



Lexington Public Schools

146 Maple Street ♦ Lexington, Massachusetts 02420

Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

(781) 861-2550
email: pash@sch.ci.lexington.ma.us
fax: (781) 863-5829

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Dear Members of the Lexington School Committee:

Recently, a Lexington resident asked whether there is a conflict of interest given that I have performed some work with Ribas Associates and Ribas Associates has provided some consulting services for the Lexington Public Schools. Although I am not aware of any actual conflict of interest, I respect that it is important to fully describe all relevant information.

In September 2001, the Lexington Public Schools hired Ribas Associates for the first time to provide training to administrators in supervision and evaluation. Ribas Associates was hired given its high level of expertise in this area. That first contract with Ribas Associates was signed a full four years before I was hired as Superintendent of Schools on July 1, 2005.

On April 10, 2004, while I was Superintendent in Westwood, Massachusetts, I was hired by Ribas Associates as a part-time consultant to provide training to supervisors for approximately ten days per year. As you can see by the timeline, my employment with Ribas Associates began well before I was offered a contract in Lexington.

During my negotiations with the Lexington School Committee in the spring of 2005, the parties agreed to include a clause in my contract that would allow me to "engage in consulting or other out-of-system engagements, provided that the extent of such activities is reasonable, and provided further that no such activity poses a conflict of interest with the Lexington Public Schools or is in derogation of the interests of the Lexington Public Schools." Pursuant to that section of my employment contract, I continued to provide up to ten days per year of consulting work for Ribas Associates after I began employment in Lexington. Some of the work was provided on weekends and consistent with my contract. The work never interfered with my duties as Superintendent.

In 2007, the administrators who work in Lexington's office of curriculum and instruction informed me that they wanted to hire Ribas Associates to train our new administrators in supervision and evaluation. At that time, I disclosed to them that I have a small consulting contract with Ribas Associates and that the decision to hire or not rehire Ribas Associates was theirs exclusively. The curriculum office made the decision with no input from me to hire Ribas Associates for four to six days for 2007. They made the same decision without any input from me in 2008 and 2009. At no time did I ever receive any financial benefit due to Lexington's contract with Ribas Associates. At no time did I perform any work for Ribas Associates that related to the Lexington school system.

Currently the Town has no contract with Ribas Associates. If, in the future, the Town should seek to enter into a contract with Ribas Associates, I will then make such disclosure as is required by the Conflict of Interest statute and either the town will not enter into a contract with Ribas Associates, or I will terminate my employment with Ribas Associates.

Sincerely,

Paul B. Ash, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools