EXCERPTS FROM LEXINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS SUPERINTENDENT EVALUATIONS 2019-2022

BY DEEPIKA SAWHNEY

I have always written the evaluations as assessments of Lexington Public School challenges and opportunities, while giving credit for accomplishments that year. It is often a reflection of what has happened in the past year and ideas about how we could do better. There are many ideas contained here, and please note that there are many constraints: competing priorities, emergent issues, economic, personnel, resources or just time. In the end we are five school committee members who also have different ideas on what is the most important thing to do TODAY!

It has been an enormous responsibility to do this work, and I did my best.

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1. End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent 2019

Superintendent:	Dr. Julie L. Hackett		
Evaluator:	Deepika Sawhney		May 22, 2019
	Name of Evaluator	**Signature**	**Date**

Comments and Analysis:

Dr. Hackett, on arrival last summer, took on the responsibility of leading the district to improve the discipline disparity identified through the DESE data. The approach required forming a Lexington based methodology and building consensus with staff and community groups. This is an ongoing process which is slowly building bridges in the community; however, complete trust hasn't been achieved yet. That will require sustained efforts over a longer period and measured responses to any school crisis which has racial overtones. DEI work in the schools has also been coupled with SEL. With the DEI process and Dr. Hackett's own efforts she has done remarkable personal outreach as well used social, print media to good effect.

She brings a new approach to some of our difficult issues, such as bringing in outside consultants so that LPS is not stymied by the limitations of in-house expertise. The ability to recognize our own constraints is key and her 'fresh eyes' approach has been key in helping move us forward.

The Strategic Plan process is ongoing and will be completed by Sept 2019. Dr. Hackett is using a well-considered and structured process which invites staff and community input and incorporates it in the final product - the vision for LPS. Other district efforts such as revisions to the homework policy, high school start time change, mental health town-school approach, hiring new capable administrators, master planning, submitting the SOI for a new high school, work in synergy towards the goal of student learning. However, goals 2, 3, and 4 are in progress and hence have been given proficient status at this time.

Comments and Analysis:

Dr. Hackett has integrated the timely goals of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the professional development offerings to LPS staff. This is a new instruction-curriculum addition system-wide. She has shown instructional leadership in bringing this about and highlighting the need for a consistent approach in our discipline practices.

Regarding all other areas of instruction, it appears that the capable LPS staff and teachers have been continuing to do their work diligently, on already established plans such as curriculum reviews or school improvement plans. The strategy and other such new work which may necessitate change, hasn't been finalized yet. In addition, a number of new administrators have been hired and some are taking on new roles. Therefore, in some respects, the work on assessment and evaluation is in its initial stages. Dr. Hackett is to be commended for the high degree of trust that has been created in this layer of our administration and for the continued smooth operation of the school system despite many senior personnel changes.

Comments and Analysis:

Dr. Hackett came in in somewhat challenging circumstances, with a number of resignations from senior administrative staff. She has put together a strong team to replace the talent by recruiting from within and from the outside. She is to be commended for finding capable professionals with the help of the HR department in such short periods. However, there is the possibility of significant change at such times and the next few years will show us the positive and possible negative effects of the hiring decisions. She has fostered a cordial professional environment and encourages learning across schools. There seems to be a greater comfort level in admitting to mistakes so as to create opportunities for general learning (Discipline disparities administration council meetings). Her Administrative council meetings are regularly held and keep the senior staff well informed. She also has time on those agendas for collegial relationships to be formed.

Her collaborative methodology for researching and implementing solutions to difficult issues creates trust in staff and community. She has recognized pay inequity and worked to solve it. The trusting and amicable relationship with the Union representative is also to be noted.

Dr. Hackett is also to be commended for completing the negotiations for union contracts amicably and her able guidance around somewhat thorny student issues.

Dr. Hackett and Mr. Rowe have created the 2020 budget which was approved by Annual Town Meeting in April. The departmental requests for funds was over the budget available so they had to ascertain competing merits of the requests and district priorities to arrive at the final 2020 budget. This also required working with a new Town manager and within budget allocation guidelines and norms which were new to both. The process was completed on time and efficiently communicated to School committee, Select Board, Town finance department and Town meeting members.

The 2019 fiscal year is going to be coming in under budget for about $1.3M. This is evidence of continuing good fiscal management. There are significant fiscal challenges for Lexington, as the town has taken on debt for school and town capital projects and the high school requires substantial investment. Given that the school operations are about 75% of the combined budget, it is important for the school system to be frugal and eliminate any waste where possible.

Dr. Hackett has accomplished much on many fronts within her first year at Lexington, however, she has not had the opportunity to concentrate on better utilization of management information systems. The strategic planning process has highlighted areas where needless paperwork etc. can be eliminated. This may be a likely area of improvement in processes for next year.

Comments and Analysis:

Dr. Hackett has taken part in many town celebrations and events as well as engaged with different sections of Lexington (and Boston based student) communities through outreach, data gathering or planning events. She has shadowed students through their typical day and visited most of the schools in the district to get to know staff better. She puts great emphasis on gathering stakeholder input and communicating process and progress to all. In the past year there have been some occasions where sensitive student matters have required careful management. In such situation she has worked with school administration to keep the community informed and communicate the culture and values of LPS.

She lives quite far away in Taunton, and such must have a challenging commute. It should be noted how accessible she makes her self at all times through email, phone or meetings in person to all (staff, community and students). She continues to 'bank goodwill' for the school system with her relationship building efforts across town constituencies. Unofficially and anecdotally, she has a high approval rating in town.

Comments and Analysis:

The overall Proficient rating has been assessed because a number of the efforts are midway and have not reached completion. In addition, the success of some of the major efforts such as the DEI or Strategic Planning work will depend on their implementation.

Dr. Hackett has begun the process of Strategic planning with a series of Keep, Loose, Dream and Innovate workshops with different constituencies of Lexington student population. The Strategic plan will give focus to Lexington Public Schools' work with its students towards shared and well understood goals. She has begun the process well, with clearly communicated process, timeline and as a result admirable stakeholder engagement and buy-in. She is also able to inspire her senior central office team to undertake such large efforts concurrently with grace and efficiency.

Some of the good work which will become a subset of the Strategic goals such as the district's diversity, equity and inclusion efforts are directly attributable to Dr. Hackett's collaborative leadership. It is not an easy task to change implicit bias and engage in racial equity conversations. Lexington Public Schools have begun the hard work. It will take time but under Dr. Hackett's leadership the district has made a real commitment. She has worked with the new and veteran administrators to foster greater discipline and instructional equity in our schools. This is ongoing.

Given the large volume of work around DEI, late start times, mental health, project-based learning, DLP etc. other areas of the curriculum have not been looked at. This is understandable given our time constraints and the care required to not let 'initiative exhaustion' set in. Thus, it would be premature to assess IV-A, IV-E.

Summative Comments:

Dr. Hackett has achieved commendable results in her first year. These are given here in no particular order:

(1) taken the leadership of a new district and ensured smooth operations through her period of transition
(2) hired senior administrative staff because there was significant turnover
(3) built new relationships with town government and elected officials
(4) established a new professional culture at the Central office and smoothed some concerns which were carryovers from the last administration
(5) completed almost all remaining union contract negotiations
(6) engaged with, internalized and begun tackling significant LPS concerns and issues such as student stress, Homework Policy, Late start time for high school, enrollment pressures, required redistricting and physical facility issues
(7) built relationships within the LPS community, staff and other groups
(8) submitted the High School SOI to MSBA
(9) started the Strategic Planning process
(10) successfully presented 2020 budget for approval

The Superintendent evaluation format doesn't quite lend itself to an assessment of these results hence it is important to mention them here. Significant challenges remain and success of these efforts can only be gauged after implementation and the student/staff/community's reception.

Strengths:
It is commendable and noteworthy that Dr. Hackett has accomplished these results with her team by creating an environment which values collaboration and is focused on what is best for the student. Her team building skills are exemplary and she is able to manage up (the School Committee) and down (her direct reports and the extended LPS staff) with ease which is a highly useful management skill. Her empathy and relatability allow her to build relationships across race and other non-visible unfortunate barriers. She works very hard and is available to all who need to communicate with her. She is thorough in her work and creative in her problem-solving approach. She also understands the value of process, communication and timelines. These skills allow her to build a significant base of stakeholders thus ensuring greater success. She also understands her own and the system's limitations, thus bringing in outside expertise when required and/or delegating to the right person for the task. Her past experiences in other districts (legal, MSBA etc.) are beneficial to LPS.

Areas of improvement and concerns:
(1) She will need to learn how to say No, especially to demands on her personal time as it sets up expectations which may be unrealistic as we tackle increasingly difficult issues.
(2) All the issues being currently tackled through Central Office, seem equally important. That is unsustainable for an organization. The Strategic Plan may help prioritise, however, there needs to be a larger multiyear plan which will define which issues are tackled when. Dr. Hackett will need to create that plan (perhaps it is the implementation plan which is derived from the Strategic)
(3) At some point we will need to refocus on what is actually happening in the classroom, i.e., where are we in our current curriculum review process (looking at existing) and what do we need to be teaching (looking at new).
(4) Dr. Hackett along with the new Assistant Superintendent for Finance should look at cost cutting measures (if possible) in our budget. Better personnel utilization, reducing waste in resources, increasing revenues where possible (rentals of school property in off peak hours) etc. etc.

2. End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent 2020

Superintendent:	Dr. Julie L. Hackett		
Evaluator:	Deepika Sawhney		May 22, 2019
	Name of Evaluator	**Signature**	**Date**

Comments and Analysis:

Dr. Hackett has brought her collaborative and empathetic educational vision to the district. The Strategic plan has been developed with community and staff input. As the work of the schools has continued concurrently during these two years the values and principles are already being adopted across the school district. Creation of structured implementation plans and their adoption will hopefully resume post Covid.
Dr. Hackett has built a strong team and has supplemented where there is need. Almost all the elementary school principals are new to the district as is a middle school one. The turnover has been voluntary, either due to personal choice or promotions within district. We have new Ast. Superintendent of Finance, and Director of Innovation and Instructional Technology. The position of Director of Student Equity and Supports which Mr. Johnny Cole has been hired for, has been a pivotal shift in how we care for our students. The team feels cohesive and has shown examples of working together well to find solutions to LPS issues.
Dr. Hackett has spent time in individual school buildings in person and virtually. She has made herself accessible to the community while also enabling and delegating responsibility to her team to manage issues. She is very student centric and has an easy rapport with the children. She supports student undertakings and is a champion for their efforts. She understands and models the belief that students should have voice and agency.
As current national events have shown there is much that needs to be done to reduce systemic racism and implicit bias. Dr. Hackett understands this whole heartedly and we are working within LPS to examine, reflect and better our policies, practices and beliefs

Comments and Analysis:

The LPS system has a well-established cycle of curriculum review. These continue. Math was currently under review and is probably in hiatus due to the school closures. As Math is a pivotal subject for student learning, the math department heads have been encouraged to look at the DEI work, particularly for Inclusion practices through the CIT (Community Input Teams). This is an example of how Dr. Hackett is having the Strategic planning work inform other aspects of LPS pedagogy. Dr. Hackett has encouraged the interweaving of the DEI work within LPS. Harrington and Bowman schools have SEL and DEI programs which are being considered for across district implementation.
In a similar effort to build more student agency Dr. Hackett had set up a workshop with LPS educators and Prof Ron Ferguson to look at evaluations and including the student voice. Dr. Hackett has also previously shared some of her evaluation practices for her direct reports. I find them reasonable and collaborative.
The remote learning portion of school closures was a challenging and systemic undertaking. In a period of global uncertainty and anxiety, school districts had to equitably and carefully craft a pedagogy which would meet the needs of a diverse student body. The districts were hampered by lack of direction at the state and federal level, or guidance that came slowly. The LPS remote learning program evolved over time with very little synchronous learning in the beginning, to a gradual increase. Parents were sent a district wide update and explanation every 2-3 weeks by Dr.

Hackett, in addition to the updates during School Committee meetings. A completely new set of webpages that explained remote learning resources comprehensively was also created. Finally, when DESE did release guidance, Lexington's program was found to be in compliance. Dr. Hackett is to be commended for exceptional leadership during such a time of global crisis. She was empathetic, patient, encouraging and very professional in her dealings with both community and staff. She also collaborated with other district heads to improve the responses.
Staff and a large section of the school community were satisfied with the remote learning program. However, many student's needs' especially in younger grades or in the SPED population were not being met. Some of these needs are challenging to provide during social distancing and online learning in any case. But reading parents' comments and descriptions of how learning was falling short of requirements was disturbing. While many staff took it upon themselves to do their best, there were many stories of where staff were not putting in much effort. This is going to be a significant challenge going forward for Dr. Hackett and Lexington Public Schools as we try and make up gaps created by Covid 19 closures. To her credit Dr. Hackett has created a number of opportunities for parents and staff to give feedback at the end of the school year. These will not be easy conversations but need to be held for systemic improvements and greater transparency. The feedback will help LPS efforts in the Fall.
LPS has been making progress towards more data driven decision making. We have a strong data team led by Dr. Kavanaugh. This requires putting systems in place to first gather the data and then convince people about the value of using that data. Some noteworthy examples are the ongoing effort to put better systems in place for gathering discipline data. The data obtained through the MYRBS survey is used by the health and wellness departments. Of course, data around enrollment is very important and was a key determinant of our redistricting plans. Transportation data was used as well in redistricting plans as well as the late start time plans for the district. The MCAS data has been leveraged a little bit. There is a lot more possible and I would really encourage Dr. Hackett to use data more to improve policies and outcomes in Lexington. This may be even more necessary as we go to a more digital based form of education.
Comments and Analysis:

Dr. Hackett inherited two ongoing school construction projects (LCP and Hastings) when she joined Lexington. These have been successfully completed and occupied prior to school closures in March. Three of our schools are very old and will require either repairs, renovations or rebuilds. The high school serves 2300 students and was lacking science labs. Prior to Dr. Hackett's arrival the science labs could only be obtained by an outlay of $1M+. Dr. Hackett was able to work with the high school team and DPF to do space mining and create science labs for substantially less. She has also submitted an SOI for the high school to the MSBA within the first year of her arrival. She has resubmitted it this year again on its not being approved last year. In addition, the Bridge school new roof proposal was also submitted. Dr. Hackett has been chairing a master planning task force which has looked at system wide space limitations. The resultant document - Compendium has been completed. This is a significant amount of work to be completed within the span of two years especially for a new administrator. It is commendable.

Dr. Hackett has made some significant hires and promotions to build up the central office team. The team is working well and is collaborative. There is a system wide interest in hiring more teachers of color. However, with budget pressures hiring will have to be judicially managed. Dr. Hackett has instituted hiring processes at LPS which will help streamline the process and save costs. This is also evidenced by the significant reduction in annual LPS counsel costs, by requiring that in-house experience and knowledge be first leveraged to field commonplace queries. Dr. Hackett has produced two fiscally balanced budgets with the help of two different Ast. Superintendents for Finance in the past two years. Prior to her arrival LPS internal processes were not necessarily geared towards fiscal conservatism. She has had to institute some internal controls especially around hiring to control costs. The 2019 budget summits were challenging. The town was feeling the pressure of funding construction of a large high school and there were concerns of a possible downturn in the economy. After many internal and town-school discussions the LPS budget was passed with a modified percentage growth. With the school closures the school district will be returning back a substantial amount (around 3M) back to town coffers. The budget process has had some uncomfortable exchanges. However, in subsequent meetings such as the meeting with the Appropriations Committee on SPED budget matters in early 2019, she was able to build mutual understanding. Fiscally challenging times lie ahead but Dr. Hackett and her team have shown that they are capable of managing them.

Dr. Hackett has also tried to improve the fiscal position with respect to external organizations such as EDCO. She has taken the lead of requesting a dissolution of the organization on the grounds of fiscal non-viability. With her guidance LPS has also requested to part ways with EDCO as soon as contractually possible.

For information systems, Dr. Hackett promoted Mr. Martellone from within the district to the position of Director of Innovation and Instruction Supports. He was able to review the existing IT budget and update it with lifecycle costs while reducing the overall spend. During the school closures due to Covid 19 the school IT department was able to get devices to all students and obtain mobile hotspots for many who needed it. The school system was also ready to help with the online town meeting by providing devices. The IT infrastructure has become a critical resource during this crisis and will continue to substantially shape the education in Lexington. Dr. Hackett and her team have done much to improve access and content in online learning. This has been a very challenging period and the IT team has performed admirably.
Comments and Analysis:

Students thrive when parents and the school district have a true partnership. In order to achieve that communication and feedback is very important. Better understanding means that students are better supported in school and at home. Quite often communication can be less than pleasant, but is very necessary. Dr. Hackett has found time for all parents who have reached out to her either directly or through school channels. In times of change, which can generate stress, multiple forums are organized as in the case of redistricting or change in start times, as well as surveys and in person meetings. She pulls in staff who can help answer concerns or inform the discussions. The staff feel supported in such situations and so are able to engage with the community efficiently. She also tries to respond to all parent concerns in a timely and empathetic manner. This is a difficult task given the high volume she receives. This was very much in evidence during the Redistricting effort, SPED community communications and more.

The reason for the Needs Improvement rating in Family concerns is largely due to the concerns raised by some of the school community during the spring school closures. Dr. Hackett and her very experienced team did try very hard to craft the best possible remote learning plan for LPS. However, there were gaps in execution. While Dr. Hackett was giving her very best effort, not all staff in the school buildings were following her example. Especially in the elementary school population, and SPED students, social emotional relationships with teachers and peers is a vital aid for learning. These could have been better maintained through more frequent check ins or additional synchronous learning sooner. I agree that motivating a large workforce, during a pandemic, without the usual evaluations and checks is very difficult. Perhaps codifying higher expectations from staff in the MOA could have helped.

There are many other new forms of communication that Dr. Hackett has originated. The annual LPS report for example, is a multiple page report which is shared with the school and town community and covers key events and efforts. The strategic planning process started with community engagement through KLDI workshops instead of just a small group working on it in isolation. The 2019 school year started with the plan being presented to all. She is working to have other annual reports (discipline disparity etc.) to be made available on the school websites so that progress can be monitored year to year. Where less is more she has bucked tradition, for example: the LPS budget book used to be a very thick and bland tome. Dr. Hackett worked with her team to slim it down and made the front and back covers a showcase for student artistic effort. This not only saved on paper but has become a much more user-friendly publication. The school website has been remade to make it more user friendly and cohesive. We also have a new LPS logo. These create a more cohesive brand identity for LPS, and have been reimagined to increase a feeling of pride and unity in the school community. She also got T-shirts printed which came in very useful for the Diamond Middle school team who were traveling to Cornell for the National Science Olympiad competition!

Our students and community from Boston have been included whole heartedly in the LPS processes. For example: A strategic plan KLDI workshop was held in Boston, Ms. Hamilton is an integral part of the Admin council and student input is actively sought out. One of my most unforgettable memories are during the Annual town meeting in 2019, Dr. Hackett invited and celebrated a group of our African American LHS students who had shown exceptional leadership. These young confident women had made us proud and it was nice to have 220 elected representatives of Lexington participate in their recognition
Comments and Analysis:

Dr. Hackett certainly has very strong interpersonal, written, and verbal communication skills! This has been an especial boon to the district as it went into lockdown given the level of fear, uncertainty and anxiety wrought by Covid 19 in March and April. Over a period of two months she authored over 17 communications and updates. These were very welcome as there was very little other official communication and unfortunately

the national and international news was very grim and worrisome. These updates included information from the Board of Health, who she worked very closely with during this entire period.

The Strategic Planning process has included students of all ages right from the beginning. Some educators at the elementary and middle school level have created classroom exercises which include facets of the plan. At the secondary level, it is harder to get teenagers attention but overtime we hope that they will come to engage more with the LPS vision.

She has exemplary conflict management skills which have been exercised repeatedly. We have taken on many initiatives which were long overdue. However, change leads to uncertainty and stress. This anxiety leads to parents or community members expressing themselves with passion. I have seen Dr. Hackett reach out individuals after the meeting and have long honest conversations. This not only helps inform her but also helps the other person feel heard and acknowledged.

Lexington has many defined community characteristics. It is multicultural and diverse. It also tends to be highly professional. Dr. Hackett has worked hard to understand the cultural context of Lexington. She has met with all the various subgroups which have an organized presence (CAAL, CALex, ABCL, IAL and others). She comes to the cultural events and is happy attending backyard BBQs and musical performances too.

Summative Comments:

The period between June 2019 and June 2020 has been very unusual. There have been significant undertakings, challenges and successes. Dr. Hackett has built a team which can respond to uncertainty and unforeseen crises. Redistricting, change in start times, budget limiting discussions, school lockdown and remote learning, and racism protests are individually significant events on a normal year; taken together, they can overwhelm a less professional and accomplished management team. However, Dr. Hackett and her Admin Council have executed well and worked efficiently as a collaborative team. The team has included representatives of the LEA Unions. Dr. Hackett has also had to work closely with our town manager, departments and committees. These have not been all easy meetings as budget issues have led to some friction.

However, matters have been resolved and a working relationship has been established. In other matters, she has extended herself in taking part in Lexington town events and has open lines of communication with our many community groups. These all add up to significant demands on her time and efforts however, she does manage to find time for all in a very long work day. Anecdotally she has a high approval rating in town and that is a testament to Dr. Hackett's managerial skills and ability to work with all.
Some significant milestones worth mentioning:

- When she joined the district almost all of our union contracts were in negotiation or stalled in the process. The negotiations were carried out very smoothly and with goodwill on all sides and reasonable financial conditions. In 2020, it was a significant relief to go into the Covid crisis with all contracts satisfactorily completed. During the crisis, she was able to work with the unions to come up with a MOA quickly and efficiently.
- Through the DEI planning she identified and hired a Director of Equity and Student Supports as a required position within LPS. Having Mr. Cole on the team was very helpful as he took on many tasks such as an internal equity audit, and support for the redistricting and start time work. In hindsight, creating and hiring for this position seems prescient with the race protests and pandemic issues. Having a point person who could support the school system and manage parent concerns has been invaluable.
- The redistricting process was very long and afforded many occasions for parents to voice their concerns. The parent forums, communications, phone calls were many. Dr. Kavanaugh managed the initiative and implementation was then handed to an ex-Clark principal Ms. Monaco. The redistricting process could have been extra ordinarily divisive. However, with many avenues for airing concerns it was managed successfully.
- The new LCP and Hastings building are operational. These projects are both nearly complete apart from some minor details and landscaping.
- The town and school administration and leadership have found some opportunities to come together symbolically and present a united message. Two examples: As a celebration of Earth day, many trees were planted by the Select Board and School Committee including

Superintendent and Town Manager; and most recently the joint statement condemning racism and expressing solidarity with our African American population.

- There was scant guidance coming from state and federal agencies in mid-March about Covid 19. Dr. Hackett pulled together a group of neighboring districts and took the leadership to formulate a regional plan for closure of schools. This was especially important because closure of one school district would not alone reduce the infection rate. She also took the lead in requiring a pause of two weeks and then formulating remote learning plans.
- Finding the right personnel or outside help as and when needed by LPS. Dr. Hackett has reached out to outside experts such as Ron Ferguson, Thomas Hehir, Jeffrey Benson and AppGeo or in-house experts such as Dr. Kavanaugh, and Mr. Cole to lead efforts in key areas. This ensures a high-quality end product and builds confidence in the results.
- Dr. Hackett has used many forms of communication to keep in touch not only with staff, parents, and community but also with neighboring school districts and professional organizations. These have included flowers, care baskets, letters, emails, phone calls, in person visits and meetings, virtual meetings, panel discussions, surveys, professional development forums, one international trip and more. Many communications have been difficult or fraught with friction but she has not backed away from having an open conversation. That is admirable.

Critical areas which need attention:

1) The school closures have impacted the learning of our students. Required academic and social emotional progress was not possible. LPS is a well resourced school district which is frequently a leader in many ways. Our community is generous in giving the schools the support they need. In turn it has high expectations of performance. In the next academic year we have to justify the trust and bridge the gaps caused by Covid 19. A generation of LPS students cannot be long term impacted by the crisis.
2) The municipal and school administration relationships are critical. The tax revenues and state-federal aid may lessen due to the Covid crisis and unemployment. It is critical that communication is frequent and professional relationships are cordial. The municipal administration has to trust that LPS will do its best to manage costs. In addition, LPS has to trust that the town will do its best to meet LPS needs. We hope that the municipal-school partnership will emerge stronger in the coming years.
3) The municipal-school shared vision for mental health services in Lexington still needs a lot of work. It seems to have stalled and should be restarted with immediate term commonsensical measures given the increasing need.
4) In addition, Lexington has prided itself on its students' stellar academic, artistic and athletic performance. However, not all Lexington students get a chance to participate or to excel. The onus is on the adults to create more opportunities, and support systems for all children to try if they want to. Creation of such opportunities does not need to be a zero-sum game. I.e. wherein students who are interested and capable of exemplary performance are held back. Rather a collaborative model should be pursued where students learn from one another. We have systems in place such as community service, peer mentoring, etc. in place and there are many competitive opportunities currently not being explored by our students. This will not be easy especially when there is a resource crunch in terms of personnel, classrooms, athletic fields or simply a defined number of spots on a team. But it can be done.

3. End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent 2021

Superintendent:	Dr. Julie L. Hackett		
Evaluator:	Deepika Sawhney		June 5th, 2021,

Name of Evaluator	Signature	Date

Comments and Analysis:

All the district goals have been overshadowed by the work that needed to be done during the pandemic. However, many of the pre pandemic goals have also been worked upon during this period. The four district goals are in progress and by their very nature may never be completed as new students, staff and families enter and exit the system, creating need and demand for capacity in different ways.

2020-21 was a very challenging and unprecedented year. This needs to be stated and emphasized. Dr. Hackett has navigated these challenges with clear thinking, courage, caring and courtesy. Given the scant support from the federal and state level, her courage, and the ability to think clearly through negotiations with unions, conflicting medical information, competing community feedback and interests greatly benefited LPS through her decisions. Caring and courtesy were her key strengths which allowed her to listen to often strident views, empathize with the concerns behind them, and answer with understandable rationale.

In addition, her ability to build relationships with other entities (such as Board of Health, other districts, DESE or MASB officials) has also been key. Oftentimes when it was the darkest, Dr. Hackett's congratulations and celebrations section reminded the community of much positive news. The LPS Core Values recognition shines the spotlight on community members who are exemplars in their social-emotional skills. This too was an innovation developed in partnership with School Committee members Bokun and Cuthbertson.

LPS has been responding quickly and empathetically to national and regional crises which effect student wellbeing. Dr. Hackett has modeled that through her communications districtwide (staff, families, and wider Lexington community). These have included being a leader in town wide efforts whether it is a Black Lives Matter vigil or an AAPI forum. Due to the nature of pandemic education with reduced numbers of students in school, rates of bullying and suspensions will be down. It is hoped that the nationwide conversations on race reckoning have permeated our community. Coupled with the ongoing professional training, restorative practices, and curriculum emphasis on understanding our history and context, hopefully these rates will continue to reduce. Dr. Hackett is continuing to put required attention on these matters through the review processes in place and the fast pace of curriculum change being adopted. The DEI lessons have been integrated into our K-8 curriculum with age-appropriate content.

Education is very relationship based. While LPS continues to provide professional development around culturally relevant pedagogy; role models and educators of color are necessary too. LPS continues to push to hire educators of color when possible, and to support the educators with affinity groups and a positive staff environment.

Dr. Hackett has also continued to make progress on strategic priorities established in previous years. The work is ongoing with the DEI CIT (Inclusion) team and a new DEI CIT (Equity) team is being formed. These teams evaluate the current state of LPS and are articulating a desired state with the community. In addition, a student group is advising the ongoing DEI work within LPS. This increases student agency and helps incorporate their feedback from the beginning of the efforts.

The change in graduation requirements is to bring LPS requirements more in keeping with the state's as well as to ease the path to graduation for our students who need the help (children who have a medical or family emergency that impacts academics etc.) Research has been done in compiling a spreadsheet of other Massachusetts districts requirements as well as identifying a small working group. Work is progressing on this front, and it is hoped that the community will get an opportunity to weigh in on the proposed changes.

Creating an online Project Based Learning Academy, a completely new form of instruction and learning for LPS, during the pandemic was a very brave, courageous move. It was made possible by the ongoing investment in PBL training, competence of our school district's staff at the teaching and administration level, and some pandemic created educator caseload issues. It has been a bold experiment as it combined grades (7,8) as well as students from our two middle schools. Hitherto there had been some PBL efforts ongoing within the district however this is the first instance wherein it was implemented as a pedagogy and not only as an isolated project. A key facet of PBL is presenting the work to an audience and reflection. In addition, it would be important to understand how impactful this model is and how well does it prepare our students to engage in their next grade in middle or high school. It is also hoped that LPS will find many more ways to cultivate student agency and make them co-creators of their learning experiences, such as the LPS student group *Diversifying Our Narrative* and the 7-12 DEI Student Advisory Council. Eventually the goal should be that where possible student participation should go from our current level of 'consulted and informed' to 'child initiated, shared decisions with adults' (https://organizingengagement.org/models/ladder-of-childrens-participation/). We can never lose sight of the fact that but for our students we would not exist as an organization.

The Master Plan and Compendium has been a multiyear effort involving school staff, representatives from many town committees and volunteers. It encapsulates technical data down to individual room areas vs MSBA recommendations as well as fit with School Committee policies. The key actionable recommendation is the submission of an SOI for a new or renovated high school. There are several other recommendations as well however, the recommendations are not detailed in terms of effort, will, and timelines required. Meanwhile, LPS still must manage an overcrowded old high school facility for the near future, hopefully without the extra burden of Covid. It is to Dr. Hackett's credit that this large and necessary undertaking was completed, the SOI was submitted twice to the MSBA, and the plan details encapsulated in a digestible format for town residents' consumption. She wrote significant portions of the compendium and shepherded a large group of people keeping them on task. Her prior experiences and relationships with the MSBA also helped LPS as she was able to invite Jack McCarthy to an LPS School Committee meeting so that the community could better understand the process and what options it had to get a new high school with/without MSBA help. I am sure that this is beyond the capability of most superintendents!

One desired change is that as district initiatives are planned there are clear goals, metrics, and timelines as to what is hoped to be achieved. It is not always clear whether these initiatives had the desired impact or could be considered successful. In addition, if there is reflection and efforts to identify implementation best practices or lessons learned these could be leveraged for future initiatives. Such work builds institutional knowledge and capacity. Moreover, it allows staff members/student facilitators to shine, become subject matter experts and burnishes their professional reputation.

Comments and Analysis:

LPS has tried to implement the principles of deeper learning as espoused by Prof Jal Mehta of HGSE during this year. The curriculum was right sized or Marie Kondoed for the pandemic, that is, emphasis was put on required essential concepts and auxiliary less-important content pruned. This was a necessary step to make the hybrid and fully remote models of education work with existing capacity constraints. Educators created new content, structures, and schedules to fit this curriculum in, especially as it had to work in the heavily device dependent mode of education required. Between June and Fall 2020, educators created 'bridge standards' to make up for learning losses due to the March lockdown. Currently for the summer of 2021, a multiweek program is being created to help the most vulnerable of our scholars. Many other ongoing curriculum changes continued such as the planned K-5 Elementary Health pilot in three schools.

Necessary instruction modality changes were made, with elementary students getting a menu of choices per week. The hybrid version of school meant synchronous and asynchronous content had to be prepared at every level k-8. At the high school a hi-flex model of synchronous instruction was used with both students in class and online being provided the same content. For K-8 cohorts were kept separate yet taught the same content, whether in hybrid or RLA. Some parent feedback pointed out the inequal quantities of synchronous time across cohorts due to the way the calendar and holidays fell. In addition, there was also feedback that the asynchronous weeks covered less material or was less rigorous. The SEAPAC parent group provided feedback on the instruction and curriculum provided to SPED students during this time as well. Dr. Hackett and her team did their best to continue to provide an LPS education to students despite the many challenges during this period.

Regular assessments of student work as well as educators was done. Many of the pre pandemic student assessments continued with a pandemic twist. Administrator and educator evaluations were done through conversations wherein growth areas were explored, and constructive feedback was prioritized to improve overall performance. For administrators the conversation-based evaluations were also followed by written evaluations. Students in lower grades had standards-based report cards whereas high school students were given grades as before.

Regarding using data for student and staff performance assessment, the School Committee Agenda has not been able to devote more in depth review given pandemic imperatives. I have requested Dr. Hackett for further clarity on how LPS is faring including-

- Aggregate students' performance for the pandemic year.
- Classroom, department, and school-based data analysis on individual student performance and by group would help educators understand where to scaffold and where to encourage independent exploration.
- LPS could benefit from a series of periodic metrics which can be communicated appropriately to parents, students, and educators. Such a student and school dashboard would help all to understand how their student and their learning environment is faring.
- Similarly, an educator dashboard could help educators understand where they are subject matter experts and where they need additional professional training.

Dr. Hackett has used multiple data sources to manage the Covid crisis. These have included staff and parent surveys, Superintendent Chats, ongoing discussions with community members, information from DESE, Harvard School of Public Health, CDC and BOH experts, as well as her network of Superintendents. The adequacy and air quality of our facilities was yet another data source that was extensively studied in house and with the help of consultants. In this manner, she used data and gathered knowledge to inform her

decisions. This comprehensive process was evident in the robust and well thought through actions and strategies deployed to manage the crisis.

Comments and Analysis:

The exemplary rating for this standard is because Dr. Hackett's management of LPS during the pandemic and divisive national events was exemplary. As has been mentioned in the other sections, the pandemic gave rise to many crises which required her to draw upon her strengths and banked good will and relationships. Every facet of LPS (HR, instruction, facilities, legal, budget etc.) seemed to need attention and require change. Anyone of these changes could have been a significant undertaking in a normal year. In an extraordinary year, all needed to be done on an emergency basis right away. Dr. Hackett modeled the can-do attitude needed to get things done and her staff and the LPS community followed. She truly deserves the exemplary status for this standard.

Comments and Analysis:

Globally parents and communities have been very worried about educating students during the pandemic. Many students still do not have access to education and may become the 'lost' generation. Lexington is fortunate that many systemwide initiatives were already underway which allowed our students to come through relatively safe. These are the district investments in devices, facilities, and professional training. These assets would have come to naught if we did not have competent and committed administration. Dr. Hackett and her team not only managed the crisis but were able to innovate too under times of stress (new modes of curriculum delivery, Zoom musical performances, social distanced graduations, PBL Academy, covid surveillance testing, covid medical protocols and vaccine clinics).

All of this would not have been possible if the organization had not changed in the last few years under Dr. Hackett. The crisis could not have been managed only by a command-and-control management practice. It could also not have been managed if there had not been many investments made in relationships across the community. These resulted in trust which allowed for unprecedented decisions to be made, mistakes forgiven and celebrations even during the darkest days. For example: we had the union president running CO_2 per room spreadsheets and offering up suggestions such as 'Covid Captains' for each school, even while negotiating tough MOAs. Parents who were most vocal in their unhappiness with LPS were invited to become part of the solution (CIT for full return to school). The joint council was an integral part of all these decisions. During the past year we read about many union-administration communication breakdowns elsewhere however it was clear to even the most anxious staff or parent that LPS was trying its best to manage all conflicting interests as humanely as possible in the circumstances. This is not easy.

Dr. Hackett is a very hardworking and prolific communicator. She uses many media and makes herself available to all depending on need. She can connect with parents, unions, experts, and town officials as well as the littlest student within LPS. This is a skill that came in very useful this past year. She was able to take the often confusing and contradictory information around Covid and communicate an LPS strategy that was conservative medically, yet able to provide some of what the different community factions

desired. Her many districtwide emails provided much needed direction to the LPS community when there was scant direction from elsewhere. LPS provided a listing of community resources such as emergency housing and financial assistance which are issues typically beyond the purview of a school district. This information and more, was provided though the 'Blueprint' a comprehensive back to school plan and the accompanying website. The many updates during School Committee meetings helped keep the community informed and less anxious. In addition, basic needs such as food for our students who needed it, was organized throughout this challenging period. Certain required medical checkups which take place in a normal year had to be suspended. It is hoped that these will be conducted not only for the current grades but also for the grades who missed it due to the pandemic.

During the pandemic there were many concerned and worried parents who reacted in less than professional language to LPS policies and pandemic management strategies. Dr. Hackett made it a point to deal with such communications empathetically but firmly, shielding LPS employees where necessary yet sympathizing with the parents' anxiety. In some instances, parents sought solutions outside of the system by trying to bring news and social media pressures to bear. However, since the LPS rationale was well researched and communicated, and with the help and partnership of the local BOH, data and knowledge-based answers were provided.

Comments and Analysis:

Over the past year, various members of LPS staff and educators have presented or interacted with the School Committee. These have included medical, finance, technology, instruction, SPED, METCO, ELL and other departments from all school levels. Despite the tough pandemic conditions LPS educators continue to inspire faith and trust. Where needed the work product may have been discussed, critiqued, or celebrated, but the overall commitment and good will of LPS staff was never in question.

LPS is currently working on integrating a DEI curriculum K-12. It is inviting feedback and community involvement most recently with the Lexington AAPI community. We are a very diverse community steadily becoming more so. LPS is working to make sure that there is a shared understanding of our country's and our community's global history. This is an ongoing process.

Due to the pandemic Dr. Hackett and team renegotiated MOAs, built close communication channels with BOH, answered many parent and staff emails, and wrote districtwide communications keeping parents informed about the pandemic and LPS efforts. The school committee meetings which in a normal year would consist of twenty people in the audience swelled to over a hundred routinely. The Community Speak section of the meeting often had parents freely sharing their opinions and thoughts about the school system. Effectively, repeatedly, indefatigably communicating was a key tool in managing the unimaginable Covid Crisis. Community members would disagree, however, they were always kept informed and channels for expressing opinions and disagreements were always open. This also was an effective conflict resolution tool, as there were higher levels of trust between school, staff and community as all views were heard.

Summative Comments:

2020-21, has not been an easy year as the pandemic crisis and national events continued to be challenging and divisive well into spring '21. The Lexington Public School system has had to figure out many services in addition to their core work of educating and caring for its 7000 or so students. These have included testing for asymptomatic but Covid positive staff and students, organizing vaccine clinics,

caring for students buffeted by hate rhetoric and crimes, insurrection, and ongoing medical crisis in extended families all the while trying to maintain normalcy and as close to the pre-pandemic level of a school experience as possible for students and staff.

It is a testament to Dr. Hackett's relationship building skills that families, staff and students have managed to survive, and somewhat thrive, through a most difficult year. The fallout of the year will be ongoing with learning gaps to be recouped, budget pressures, and much change. Crisis management is hard however, post crisis management will also not be easy. Lexington Public Schools will require the best efforts of all to bring true normalcy and routine back for the students.

LPS has a competent staff who are willing to innovate, take risks and continue to learn. There are many staff members who have gone over and beyond the call of duty such as showing up at students' doorsteps with home baked cookies, keeping after school clubs ongoing as a much-needed social gathering online for student mental health, and managing their own family needs while navigating the new means of providing education. Parents and families too have adapted and managed through many anxious moments and concerns about their children's academic and health futures. We have a community minded school and a school minded community. We have mitigated the negative impacts of the pandemic though the cooperation and teamwork of all (staff, unions, families, students). It is a credit to Dr Hackett that such a collaboration was possible and that the tenor of LPS functioning was attentive, empathetic and professional throughout.

4. End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report: Superintendent 2022

Superintendent:	Dr. Julie L. Hackett		
Evaluator:	Deepika Sawhney		June 5th, 2021,
	Name of Evaluator	**Signature**	**Date**

Covid Caveat:
The continuing pandemic has affected the functioning of LPS much like the rest of the world. In the 2021-22 academic year, Dr. Hackett, and LPS staff have had to manage community health and safety all the while executing on their day-to-day responsibilities, and trying not to come down with covid. This they have done ably and admirably. We are grateful for their empathy and efforts.

All educators have expended significant effort to prevent Covid infections and care for the students physical and mental health, while still teaching the content they are responsible for. As successive age groups of children became eligible for the vaccine LPS continued to host multiple clinics organized by LPS nursing staff. The easy access helped many to get their initial or booster vaccines.

However, the pandemic has given a rise to unpleasant interactions and shortage of patience and tolerance. This will take a concentrated effort of all, elected, community and staff to mitigate. I have confidence in Dr. Hackett creating the right conditions to help these efforts.

Address and Narrow Equity Gaps:
This will be a goal always in progress. LPS has made great strides under Dr. Hackett's leadership though. Our hiring of BIPOC staff at all levels is increasing with intentional practices by Human Resources, as well as the constant messaging that BIPOC staff are welcome and supported. Curriculum efforts to bring in marginalized groups experiences are being continued and enhanced from the 'Serious Talk' units at Bowman to the student informed new curriculum work ongoing at the district level. More importantly, we were able to observe, through these celebrations, class and staff dynamics, our values were being practiced in the small discretionary moments. It was very gratifying to see BIPOC students and staff taking on leadership roles, sharing their schools with the 'guests' with pride. The CIT groups have done a lot of work and some of it is nearing completion such as the CIT (Inclusion).

Redefine Success:

Public schools are increasingly the bulwark for providing much needed services to the most vulnerable: the children. Where earlier the schools' responsibilities may have only included academic content, increasingly they include character, health, and mental wellbeing. After almost a year and half of remote and hybrid instruction, all students were back for the 2021- 22 year. There were many challenges to restarting school in-person, including reacclimatizing students to school, managing caregiver expectations, staff concerns and supply chain issues.
It has taken a village to get LPS through this period which would not have been possible without senior leadership and primarily Dr. Hackett modeling the attitudes and behaviors needed. Also, the prior years' investment in relationship building, improving internal processes again to a large

part due to Dr. Hackett's leadership, were instrumental in a smoother full return to school. Children are watching what we do, therefore seeing the mix of sound management and empathy models the desired behavior.

Cultivate Student Agency.
Student agency has been strengthened and welcomed. For the various elementary 'Joy in Learning' celebrations the children became little ambassadors answering questions, keeping us on time and on track. In the higher grades our students have organized community wide events, brightened up our aging LHS facility with color and art, taken part in curriculum review teams as well as helped us hire more BIPOC educators. While the online PBL academy was not extended into this year, PBL is a pedagogy in use within our schools, through cross discipline projects observed during our visits (e.g.: science of water filtration and heat management linked to an African story about children refugees' trek across a desert, all as a part of a library period!).

Plan and Innovate For Sustainable Change.

MSBA invited LPS to enter the feasibility phase for the new/renovated LHS. The work has begun on ascertaining the use restrictions on the land adjoining the current buildings as the first step in the process. The Special Town meeting in March voted to fund the feasibility study for the amount of $1,825,000. LPS will be following the timelines and schedules set by MSBA for this process. Dr. Hackett has successfully achieved this goal and gone beyond during a very challenging period and aggressive timeline.

Comments and Analysis:

Given that we cannot always observe the magic that happens in classrooms, these categories are difficult to give feedback on. In addition, Covid continues to be a confounding factor this year, making management of a complex school system like LPS difficult. To the extent possible system level impact of Dr. Hackett's management of LPS will be evaluated here.

Curriculum:

Within the busy-unusual school year there has still been ongoing work on curriculum. In the previous year the curriculum had been extensively modified to reflect the directives from DESE to right size it for the pandemic. This year the educators have had to build on the concepts learned in a nonstandard school environment, account and support any unfinished learning as well as teach the content for the current year all within DESE, national and Lexington guidelines. These multiple challenges are added to by external global and national headlines which impact an educational system. Publicly available metrics on student academic performance for the past five years (MCAS, SAT from DESE) continue to show LPS students' strong performances with an understandable minor dip due to Covid. To some extent these can be tied to Dr. Hackett's annual performance as they are evidence of building a sound team, trust in the processes, and thoughtful execution of tasks.

Instruction:

Our professional development programs have continued through even during the worst of the pandemic through online and other means. The PD is focused on our DEI values, as well as sessions to help onboard educators new to the system. Our instruction practices are participatory. I saw much evidence of small group work and peer to peer learning in the middle school, whereas in the elementary depending on the grade there was more

reliance on sharing out as they worked to build the skills for teamwork. LPS continues to support our SPED learners with experienced personnel, materials and empathy. This was especially evident in our littlest learners at the LCP, who were encouraged to practice autonomy and fundamental relationship skills within their learning experiences. While challenges are continuing to be met for all our learners, I hope we will also improve our practices to improve the academic performance of some of our historically struggling populations.

Assessment:

This is a category that is hard to evaluate. In the previous year many assessment changes were introduced, to ease the instructional challenges of Covid. This year for the most part school has resumed its normal functioning, and normal assessment patterns. Educators continue to reflect best practices by designing various kinds of assignments and assessments for improving academic performance or just plain fun (0.1 point back on a math test if the child designs and makes a three dimensional parallelopiped). One may deduce from such assignments that educators are trusted by their department heads and building leaders to meet the assessment needs of their students.

Evaluation:

Educator evaluation may come up during contract negotiations or through direct complaints to us. As these have not been brought to us it would be safe to assume that evaluations are being carried out in a fair and timely manner in compliance with DESE guidance.

Data-Informed Decision Making:

DESE has publicly available data regarding many LPS facets which can be compared with like towns. Our district data department does share periodic updates on these. Key information is shared with the community through multiple LPS conduits such as School Committee or SHAC meetings. It would be desirable to have mini follow ups, which update us on how that data was acted upon to what effect, instead of annual presentations. Meanwhile an individual student has a number of LPS structured rubric-based assessments.

These help inform the educator on how best to nurture the child's academic growth further. Standards based grading is in its second year of implementation at the middle school and requires some adjustment much like any new initiative. Given that these forms of data are being collected internally it would be desirable to see aggregated internal metrics so that we are not dependent only on MCAS to understand LPS academic performance.

As we look to take on additional initiatives such as graduation requirements, I hope that we leverage DESE as well as internal data to ground our decisions and make our thinking transparent.

Comments and Analysis:

Some of the most challenging and daunting situations such as the security scare at our middle school was managed with care and competence. Dr. Hackett bolstered the confidence of the building administration and guided them to a successful resolution of the event. Parents and staff took their cues from her. We are very grateful to Dr. Hackett and the LPS staff for managing everything so efficiently and empathetically.

Environment:

Covid added additional complexities for managing our school physical facilities as well as classroom logistics to keep children and staff safe from an airborne virus. Through a strong partnership with the Lexington Board of Health, Facilities Department and janitorial staff, in classroom practices, the children were kept as safe as possible from in school transmission. Adding the vaccine clinics helped increase our overall vaccination rates which were a boon for the community.

Human Resources Management and Development:

LPS has a new HR head in Dr. Lyons who is combining both the HR and PD functions in one role. The largest LEA personnel contract is under negotiation. LPS has prioritized increasing diversity in educators. Our numbers are slowly increasing though thoughtful hiring. Increasing the number of BIPOC at administration or department level sends out helpful signals that LPS is serious about its DEI efforts. Decisions to review prospective candidates wholistically and not only based on licensure will help bring in the talent we need. These decisions are one more way Dr. Hackett is operationalizing our strategic plan. Managing employee numbers with falling enrollment is a challenge as we seek to diversify our educator population.

Scheduling and Management Information Systems:

The 2020-21 year was a banner year for the LPS IT dept as they helped an entire school system pivot towards distance learning. I assume this year has been more in keeping with pre covid where the IT department continues to execute in its quiet efficient way. Finding and retaining Mr. Martellone for this position has proved to be an astute move. He has managed equipment shortages, multiple device life spans, a successful Tech contract negotiation as well as additional responsibilities for Estabrooke very successfully. Good decision Dr. Hackett!

Law, Ethics, and Policies:

Given the challenging circumstances of providing public school education during Covid, there have been some employee and parent grievances, and ongoing contentious processes to disentangle regional legal relationships. Dr. Hackett has navigated these while keeping the School Committee fully informed and seeking guidance at appropriate junctures from school and town counsel. While unpleasant these issues are a part of managing a public school system and Dr. Hackett has shown herself to be a capable administrator in this respect.

Fiscal Systems:

LPS is fortunate in that it is a well-resourced system with robust town finances that allow for both current operations and construction projects. The budget process and LPS strategic goals and imperatives are now well understood and adhered to by the district administration. As such there are no funding/process challenges however certain fiscally prudent steps of Dr. Hackett are commendable (keeping new hiring within our natural employee attrition). As our enrollment continues to decline and interest rates and supply chain issues continue to make providing public school education more expensive, being conservative in personnel and material costs is much desired. And the budget for 2022-23 was passed! Some of the Covid relief funds have been used to pay for expenses such as purchase of PPE, and the community has been kept well informed through School Committee and finance summit meetings.

The funding and spending associated with LPS has much complexity. It is desirable that the budget presentation be further simplified to allow all members of our community a basic understanding.

Comments and Analysis:

This category is centered around community partnerships. A substantial portion of Dr. Hackett's efforts are to ensure that there is an LPS investment in this two-way relationship and an open invitation for engagement. This is commendable and necessary in our community and has yielded benefits to smoothen the management of LPS during challenging times.

Engagement:

Dr. Hackett makes it a point to come to as many community events as possible during the week and even on weekends though she has a long commute. These extra efforts help the diverse parts of our community feel acknowledged and creates relationships based on trust. During these past two years she has kept the community informed about Covid rates in our system and has had to write many challenging pieces of communication due to national events. These sometimes get pushback, however, Dr. Hackett handles these with grace and empathy.
There are some challenges ahead, wherein the complicated funding and tax implications as well as the changes to the High School curriculum have to be explained to a diverse community. It is important to leverage other channels for this purpose and to ensure that the message is accessible to all.

Sharing Responsibility:

Some community sections may not have felt that Dr. Hackett was being collaborative, especially during the worst peaks of the pandemic. However, Dr. Hackett with guidance from the Board of Health in Lexington worked tirelessly to communicate the reasoning behind the LPS mask and vaccine guidance. The 'student learning at home', portion of this category has not been as prominent this year after a year of hybrid education where much learning was 'at home'. LPS has concentrated on getting the children back in school and having the system function as close to normal as possible. However, 'student learning at home…and community' is very important for fundamental skills such as reading, writing, speaking and content literacy as well as wholistic development of the child, I hope we will create more opportunities and structure it within our pedagogy.

Communication:

Community Speak, annual newsletter, district wide emails, and Superintendent reports are some of the ways Dr. Hackett uses to communicate to the Lexington community. There are some ongoing challenges in being able to reach the non-English speaking population, but Dr. Hackett is aware of it and continues to work to reach all. Her rapport with students is also very helpful in making LPS a welcoming place for all.

Family Concerns:

LPS is a complex school system even though well resourced. Population demographics are changing significantly bringing new opportunities and challenges for community partnership. Dr. Hackett has the task of managing expectations and anxieties of parents who need help navigating the LPS system or are worried about the changing student population and how it may impact their own. These past few years has largely been a unifying

experience where we were all surviving Covid together. Dr. Hackett herself put in significant effort, and through her team, for keeping our students and community safe. Hopefully the community will continue to find that challenges are a unifying and not divisive force.

Quite often given the highly engaged parent community, communications can be less than polite. Dr. Hackett keeps an even temper and has either successfully heard the concerns and worked to mitigate them or when not possible has clearly explained the circumstances and disengaged. Covid and national rhetoric continue to exacerbate tempers. Dr. Hackett has managed to navigate these with very admirable grace.

Comments and Analysis:
N/A* Some categories are difficult to evaluate as we are not in the classrooms repeatedly so cannot judge 'Continuous Learning' for example. 'Shared Vision' is also a goal that will come more to the forefront as we begin to gather community members feedback around graduation requirements next year. If we can define metrics around responsible citizenship and being a global contributor it would help evaluate this category

Commitment to High Standards:

A full return to in person school after a year and a half of various modalities, was not going to be easy. The Staff, Administration, Dr. Hackett and parent community are to be commended on how well the year has gone. To put things in context, vaccines for the younger age group 5 to 11 years were authorized in the end of October and were not immediately readily available. Therefore, there was heightened anxiety around how efficacious universal masking could be to prevent infections. However, Lexington has a shared commitment to high standards in academic instruction, staff professionalism and parent engagement, and our children benefited. This year has gone a long way to smoothening out our children's school experiences from here on. Dr. Hackett continues to model a level of professionalism which sets the tone in the district.

Cultural Proficiency:

During our visits to the various schools for 'Joy in Learning' celebrations we saw many instances of diverse curriculum being taught as well as diversity of student viewpoints. Students are able to engage with material freely and opinions are heard and valued. It has been a difficult year for all, some personnel issues have come to the fore however, Dr. Hackett continues to work with building administration and union representatives to reach amicable solutions if possible. Fun events such as visits by ice-cream or food truck for staff help build stronger relationships through shared positive experiences.

Communication:

Dr. Hackett continues to be "a very hardworking and prolific communicator. She uses many media and makes herself available to all depending on need. She can connect with parents, unions, experts, and town officials as well as the littlest student within LPS. This is a skill that came in very useful this past year." (from my last year's evaluation and relevant this year too). Dr. Hackett writes detailed communications to keep the community informed. Her Superintendent Report and especially the Congratulations and Celebrations section highlights
the many happy events happening in our school system every week. Dr. Hackett continues to include stakeholders in the communications before dissemination such as asking School Committee feedback on district wide emails etc. This ensures collaboration and a unified message to be sent.

Continuous Learning:

*N/A**
Shared Vision:
*N/A**

Managing Conflict:

Many in the Lexington community disagreed with the measures LPS instituted in response to the pandemic. As these were primarily health related and necessary, Dr. Hackett and her team continued to keep the channels of communication open while messaging the reasoning behind the measures. Disentangling regional business relationships and changing vendors this past year also led to some conflicts. These have all been resolved by diligent persistence and communicating consistently.
Some personnel issues are being exacerbated by the general covid effect of negativity and actions taken in neighboring districts. These are being managed by Dr. Hackett and we are kept informed as needed. Therefore, Dr. Hackett is a competent administrator when it comes to managing conflict and building consensus.

Summative Comments:

Dr. Hackett works hard to keep LPS functioning smoothly. The community largely trusts Dr. Hackett to lead LPS ably and she is well liked. There have been high points of external recognition – our schools being awarded National Blue Ribbons, or our educators and their programs being recognized as exemplary (Mr. Cassidy). Our students continue to make us proud whether it is in their academic, athletic, artistic or altruistic pursuits. Some goals set in a pre-covid age cannot be evaluated for this year especially as Covid consumed so much of our resources. In some ways managing a large public school during a pandemic should have been the only goal for 2020-2022. Dr. Hackett deserves an ‘Exemplary’.