



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date:	February 02, 2022
Time:	6:30PM
Location:	City Council Chamber, 375 Merrimack Street, 2nd Floor, Lowell, MA 01852

1. SALUTE TO FLAG

2. ROLL CALL

On a roll call at 6:46 p.m., all members were present, namely: Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Delrossi, Mr. Descoteaux, Ms. Doherty and Mr. Lay.

3. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

4. MINUTES

4.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee of Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 and the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting on Wednesday, January 19, 2022; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

4.2. Approval of the Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled Lowell School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, January 19, 2022

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee on Wednesday, January 19, 2022 and the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting on Wednesday, January 19, 2022; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty made a motion to suspend the rules to allow the Auditor and City Solicitor to address the Committee regarding the Aramark water bill issue contained in the budget update; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Oakes, City Auditor stated her concerns regarding procurement. She stated that the documentation provided to the auditor's office lacked standard details such as quantity of goods, the delivery location and whom at the School Department received the goods and this was why the auditor's office rejected it.



Atty. O'Connor, City Solicitor stated that her response to this issue was from a request from School Committee member Ms. Doherty who wanted more information on the unpaid \$119,000.00 water bill that was discussed at the last school committee meeting. The law department became aware of an unpaid water bill shortly before December 21st with members of the school department. She stated she was asked to speak to the auditor regarding this unpaid bill and following a January 6th meeting with the auditor, she sent several questions to central office for clarification. In order for law and auditing to properly assess next steps, these questions need to be addressed and additional information needs to be provided.

Ms. Turner, Chief Financial Officer stated that Section 5.A.2 and Section 11 in our current Aramark contract allows for them to purchase food and supplies on our behalf, and our bottled water purchases were made with the belief that we are covered by our current vendor. Since we did go out to bid to obtain this vendor and worked with City Hall on the contract language, we operated under that language. She stated that she has reached out to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education auditors to be sure. She stated that the transaction that was used has been occurring since 2010 when the FSMC began and there are over 100 transactions over the last decade showing LPS FS vendor billing Lowell Public Schools General Fund and payments being made. She stated that principals worked with the Food Service staff to determine the number of water bottles needed. The rule of thumb was two (2) bottles per student per day. She stated that the purchase order entered by LPS incorrectly hit the revolving account number when it should have charged local account or ESSER and therefore it does affect account balances.

Ms. Doherty stated that she wasn't criticizing Ms. Turner and acknowledged all of the excellent work she has done in the past. She stated that she was only expressing her concern with the current situation.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to suspend the rules to allow the City of Lowell Health Officials' provide updates on COVID-19 testing protocols to the Committee; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED

5. PERMISSION TO ENTER

5.1. Permission to Enter: February 2, 2022

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

5.2. Approval of Updated Language to the Previously Approved Contract Amendment for Chief Operating Officer James Hall

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve the contract amendment for James Hall, Chief Operating Officer; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 nay (Ms. Doherty) APPROVED



6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1. Report On Motions

Ms. Doherty inquired about a motion she made in regards to receiving information on the end of the year report from the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE).

Superintendent Boyd stated that he remembered the motion and he will have the motion put back on the report.

Ms. Delrossi asked about Ms. Clark's motion regarding Dominik Lay.

Superintendent Boyd stated that sitting member's motions take precedence, but will elevate Ms. Clark's motion.

Ms. Martin stated that a lot of the motions on the report can be eliminated and suggested that Committee members remove motions that they feel are completed and provide that information to the administration. She believes this will clean up the report.

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

7. MOTIONS

7.1. [By Eileen DelRossi]: Motion for the superintendent to provide a current report on the recently approved motion to hire 29 support staff as social workers, adjustment counselors, and guidance counselors. Report to include job description, qualifications, salary, school assignment, and what their actual duties are in terms of working with students.

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

7.2. [By Eileen DelRossi]: Motion to request superintendent to provide a report on the current grading and discipline policies for all grades and all schools in Lowell.

Ms. Martin stated that she also has concerns with how some of the schools are grading.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to bundle, approve and have the administration provide a report to the full Committee; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED

7.3. [By Eileen DelRossi]: Motion to request an updated kindergarten through grade 8 health and physical education curriculum.

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



7.4. [By Stacey Thompson]: Request that the Superintendent prepare and present a monthly report as to incidents of bullying, harassment, discrimination and racism for the School Committee, that were to be held in the reporting system developed in 2020. To start with a synopsis of occurrences since this protocol was put in place in 2020 up unto the present and hereafter to be supplied monthly to the committee.

Fallon Manyika and Justin Ford registered and spoke in favor of this motion.

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

7.5. [By Dominik Hok Lay]: Ask the Superintendent for a report from the Athletic Department on “neck guards”, helmets and safety equipment for the hockey team as well as the safety equipment for other sports teams such as field hockey, basketball, soccer, lacrosse, baseball; softball, etc.

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

7.6. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Policy Subcommittee meet to review current grading and discipline policies and implementation.

Ms. Martin stated that she also has concerns with how some of the schools are grading.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to bundle, approve and to have administration provide a report to the full Committee; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED

8. SUBCOMMITTEES

8.1. Curriculum & Instruction: Report of the Meeting of Monday, January 24, 2021 [Connie Martin, Chairperson]

Ms. Martin, Chairperson of the Curriculum & Instruction Subcommittee stated that the current graduation requirements for Lowell High School students, as per the 2021-2022 Student Handbook, require that students must select Physical Education each year and pass four (4) semesters in Physical Education for (10) credits. AFJROTC, Dance, Band, or Show Choir may be substituted each year for this requirement. Students must select Health Education A in the ninth (9th) grade and Health Education B in the tenth (10th) grade. She stated that both health courses (2.5 credits each) must be passed for a total of five (5) credits and that AFJROTC may be substituted each year for this requirement. She stated that in order to better align the Lowell High School graduation requirements to the forthcoming revised Massachusetts Comprehensive Health Framework, which places a greater emphasis on health as a form of personal wellness, it was requested that the School Committee allow all PE-equivalent classes to fulfill the Health A and Health B requirements. She stated that a partnership with Team Block, which is a part of Lowell Community Health Center will deliver courses to our students and they're also more than willing to map out curriculum for next school year as well. A motion was made and approved on the floor approving that request at a recent School Committee meeting. Ms. Martin then spoke about the Leblanc School staffing. She stated that the staffing has not really changed over a five (5) year period



and that the Subcommittee will receive more comprehensive information when they meet again in approximately six (6) weeks.

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

9. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

9.1. COVID-19 Update

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided the Committee with a report that gave them a COVID-19 Data monitoring update that included Lowell Public Schools COVID positive cases, Pool Testing Participation and Testing Services (symptomatic testing, “test and stay” and routine COVID Pooled testing). The report also included the impact on student attendance due to COVID-19.

Mr. Skinner, Chief Schools Officer stated that the absence rate is 2.7 times higher than pre-pandemic. He stated that the administration is looking at ways for students to catch up with offerings of summer school as well as opportunities during February and April vacations, etc.

Ms. Martin inquired about any response from the state regarding this issue.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 through 9.6 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.2. Budget Update

Ms. Doherty made a motion to refer the Budget Update to a Finance Subcommittee; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty asked for revenue to be included on the year to date budget report at the Finance Subcommittee.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.3. Response to Motion 13. COO of 12/01/21 by Andy Descoteaux Regarding Neighborhood Schools and the Potential Acquisition of the St. Louis Property.

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided the Committee with a report informing them that February 16, 2022 was proposed to the City for a requested subcommittee meeting. A representative from the Archdiocese has informed Dr. Hall that the annex building at 72-74 Boisvert Street is already under agreement.



Mr. Descoteaux stated that he believes there are other building on the campus that may be available.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.4. Response to Motion 5. CAO of 01/19/22 by Andy Descoteaux and Dominik Lay Regarding Chromebook Availability

Ms. Desmond, Chief Academic Officer provided a report that stated that Lowell Public Schools (LPS) currently enrolls 14,140 student's Pre-k through grade 12 and that of the 14,140 students, 491 are enrolled in Pre-K programming. Since September of 2020, LPS has been a 1:1 device district and currently, approximately 13,500 students enrolled in grades in K-12 have been provided a Chromebook. Students in kindergarten were assigned touchscreen Chromebooks which may be used either as a tablet or traditional keyboard Chromebook. Students in grades 1-12 have been provided a traditional Chromebook. The remaining students have been assigned or have access to iPads. Of the 13,500 students with Chromebooks, there are 215 waiting to be evaluated by a technician to determine if the issue is a software or hardware related issue. Currently, 1,240 Chromebook devices have been turned in for repair; however, replacement Chromebooks have been distributed to students. The Worth Ave insurance program provides cases for the staff to pack and ship broken devices to the company for repair. Once repaired, the devices will be returned to the district, and those devices will be put back into the available inventory. These refurbished Chromebooks will be distributed to students as more devices are returned in need of repair. There are approximately 100 devices currently listed as lost or stolen and replacement devices have been provided to those students while the assigned device is located. These numbers fluctuate throughout the year. The report stated that during the 21-22 school year, LPS increased staffing levels in the Information Technology department and that current staffing in the Information Technology Department is: 1- helpdesk technician, 4- full time technicians, 2- part-time technicians, 1- Software Specialist, 1- Network Administrator, 1- Assistant Network Administrator, 4- Instructional Technology Specialist and 1- Director of Technology.

Mr. Descoteaux asked for more information regarding the number of employees we had in that department pre-pandemic.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.5. Response to Motion 16. COO of 01/19/22 By Eileen DelRossi Regarding Cafeteria Staffing Levels at the STEM Academy

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee that showed staffing levels for the cafeteria at the STEM Academy as compared to other schools.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED



9.6. Response to Motion 14. COO of 01/19/22 By Connie Martin Regarding Food Service Feedback System

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a report to the Committee informing them that Aramark will be launching “Be Heard” reporting system. This reporting system will allow parents to be able to provide instant feedback and pictures by clicking on the website. Aramark will then review and respond to the reported concern.

Ms. Martin requested that this be available on all Lowell Public Schools social media platforms.

Ms. Thompson asked when a comment is made where does it land...Aramark or Administration.

Dr. Hall responded that it is still being built, but will make the suggestion to Aramark to have it go to both.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 7.1 through 7.4 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

9.7. Home Education

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

Toi Sisomphou

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

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1. Consideration of City of Lowell Health Officials’ Recommended Updates to COVID-19 Testing Protocols

Ms. Golden, Director HHS informed the Committee that the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) has provided school districts with two (2) choices related to COVID testing within schools. She stated on Wednesday, January 19, 2022, a DESE webinar explained the new COVID testing choices and that the district needs to choose one (1) of these testing programs as a school system. The current program has been used by Lowell Public Schools (LPS) since early 2021. This includes: obtaining consents, pool testing, reflex testing, test and stay, and symptomatic testing. To date LPS has done 14,950 test and stay and we have received only 273 positive results, this is less than 2%. The City of Lowell Health Official’s at this time strongly recommend following the below resolution:

- Follow the recommendation of Governor Baker & Commissioner Riley.
- Shift to symptomatic testing. We should not be testing asymptomatic people. This is not done for any other virus.
- Stop pool testing.
- Open line of communication with parents.



- Follow the guidelines that have always been in place – stay home if you are sick. Return when symptoms have improved and when you are fever free for 24 hours without fever-reducing medication. As the year continues the School Nurses need to complete their State mandated programs including Hearing and vision, Immunization reminders, BMI screenings, Postural, and SPIRT. We have hired 10 new nurses who each need to attend four State Mandated professional days. The Lowell Health Department will only support symptomatic testing and at home weekly testing

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to approve to approve shifting to symptomatic testing and stopping pool testing; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.2. Request for Approval of Unaffiliated Pay Raises

Mr. Descoteaux made a motion to approve the unaffiliated pay raises as written which include the substitute teaching rate and the tutor rate; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.3. Budget Transfer

Ms. Doherty requested more information at the next School Committee meeting on the Public Consulting Group and what will be covered/included in the Family Resource Audit.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve the budget transfer of \$84,174; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.4. Approval of UMass Lowell Research Proposal: Fred Martin

Mr. Skinner, Chief School Officer requested approval for Fred Martin, an Associate Dean for Teaching, Learning, and Undergraduate Studies, Kennedy College of Sciences and a Professor of Computer Science at the University of Massachusetts Lowell. Mr. Martin is working with Carolyn Rocheleau on offering an afterschool program at the Bartlett School to teach Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning to approximately 15-20 7th and 8th graders. In the context of a six-week afterschool program for middle school students (grades 7 & 8), the study aims to demonstrate that students can understand applications of artificial intelligence, how machine learning algorithms operate, and ethical considerations regarding use of these tools. The study will also examine how the curriculum influences their interest in these technologies and in STEM careers. The participants will meet twice a week for the duration of their respective program.

Ms. Thompson shared her concerns around data and how the data is being protected and asked that it be monitored.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve UMass Lowell Research Proposal: Fred Martin; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED



11. COMMUNICATIONS

11.1. Letter from McAuliffe Families

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

11.2. Memo from Chief Schools Officer Requesting a Meeting of the School Improvement and Performance Management Subcommittee

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve having a School Improvement and Performance Management Subcommittee meeting; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

12. CONVENTION/CONFERENCE REQUESTS

12.1. Out of State and Overnight Travel Request: Nashville, TN: If COVID-19 restrictions and related district circumstances allow, the Superintendent plans to attend the 2022 American Association of School Administrators' National Conference on Education to be held in Nashville, TN from Thursday, February 17, 2022 through Saturday, February 19, 2022. The cost of the conference and lodging, and airfare not to exceed \$3,500.00 and will be paid by the District's Professional Development funds. The cost of meals \$50/day expense will not exceed \$200.00.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve the conference request; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 7 yeas APPROVED

13. PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

13.1. The Members of the United Teachers of Lowell Hereby Donate Twenty-Two [22] Sick Leave Days to Elizabeth Madden Wang School Teacher.

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

Ms. Thompson took a point of personal privilege and stated that we are in day two (2) of Black History month and she acknowledged that for the first time in Lowell's history we have a black woman and man in the electric. She also reminded the public about the flag raising on Saturday.



14. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lay made a motion to adjourn at 8:47 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

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

JDB/mes