

Lowell Public Schools

Strategic Planning Update

February 19, 2020

Building a Five-Year Plan



LOWELL

PUBLIC SCHOOLS



Accomplishments to date for School Year 2019-20

A Series of FIRSTS:

- Establishment of a coordinated process for school-based instructional plans
- Reorganized central office structure to provide more effective support and school oversight with more diverse personnel in leadership roles than ever before
- Restructured support system designed to target support for underperforming schools through Renaissance network





Accomplishments to date for School Year 19-20 (cont.)

- Renewed commitment to functioning school site councils with all schools on pace for conclusion of SY 19-20
- Developing recruitment partnership with higher ed institution to strengthen teachers of color pipeline
- On track to restore all revolving accounts to appropriate levels of funding





Accomplishments to date for School Year 19-20 (cont.)

- Completion of fall pilot program preceding full migration of budget processes from a centrally based system to a school-based system in order to achieve fair student funding that is tied directly to student and school community needs
- Establishment of first formal employee commendation and recognition program resulting in numerous LPS employees being recognized for their hard work and dedication



Continuing to *Listen* while also *Planning*

Individualized and Small Group Listening and Learning	Public Interviews, Presentations and Forums	Local Board/Committee Participation
54 listening and learning sessions with individual employees and local bargaining unit representatives	16 formal speaking engagements and public presentations	Collaborative for Regional Educational Services and Training (CREST)
41 listening and learning sessions with community-based and non-profit leaders	31 interviews with local media outlets	Project LEARN (Lowell Education Alliance Resource Network)
100+ visits to schools, including visits to more than 100 classrooms	16 school-based morning meetings held or scheduled with local parent groups “Breakfast with Boyd”	Lowell Plan, Inc.
	5 evening community forums scheduled in different neighborhoods across the city	Lowell High School Building Committee
		Community Health Alliance



Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for the Lowell Public Schools

Why: In order for LPS to maximize its potential as a mission-driven, well-functioning, student-focused organization, there must be a coordinated and agreed upon set of priorities and a sequence by which these priorities are pursued.





Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for the Lowell Public Schools

Components of the Strategic Plan:

1. Core Beliefs
2. Fundamental Commitments
3. Strategy
4. Theory of Action/Strategic Priorities

Key Concepts:

- Inclusivity
- Agreed upon definitions
- Capitalizing on strengths
- Identifying critical needs

Core Beliefs:

High quality education = fundamental civil right.

Teaching and Learning = core of work.
Parents are our partners. They are our students' first teachers in the home.

Families = partners.

No silver bullet = hard and steady work.

Students' success = responsibility of entire community.

Strategy:

Differentiated autonomy = Empowerment professionals closest to students.

Systemic alignment = Use strength of full organization lift all school communities through coordinated approach to challenges

Empower families = Prioritize and cultivate choice and flexibility.

Reciprocal accountability = Complement high standards with clear expectations, optimal support and meaningful feedback.

Fundamental Commitments:

Eliminate the racial, ethnic and linguistic achievement and opportunity gaps among all students.

Provide equitable funding and resources among the district's diverse schools.

Engage all families with courtesy, dignity, respect and cultural understanding.

Strategic Priorities:

Expand **access** to early learning opportunities for children ages 0-5.

Expand **access** to high-performing seats for all grade levels.

Align secondary programming and curriculum so that students can better **access** post-secondary opportunities.

Leverage Lowell's rich diversity to **access** all the benefits of a truly global school system.



Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for The Lowell Public Schools

A number of key concepts have emerged from the 10+ staff forums convened over the last month that will be important to incorporate into the developing strategic plan.





Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for The Lowell Public Schools

Key Concept: Inclusivity

Convening of the first Superintendent's Steering Committee.

- Comprised of 25 internal and external stakeholders
- Sounding board and advisory council to district administration
- Will continue to convene throughout the life of the strategic plan
- First take will be helping to vet the strategic plan prior to presentation to the Lowell School Committee





Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for The Lowell Public Schools

Key Concept: Agreed upon definitions

Year 1 goal: Establishing LPS definition of “quality.”

- Expanding high-performing seats requires consensus-based definition of “quality” that both encompasses rigor and contemplates students’ hierarchy of needs
- Portrait of a Graduate – community-based process of defining what is a successful LPS graduate, i.e. adaptive and technical skills





Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for The Lowell Public Schools

Key Concept: Capitalizing on strengths

Building on the momentum of LPS's strengths and ongoing progress

- Identifying elements that have led to constructive cultures within high-performing schools and strategies to push the cultivation of those strengths district-wide
- Tapping into internal talent and expertise to instill greater systemic alignment
- Utilizing the broad range of support for LPS throughout the Lowell community





Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for The Lowell Public Schools

Key Concept: Identifying critical needs

Address challenges consistently recognized as areas in which progress is necessary

- Developing comprehensive strategies to support high-need learners, particularly English Learners and students with disabilities
- Targeted and focused professional development tied to district and school goals
- Understanding full implications of how students' hierarchy of needs affect learning strategies





Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for the Lowell Public Schools

Examples of Year 1 Measurable Objectives:

Measurable Objective 1:
Defining LPS “high-quality” by
December 2020

Potential concepts:

- Global skills for global citizenry
- Foundational social and emotional well-being to build academic
- Civic responsibility awareness
- Adaptable communication and critical thinking capacity

Measurable Objective 3:
Present plan for revamped diversity
hiring initiative by September 2020

Potential concepts:

- New hiring procedures central office and building-based positions to connect with new talent pools
- Explore new pipeline strategies with higher ed partners

Measurable Objective 2:
Coordinate w/ providers on
standards-based approach to 0-5
learning by June 2021

Potential concepts:

- Early childhood coalition
- Infrastructure plan for site-based pre-Ks in each ES
- Community-wide metrics for excellence for early learners, including first 1000 days

Measurable Objective 4:
Develop arts/athletic plans for all
K-8 schools by January 2021

Potential concepts:

- Partnership-driven extracurricular programming
- School themes for SY 20-21 tied to arts and athletic expansions at each site



Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for The Lowell Public Schools

Opportunities within the Strategic Plan

- Emphasize Lowell's global identity by developing global approach to high-quality learning. **Global city must produce global citizens.**
- Complementing differentiated autonomy and school empowerment with systemic and curricular alignment to **maximize each LPS school community's full potential.**
- Common thread through all facets of LPS strategic plan:

ACCESS





Strategic Planning Initiative: Developing the Five-Year Plan for The Lowell Public Schools

ACCESS

- Success cannot be defined solely by how those already empowered to capitalize on opportunities are accessing LPS.
- Effective strategies must be deployed and replicated to ensure all Lowell community members are accessing high-quality opportunities.
- Where there are inherent strengths, like Lowell's position as a global community, LPS must capitalize in order to ensure LPS students access the benefits that stem from growing up in a community reflective of the world they will inherit.
- Where impediments to learning are present – particularly those through social and emotional challenges – they must be confronted so students are empowered to access the programming equitably.



Strategic Planning Initiative & The Student Opportunity Act

The Student Opportunity Act obligates LPS (and all other districts in MA) to four basic commitments:

Commitment 1:

Intentionally focus on student subgroups who are not achieving at the same high levels as their peers

Commitment 2:

Adopt, deepen or continue specific evidence-based programs to close opportunity and achievement gaps for student subgroups and allocate resources to support these programs

Commitment 3:

Monitor success in reducing disparities in achievement among student subgroups over three years with a small number of metrics and targets

Commitment 4:

Engage families, particularly those families representing student subgroups most in need of support, about how best to meet their students' needs.

Connecting strategy to the SOA
Obligations:

Instructional alignment

Differentiated autonomy

Reciprocal accountability

Empowerment through
CHOICE

The Student Opportunity Act Next Steps

By April 1, 2020:

Submission of a DESE plan attesting to the district's utilization of any increased revenue, and specifically, how the district will use those funds to fulfill the commitments to which LPS is obligated under the SOA.

In mid to late March, the Lowell School Committee will have the opportunity to review a draft of this document, which will be consistent with the overall direction being developed under the strategic planning process.