



Paul St. Cyr  
Commissioner of Public Works

## MEMORANDUM

**TO:** Thomas A. Golden, Jr., City Manager 

**FROM:** Katherine Moses, Sustainability Director

**CC:** Paul St. Cyr, Commissioner of Public Works

**DATE:** February 24, 2026

**SUBJECT: MOTION RESPONSE: 2/10/2025 – M. Gitschier** – Req. City Mgr. Work With The Lowell Sustainability Council And The Lowell Public Schools To Create A Student Environmental (Climate Change) Competition To Be Held On Civics Day In May 2026; Prizes Would be Handled Through the Lowell Parks & Conservation Trust

### Background:

In 2020-21 a Lowell-based group called Youth and Climate Change Action (YCCA), was formed out of the Leaders Engaged and Activated to Drive System-Wide Change (LEADS) program. The group's mission was to engage Lowell Public Schools students in climate action that would broaden their understanding of the implications of climate change and provide an important outreach component to bring attention to this issue. The YCCA, among other things, conducted student surveys and structured a competition to help support education around climate change. Cash prizes were made available through fundraising efforts made through the LEADS program.

The YCCA group disbanded but have expressed an interest in using the \$11,000 remaining to fund a small yearly cash prize to continue with the proposed environmental (climate change) competition outlined in the current motion. The funds are currently in an endowment at the Greater Lowell Community Foundation, with the Lowell Parks and Conservation Trust (LPCT) as the agent to administer cash prize distribution to students.

### Proposed Action Steps:

The Sustainability Division is in favor of continuing to educate students on climate change and incentivizing the proposed competition. By utilizing the strengths of the municipality, Lowell Public Schools (LPS) system, and community partners, we believe that prizes can be available for Civics Day in May 2026.

Proposed actions, partners and responsibilities to achieve this goal are outlined below. Although the timeline for completion is short, with the dedicated staff and partners, we believe that the YCCA competition can engage students on climate change for many years to come. The City of Lowell is appreciative of the LEADS YCCA group in Lowell for their passion in continuing to educate the next generation on important topic.



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Action Step Needed	Proposed Responsible Parties	Timeline
Assemble team to guide and judge the competition.	Superintendent (or designee) to recruit and select 5-member team with representatives from:  LPS educator City of Lowell Sustainability Division Lowell Sustainability Council UMass Lowell RIST Institute for Sustainability and Energy Local environmental non-profit	Early March 2026
Create and distribute competition guidelines and scoring rubric for student competition to judges. Finalize guidelines based on feedback from judges.	LPS educator	Mid-March 2026
Promote the competition at schools and in local media	City of Lowell Communications team	Late March 2026
Accept and review student entries.	LPS educator to distribute entries to judges. Judges to complete review of entries.	Mid-April 2026
Select winners.	Judges	End of April
Assemble funds for distribution to winners.	LPCT	Early May 2026
Invite elected officials to Civics Day	City of Lowell Mayor	Early May 2026
Present awards at Civics Day	Superintendent (or designee), along with judges and elected officials	May 2026