



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date:	January 18, 2023
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 6:44 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun, Ms. Delrossi and Ms. Doherty. Mr. Lay arrived at 7:03 p.m.

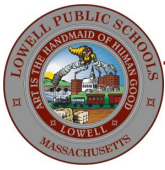
3. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

3.1. Spotlight On Excellence – The Programming Initiative

Ms. Santelmann, Coordinator of Science and Social Studies, introduced two (2) Lowell High School students, Kenneth Chap and Ibraheem Amin, who were recently highlighted in the local newspaper for The Programming Initiative, which is an after school program that they developed in the after-school computer science club. Kenneth and Ibraheem, along with faculty advisor, Mr. Morse, have taught students how to use the programming language Python in a variety of projects and informed the Committee why they formed the club, how they recruited participants and what they are working on now and where they would like to see the club go in the future.

Mayor Chau as well as all Committee members thanked the students and told them how impressive their work is.

3.2. An Executive Session May Be Called to Discuss Collective Bargaining, Strategies and/or Possible Litigation Under Open Meeting Law, Chapter 30A, Section 21 (A) (B), 2, 3 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws. Open Meeting Discussion May Have a Detrimental Effect on the Bargaining or Litigating Position of the Public Body.



4. MINUTES

4.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, January 4, 2023

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, January 4, 2023; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

5. PERMISSION TO ENTER

5.1. Permission to Enter: January 18, 2023

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

6. MOTIONS

6.1. [By Jackie Doherty]:

Request the Policy Subcommittee meet to clarify conditions for placing communications to the board on the Agenda and provide recommendations to the full committee at its Feb. 1 meeting.

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

7. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

7.1. Diversity Recruitment and Hiring Report

Mr. Lay made a motion to take item #7.7 out of order so it can be discussed with item #7.1; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee that addressed four (4) areas to strengthen and improve the district's recruitment, hiring and retention of a diverse workforce. The following areas are:

- Workforce – Understanding the racial and ethnic diversity of our current workforce.
- Recruitment & Selection – Are we attracting highly-rated, diverse applicants and does our selection process identify these candidates.
- Retention & Staffing- Are effective teachers being retained, and are we filling vacancies with effective teachers.
- Development – How are we supporting the development of our educators. How are we investing in professional learning opportunities?

She also discussed the key goals of the diverse teacher leader program as well as the 2-year fellowship program for DTL fellows.



Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that included a table of all schools in the district with all teachers and paraprofessional and with all who identify as diverse. It also included a chart that indicates the number of changes in the diversity hires over the last four (4) years in the district.

Ms. Thompson asked about the number of staff of color who have left the district in the last five (5) years. She asked about doing work on bias and if professional learning opportunities are being offered to the whole workforce. She also asked what year of the fellowship is anti-racism discussed.

Ms. Phillips stated that it is discussed in the 1st year and that it is ongoing and a work in progress.

Ms. Thompson asked how they felt the work was going.

Mr. St. Louis, a participant in the fellowship stated that he has been reaching out to others at various levels to get feedback on this work.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.2. Report On Motions

Superintendent Boyd provided the Committee with an updated report on the status of outstanding motions and asked the Committee if they had any concerns or questions.

Ms. Thompson asked about her motion on page one (1) from last May about trainings offered to teachers and staff and when she would be receiving it. She also asked about her motion on page three (3) about academic gaps & utilization of community partnerships from May and asked what has been done. She also asked about her anti-racism training motion that is on the same page and stated that it has been six (6) months and is waiting for a response.

Ms. Phillips stated that she is waiting to hear from schools.

Ms. Thompson stated that on page six (6) she is waiting for a response from her motion regarding an equity lens on employment process. She is waiting for a response from her motion on page ten (10) regarding financial wellness because she stated she wasn't satisfied with the original response and she wants to look at it again. She concluded by saying on page twenty-four (24) she is still waiting from March of last year regarding signage at school playgrounds and city parks for non-verbal youth.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to send the Financial Wellness and Life Skills motions to the Curriculum Subcommittee for discussion; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty asked about her motion on page four (4) around the Family Resource Center hours and stated that she has been waiting for that adjustment. She stated it's not fair to the community. She stated that it will be cost neutral as it was when it was done pre-pandemic. She stated on page five (5) she's waiting on her motion on looking at the rezoning plan and on page ten (10) her motion on the third party audit for mental health services. She asked if someone has looked at how we deliver services and what are our next steps. She stated the Superintendent had told her he would get back to the Committee.



Mr. Lay asked about his motion on page thirteen (13) regarding waiting on school's contribution/school budget.

Ms. Turner stated that she will call the city CFO and will share her original draft with the CFO's response to the Committee.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.3. Response to Motion 08. COO of 07/13/22 by Jackie Doherty Regarding Status on Lowell High School Construction Project

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that included a report produced by the General Contractor and a report from Mr. Fiato, Head of School with regard to the impact of construction on the daily lives of the students and employees.

Ms. Doherty asked about the last bullet in Mr. Fiato's report that talks about the travel time for students going from building to building. She stated that she thought the students had suggested having security staff be at several doors to let students in and she thought the Superintendent was going to check with Mr. Fiato.

Superintendent Boyd stated that every employee has a responsibility within the building and changing that creates safety & security problems. He stated this is under constant analysis and there are not additional staff members to do this.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.4. Response to Motion 12. COO of 09/07/22 by Eileen DelRossi Regarding Status on HVAC

Mr. Underwood, Director of Facilities provided a report that included a breakdown by school of HVAC/Mechanical Issues as of January 12, 2023, and stated that a great amount of progress has been made.

Ms. Delrossi asked about broken windows and if the Committee could get a record of what schools are fixed. She also asked about when the Rogers School ventilation will be finalized or will it start in the spring.

Dr. Hall stated that the project will start in the spring.

Ms. Thompson asked if this has been costed out per school and she believes it would be very helpful per school in case we received money to fix all of these issues. She also asked for the person who does this to be present to answer questions.

Dr. Hall stated that a complete fix would cost over \$100 million dollars.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED



7.5. Response to Motion 20. COO of 10/19/22 by Stacey Thompson Regarding Hiring Process Feedback

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report informing the Committee that he is only aware of one (1) MCAD complaint and the City Solicitor's office is handling that. The Solicitor's office likely has other "claim" letters" and "lawsuits" related to Lowell Public Schools and we have requested said report. He stated where he is counsel, he is aware of only one (1) case. He stated that exit interviews and surveys are available to employees and that about 30% are providing feedback.

Ms. Thompson asked what is being done to get exiting staff comments.

Dr. Hall stated that he would like the Committee's feedback and asked if we should offer money.

Ms. Thompson stated that she believes that it should be part of the orientation process and asked of the new employee when coming on board. She also asked what the timeline is and does someone call and set that up.

Dr. Hall stated that when HR receives the resignation they immediately contact them and set it up.

Ms. Doherty asked to clarify that when the employee sends a resignation letter they get a call.

Dr. Hall stated yes and it was implemented six (6) months ago and everyone is getting that opportunity.

Ms. Doherty asked for clarification that there is one (1) superior case or two (2) cases as referenced in the letter.

Dr. Hall stated one (1). The one the Solicitor handled was dismissed.

Ms. Doherty asked how many grievances and when does it get to the Committee level.

Dr. Hall stated two (2). One (1) the Committee hasn't heard yet and one (1) the UTL is no longer pursuing.

Ms. Thompson asked if there is any effort made to retain employees who are leaving.

Dr. Hall stated yes.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED



7.6. Response to Motion 24. COO of 11/02/22 By Eileen DelRossi Regarding Emergency Licensure

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report that informed the Committee that eighty-six (86) teachers have emergency licensures and due to the state-wide availability of emergency licenses, there is not the same need to request waivers as there has been in the past. The report states that there are twelve (12) administrators at this time that are utilizing an emergency license and no waivers have been requested. The HR department is in the process of integrating new software (February 1, 2023) which will track this going forward for the whole district.

Ms. Doherty stated that the district hasn't had to go for waivers/waiver process? Did you have to get special permission to hire that person with the emergency license? She stated that emergency licensure has the same rules even though it has been extended a year. She stated that she called Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and they told her that each district has to manage it.

Dr. Hall stated teachers will be tracked with the new software. Ms. Maggio, LTA Director, who works for the Teacher Academy is also helping with this.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.7. Response to Motion 11. COO of 08/10/22 By Domink Lay & Stacey Thompson Regarding Diversity Hiring Gains

Mr. Lay made a motion to take item #7.7 out of order so it can be discussed with item #7.1; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a PowerPoint presentation to the Committee that addressed four (4) areas to strengthen and improve the district's recruitment, hiring and retention of a diverse workforce. The following areas are:

- Workforce – Understanding the racial and ethnic diversity of our current workforce.
- Recruitment & Selection – Are we attracting highly-rated, diverse applicants and does our selection process identify these candidates.
- Retention & Staffing- Are effective teachers being retained, and are we filling vacancies with effective teachers.
- Development – How are we supporting the development of our educators. How are we investing in professional learning opportunities?

She also discussed the key goals of the diverse teacher leader program as well as the 2-year fellowship program for DTL fellows.

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that included a table of all schools in the district with all teachers and paraprofessional and with all who identify as diverse. It also included a chart that indicates the number of changes in the diversity hires over the last four (4) years in the district.



Ms. Thompson asked about the number of staff of color who have left the district in the last five (5) years. She asked about doing work on bias and if professional learning opportunities are being offered to the whole workforce. She also asked what year of the fellowship is anti-racism discussed.

Ms. Phillips stated that it is discussed in the 1st year and that it is ongoing and a work in progress.

Ms. Thompson asked how they felt the work was going.

Mr. St. Louis, a participant in the fellowship stated that he has been reaching out to others at various levels to get feedback on this work.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.8. Monthly Incident Report

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a report that informed the Committee that during the month of December 2022, fifty-eight (58) incidents were reported using the online reporting system, and fifty-three (53) investigations were completed for these incidents and uploaded into the database during this timeframe. During the month of December 2022, the completed investigations took an average of 0.89 school days to launch an investigation and an average of 1.7 school days to complete. The reports states that the district is continuing to work with community partners to develop trainings for investigators which will address bias and restorative practices. They're also continuing to collaborate with community partners, members of our Anti-racism Coalition and the Lowell Student Advisory Council in identifying strategies for continued improvement that a) inform our understanding of the experience of the reporter and/or target throughout the investigation process b) assist us in identifying/implementing practices surrounding the restoration of safe and welcoming learning environments.

Ms. Thompson asked if phone calls and home visits being made.

Ms. Phillips stated yes.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.9. Monthly Enrollment Report

Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer provided a report that informed the Committee that as of January 12, 2023, there are 14,278 students enrolled with the Lowell Public Schools. The report states that in prior enrollment reports, the School Committee received an update on the students in the Family Resource Center (FRC) category from the district enrollment report and the total number of these students were reported to the School Committee as well as what the students were missing to complete their registration. The primary reason students would be in the FRC category was due to missing the required registration documents. Since March, families complete the registration process online using the Aspen online registration portal (OLR). Families create an Aspen account, enter their child's information required for registration, and upload the required registration documents directly to their online registration. The required registration documents are: child's birth certificate, child's



vaccination, parent photo identification, proof of Lowell residency (one of the following: gas bill, cable bill, electricity bill, lease, or mortgage). Additionally, high school students will need to provide transcripts and Special Education students the current, signed IEP.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.9 as reports of progress; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.10. Home Education

Superintendent Boyd recommended that the following parents/guardians be allowed to home educate their child:

Kirsten Barrick
David Mollica
Leah Snelders
Megan Savard

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

8. NEW BUSINESS

8.1. Update and Approval of Preschool Assignment Policy

Ms. Thompson asked if this has gone through the CMAA. She also asked if this is done in the parent's language or just English.

Ms. Phillips stated that everything possible is done to accommodate the parent's language.

Ms. Doherty stated that she questioned the timing and is still concerned about full kindergarten registration, because it has caused problems. She stated that the dates should be looked at and when students need immunizations.

Superintendent Boyd stated that he recommends approval of this.

Ms. Doherty stated she understands his recommendation, but she is concerned with the timing and what is involved regarding immunizations, especially now that we are going to Pre-K Universal and stated we should look at kindergarten registration too.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to send the Preschool Assignment Policy to the Policy Subcommittee and to have it added when the Subcommittee meets to discussion communications on the agenda; seconded Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.2. Establishment of Subcommittees

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve a Special Education Subcommittee with Ms. Delrossi as Chair, and Ms. Chhoun and Ms. Thompson as members; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED



8.3. Budget Transfer

Mr. Lay made a motion to approve the budget transfer of \$675,490.18; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.4. Approval to Accept and Expend Allocated FY23 Awards

Ms. Turner asked the Committee to approve, accept and expend the allocate the FY23 awards. The report states that these funds include Federal and State entitlement, continuation, competitive and private funding awards that have been secured by the Lowell Public Schools through the Department of Secondary and Elementary Education, The Mass Cultural Council as well as funding from The US Department of Education.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve, accept and allocate the FY23 awards; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.5. Approval of Job Description & Permission to Post: LHS Attendance Officer

Ms. Thompson stated that she doesn't agree with the 2nd requirement and believes it is written like a school to prison pipeline. She stated that the posting is wrong and that the posting on school spring is different than the one presented to the Committee (languages). She also asked how many people are presently in this role.

Dr. Hall stated that anyone can apply for the position. He stated that this person will help the high school. He stated that the title of the position needs to be changed and that he spoke with LSAA and they stated it could be an Attendance Assistant.

Ms. Thompson asked if this pays less.

Dr. Hall stated yes, and that the person at the high school left.

Ms. Doherty asked if we approved this before. She stated we have an Attendance Officer and also an Attendance Monitor that has been in the district for years making \$10,000 less. She stated that we talk about equity. She also asked why you would put this person at the high school and not make them part of the attendance team.

Dr. Hall stated that they are not part of the union.

Ms. Doherty asked why would we be doing this with \$10,000 less and change the title. She stated she wants to send this back to HR for more review.

Superintendent Boyd stated that we can continue to analyze this and asked how sending this back to HR helps the students.

Ms. Doherty stated that she's not looking for an analysis and that she believes the solution is to make it a monitor and have the same salary for both of them. She stated having 2.5 people in the attendance office isn't adequate anyway.



Superintendent Boyd stated that this would be a typical structure and is the typical structure we use throughout the district. He asked that we make the changes on the floor and approve this so we can post it.

Ms. Martin stated that she cannot support this and that every recommendation from this Committee doesn't need to be knocked down like its coming from a place of bureaucracy. She stated that we had a robust program and taking a short cut and adding more money is not an effective way to manage. Ms. Martin also stated that isn't looking for an analysis.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to send the LHS Attendance Officer job posting back to the HR office and for them to come back to the Committee with a plan; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9. COMMUNICATIONS

9.1. Update On STEM Modular

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer informed the Committee that he had a meeting with the Assistant City Manager and OPM to discuss the STEM project, to clarify the scope of work, and to discuss the acquisition of architectural services to assist the School Committee in making a final decision on this project. The communication states that it is expected that the architected support will provide more exact information on where the modulares could be located and how many modulares could be acquired for 5.3 million dollars. Following the School Committee's vote on December 7, 2022, the OPM forwarded a sample RFP and sample contract on December 13, 2022 to City Purchasing and the Law Department. The OPM is going to call the Purchasing Department to inquire whether the Request for Services could go forward without a draft contract with the intent to supplement or provide the contract within the next few weeks. It is expected that the Law Department will have additional hours available two (2) weeks from now, instead of this week, as the Solicitor started work this Monday. The Assistant City Manager was going to review if this contract could be prioritized over other contracts that are also in the queue for review. The OPM is going to move forward on the Request for Services based on the advice of the Purchasing Department. It was discussed that the STEM project would move forward separately from the Cawley Stadium modular project. The OPM stated that if the School Committee decided not to pursue the STEM project at any time in the future to let him know and he would cease contracted work immediately.

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

9.2. Professional Staff Hiring Policy & Comprehensive Hiring Policy

Ms. Martin made a motion to send the Professional Staff Hiring Policy & Comprehensive Hiring Policy to the Policy Subcommittee for further discussion; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED



10. CONVENTION/CONFERENCE REQUESTS

10.1. Out of State & Overnight Travel Request: LHS Wrestling Team to Providence, RI

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

11. EXECUTIVE SESSION

11.1. Item:

- Litigation- update in regard to present litigation

12. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to recess at 9:10 p.m. and to enter into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing collective bargaining, strategies and/or possible litigation under open meeting law, Chapter 30A, Section 21 (A) (B), 2, 3 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Laws related to update in regard to present litigation, which open meeting discussion may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body, and to return to Open Session; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

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

JDB/mes