



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE

REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Date:	May 3, 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 6:37 p.m., members present were, namely: Mr. Lay, Ms. Martin, Ms. Thompson, Ms. Chhoun, Ms. Delrossi and Ms. Doherty. Mayor Chau was absent.

3. SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

3.1. Spotlight On Excellence – Science and Engineering Fair Winners

The Spotlight on Excellence presentation features the 2023 Science and Engineering Fair that was held of February 15, 2023 at Lowell High School. The winners from Middle School were Feliciano and Yeirideliz Maria whose project was titled "Water Quality in Our School Sapphire." They stated that they did this project because students and teachers have been concerned about the water because of the different colors and tastes as well if the school water was safe enough for the younger students to drink. The data that collected informed them about the level of chemicals in the water in each classroom. The results of this experiment showed that the school water is healthy enough to drink. The winners from Lowell High School was Tiffany Tran. Her project "Harnessing the Intelligence of Physarum polycephalum to 'Mold' a Better Society", researches the foraging behavior of brainless slime molds. Pieces of these bright yellow protists were placed in simple mazes and complex mazes, and after the pieces fused together, oats were placed at either end of the maze. The slime mold was capable of finding the shortest path and solving the maze at least half of the time in both the simple and complex mazes. The slime mold behavior was compared with models of actual transportation networks of Massachusetts, America, and Africa. In the future, we can apply the "intelligence" of slime molds to map out transportation networks in developing countries, as well as creating a mathematical model to explain the similarity between the movement of slime molds and cancer tumors.

Committee members congratulated and thanked the students for their hard work.



4. MINUTES

4.1. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, April 12, 2023

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special and the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 and Wednesday, April 19, 2023; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 years, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

4.2. Approval of the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special and the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 and Wednesday, April 19, 2023; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 years, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

4.3. Approval of the Minutes of the Regularly Scheduled Lowell School Committee Meeting of Wednesday, April 19, 2023

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to accept and place on file the minutes of the Special and the Regularly Scheduled School Committee Meetings that were held on Wednesday, April 12, 2023 and Wednesday, April 19, 2023; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 years, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

5. PERMISSION TO ENTER

5.1. Permission to Enter: May 3, 2023

Ms. Martin made a motion to approve the Permission to Enter; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 years, 1 absent (Mayor Chau). APPROVED

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

6.1. Discussion and Deliberation of Options and Timeline for the Hiring an Interim Superintendent, Review of Job Description and Consideration of Guidance from MASC

Ms. Martin recommended that we reach out to Mr. Koocher, from Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and see if they can be the consultant and update the job description.

Ms. Thompson requested that DEIB be added to the job description.

Ms. Martin made a motion to reach out to Mr. Koocher, from Massachusetts Association of School Committees (MASC) and see if they can be the consultant and update the job description and provide a timeline and posting as soon as possible; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 years, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

Ms. Doherty asked if the administration can check and see if Mr. Koocher can provide it by next Wednesday.



6.2. Update from Brody, Hardoon, Perkins & Kesten, LLP Regarding Independent Investigation

Ms. Martin provided an update to the Committee that informed them that they have met with some complainants and have several more scheduled. BHPK requested that a cutoff date be chosen for complaints to be submitted as well as how far back complaints should be entertained. She stated that BHPK recommended May 19, 2023 as the cutoff date.

Committee members discussed how far back the lawyers should investigate claims.

Ms. Martin made a motion to have BHPK go back no longer than two (2) years to receive complaints and that no complaints before that time be investigated; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 5 yeas, 1 nay (Mr. Lay), 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

Ms. Thompson made a friendly amendment to go back five (5) years to receive complaints. The maker of the motion and Committee members did no object to going back five (5) years.

Ms. Martin made a motion to have BHPK have a deadline of May 19, 2023 and to not receive complaints after said date; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

Ms. Martin made a to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

7. MOTIONS

7.1. [By Susie Chhoun]: Request the Superintendent to take a look at the freshman academy and determine what need to be fix in order to prevent further leaks onto the hallway floor.

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

7.2. [By Eileen DelRossi and Jacqueline Doherty]: Request the Superintendent to collaborate with the curriculum department to strategically implement a strong continuous research based reading, writing, and math intervention program that involves progress monitoring for the classes of 2031 (current 4th graders) and 2032 (current 3rd graders) that will follow all of these students until they graduate high school.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Doherty. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

7.3. [By Eileen DelRossi]: Request the Superintendent to work with the facilities department to assure all middle school bathrooms' stall doors are secured, installed, and any type of negative graffiti is removed so that all students feel secure going to the bathroom.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED



7.4. [By Eileen DelRossi]: Request the Superintendent to collaborate with the Curriculum Department and Special Education Department to do an inventory of and report on all reading, writing and math programs that the district still has within the 28 schools within the district.

Ms. Martin requested this be referred to a Curriculum subcommittee. No objection from the maker of the motion or the Committee.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

7.5. [By Eileen DelRossi]: Request the Superintendent to report on the special education reading, writing, and math curriculum used in the elementary, middle school, and high school level and the equity of the staff having access to these curriculums throughout the district.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

7.6. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Superintendent provide the committee with a report on the three windowless rooms in the 1980 LHS building with air-quality issues. The report should include testing dates, times, and results over the current school year, as well as what is being done to mitigate the “continued high-level readings” as reported at the Lowell Board of Health’s April meeting.

Ms. Doherty made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

7.7. [By Jackie Doherty]: Request the Superintendent provide the committee with an update on current usage of the TV studio at LHS with a plan to increase it, as well as a plan to return to using the broadcast-equipped room at Central Office to hold school board subcommittee meetings as soon as possible.

Ms. Delrossi made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

8. SUBCOMMITTEES

8.1. Finance Subcommittee: Report and approval of the Meeting of Thursday, April 20, 2023 [Dominik Lay, Chairperson]

Chairperson Lay provided an update stating that the budget landscape includes funding sources that include state/local aid, grants and offsets using revolving accounts. He spoke about Fair Student Funding (FSF) growth from FY22 to FY24. Mr. Lay stated that the budget draft book was provided to the Committee and uploaded. He stated that there are upcoming public hearings.

Mr. Lay made a to accept the report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED



9. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

9.1. FY24 Recommended Budget

Ms. Turner, Chief Financial Officer provided the operating budget for FY24 to the Committee. The annual budget is the District's one-year financial plan for operationalizing the next phase of the district's multi-year strategic plan. The budget has been built over the course of five (5) months with direct input from internal and external stakeholders, leveraging the combined benefits of the Student Opportunity Act and the federal Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief fund. The FY24 budget has been prioritized to achieve four districtwide, strategic goals:

- Improving academics and student achievement at all school sites,
- Improving operational efficiency across the system,
- Ensuring that all schools are safe and welcoming for all students and families, and
- Increasing the level of family and community engagement across the district.

Ms. Turner will be sharing a more in depth discussion around the budget tomorrow night at the budget hearing.

Mr. Lay made a motion to accept the following Reports of the Superintendent 9.1 and 9.2 as reports of progress; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

9.2. Update Regarding Response to Motion: Ninth Graders Failing One or More Class

Mr. Skinner, Chief Schools Officer provided an update to the Committee. The update reports that the disaggregated data requested states that presently there are 977 grade nine (2) students and of those, 857 are first time freshmen and 120 are 9th grade repeaters. A ninth grade repeater is a student who either does not earn enough credits during their freshman year at LHS or who enters from another district without the credits and course work needed to be considered a sophomore. The report states that credit recovery programs began prior to and during February vacation and will remain in effect through June. The report states that support is offered before school, after school and on Saturdays. Additionally, students have the opportunity to engage in credit recovery over April vacation and the district is offering a variety of credit recovery courses levels.

Ms. Thompson stated the number of 9th graders failing is scary.

Ms. Doherty asked what is being done to help these students.

Ms. Thompson made a motion to receive quarterly information on the 9th graders failing one (1) or more classes and asked that the report include if they are in danger; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED



9.3. Home Education

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

Kesia Castillo Abruzzio
Barbara Anstiss

Ms. Chhoun made a motion to approve; seconded by Ms. Thompson. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

10. NEW BUSINESS

10.1. 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. Martin made a motion to approve, accept and expend the allocated FY23 awards; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

11. CONVENTION/CONFERENCE REQUESTS

11.1. Out of Country and Overnight Travel Request: For Lowell High School Students and Chaperones to Travel to Japan

Ms. Thompson made a motion to bundle and approve the convention/conference requests; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

11.2. Out of State & Overnight Travel Request: For Carolyn Rocheleau to Travel to New Orleans, LA

Ms. Thompson made a motion to bundle and approve the convention/conference requests; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

11.3. Out of State & Overnight Travel Request: Lowell High School Portrait of Graduate to Travel to Portland, Maine

Ms. Thompson made a motion to bundle and approve the convention/conference requests; seconded by Ms. Chhoun. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

Ms. Thompson made a motion to hold a Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee for student leaders from Project Learn on anti-racism; seconded by Ms. Martin. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED



12. PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL

12.1. The Members of the United Teachers of Lowell Hereby Donate Five [5] Sick Leave Days to Mark Pratt, Butler School Building Service Employee

Ms. Martin made a motion to bundle and approve the professional personnel requests; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

12.2. The Members of the United Teachers of Lowell Hereby Donate Forty [40] Sick Leave Days to Kristen Colon, Lowell High School Teacher

Ms. Martin made a motion to bundle and approve the professional personnel requests; seconded by Mr. Lay. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

13. ADJOURNMENT

Ms. Martin made a motion to adjourn at 8:00 p.m.; seconded by Ms. Delrossi. 6 yeas, 1 absent (Mayor Chau) APPROVED

Respectfully submitted,

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

JDB/mes