



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

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| Date: | June 15, 2022 |
| Time: | 6:30PM |
| Location: | 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 mpalazzo@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 6:41 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun, Ms. Delrossi, Ms. Doherty and Mr. Lay.

3. MINUTES

3.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, June 1, 2022

Ms. Martin made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting that was held on Wednesday, June 1, 2022 and the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee that was held on Thursday, June 9, 2022; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

3.2. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee Meeting of Thursday, June 9, 2022

Ms. Martin made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting that was held on Wednesday, June 1, 2022 and the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee that was held on Thursday, June 9, 2022; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED



4. PERMISSION TO ENTER

4.1. Permission to Enter: June 15, 200

Ms. Thompson made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

4.2. Chief Financial Officer/ Assist Superintendent Billie Jo Turner, Contract Approval

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve the contract for Chief Financial Officer/ Assistant Superintendent Billie Jo Turner; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

4.3. Chief Equity and Engagement Officer/Assist Superintendent Latifah Phillips, Contract Approval

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to approve the contract for Chief Equity & Engagement Officer/ Assistant Superintendent Latifah Phillips; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 yeas APPROVED

5. MEMORIALS

5.1. **Mas Dechhat**, Murkland School Student and **Boua DeChhat**, Mother of Mas Dechhat

5.2. **Kerri DeRosa**, A Shaughnessy School Paraprofessional.

5.3. **Edward Farley, Jr**, Brother of Thomas Farley STEM Academy Teacher

5.4. **John Jeffers**, Brother of Sue Gannon Wang School Cafeteria Worker

6. MOTIONS

6.1. **[By Jackie Doherty]**: Request the Superintendent provide a report by June 17 on the total number of windows by school that still need to be replaced or repaired, as well as those still needing screens and shades. The report should include information on the window improvements completed over the last year, an explanation as to why we still have window issues, and a timeline and plan for repair.

Ms. Doherty asked if there has been partial work done.

Superintendent Boyd stated that the staff has asked if they can provide the report on June 30, 2022. He stated a partial report can be provided at this time.

Ms. Doherty stated that the original motion was a year ago. She stated that she wants all the information she can have for when she meets with the City at the Facilities Subcommittee meeting next week, and doesn't believe this is a short turn around given she requested this information last year.

Superintendent Boyd stated that the information he has been given to share is valuable.



Mayor Chau stated that maybe the custodians at each school can provide the information as well.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

6.2. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Superintendent provide a report on the Vacancy Savings Line Item in the Budget: How much is in it and what are the positions that were not filled?

Ms. Delrossi asked for a list of who has left and who has been hired.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 yeas APPROVED

6.3. [By Stacey Thompson]: Motion to the Superintendent to have the culmination of Civics Day to include a day of meeting in the chambers with the School Committee to further the content of your projects, to gain community knowledge and support and to present your asks of the Committee and to include City Council if permissible by the Mayor.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

7. SUBCOMMITTEES

7.1. Facilities & Transportation Subcommittee: Approval of the minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, June 1, 2022 [Jackie Doherty, Chairperson]

Ms. Doherty, Chairperson of the Facilities & Transportation Subcommittee reported out on this at the June 1, 2022 School Committee meeting.

Ms. Doherty spoke about the HVAC list that they're waiting for.

Ms. Thompson spoke about the entry points she has concerns with.

Ms. Chhoun asked what we can do regarding air quality for summer school.

Superintendent Boyd stated that if there is a solution to be found our partners in the city will find it. He is very pleased with the partnership the city and schools have w/Mr. Byrne on board.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.2. Policy & Governance Subcommittee Meeting: Approval of the minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, June 1, 2022 [Jackie Doherty, Chairperson]

Ms. Doherty, Chairperson of the Policy & Governance Subcommittee reported out on this at the June 1, 2022 School Committee meeting.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Ms. Delrossi) APPROVED



8. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

8.1. May Bias Based Incident Report

Ms. Phillips, Equity & Engagement Officer provided a presentation that included the data from May 2022. Fifty-four (54) incidents were reported and forty-one (41) investigations were completed and uploaded into the database during this timeframe. A synopsis of the investigation findings and administered consequences have been included in the presentation. The average timeframe from the submission of a discrimination, racism, bullying or intimidation complaint until the time an investigation was opened was 0.7 days for the investigations completed in May. Additionally, the presentation includes data from the March and April 2022 reports for comparison. On June 1, over 100 LPS students from eleven (11) K-8, middle and high schools convened at the UMASS Lowell Inn and Conference Center to review a revised student-friendly racism and bias based incidents reporting form and develop a school-based communications and outreach plan to present to their school administration before the end of the school year. The students also strategized school-wide activities and trainings to propose to their administrators for implementation during the 2022-23 school year. The Office of Equity and Empowerment will follow up with each school once the student teams have had the opportunity to discuss their proposed plans with their school administration.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 8.1 through 8.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.2. Secondary School Redesign Update

Mr. Fiato, Lowell High School Head of School provided a PowerPoint presentation that included the following:

- Proposed Vision
- Need for Change
- Current Work
- Aligning Initiatives
- Next Steps

Ms. Delrossi asked if remedial courses in math and civics would be offered.

Mr. Fiato stated that students get stuck in remedial and we want students in advanced courses.

Ms. Delrossi stated that sometimes we need remedial courses before acceleration courses.

Ms. Doherty asked if the dropout rate has improved.

Superintendent Boyd stated that they're waiting for the finalized data.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 8.1 through 8.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



8.3. Response to Motion 03. CSO of 05/04/22 by Jackie Doherty Regarding Programs to Support Our Youngest Students with Behavior Issues

Mr. Skinner, Chief Schools Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that all elementary schools implement programs and systems that support students' behavioral needs. Although different schools employ different individual programs, all follow a model that can be considered to provide for student behavioral needs in tiers, with different systems of support associated with each tier. It can be useful to consider the tiers as:

- Tier 1: Universal supports:
 - Tier 1, Universal supports: These involve programs of support for all learners. They provide SEL lessons, develop helpful mindsets, promote positive behaviors, and teach competencies related to interacting with peers, responsibility, kindness, and teamwork. Many different choices are employed by schools. They include: Second Step, Open Circle, Zones of Regulation, Quaver SEL, and Center for School Emotional Learning materials.
- Tier 2: Selective supports:
 - Tier 2, Selective supports: For students who require additional support, because Tier 1 supports do not meet their needs, a team meets to review cases. Consisting of such staff as principal, assistant principal, social worker, ETC, school psychologist, and BCBA, they discuss student cases on an individual basis. This is sometimes a proactive approach. At other times the team meets in response to an incident or a concern arising from a pattern of behavior. Students in these cases may be provided with counseling, placed on a behavior chart with adult check-ins, or provided with other interventions.
- Tier 3: Intensive supports:
 - Tier 3, Intensive supports: In rare cases, where Tier 1 and Tier 2 supports are not sufficiently helpful, schools go further, supporting children through working with various agencies, support with providing information ahead of upcoming appointment, and attempts to provide more wrap-around support (therapeutic mentor, additional counseling, etc).

Ms. Doherty stated that she found the report general and not hearing anything specific. She stated that she believes there is a disconnect from what she is hearing and believes it didn't really address it.

Superintendent Boyd stated that he's not sure that she is getting the same feedback the administration is. He stated that \$2.5 million is earmarked for Alternative Schools.

Ms. Doherty stated that she didn't see the evidence that we've done it and doesn't believe the response answers it. She stated she's talking about the money that has already been spent.

Superintendent Boyd stated that there is an impact on the investments that we're making. He stated that suspensions have dropped.

Ms. Doherty stated that it could be said that it due to Principals' being told not to suspend.



Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 8.1 through 8.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.4. Response to Motion 06. CSO of 05/18/22 by Dominik Lay Regarding Dress Code Policy

Mr. Skinner, Chief Schools Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that at a meeting of all school principals held on Monday, June 6th, a review was conducted of how dress code is implemented and enforced in schools. All principals voiced strong support for the district's dress code as laid out in official Lowell Public Schools Student Handbooks. They asserted the value of our dress code and claimed that it is implemented and enforced using various means. Most schools have a Catie's Closet and offer a change of clothes to students when they arrive to school wearing unsuitable clothing.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 8.1 through 8.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.5. Response to Motion 09. CFO of 05/18/22 by Jackie Doherty Relative to Payroll and Processing Concerns

Ms. Turner, Chief Financial Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that the external audit conducted by Powers & Sullivan recently confirmed concerns with internal controls previously identified and cited during her initial audit of the Lowell Public School's budget in the fall of 2018. Their report states that the City's payroll process is manual and not utilizing the Munis general ledger software to the fullest. During FY2018-2019, numerous meetings were held with City Hall staff on how to rectify the lack of controls despite an archaic system and both departments (LPS Payroll and City Hall Payroll) being short staffed. Despite having an impressive ERP system (Munis) that can automate and rectify many of the concerns we are facing, manpower is needed to pilot and implement the new systems using our existing technology. Covid caused further delays to improvements as the schools and the City faced a plethora of new challenges during this time including significant staff turnover in the payroll offices. Since then, numerous meetings have been held with the City to address the out dated systems and issues inherited by the current staff in both offices. There were different instances in which overpayments occurred. In the summer of 2021, summer payrolls processed by City Hall inadvertently included forty-two (42) and forty-four (44) week employees who should have been filtered out. Other examples that have resulted in overpayments include resignations that were not entered into the Munis system prior to another check being cut (time issues with archaic manual entries) and when a retired individual changed their mind after being paid out. The amount remaining to be recouped is \$8,326.97 and payment plans are in place. Each occurrence faced is discussed with City Hall staff to work together as a team to identify ways in which future issues can be avoided.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 8.1 through 8.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



8.6. Response to Motion 02. CSO of 03/16/22 by Stacey Thompson Regarding Enrichment Programs & Scholarship Opportunities

Mr. Skinner, Chief Schools Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that all schools have staffed and operational enrichment offerings. In all cases, activities are particular to each individual school based on student interest and special aptitudes and skills of available instructors. With a few exceptions, such as book clubs and Algebra classes in some middle schools, they are primarily offered in after school programs and summer schools. They are funded entirely through grants.

Ms. Thompson asked if they're published and how parents know.

Mr. Skinner stated that it's on the district's page and school sites. He stated that he will follow up regarding scholarships.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 8.1 through 8.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.7. Enrollment Report

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a report to the Committee that informed them that as of June 9, 2022, there are 14,494 students attending Lowell Public Schools. Following our standard format, the June 9, 2022 enrollment report includes other categories of enrollment that the district is responsible for monitoring, placing and/or supporting such as home schooled students, out of district student placements, community pre-K student program placements, students referred for special education program evaluation, as well as students in the Family Resource Center category awaiting school assignment. When combining all of these categories together, the total enrollment on the March enrollment report adds up to 15,288. The report stated that as of Thursday morning, June 9, 2022 the total number of K-12 students in the FRC category was 24. Additionally, fifty-three (53) pre-K students are on the waitlist for the 2021-2022 school year and two (2) remain in the EC category which adds up to a total of seventy-nine (79) in the FRC category. On this date, of the twenty-four (24) K-12 students in the FRC category, six (6) students have been provided an assignment and are ready to attend school. Of the remaining eighteen (18) students, six (6) students are awaiting medical clearance, six (6) are registrants needing to submit required documentation, four (4) are English Learner students who need to complete their scheduled language testing, and two (2) students are awaiting placement by the Special Education department.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 8.1 through 8.7 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



9. NEW BUSINESS

9.1. Budget Transfer

Ms. Doherty asked if we will have access to this money.

Ms. Turner stated yes and by putting it in the Special Education Stabilization account we are fiscally preparing for when we likely will hit a fiscal cliff. The Special Education stabilization account will offer us the additional security for having funds available for an increase in out of district costs.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve the budget transfer of \$2,234,461; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 years APPROVED

9.2. Early College Promise Pilot-Memorandum of Understanding

Superintendent Boyd stated that the guidance he received today that this only needs to be accepted as a report of progress.

Ms. Martin made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 years APPROVED

9.3. Student Opportunity Act Plan

Mr. Lay made a motion to approve the Student Opportunity Act Plan; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 years APPROVED

9.4. Approval of Job Descriptions and Permission to Post of New Positions Previously Approved in the FY23 Budget Adoption

Ms. Thompson made a motion have a Special Meeting of the School Committee by Committee to discuss job descriptions; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 years, 1 nay (Ms. Doherty) APPROVED

10. CONVENTION/CONFERENCE REQUESTS

10.1. Lowell High School Out of Country and Overnight Travel Request: Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to approve the convention/conference request; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 years APPROVED

11. COMMUNICATIONS

11.1. Communication from the Office of Teaching & Learning Regarding Fine Arts Wellness Curriculum Inquiry

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the communication and to place it on file; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 years APPROVED



12. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Thompson made a motion to recess at 8:36 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

**Joel D. Boyd, Ed.D., Superintendent and
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee**

JDB/mes