

## School Committee

2 for 3 years

Incumbent

**Eileen Jay**

Precinct: 4

e-mail address: eileen@jayforschoolcommittee.com

phone number: 617-901-8502

### Community Activities

- School Committee member 2016-19; School Committee Chair since 2018
- Co-chair, Superintendent Search Committee 2017-18
- Town Meeting Member, Precinct 4
- Chinese American Association of Lexington (CAAL) Executive Board
- Lexington Community Coalition Steering Committee

### League Question for School Committee candidates:

**How should the School system handle enrollment pressures in the next five (5) years at the high school?**

Growing enrollment over recent years has already led to severe overcrowding at Lexington High School. The current enrollment of 2263 students already exerts considerable stress on old buildings designed for a capacity of 1850. With the expected continued rate of growth, enrollment is projected to increase by another 350 students over the next six years.

We must have short-term solutions to handle these pressures, while simultaneously making long-term plans for a new or renovated high school. Work on both long and short-term solutions is already underway. The School Committee and Superintendent are about to submit a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) to initiate the process of planning for a new high school. This year, the School Committee formed the School Master Planning Advisory Committee that is working on developing a long-range capital plan and exploring short-term solutions for overcrowding at the high school.

Some of the short-term solutions involve maximizing existing space. For example, additional science lab classrooms will be gained through a cost-effective plan that reconfigures existing rooms. Further re-purposing of existing space and moving non-teaching operations to off-site locations will add more classroom space. If even more space becomes necessary, LPS could consider adding short-term modular units and exploring alternative spaces or other creative options. We will continue to explore all possibilities to address the space issues.

It is important to recognize that the impact of enrollment pressures goes beyond just space and building issues. The influx of additional students requires more resources in terms of teachers, staffing, programming and support services. LPS administration plans for and devotes resources in anticipation of more students. Most of the budget increase for FY2020 was allocated for additional teaching and support services staff needed due to enrollment increases at LHS. We will also continue to monitor the impact of enrollment increases on access to programming, course selection, athletics, arts programs, and extra-curricular activities.

Over the next five years, enrollment pressures will present some real challenges, but we will approach them realistically through careful planning, adaptation, and a commitment to maintaining the high quality of education at the high school.

New Candidate

### **Scott Bokun**

Precinct 9

e-mail address [scottabokun@gmail.com](mailto:scottabokun@gmail.com)

phone number 781-879-9361

### **Community Activities**

--Town Meeting Member, Precinct 9, from 2015 to present

--Preschool Teacher at Hancock Nursery School from 2001 - 2015

--LexFUN! President from 2000 - 2002

--Lexington Youth Summer Theatre Parent Coordinator from 2008 - 2011

--Copy Editor for the Lexington Annual Report from 2009 - 2011

--Lexington Delegate to 2018 Democratic State Convention

### **League Question for School Committee candidates:**

**How should the School system handle enrollment pressures in the next five (5) years at the high school?**

When I chat with people at my meet-and-greet events, there is one issue that always comes up: our overcrowded high school. It is projected that Lexington High School enrollment will increase by 273 students in the next five years, with the highest enrollment anticipated in the 2024 - 2025 school year. This year, there are already 2,263 students at LHS, which makes it one of the ten largest high schools in the state.

These enrollment numbers, combined with the fact that LHS was originally built in the 1950s (and has undergone numerous renovations), tell me that a dramatic transformation is needed.

The current plan is this: our Superintendent, Dr. Julie Hackett, will submit a Statement of Interest to the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) this April, with the hope of receiving funding approval in December 2019. Should that be approved, Lexington will be placed in the queue to begin the process of building a new – or possibly renovating – LHS. (It is important to note that MSBA state funding would likely only cover about one-third of the total project cost.) Even if we are fortunate enough to receive MSBA funding the first time we apply, this process will still take several years to complete. So what do we do in the meantime?

Since the financing for a new high school is not guaranteed, there is already a School Master Planning Committee working to explore other options that could be implemented in the interim. The committee has generated and initially vetted a wide variety of possible solutions. The ideas I find most intriguing are:

- Move the 9<sup>th</sup> graders off-site;
- Institute a four-day school week schedule, in which each grade gets one day off per week to relieve overcrowding;
- Create more opportunities for athletic activity and artistic performances, as existing teams and performing groups have practical size limits;
- Move specific departments or services out of LHS to the Central Office building;
- Build a second high school, similar to the Newton North and Newton South concept.

This process can seem daunting, but I don't look at it that way. This is a transitional time for our town. We are beginning a journey full of challenges, giving us the opportunity to come together and achieve something great. I want to find solutions that will help our students succeed, even if our educational space is limited. I want to be a part of the answer and work with our new superintendent to propel our children, our schools, and our community into a strong future. I look forward to finding the solutions with you.