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Equity & Access Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, April 20, 2022
City Hall – Council Chambers
6:00 p.m.

Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Thompson, Ms. Doherty and Mr. Lay
School Department Personnel Present:	Dr. Boyd, Superintendent of Schools Ms. Phillips, Chief Engagement & Equity Officer

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Chairperson Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. and all Subcommittee members were present. The following agenda item was discussed:

1. **Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices Update**

Superintendent Boyd stated that culturally & linguistically sustaining practices fits into the Lowell Public Schools framework. He stated that there are a lot of assumptions about the Equity Office, but strategic planning is part of this office. He stated that this office provides equity and fairness for our students. He gave an overview of the district's core beliefs which are as follows:

- A high quality education is a fundamental civil right of every child we serve.
- Teaching and Learning are at the core of our work. Everything we do must support what happens in the classroom.
- Parents are our partners. They are our students' first teachers in the home.
- There is no silver bullet to improving our schools. Sustainable school improvement requires hard and steady work over time.
- Every adult in the system is accountable for the success of our students. Putting every child on a path to college and career success is the responsibility of the entire community.

Dr. Boyd stated that the district's fundamental commitment is to equity and to eliminate the racial, ethnic and linguistic achievement and opportunity gaps among all students. He stated that the districts goal is to provide equitable funding and resources among the district's diverse schools and engage all families with courtesy, dignity, respect and cultural understanding. He spoke about opportunity gaps, language access, diversity hiring and culturally and linguistically sustaining practices and stated that these are independent, but also interrelated. He stated the following next steps:

- Continue collaboration with internal and external stakeholders to refine and finalize the LPS DEI Model School Dashboard ahead of district-wide rollout in summer/fall 2022.
- Update school-by-school staffing opportunity analyses and continue collaboration with labor unions to further refine recruitment and retention incentives ahead of SY22/23 hiring.
- Continue collaboration with school leaders and school-site councils on QIP development and CLSP goal setting.
- Align all performance management tools, protocols and processes with the district's overarching strategic plan for improvement through continued collaboration with UMASS Lowell.
- Implement phase 2 of the LPS multi-year, cross-disciplinary CLSP plan.

Ms. Phillips addressed the subcommittee and stated equity needs to be at the top level throughout the organization and it was good to hear the Superintendent address these issues. She stated that sustaining practices means sustaining all practices as well as maintaining languages and maintaining an individual's language is equally important. She stated that it's not easy to do this work and that everyone is on a different level on the continuum. She stated that the most successful training is onsite and embedded in the practice. She stated that we need to identify bias and every teacher should be doing self-reflection and that a lot of times bias isn't intentional. She stated that adding the Coordinator of Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices is an important role and will provide more support to schools and can bring the adaptive piece as well as the technical piece. She stated that she would ask the position be taken out of the Suspense Account.

Mr. Lay asked Ms. Phillips if this person would be working with teachers and if this job is a permanent position.

Ms. Phillips stated that we won't to be able to reach every teacher, but the Coordinator can meet with school teams to help and support the facilitation. She stated that some schools may need more extensive training than others. She stated that one (1) position isn't really enough, but it's a start. The funding for this position is available and there is a need for it. She stated that training can be done to see if teachers understand bias.

Superintendent Boyd stated that he will be recommending that the salary come out of the general fund and stated that there is an increased need for this position and for sustainability reasons will not be using the ESSER funds.

Ms. Doherty stated that she is very much in favor of this work and from what she's seen, and it's very impressive to hear what our teachers have learned. She stated that we need professional trainers with the expertise to lead those meetings. She stated that she has questions about the dashboard and that it needs to be hard data. She stated that the data needs to include

attendance and who's moving on to college. She stated that under qualifications preferred she would like to see two (2) of the bullets be moved to qualifications. The two (2) bullets are:

- Experience and demonstrated expertise as a classroom teacher of relevant content and/or subjects.
- Experience developing curriculum and working in or with Lowell Public Schools.

Ms. Thompson stated that she agrees with Ms. Doherty on moving the two bullets to qualifications and not have them listed under preferred qualifications and that she is encouraged by the work. She stated that it's tough with all the work that needs to be done, but we have to start chipping away at it. She stated that she's proud to be on a School Committee that voted that racism is a public crisis.

Ms. Doherty asked when the Committee will receive more information about the data dashboard.

Superintendent Boyd stated that he's hoping the Committee approves the UMASS partnership and that Ms. Phillips will continue to work on this.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to recommend the Coordinator of Culturally and Linguistically Sustaining Practices job positon be brought forward to the Committee of the Whole for approval, to remove the monies in the Suspense Account for said position and to remove the following qualifications from Preferred Qualifications (Experience and demonstrated expertise as a classroom teacher of relevant content and/or subjects. Experience developing curriculum and working in or with Lowell Public Schools.) to Qualifications; seconded by Mr. Lay. 3 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty made a motion to adjourn at 6:54 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Lay. 3 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer for Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent and Secretary, Lowell School Committee

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