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To: Liam Skinner, Superintendent of Schools
From: Derek Pinto, Assistant Superintendent of Finance
Date: January 15, 2025
Subject: FY26 Budget Development Calendar DRAFT

Purpose: The FY26 Budget Development Calendar is meant to provide a structured timeline for the district's budgeting process, ensuring all tasks are completed efficiently, transparently, and in compliance with Massachusetts state laws and local requirements. Key objectives include:

1. Establishing Clear Deadlines

The calendar outlines critical milestones to include school & department budget submissions, school committee reviews, public hearings, and final approval dates. For LPS, this ensures all parties, including central office staff, principals, and department heads, meet their responsibilities on time.

2. Enhancing Coordination and Communication

The calendar helps align efforts among Lowell's district leaders, school administrators, the finance team, and the school committee, ensuring clear communication of roles and timelines. This supports collaboration with the city manager and city council to align district and municipal priorities.

3. Ensuring Legal and Procedural Compliance

As required by Massachusetts law, the budget calendar ensures LPS meets statutory deadlines for budget submission and municipal review while adhering to local protocols for financial planning and reporting.

4. Promoting Transparency

By establishing a clear, publicly accessible timeline, the calendar fosters transparency with Lowell's families, educators, and community stakeholders. This ensures they are informed about the process and key opportunities for input during budget development.

5. Improving Efficiency

A well-defined budget calendar minimizes confusion and streamlines the process for LPS, enabling district leaders to focus on strategic planning and equitable resource allocation to meet student needs.

6. Supporting Strategic Goals

The calendar aligns the budgeting process with LPS' vision for student success, ensuring resources are allocated to advance equitable, student-centered outcomes and sustain long-term priorities for the district.

Lowell Public Schools - FY26 Budget Development Calendar DRAFT

Task	Date
January	
Enrollment Projections	2nd week Jan
Enrollment projections shared with principals	2nd week Jan
Update average compensation for each position in workbooks	2nd week Jan
Technical updates to budget document, algorithm and spreadsheets	2nd week Jan
Determine weights, transition policies and guardrails	2nd week Jan
School & Dept. budget workbooks created, updated accounts, rows, options, insert columns for account numbers	3rd week Jan
Governor's numbers received; preliminary funding level determined https://malegislature.gov/Budget/GovernorsBudget	January 22
Prepare a Summary of Impact to show a net effect on each school	3rd week Jan
February	
School Site Council Training	TBD
FY25 budget updated and converted to expected FY26 amounts	1st week Feb
Preliminary Summary prepared to show expected shortfalls (surplus)	1st week Feb
Fair Student Funding pool amount finalized and distributed between schools	2nd week Feb
Budget Kickoff/Budget workbooks distributed	2nd week Feb (Admin Meet Feb 3)
February Break 17-21	
Budget collabs held with principals and central office team for approval	4th week Feb

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Individual budgets are rolled into the master file to be entered into the main budget document - (compiled budget document)	4th week Feb
March	
School Committee Budget Development Update/Approval of School Site Budgets	TBD
Enter and reconcile the main budget to determine true excess or shortfall	1st week March
Determine adjustments necessary to balance the budget	1st week March
Update the Preliminary Summary to list all of the year over changes made to the budget (reductions/additions)	2nd week March
Create charts and graphs to depict complex data	2nd week March
Have the Superintendent draft a budget introductory letter	2nd week March
Update narrative in Budget Overview section	2nd week March
Update the Fair Student Funding narrative	2nd week March
Format and print the Site Based Budget and Funding Summary Sections	3rd week March
Prepare the staff salary book using current staffing without cuts or additions	3rd week March
Project grant revenue and spending to use as estimates in budget book	3rd week March
Send budget draft to printers – review and make adjustments	3rd week March (17/18)
Send out budget books	March 26
April	
Present budget on April 2nd	1st week April

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Hold Public Budget Hearing (TBD) - tentatively on April 5th	1st week April
2nd Hearing, Budget Approval on April 16 th	3rd week April
Send to City Council for approval	TBD
June - enter the budget into Munis projection for July 1 start date	TBD