



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date:	April 5, 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 6:36 p.m., members present were, namely: Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun, Ms. Delrossi, Ms. Doherty and Mr. Lay.

3. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

3.1. Spotlight On Excellence – Early College at LHS

The Spotlight on Excellence presentation featured Lowell High School’s Early College program which is a dynamic educational opportunity open to all Lowell High School students and Early College (EC) regardless of what they plan to do after graduation. In 2018, Lowell Public Schools, in conjunction with Project Learn and Middlesex Community College (MCC), was awarded an EC designation from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE), and the Massachusetts Department of Higher Education. Since that time, Lowell High School (LHS) has worked in partnership with MCC and Project Learn to expand EC offerings to LHS students. EC Lowell students take enriching college-level courses while enrolled in high school, earn real 30 college credits, and get an early start on their post-secondary education and career—at no cost to them or their families. This work begins in a student’s freshman year when they have the opportunity to take 1-credit interdisciplinary courses that center on career exploration and introduce students to LHS’ academic pathways. At present, LHS offers eleven (11) EC courses and anticipates offering three (3) additional courses next year. Mr. Fiato, Head of School and Ms. Nunn spoke about the program to the Committee. Mayor Chau thanked all involved.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to suspend the rules to take item # 7.2 & # 9.2 out of order; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED



4. MINUTES

4.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, March 15, 2023

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meeting that was held on Wednesday, March 15, 2023; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

5. PERMISSION TO ENTER

5.1. Permission to Enter: April 5, 2023

Ms. Doherty stated that she wanted a scope and timeline on audit.

Ms. Martin stated that the same process should be followed that is currently being followed for the HR investigation.

Ms. Martin made a motion to have CLIFTONLARSEN LLP report to the Human Resources & Labor Relations Subcommittee to explore the same path as the current HR investigation; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

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

6. MEMORIALS

6.1. **Judith A. "Judy" [McCluskey] Flood**, A Retired Lowell High School Guidance Counselor

6.2. **M. Roberta "Bobbie" (Mulvey) (McDermott) Galvin**, Retired Title One Executive Secretary and Mother of Moody School Principal, Roberta [Robbie] Keefe and Grandmother of Kathleen Keefe, Teacher at Lowell High School, Courtney Keefe, Teacher at the Bailey School and Kara Keefe Mullin, Former Assistant City Manager

7. MOTIONS

7.1. **[By Susie Chhoun]**: Request the Superintendent to look into the safety of playgrounds and play structures.

Ms. Chhoun also requested that the report include who is responsible for the play structures.

Mr. Lay asked that the report include updates to the basketball courts, tennis courts and playgrounds.

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



7.2. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Superintendent provide the committee with a plan to provide free feminine hygiene products in the girls' restrooms at Lowell High School and all middle schools beginning in the fall of 2023. The plan should provide for products that are of good quality, and varied types and sizes; containers to house the products that can be installed in the restrooms and replenished as needed; as well as disposal containers for used products.

The following speakers spoke in favor of this motion: Ms. Cruz, Ms. DaSiviva and Ms. Clark.

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

7.3. [By Mayor Sokhary Chau]: Request the Superintendent research the feasibility of adding a line item in the FY24 budget to support the cost of field trips for students for next school year.

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

8. SUBCOMMITTEES

8.1. Special Education Subcommittee Meeting: Report and Approval of the Meeting of Wednesday, March 22, 2023 [Eileen DelRossi, Chairperson]

Chairperson Delrossi, informed the Committee that a presentation was presented to the subcommittee that covered special education departmental updates on professional development that has occurred. She then spoke about the Laura Lee Therapeutic Day School and stated that the building was built in 1900 and was last renovated in the 1980s. She stated that water in the basement is common and that the handicap ramp is only accessible for the 1st floor. She stated that the report noted concerns around the exhaust system as well as the DPW's concerns about the building and upkeep moving forward.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to look at options for the Laura Lee to either repair or look elsewhere for an adequate facility; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Delrossi made a motion for an updated repair report on the Laura Lee so that the Committee can have accurate data; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms Delrossi made a motion that the district review student needs so we are sure we are servicing and supporting all of our student's needs; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

8.2. School Improvement & Performance Management Subcommittee: Report and Approval of the Meeting of Monday, March 27, 2023 [Dominik H. Lay, Chairperson]

Chairperson Lay, informed the Committee about the teacher and support staff survey. He stated that the Lowell Public Schools and UMass Lowell are working in partnership around the data dashboard and a survey was created by the Massachusetts Consortium for Innovating Education Assessment that the



district is currently using. The survey is a series of questions that all teachers can respond to and it is implemented across all schools. He stated that the results are on the data dashboard. Chairperson Lay also spoke about KPI's and stated that the report provided to the subcommittee contained data around academic and student achievement, safe and welcoming environment, operational efficiency, and family, and community engagement. He stated that they have also added a comparison point from last year to the report.

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

8.3. Human Resources and Labor Relations Subcommittee: Report and Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, March 29, 2023 [Connie Martin, Chairperson]

Chairperson Martin, informed the Committee that the subcommittee met with the law firm (BHPK) doing the human resources investigation. She stated that the attorney stated that they have not received all of the material from the City of Lowell's law department. She stated that BHPK will schedule and speak with the complainants and try to understand the scope of this investigation. She stated that BHPK plans to start scheduling and conducting interviews by April 10, 2023. She stated that BHPK plans on giving the Committee a report by May 1st. Chairperson Martin stated that the contact email for employees to reach out to them is investigations@BHPKlaw.com and that it is a direct link.

Ms. Doherty stated that she would like to make a motion to have Attorney Mosher-Canty, a twenty (20) year employee with the school department be the contact person for BHPK. She also asked for the email to be put on the Lowell Public School website.

Superintendent Boyd stated that Attorney Mosher-Canty works for Dr. Hall so he will provide two (2) other alternatives to be the contact.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to have/explore Attorney Jane Mosher-Canty be the contact person for BHPK; seconded by Ms. Martin. 3 yeas, 1 nay (Mr. Lay), 3 present (Mayor Chau, Ms. Chhoun, Ms. Delrossi) FAILS

Ms. Doherty made a motion to have/explore Attorney Jane Mosher-Canty be the contact person for BHPK or the two (2) other alternative names supplied by Superintendent Boyd and to look at the feasibility/legality of such; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Martin asked for the Superintendent to poll the Committee to hold a special meeting next week.

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

8.4. Joint Curriculum & Policy Subcommittee Meeting: Report of the Meeting of Thursday, March 30, 2023 [Jackie Doherty, Chairperson, Connie Martin, Chairperson]

Chairperson Doherty stated that there are currently six (6) middle schools with health teachers and the amount of time dedicated for health classes differs between schools. She stated that class periods



range from fifty (50) minutes to sixty (60) minutes and that the health teachers follow the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Standards for Health Education. She stated that the standards are twenty-four (24) years old and they don't address issues like vaping. She stated that the wish of the subcommittee is to have all middle schools have a middle school teacher.

Ms. Doherty made a motion that a certified health teacher be in every middle school; seconded by Ms., Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty then spoke about communications appearing on the Committee's agenda and that Ms. Phillips will be providing more information or a policy around that at an upcoming meeting.

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

8.5. Facilities & Transportation Subcommittee: Report of the Meeting of Wednesday, March 30, 2023
[Jackie Doherty, Chairperson]

Chairperson Doherty spoke about the Cawley Stadium project and stated it is on target to be ready by the fall of 2023. She then spoke about the STEM Academy Modular Project. She stated that the OPM has proposed contracting with the architect who could conduct work under the OPM's contract and that the cost estimate should be within ten (10) to fourteen (14) days and that the work is expected to provide the Committee with more exact information on where the modulares could be located and how many modulares could be acquired for \$5,300,000.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to look at the options for space/modulars at the STEM Academy; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

Ms. Doherty then spoke about the Wang School and stated that it is finished with the exception of installing baseboards in the hallways.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

9. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

9.1. Update on FY24 Budget

The update on the FY24 budget will be discussed at the upcoming Finance Subcommittee meeting.

Ms. Doherty asked that she would like to see what is specifically being done for the alternative schools and believes more needs to be done.

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



9.2. Update on Secondary School Redesign

Mr. Fiato, Head of School provided an overview that included an update on the multi-year, Secondary School Reform initiative, including (1) an update on student level data including progress, outcomes, and next steps; (2) update on secondary school reform, including instructional redesign and post-secondary pathways, aligned and informed by the Portrait of a Graduate (PoG); and (3) next steps for continuous improvement

Ms. Doherty stated that previously the district's dropout rates were always out ahead of comparable districts, but now we are behind those cities. She stated that it is not on Mr. Fiato, but asked what we are offering. She stated that in 2017, the district made a great deal of effort and asked how as a district we are going to turn this around. She asked how we are putting out those resources.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to refer this to the College and Career Readiness Subcommittee for further discussion; seconded by Ms. Martin. 7 yeas APPROVED

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

9.3. Response to Motion 28. COO of 05/15/23 by Stacey Thompson Regarding Human Resources Staff Trainings

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer provided a listing of each current HR employee's reported training from 2020 to the present.

Ms. Thompson stated that she is looking for anti-racist training and will continue to monitor.

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

9.4 Response to Motion 04. CSO of 03/01/23 by Jackie Doherty Regarding Summer Program Data

Mr. Skinner, Chief Schools Officer provided data to the Committee around the school attended, number of students attending for credit recovery, credit recovery students who completed the summer program, and number of students in summer credit recovery and how many were retained. Mr. Skinner stated that there are at least two (2) important areas for consideration to put the data above in context: why retention is often avoided and what happens, in lieu of retention, to support the student.

Ms. Doherty asked how we obtained the attendance data.

Mr. Skinner stated that the Principals sent it.

Ms. Doherty responded that it wasn't collected by central? She stated that it was an exception that was made last year if the students were credit recovery. She stated that we tell kids that they need to go to summer school, but then they still get promoted if they don't have good attendance, etc. She stated that it's concerning.



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

9.5. Update to Motion 02. CAO of 05/04/22 by Stacey Thompson Regarding Financial Wellness Curriculum

Ms. Desmond, Chief Academic Officer provided a report that informed the Committee the development of a financial wellness curriculum is happening and the several individuals have agreed to participate in a working group to support the development of a Financial Literacy curriculum. The working group will be meeting on Monday April 3, 2023, Wednesday May 1, 2023 and Thursday June, 2023.

Ms. Thompson stated that she is excited to see this and that we're educating students as whole. She asked who someone could contact if they want to be involved.

Ms. Desmond stated that it's just starting.

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

9.6. Response to Motion 03. CSO of 11/02/22 by Jackie Doherty Regarding Ninth Graders Failing One or More Core Courses

Mr. Skinner, Chief Schools Officer provided a report regarding 9th graders failing one (1) or more classes by the end of the second quarter (January 2023). The report stated that presently there are 977 9th grade students. He stated that 857 students are first time students and 120 are 9th grade repeaters.

Ms. Doherty stated that the take away from the report provided is that there is improvement.

Ms. Thompson stated that 25% failing is alarming and asked how we disaggregate data and if we do it by culture and McKinney Vento. She asked if community organizations have access to the data.

Mr. Skinner stated that information exists and that they're working with the high school leadership. He stated that they're working with the Freshman Academy on students who are failing core classes.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to receive a report on the disaggregate data by culture and by McKinney Vento; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

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

9.7. Home Education

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

Erin Tuleja
Angela Rivera



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

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1. Budget Transfer

Ms. Doherty asked if any of this transfer was for the bad bills.

Ms. Turner responded no, they're not included.

Ms. Martin asked why we could not be present at the last city council meeting to discuss the bad bills.

Ms. Turner stated that Councilor Gitchier wanted to see more detailed information and we are still waiting to receive that from the vendor.

Ms. Martin asked when we will be receiving it.

Ms. Turner stated soon and that she hopes by Friday.

Ms. Martin asked if we had copies of this.

Ms. Turner stated that we do, but they don't indicate dates of service. She stated that Councilor Scott asked if we vet the bills and Ms. Turner stated that we do.

Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the budget transfer of 5,408,654.64; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.2. Approval to Accept and Expend Allocated FY23 Awards

Ms. Turner, Chief Financial Officer requested the Committee approve and accept these funds that include Federal and State awards.

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

10.3. 2023-2024 School Committee Meeting Dates

Please note that the June 19, 2024 will be marked TBD, due to the fact that it is Juneteenth Day.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve the 2023-2024 School Committee meeting dates; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.4. Vote to Accept a Donation of \$10,000 from the Billi Marcus Foundation Inc.

The Billi Marcus Foundation, Inc. wishes to donate \$10,000 to support the Daley School's physical education department and school gym,.



Ms. Thompson made a motion to accept the donation from the Billi Marcus Foundation, Inc.; seconded by Mr. Lay. 7 yeas APPROVED

10.5. Approval of a Doctoral Research Proposal: Dr. Justin Garwood and the University of Vermont

Dr. Justin Garwood is employed at The University of Vermont and through a sponsorship with the U.S. Department of Education, is studying teacher burnout and the impact on behavior. The main purpose of this survey is to better understand the risks factors that contribute to burnout of special education teachers and, how a teacher's feelings of burnout may impact their ability to deliver effective behavior interventions to students with disabilities. The PI intends to conduct a multi-phase mixed methods investigation to determine what can be done to prevent and remediate special educator burnout. The evidence-based practice movement is designed to identify and promote the use of practices in schools with sufficient backing in high-quality research. The focus by national education agencies (e.g., Institute of Education Sciences) on identifying, validating, and scaling up effective school-based interventions has come along with a concern about teachers' abilities to implement procedures with fidelity. The current situation in the field of special education is precarious: serving students with EBD can lead to stress and burnout, which in turn leads to struggles with FOI in behavior interventions, which then causes more distress as behaviors among students do not improve. If this negative cycle is to be broken, there needs to be an examination of the malleable factors that influence teacher burnout along with an in-depth inquiry into the specific mechanisms within burnout that trigger teachers' low FOI of behavior interventions. The PI will address these gaps in Project Burn and Turn.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve the Doctoral Project by Dr. Justin Garwood and the University of Vermont; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 7 yeas APPROVED

11. CONVENTION/CONFERENCE REQUESTS

11.1. Out of State & Overnight Travel Request: For Butler Middle School Students to Travel to Washington, DC

Ms. Doherty made a motion to bundle and approve the convention/conference requests; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

11.2. Out of State & Overnight Travel Request: For Angela Say and Sophorn Keo to attend the AASPA 2023 Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Summit in Baltimore, MD

Ms. Doherty made a motion to bundle and approve the convention/conference requests; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

12. PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

12.1. The Members of the United Teachers of Lowell Hereby Donate Nineteen [19] Sick Leave Days to Donna Kelliher, Washington School Paraprofessional.

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



13. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Lay made a motion to adjourn at 9:06 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 7 yeas APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

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

JDB/mes