troupe Show

The Lexington High School Drama club will be holding an improv show at the LHS Black-box on February 5 at 7:30pm.