



# LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

## REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

<b>Date:</b>	September 6, 2023
<b>Time:</b>	6:30PM
<b>Location:</b>	City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01852

Members of the public may view the meeting via LTC and those wishing to speak regarding a specific agenda item shall register to speak in advance of the meeting by sending an email to the Superintendent indicating the agenda item, a phone number and email address so we can provide a zoom link to access the meeting. Email address is [lbedoya@lowell.k12.ma.us](mailto:lbedoya@lowell.k12.ma.us). If no access to email you may contact us at 978-674-4324. All requests must be submitted before 2:00 p.m. on the day of the meeting.

### 1. SALUTE TO FLAG

### 2. ROLL CALL

On a roll call at 6:40 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun, Ms. Delrossi and Ms. Doherty. Ms. Martin was absent. Mr. Lay arrived at 6:44 p.m.

### 3. MINUTES

3.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled Lowell School Committee Meeting of August 16, 2023

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special and Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday, August 16, 2023; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED

3.2. Approval of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee of August 16, 2023

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special and Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday, August 16, 2023; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED

### 4. PERMISSION TO ENTER

4.1. Permission to Enter: September 6, 2023

Ms. Thompson made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter: seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED



**Mayor Chau made a motion to suspend the rules to discuss the schools closing due to the heat; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

Mayor Chau asked Interim Superintendent Skinner to provide an update regarding the closing of schools for the next two (2) days due to the extreme heat. Interim Superintendent Skinner stated that he was aware that there was a heat advisory and that the temperature is predicted to increase. He stated that the building has been absorbing heat and that classrooms are over 90 degrees. He also stated that the tunnel at Lowell High School was 101 degrees. He stated that considering all these facts the decision was made to close the schools for the next two (2) days.

Ms. Chhoun asked if these days will be included in the allotted number of snow days.

Interim Superintendent Skinner responded that they will be added to the allotted number of snow days.

Committee members asked Interim Superintendent Skinner to continue to work with the city around these issues.

## **5. MOTIONS**

**5.1. [By Dominik Lay]:** Request the Superintendent to work with the City Manager on an assessment of mold issues at the Pawtucketville Memorial School and report back to the school committee with findings and recommendations.

Mr. Underwood, Facilities Director gave the Committee an overview of the work that was done at the Pawtucket Memorial. He stated that they cleaned the rugs, air conditioned the space and brought ServPro in. He stated that after speaking with the Director of DPW, he contacted and worked with EFI Global. He stated that to be extra cautious they then brought ServPro back. He then introduced Mr. Vaugh from EFI Global to answer any questions that the Committee may have.

Mr. Vaugh stated that the weather is the driving force behind the mold issue at the Pawtucket Memorial.

Ms. Doherty asked what can be done to possibly avoid this happening again.

Ms. Thompson asked for the following to be included in the report: acceptable margins or nothing detectable, mold mitigation or remediation. She stated that she is concerned that we will be dealing with this again this winter (due to snow) and how this could potentially cause the mold to return.

**Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

**5.2. [By Eileen DelRossi]:** Request timeline to create a blue ribbon committee as well as identify timeline, and resources needed to find a permanent superintendent.

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Mr. Lay.**

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to refer this to the Human Resources & Labor Relations Subcommittee for further discussion; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**



**5.3. [By Eileen DelRossi]:** Request the interim superintendent to draft a plan to address concerns in regards to how Lowell Public Schools will respond to the incoming immigrants that will be staying at the Lowell Inn and Conference Center and attending Lowell Public Schools. (In terms of school registration, and vaccinations).

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 years, 1 absent (Ms. Martin)**  
**APPROVED**

**5.4. [By Eileen DelRossi]:** Request interim superintendent to report on all school building facilities work that has been completed for each school in the district from fiscal year 2022 and 2023 to date.

A friendly amendment was made with no objection from the maker of the motion to include the equipment that will be needed as well as the funding.

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 years, 1 absent (Ms. Martin)**  
**APPROVED**

**5.5. [By Jackie Doherty]:** Beginning with this fiscal year (July 1, 2023), request the Superintendent provide the committee with ongoing updates with explanations re positions being filled with people who have emergency or temporary licenses rather than the full license required in the job description.

Ms. Doherty stated that a line item could be added to the report that the Committee receives that states if the new hire is on a temporary license and reason for hire.

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 years, 1 absent (Ms. Martin)**  
**APPROVED**

**5.6. [By Jackie Doherty]:** Request an update on tv studio programming at LHS that explores connecting with MCC as part of the early college/dual enrollment program.

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 6 years, 1 absent (Ms. Martin)**  
**APPROVED**

**5.7. [By Stacey Thompson]:** Request to have ongoing, monthly air quality tests at the Pawtucketville Memorial, with immediate public release of information to ensure the safety and respect of all staff, students, parents and stakeholders.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 years, 1 absent (Ms. Martin)**  
**APPROVED**

**5.8. [By Stacey Thompson]:** Request to have a comprehensive report from facilities regarding the current status of all roofs in the district, and what work is already planned, and the dates that work plans to be executed ahead of the winter season.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 6 years, 1 absent (Ms. Martin)**  
**APPROVED**



**5.9. [By Dominik Lay]:** Request the Superintendent ensures that all elementary schools have proper equipment for recreational use during recess.

**Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

## **6. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

### **6.1. 2023 Summer School Programming**

Ms. Rocheleau, Special Programs Coordinator, provided a report to the Committee that informed that the Lowell Public Schools provided summer school programming to more than 4,000 students in the summer of 2023, offering forty (40) distinct opportunities for students to attend. The programs ran from June 22<sup>nd</sup> through August 18<sup>th</sup>.

Ms. Doherty asked if attendance could be included in the report moving forward.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

### **6.2. School Assignment Update – School Opening**

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that as of August 31<sup>st</sup>, there are 14,520 students enrolled in the Lowell Public Schools. The report included a district enrollment spreadsheet that reflected the 14,520 students in addition to students in other categories such as students awaiting Special Education evaluations, students awaiting medical clearance in order to be pulled onto a school roster, and students on the PreK waitlist. The report stated that since July 1, 2023, the Family Resource Center had 938 registrations submitted using the online registration portal (OLR). The report also included a chart of the grade distribution of the registrants.

Ms. Doherty asked if we have a plan for the 300 students who are currently not attending.

Ms. Phillips stated that the nurses and the schools are currently working on this.

Ms. Thompson asked about the 2000 calls that were made.

Ms. Phillips stated that they were made through our call center.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**



### 6.3. Response to Motion 2. CSO of 08/16/23 By Eileen DelRossi Regarding Increase in SROs

Ms. Crocker-Roberge, Chief School Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that currently there are School Resource Officers (SROs) assigned to either Lowell High School or to a coverage cluster of the elementary and middle schools, with a home base at the larger middle schools. The report stated that Officer teams work flexibly in response to the needs of a particular school at any given time and SRO's are also supported by patrol officers on shift duty when immediate responses to schools are necessary. The report stated that based on the limited available data to support the efficacy of expanding School Resource Officer programming and the staffing challenges that police department currently face, the feasibility of adding a School Resource Officer to every middle school is questionable at this time.

Ms. Delrossi asked if we can afford more SROs and if Interim Superintendent Skinner has had a conversation with the Superintendent of Police.

Interim Superintendent Skinner stated that the district didn't pursue more funding for SROs, because as the report indicated it is not recommended and can be seen as a detriment to schools. He stated he has not spoken to him around this.

Ms. Doherty asked if the school department pays for the SROs.

Interim Superintendent Skinner stated that he didn't know and would have to let the Committee know.

Ms. Crocker-Roberge stated that there is conflicting data about the effectiveness of SROs in schools as well as there being a nationwide shortage of Police Officers.

Ms. Thompson stated that she understands the validity of why people want SROs in schools and is specifically concerned around the numbers going up in our middle schools and believes that a deeper conversation needs to take place and a plan brought forward.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

### 6.4. Response to Motion 3. CSO of 08/16/23 By Eileen DelRossi Regarding Protocol on Bullying

Ms. Crocker-Roberge, Chief School Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that as part of the Mandatory Annual Training, all leaders receive training in the procedures and protocols for investigations, including those that occur as a result of a filing or reporting of bullying to school personnel. The report stated that it is the responsibility of the school administration and principals to make clear to students and staff that bullying or harassment in the school building, on school grounds, on the bus or school sanctioned transportation or at school sponsored functions will not be tolerated. School principals or their designees shall be responsible for the implementation of bullying prevention and intervention procedures, including investigating all charges of bullying, cyberbullying and/or retaliation. The report stated that violations of school and/or district policy and procedures will be addressed in conformance with existing disciplinary policies. In addition, all reporting, investigations and responses shall be consistent with local, state and federal law regarding anti-discrimination and the protection of civil and human rights. The report stated that consultation with district legal staff and



representatives of local, regional and state law enforcement and justice agencies may be required to ensure the rights of targets/victims and aggressors/perpetrators are maintained.

Ms. Delrossi stated that she wanted the report to address professional development on bullying for staff.

Interim Superintendent Skinner stated that they will provide more information to the Committee on this and that this response will not be considered completed.

Ms. Thompson stated that she is aware of a young person who had a terrible experience on a bus who has an IEP and the issue was further exacerbated in class. It was a very traumatic experience and apparently has happened multiple times. She asked how this is handled and is this part of the reporting process.

Interim Superintendent Skinner stated that incidents that happen on the school bus are considered an extension of what happens in the school. He stated that the district follows up on all cases that the district is aware of.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 6.1 through 6.5 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

#### 6.5. Middle School Health Curriculum Update

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to refer this to the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee for further discussion; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

#### 6.6. Home Education

Interim Superintendent Skinner recommended that the following parents/guardians be allowed to home educate their child:

Katelyn Costa  
Michael Krajczynski  
Ana Moreira  
Kristen Nintean  
Sabrina Holland  
Sokvanary Chery  
Brittany Haley  
Sheryl Cloudier

**Mr. Lay made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

### **7. NEW BUSINESS**

#### **7.1. Ratification of Collective Bargaining Agreement with SEIU**

This was deferred until the next meeting.



## 7.2. Approval of Job Description: Portrait of a Graduate

Ms. Doherty stated that a master's degree preferred should be added to the job description.

Ms. Thompson stated that this job description is really a project manager and that person should have five (5) to seven (7) years' experience. It should also read that a master's degree or a bachelor's degree with commensurate experience.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to add that it should read master's degree or a bachelor's degree with commensurate experience; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 5 yeas, 1 nay (Mr. Lay) 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

## 7.3. Budget Transfer

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve the budget transfer of \$226,300; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

## 8. PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

**8.1.** The Members of the United Teachers of Lowell Hereby Donate Thirty [30] Sick Leave Days to Stephanie Ly, Murkland School Teacher.

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

## 9. ADJOURNMENT

**Ms. Doherty made a motion to adjourn at 8:42 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Lay 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Martin) APPROVED**

Respectfully submitted,

Liam Skinner, Interim Superintendent and  
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee

LS/mes