



## Response to Motion: Makerspaces in Lowell Public Schools

TO: Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools  
FROM: Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer *Robin Desmond*  
DATE: April 7, 2020  
RE: *Makerspaces in Lowell Public Schools*

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The following report is in response to the motion by Hilary Clark:

*Request the Superintendent provide a status update on the use of the Makerspace's at Lowell High School and the Bartlett Community Partnership School.*

The Bartlett Community Partnership School: The District STEM Resources Teacher position was eliminated from the FY20 budget. This position helped the Bartlett School staff get the Makerspace up and running over the past three years. The Bartlett School was unable to manage the Makerspace without the District STEM Resource position this school year. Materials and equipment are remaining housed in the space, but the space itself is not being utilized by the Bartlett staff currently. The principal, Peter Holtz, states that the Makerspace will play more of a role for next year, as enrichment will be more of a focus in the Bartlett School's Improvement Plan. Utilizing the site based budgeting process, Principal Holtz will develop a way to utilize the Makerspace for the next school year, by staffing it with either a teacher or a tutor.

Lowell High School (LHS): The Makerspace at the LHS Freshman Academy opened five years ago. From the start, there were many challenges that limited student access, and ultimately resulted in the space being phased out. In the first year, eight science teachers (each with four classes) were expected to use the Makerspace. Scheduling 32 classes was extremely problematic for the Freshman Academy administration. The Makerspace is physically located in a small space in the basement which makes student (700+) access a challenge. The Makerspace was not originally staffed by an additional teacher, so individual students could not use it as a drop in space. Now, in the fifth year, the downward decline has continued, because the equipment is outdated and there is still no staffing. The Makerspace is slated to be used to house other programs during the new LHS construction. The LHS Science Department Head, Stephanie Selvaggio, plans to reallocate the Makerspace equipment to two engineering teachers. Future LHS plans include, creating a more functional Makerspace in the new LHS building. Ms. Selvaggio will collect data on what should be in a new Makerspace, based on market trends and student interests, before starting the initiative again.

I would like to thank Elaine Santelmann, Coordinator of Science and Social Studies, for the information contained within this report.