



**LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
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**John J. Leahy**  
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## **Policy Subcommittee Meeting**

**Andre P. Descoteaux**  
**Vice-Chairperson**

**Thursday, April 23, 2020**  
**Zoom – Virtual Meeting**  
**6:30 p.m.**

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

Subcommittee Members Present:	Chairperson Jackie Doherty, Mike Dillon Jr. and Connie Martin
School Committee Members Present:	Mayor John Leahy, Andy Descoteaux, Robert Hoey and Hilary Clark
School Department Personnel Present:	Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent of Schools Latifah Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement Officer Dr. James Hall, Chief Operating Officer Billie Jo Turner, Chief Financial Officer Robin Desmond, Chief Academic Officer Dr. Linus Guillory, Chief Schools Officer David Murphy, Strategic Plan Advisor

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**This meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the Governor of Massachusetts' March 12, 2020 order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law G.L. 30A, Section 20.**

Chairperson Doherty called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. The following agenda item was discussed:

**1. Lowell Public Schools Developing Strategic Plan: Review of Proposed Strategic Priorities and Associated Objectives**

Ms. Doherty asked Superintendent Boyd to address the Subcommittee about the Strategic Planning Draft Update. Superintendent Boyd informed the Subcommittee that this draft version of the Strategic Plan is the plan of the community and for the community. He introduced Mr.

David Murphy, Strategic Plan Advisor and stated that he believes that it was very important to have Mr. Murphy as a third party involved with this plan. He spoke about the closing of schools for the remainder of the school year due to the Coronavirus and how the economic fallout has not been felt yet. He stated that the State is down \$900 million dollars this year and projected to be down \$4 - \$6 billion dollars next year. He stated that originally this plan was a long term plan, but due to the issues the district is now facing we are shifting to a one (1) year plan as we move forward and looking for guidance from the Subcommittee. He stated that since the closure the district has served over 120,000 meals and delivered over 3000 chrome books, with another round of distribution planned. He stated that the district has been able to reach 99% of our families and have been tracking attendance and engagement. He concluded by saying that he and his team are working on a plan for when students return in the fall.

Ms. Phillips then addressed the Subcommittee and stated that the final version of the Strategic Plan will be a forty (40) page document, and that tonight's presentation is a high level summary on which she is looking to receive feedback from the Subcommittee. She stated the following:

Developing Strategic Plan - Process and Sequence Check: How the four (4) proposed Strategic Priorities were arrived at:

- Spring 2019: Superintendent Hiring Process: Mandate to develop strategies to close opportunity gaps and cultivate more equitable learning environment for all students.
- July 2019 – January 2020: Accumulation of information on district's strengths , challenges, and opportunities through hundreds of stakeholder meetings, including nearly sixty (60) listening sessions with staff, over forty (40) gatherings with external partners and community representatives, and one hundred (100) school visits in the first one hundred (100) school days.
- October – December 2019; Strategic Planning Goal and Priority Setting: Development of Core Beliefs, Fundamental Commitments and the broad goals and specific priorities thought necessary to bring about the sustainable improvements to LPS based on achievement data and trajectories.
- January – March 2020 School Community Visits: Discussed developing priority and goal areas in dozens of meetings across over twenty (20) schools to hear from frontline educators. She concluded by saying that the overarching goals are to improve academic achievement at every LPS site, ensure that every LPS enjoys a safe and welcoming culture, improve operational efficiency across LPS and increase LPS community engagement and empower families as partners. Ms. Phillips then introduced Mr. Murphy.

Mr. Murphy stated that he has coordinated and talked through each priority with all stakeholders. He spoke about the following Strategic Priorities that including why each strategic plan is needed, Lowell Public School's current strengths within each priority and action steps for each priority:

Strategic Priority # 1: Increase access to and coordination of early learning opportunities for children from birth to age five (5) by supporting the work of community partners to ensure that every child in Lowell is academically, emotionally, and socially prepared for Kindergarten.

Strategic Priority # 2: Increase access for all students to high performing seats through the continuous improvement of all schools, the expansion of high demand programs, and an intensive focus on turning around historically underperforming schools. \*\*Developing a consensus definition of high quality leading to more equitable access.

Ms. Martin and Ms. Doherty both stated that they would like to have more information on social emotional learning and the mental health component, because they believe there is a difference between social emotional learning and mental health needs and they view them as separate issues.

Strategic Priority # 3: Align secondary school curriculum and programs for all students with post-secondary opportunities so that they are college, career, and life ready upon graduation. \*\*Implement a comprehensive high school redesign program with rigor reflective of the challenges students will encounter as graduates and that is relevant to the skills that post-secondary opportunities will demand. The foundation of that redesign process will be grounded in the cultivation of meaningful relationships between students and the educators who will guide them through three (3) interest-based pathways.

Strategic Priority # 4: Leverage the rich diversity that defines the Lowell community through a fundamental commitment to equity so that all students access the full benefits of growing up in a truly global community.

Mr. Descoteaux asked about the high school project and how the Coronavirus could impact students.

Ms. Phillips stated that it will be included in the longer version that will be shared with the Committee.

Ms. Martin stated that the draft plan was presented to the Committee in a great structure and believed it is a really effective way to communicate this.

Mr. Hoey stated that he is very pleased with the administration, all the meals being served and all the chrome books being delivered to our students. He also stated that we need to focus on wellness.

Mr. Dillon stated that he believes discipline is an issue and that discipline and opportunity go together and that we need to give students every possible opportunity in Early Childhood and after school activities such as Arts and Athletics.

Ms. Clark stated that a lot of good information was shared tonight and with the unknowns of next year we can continue to work on a strategic approach with our relationships and believes we can make great strides without a lot of money.

Mayor Leahy spoke about the cost of transportation with regards to expanding Early Childhood and believes we need more supports for teachers.

**Ms. Martin made a motion to recommend to the full Committee to approve moving forward with a one (1) year Strategic Plan with more specifics to come; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 3 yeas APPROVED**

**Ms. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 7:50 p.m.; seconded by Mr. Dillon. 3 yeas APPROVED**

Respectfully submitted,

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

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