

Eileen M. Donoghue
City Manager

May 17, 2018

Mayor William J. Samaras
And
Members of the Lowell City Council

Dear Mayor Samaras and Members of the Lowell City Council,

I write to update you on the ongoing negotiations with the school department regarding the FY2019 budget. The upcoming fiscal year presents both the city and schools with significant funding challenges. On February 22, 2018, the former City Manager proposed a total line-item appropriation to the schools of \$165,000,164. However, upon entering office, it has been impressed upon me by the City Council and the School Committee that the funding needs for the schools far exceeded the total appropriation proposed earlier this year.

Education is integral to each of the pillars of my administration. As such, I am committed to providing the proper level of funding to the Lowell Public Schools (LPS). The previous funding proposal was based on the Governor's Chapter 70 funding proposal of \$149,264,111. Since that time, the Senate has increased the Chapter 70 education aid by approximately \$1.7 million to a total of \$150,935,483. While this number is still subject to negotiation in conference committee, it is indicative that the amount appropriated by the Commonwealth will be a significant increase over the initial estimates. In FY2017, the year most recently certified by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), Lowell exceeded the required level of spending on the school department by over \$8 million. Despite this surplus in the schools, I have directed my finance department to find the ways and means to supplement their budget.

After conversations with the Superintendent of Schools, I have committed to reducing school department expenses for water and sewer, which will free-up approximately \$250,000 in expenses that can now be dedicated to the classroom and absorb approximately \$100,000 in costs for educational video programming and the annual cost of Medicaid software in the city budget. Lastly, I intend to propose over \$3 million in capital investments in the schools for critical facility upgrades. All together this commitment totals over \$3.3 million in additional city funding for the schools this next fiscal year.

Sincerely,



Eileen M. Donoghue
City Manager

CC: Conor Baldwin, Chief Financial Officer



LOWELL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Henry J. Mroz Central Administration Offices
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Salah E. Khelifaoui, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools

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May 18, 2018

Dear Manager Donoghue,

I am pleased to inform that the School Committee voted unanimously to approve the FY19 Budget for the Lowell Public Schools for the amount of \$165,522,325.

This budget was constructed on the basis of the state budget proposed by the House of Representatives. Should the final state allocation differ, the school committee will revise our budget and we will inform you promptly.

On behalf of our students, parents and staff, I wish to express my most sincere gratitude for your continued support of our schools.

Respectfully,

Salah E. Khelifaoui, Ph.D.
Superintendent of Schools