



# LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## *REGULAR MEETING MINUTES*

---

**Date:** April 10, 2019  
**Time:** 6:30PM  
**Location:** City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01852

### **1. ROLL CALL**

On a roll call at 6:33 p.m., members present were, namely: Mr. Descoteaux, Ms. Doherty, Mr. Hoey, Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin and Mr. Nutter. Mayor Samaras was absent.

### **2. SALUTE TO FLAG**

### **3. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS**

#### **3.I. Spotlight On Excellence- Robinson School Stranger Sagas Young Writers' Competition**

The Spotlight on Excellence recognized Robinson Middle School students who had stories recently selected and published as part of the Young Writers Stranger Sagas writing competition. Several students read their stories that were published in the book called Stranger Sagas: Stories from Massachusetts to the Committee.

#### **3.II. Blue Ribbon Screening Committee Update**

Ms. Martin gave the Committee an update on the Blue Ribbon Screening Committee. Ms. Martin stated that the screening committee is a very engaged and committed group of people. They have looked at twenty-three (23) applicants and it is an impressive group of candidates. The screening committee broke into six (6) different teams that worked together to develop questions around finance, human resources, leadership and internal and external relationships and those questions will be used during the interviews. The interviews will be held from April 23<sup>rd</sup> through April 26<sup>th</sup>. Ms. Martin concluded informing the Committee that she feels confident that the screening committee will be able to bring forward some great candidates to the full Committee.

**Ms. Martin made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**



**3.III. Appointment of Jeannine M. Durkin as Superintendent of Schools**

**Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the appointment of Jeannine M. Durkin as Superintendent of Schools; seconded by Mr. Nutter. 5 yeas, 1 present, 1 absent. APPROVED**

**4. MINUTES**

**4.I. Minutes: Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Lowell School Committee of Wednesday, April 4, 2019.**

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes from the April 4, 2019, Lowell School Committee meeting; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

**5. PERMISSION TO ENTER**

**5.I. Permission to Enter: April 10, 2019**

**Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

**5.II. Approval of Contract for Jeannine M. Durkin as Superintendent**

**Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the contract for Jeannine M. Durkin as Superintendent of Schools; seconded by Mr. Nutter. 4 yeas, 2 nays, 1 absent. APPROVED**

**6. MEMORIALS**

**6.I. Memorial - Welcome**

Doris A. Welcome, mother of retired Bartlett and Stoklosa School Principal Jackie Travers.

**6.II. Memorial - Tep**

Darius Tep, Lowell Public School student.

**6.III. Memorial - Do Santos**

Jordan Do Santos, Lowell Public School student.



## 7. MOTIONS

**7.I. [By Gerard Nutter]:** Based on the City budget the last 2 years supplied by the City Manager in anticipating the City will provide at most approx. \$650,000 of their required \$2,000,000 increase in Net School Spending in the form of an additional cash contribution. School Committee direct Superintendent to provide report showing savings if we eliminate All Pre-School Programs, Adult Education , All Varsity/ JV / Intramural Athletics programs and rezoning School District for 2019/2020 School year.

Mr. Nutter stated that no report was needed.

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

**7.II. [By Gerard Nutter]:** School Committee vote to direct our Lawyer to draft a letter to the magistrate in the Huot v. City of Lowell case opposing any settlement involving changing the way School Committee is elected/appointed due to lack of School Committee being allowed representation in the case.

The Committee requested that the administration reach out to the Mayor for an update regarding a previously approved motion that addressed meeting in Executive Session to discuss the Huot vs. City of Lowell case.

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

**7.III. [By Gerard Nutter]:** School Committee vote to request DESE conduct a fiscal compliance Audit regarding the City's Net School Spending charges.

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

**7.IV. [By Gerard Nutter]:** School Committee vote per 603 CMR 10.00: School Finance Education Laws and Regulations Request Commissioner of Education appoint a designee to conduct an informal hearing to encourage the parties to reach an agreement and make a final determination on the issues in dispute to establish to a new maintenance of effort agreement that takes effect for the 2019/2020 School Year.

This motion was withdrawn.

**7.V. [By Dominik Hok Lay]:** Ask that the Superintendent to create a line item for translations in the FY20 Budget for the amount of \$30,000.

The maker of the motion amended the motion to read as follows:

**"Ask that the Superintendent create a line item for translations in the FY20 Budget for an amount to be determined."**

**Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**



**7.VI. [By Dominik Hok Lay]:** Ask that the Superintendent to explore the feasibility of reinstating full time Parent Liaisons.

Mr. Lay requested that the feasibility of reinstating full time Parent Liaisons be added to the priority list that was created during last year's budget proceedings.

**Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

## **8. SUBCOMMITTEES**

**8.I. Policy Subcommittee:** Report and Approval of the Meeting of Wednesday, April 3, 2019 [Gerard Nutter, Chairperson]

Mr. Nutter, Chairperson of the Policy Subcommittee spoke to the Committee about the proposed policy that was brought forward to allow service animals in the Lowell Public Schools. The policy states that the use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety is not jeopardized. The individual requesting that the animal be brought to schools is responsible for adhering to "Animals in the Classroom: Recommendations for Schools" and other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of all students.

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to recommend that the policy regarding Service Animals be approved; seconded by Mr. Hoey. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

Mr. Nutter then spoke about allowing speakers under the public participation portion of the agenda be allowed to address the School Committee for five (5) minutes as opposed to the three (3) minutes that is currently allowed.

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to extend the public participation time allotment from three (3) minutes to five (5) minutes; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 nay APPROVED**

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

## **9. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

### **9.I. Communications and Literacy MTEL Workshop**

Pina Maggio, LTA Facilitator informed the Committee that the Lowell Public Schools is looking to support Lowell residents interested in becoming a teacher and joining the Lowell school district community. The Lowell Public Schools will be holding informational sessions as follows:



- Thursday, April 25, 2019 at the Stoklosa Middle School from 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.
- Thursday, May 2, 2019 at Lowell High School from 3:00 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

#### **9.II. Response to Connie Martin's Motion of March 6, 2019 regarding Pre-School and Kindergarten Admission Policies.**

Lisa Van Thiel, Early Childhood Coordinator provided a report to the Committee that informed them that the cut-off age for preschool and kindergarten is consistent with the majority of school districts across the state. The report included information from several surrounding school districts and their cut-off age.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

#### **9.III. Business Office Update**

Assistant Superintendent Turner provided an update to the Committee that addressed the following areas:

- Her meeting with the City Auditor to discuss unified efforts to ensure that concerns highlighted over the last few months can be avoided.
- Embezzlement and Insurance Payment
- Playground Update
- Aramark Update
- Funding Formula Forum being held on April 22, 2019

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to request that the Mayor request the \$25,000 Insurance Payment be deposited into the Student Activity account; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

#### **9.IV. Behavioral and Mental Health Services Grant Update**

Superintendent Durkin provided a report that informed the Committee that the Lowell Public Schools has been awarded a Fiscal Year 2019 and Fiscal Year 2020 (pending continued appropriation) Fund Code 366 Improving Student Access to Behavioral and Mental Health Services grant, in the amount of \$110,000. The purpose of the grant is to create a Mental Health Intervention Model (MHIM) that will provide meetings with parents, school staff, and community agencies already or potentially involved with an identified student in crisis.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**



**9.V. Response to Gerard Nutter's Motions of February 14, 2018 and February 19, 2018 regarding the new Maintenance of Effort Agreement.**

Assistant Superintendent Turner provided a report to the Committee that addressed the Maintenance of Effort Agreement. The City funds its required minimum contribution with both a contribution towards our education budget and City charge offs that are reflected in the Maintenance Effort of Agreement. Of the \$44.6 million of required minimum contribution, the City gave us approximately \$15.7 million towards the Lowell Public Schools budget. The remaining \$29 million will be in charge offs listed in the Maintenance of Effort Agreement.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

**9.VI. Response to Jacqueline Doherty's Motion of March 20, 2019 regarding Salary Trends**

Assistant Superintendent Turner provided a report to the Committee that addressed salary trends. Assistant Superintendent Turner stated that seeing increases to our total teaching salaries can be misleading if not studied or presented clearly. A large increase doesn't necessarily mean reckless generosity. Rather, large jumps could include column increases as teachers obtain degree advancement as required by this profession or step increases as teacher progress with levels of experience. Since teacher retention is very important to a school district, such incentives are necessary to attract and maintain a seasoned teaching staff. Other misleading factors could include timing issues with negotiations. Per the data collected by Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Lowell Public Schools teacher salaries mirrored the state average and growth.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

**9.VII. Response to Robert Hoey's Motion of January 16, 2019 regarding Pay to All Unaffiliated Staff**

Assistant Superintendent Turner provided a report to the Committee that informed them that raises for fifty (50) unaffiliated staff have been processed per the February 14, 2019 School Committee vote. This raise will be included in the April 11, 2019 pay checks. The total cost of these raises is \$53,605.34. Retro payments were included to ensure that the raise was effective on January 1, 2019.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

**9.VIII. Response to Connie Martin's Motion of July 25, 2018 regarding Existing Law Suit**

Assistant Superintendent Turner provided a report to the Committee that informed them that after studying the foundation budget for the Lowell Public Schools and comparing it to the actual spending reported to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) through the end of the year



financial report, the Lowell Public Schools is not funded sufficiently to comply with their mandates and educate the 16,025 students in our public and charter schools. Insufficient charter reimbursements, special education funding, transportation allowance and inadequate consideration for poverty related factors all drastically impact our ability to function as a district.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

#### **9.IX. Pledge of Allegiance**

Superintendent Durkin provided a report to the Committee that informed them that on Friday, April 5, 2019, all staff were reminded that Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 71, Section 69 requires that “each teacher at the commencement of the first class each day in all grades in all public schools shall lead the class in a group recitation of “Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag”.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

#### **9.X. Report on Motions**

Superintendent Durkin provided the monthly report on the status of outstanding motions and asked the Committee if they had any concerns or questions.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

#### **9.XI. Enrollment Figures**

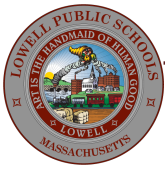
The district enrollment report provided to the Committee showed the breakdown by school and grade through April 4, 2019.

**Mr. Hoey made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.I through 9.XI as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent APPROVED**

### **10. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **10.I. Election of Jeannine M. Durkin as Secretary to the Lowell School Committee**

**Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the election of Jeannine M. Durkin as Secretary to the Lowell School Committee; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 years, 1 absent. APPROVED**



**10.II. Budget Transfer**

Department:		SCHOOLS				
<b>TRANSFER TO:</b>						
Account #				Description	Amount	
Org.	Object	Project	DESE Function			
99310301	512907		5100	Sick Leave Buy Back	\$ 150,000.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>					\$ 150,000.00	
<b>TRANSFER FROM:</b>						
Account #				Description	Amount	
Org.	Object	Project	DESE Function			
99310004	544400		2300	Supplies & Textbooks	\$ 150,000.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>					\$ 150,000.00	

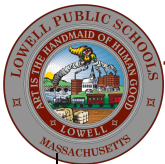
Reason for the transfer: Corrective Action

Mr. Nutter made a motion to approve the budget transfer of \$150,000.00; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6  
 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED

**10.III. M&L Expenditure Transfer**

Department:		SCHOOLS				
<b>TRANSFER TO:</b>						
Account #				Description	Amount	
Org.	Object	Project	DESE Function			
12010025	511000			M & L Revolving	\$ 567,881.00	
<b>TOTAL</b>					\$ 567,881.00	
<b>TRANSFER FROM:</b>						
Account #				Description	Amount	
Org.	Object	Project	DESE Function			
99047103	512960			LHS Custodian	\$ 474,241.00	
99347103	512960			Admin Bldg Custodian	\$ 3,640.00	
98347103	512960			Bartlett Custodian	\$ 5,264.00	





90247103	512960			Bailey Custodian	\$ 5,758.00
91247103	512960			McAvinue Custodian	\$ 6,192.00
91847103	512960			Pyne Arts Custodian	\$ 8,316.00
92047103	512960			Lincoln Custodian	\$ 5,666.00
92547103	512960			Molloy Custodian	\$ 11,143.00
93047103	512960			Morey Custodian	\$ 6,550.00
93547103	512960			LeBlanc Custodian	\$ 1,271.00
93647103	512960			Pawtucket Custodian	\$ 4,463.00
94047103	512960			Reilly Custodian	\$ 7,691.00
95047103	512960			Shaughnessy Custodian	\$ 7,296.00
95547103	512960			Washington Custodian	\$ 2,844.00
96047103	512960			Stoklosa Custodian	\$ 6,449.00
98047103	512960			Murkland Custodian	\$ 4,442.00
98447103	512960			Butler Custodian	\$ 6,484.00
98547103	512960			Daley Custodian	\$ 171.00
				<b>TOTAL</b>	\$ 567,881.00

Reason for the transfer: Shifting a portion of custodial staff salaries to the Milk and Lunch Revolving fund per the approved budget offset - keeping with in the DESE approved indirect cost rate of 11.23%.

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to approve the M&L Expenditure transfer of \$567,881.00; seconded by Mr. Hoey 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**

**10.IV. Health Care General Staffing Agreement**

**Mr. Nutter made a motion to approve Health Care General Staffing Agreement; seconded by Ms. Martin 6 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED**



## 11. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 8:23 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 6 yeas, 1 absent  
**APPROVED**

Respectfully submitted,

Jeannine M. Durkin, Superintendent and  
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee

JMD/mes