



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Henry J. Mroz Administration Office
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Mayor and Chairperson

Andre P. Descoteaux
Vice-Chairperson

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

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Policy Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, February 19, 2020
City Hall – Council Chamber
6:00 p.m.

Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Jackie Doherty, Mike Dillon Jr. and Connie Martin
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 Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer

Chairperson Doherty called the meeting to order at 6:09 p.m. The following agenda item was discussed:

1. 2020-2021 School Calendar

Ms. Doherty asked Ms. Phillips to address the Subcommittee. Ms. Phillips spoke about the proposed 2020-2021 school year calendar and the two (2) versions that were presented. Ms. Phillips stated that she was originally looking for approval of Option A, but after receiving feedback she would like Option A to be amended and approved with the changes that Ms. Desmond will address. Ms. Desmond stated that that the district was notified that they will no longer be able to participate in alternative learning days if we have significant weather related cancellations. She stated that the State advised the district that we should extend the additional five (5) days that we built into the calendar to ten (10) days. Ms. Desmond stated that that due to the fact that Labor Day falls so late this year (September 7th) the district would have had to return on August 24th if the ten (10) days were in fact included. Ms. Desmond recommended approving the amended Option A. The amended Option A states that the district would return

on Monday, August 31, 2020 due to contractual language (which is the Monday before Labor Day) and includes five (5) snow days which would bring the school year to June 28th.

Ms. Martin asked if we could send out a survey asking staff and families what they believe would be most effective in order to narrow down the options and to get a plurality of opinion. She stated that she believes this is the most effective and valuable way to get the information from the people impacted by it.

Mr. Dillon asked if there has been any talk about the day before Thanksgiving and Good Friday and swapping them out.

Ms. Phillips stated that those are flexibilities within the calendar process. The Wednesday before Thanksgiving is a short day for schools and central office works a full day. She stated that Good Friday has been a long standing day off, but the district has received feedback that we are becoming very diverse and we should consider multiple cultural and religious beliefs.

Mr. Hoey asked the Superintendent what he is recommending.

Superintendent Boyd stated that that UTL received these options prior to the meeting and that he has spoken with them about the contract language specifically. He stated that he believes there is value in what Ms. Martin stated and to run an expedited survey. The message he has been receiving from families is that they need to know as early as possible to plan their summer vacations and camps for their children.

Ms. Martin stated that if we are going to move forward with the survey we should include Good Friday and the day before Thanksgiving as well as give the UTL a way to be involved.

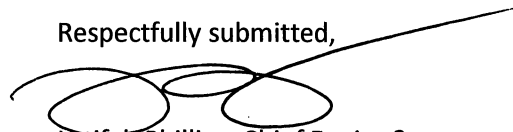
Mr. Descoteaux stated that he thinks that including Good Friday could cause a lot of teachers to still take the day off.

Mr. Dillon asked if the elections are reversible and suggested that we look into that.

Ms. Martin made a motion to have the administration send out a survey to our families and staff to determine preferences for the FY2020 - 2021 school year around start dates, end dates and various holidays (half day before Thanksgiving and Good Friday) as was discussed; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 3 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 6:31 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Descoteaux. 3 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,



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

LP/mes