



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Henry J. Mroz Administration Office
155 Merrimack Street
Lowell, Massachusetts 01852

John J. Leahy
Mayor and Chairperson

Tel: (978) 674-4324
Fax: (978) 937-7609

Policy Subcommittee Meeting

Andre P. Descoteaux
Vice-Chairperson

Thursday, April 30, 2020
Zoom – Virtual Meeting
5:00 p.m.

Hilary Clark
Michael Dillon Jr.
Robert J. Hoey Jr.
Connie A. Martin

Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Jackie Doherty and Connie Martin Mike Dillon was absent.
School Committee Members Present:	Andy Descoteaux, Robert Hoey and Hilary Clark
School Department Personnel Present:	Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools Latifah Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer Dr. James Hall, Chief Operating Officer Billie Jo Turner, Chief Financial Officer Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Linus Guillory, Chief Schools Officer David Murphy, Strategic Plan Advisor

This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. 30A, Section 20.

Chairperson Doherty called the meeting to order at 5:08 p.m. The following agenda item was discussed:

1. Lowell Public Schools Developing Strategic Plan: Review of Proposed Strategic Priorities and Associated Objectives

Ms. Doherty asked Superintendent Boyd to address the Subcommittee about the Strategic Planning Draft Update. Superintendent Boyd informed the Subcommittee that the Strategic Plan and the Budget are interrelated and after tonight they will no longer be brought forward separately, but as an interrelated document.

Ms. Phillips then addressed the Subcommittee informing them that the COVID-19 public health crisis and related school closures have altered the reality of the Lowell Public Schools and the world. While the 1 + 4 year plan envisions future progress, it is premised on a four (4) part strategy of COVID-19 readiness and responsiveness. Ms. Phillips stated that moving forward we need to look at the following areas:

Physical Health:

Lowell Public School facilities will undergo robust disinfectant sanitation and other enhanced cleaning tactics. Strict hygiene requirements will be imposed at all grade levels. Logistical modifications will be made to account for any physical distancing strategies advised by public health officials.

Mental Wellness:

Lowell Public Schools will prioritize trauma informed practices in anticipation of students' mental health challenges precipitated by or exacerbated by the crisis. School leaders will be advised on practices to support both staff and families experiencing anxiety related to the crisis. SEL support systems will continue to be emphasized for the purpose of ensuring students' educational needs to be continued to be met in the wake of the 2020 closure and amid ongoing uncertainty.

Fiscal Prudence:

Lowell Public Schools will conduct itself with heightened cautiousness due to revenue uncertainties at both the state and municipal level. All investments will be scrutinized for implications regarding long-term goals and any basis for immediate urgency.

Maintaining Flexibility:

Lowell Public Schools will employ strategies to maintain programmatic and organizational flexibility both to meet the needs of students in the wake of the 2020 closure and to ensure maximum adaptability to logistical challenges and/or additional disruptions during the 2020-2021 school year.

Ms. Phillips then spoke about the strategic plan and how they're going to measure the districts success and the key factors shaping the one (1) year strategic plan. She stated that supports are necessary to mitigate academic, social and emotional gaps formed or exacerbated by the interruption to the 2019-2020 school year and at the same time continuing 2019-2020 initiatives that are currently gaining momentum in advance of the district's overarching goals and long term objectives. In addition, she stated that the district will be implementing strategies that account for potential future disruptions to traditional instructional delivery, i.e. blending learning strategies. She also stated that the district has particular emphasis on zero and low cost objectives in light of the budgetary uncertainty now surrounding FY21 and the continuity of momentum and stability amid uncertainty. She concluded by stating that the district plans on continuing what is working well while factoring in what the district has learned through the strategic planning process.

Mr. Murphy then addressed the Subcommittee and spoke about the one (1) year plan which he stated is a series of actionable and meaningful objectives that reflect the strategic priorities and

advance the district's overarching goals, yielding measurable progress and the momentum for continuous improvements by the Lowell Public Schools in subsequent years. He spoke about the COVID-19 task force and the career and technical education expansions which create new pathways to meet the needs of all students. He also touched upon social emotional and mental health support.

Ms. Martin asked what concrete measures we are using.

Superintendent Boyd stated that the district originally was going to move forward with a data dashboard, but due to the fiscal uncertainty we have not included that.

Ms. Martin stated that she believes we have the ability to do it internally.

Ms. Doherty asked how we are moving forward with these goals and how are we measuring them at each school. She asked about Tableau and if the district is still using it.

Superintendent Boyd stated that we do have Tableau and that he is very familiar with it, but doesn't feel it's very easy for Principals and teachers to get the information they need from it. He also shared that Dr. Guillory had received bids for a data visualization system, but there would need to be additional discussions with the Committee around whether the revised budgetary forecast would result in there being funding to procure the system as originally envisioned. He stated that the district can explore how best to use Tableau for data visualization in the meantime.

Superintendent Boyd publicly thanked Ms. Phillips and Mr. Murphy for all the hard work that took place creating this plan.

Ms. Martin made a motion to recommend to the full Committee the approval of the one (1) year Strategic Plan; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 2 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED

Ms. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 5:54 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 2 yeas, 1 absent APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

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

LP/mes