

**LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
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**Sokhary Chau**  
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**Jackie Doherty**  
**Vice-Chairperson**

**Joint Equity & Access and  
Facilities & Transportation  
Subcommittee Meeting  
Monday, October 3, 2022  
City Hall – Council Chambers  
5:30 p.m.**

**Eileen Delrossi**  
**Dominik Lay**  
**Connie A. Martin**  
**Stacey Thompson**

Equity & Access Members Present:

Chairperson Thompson and Ms. Doherty.  
Mr. Lay arrived at 5:59 p.m.

Facilities & Transportation Present:

Chairperson Doherty and Ms. Delrossi.  
Mr. Lay arrived at 5:59 p.m.

School Department Personnel Present:

Dr. Hall, Chief Operating Officer  
Ms. Phillips, Chief Equity & Engagement  
Officer  
Mr. Descoteaux, Transportation Director

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Chairperson Doherty called the meeting to order at 5:51 p.m. The purpose of the meeting is review and discuss the following agenda item:

1. District Zones & School Assignment Patterns

Ms. Phillips addressed the Subcommittee and stated that this topic was previously discussed approximately one (1) year and seven (7) months ago and included a PowerPoint presentation. She stated that at that time the following Guiding Questions were presented:

- Does our current school assignment policy result in equitable student distribution across race, language, economic status, gender and other demographic factors?
  - Ms. Phillips added: Want to understand if there is a problem and is there diversity.
- Does our current school assignment policy result in equitable access for all student demographics to programs and choice opportunities across our district?
  - Ms. Phillips added: Understand if schools have particular programs.

- Does our current school assignment policy perpetuate inequalities across our schools?
  - Ms. Phillips added: Does some have schools with socioeconomic inequalities.
- How do we make all schools equally desirable for all students? How do we shift misperceptions of some schools?
  - Ms. Phillips added: We want all families happy.

She then went over the Desired Outcomes and asked if this is still the outcomes that the School Committee is looking for:

- For all students to attend schools that are reflective of Lowell's rich diversity (race, language, culture, socio economics, etc.).
- For all students and families to have satisfaction in their school assignment in meeting their needs as learners and community members.
- For all students to have access to the wide range of quality services and programs across schools.

She discussed the elementary school landscape and the feeder schools. The presentation also included a map of the district with the zones highlighted in different colors. She stated that when many families are registering their children the questions most often asked are about the middle school feeder schools and if transportation is provided for that school. She stated that families find the two (2) mile regulation an incredible hardship. She stated that a formal RFP needs to look at enrollment for the entire city (including private schools, charter schools and home schooling).

Mr. Descoteaux then addressed the Subcommittee and stated that the district is comprised of two (2) zones and the district uses a three (3) tier system for transportation. He stated that according to Massachusetts General Law, if we transport students to citywide schools we have to provide transportation to the private and charter schools. He stated that the higher cost for transportation is associated with the district's citywide schools. He spoke about a presentation that was presented previously discussing algorithms on both sides of the bridges and the cost savings that could be close to \$4.9 million dollars and reduce your student mileage component.

Ms. Doherty spoke about equity across the city and asked if each zone could have a citywide school.

Mr. Descoteaux responded that it could and each grade would have to be equitable.

Ms. Phillips stated that presently the only citywide school that has a lottery is the Pyne/Arts school and that all other citywide schools have available seats.

Ms. Delrossi stated that in terms of programming the district needs to address the gaps and needs to streamline the programming for elementary and middle schools.

Mr. Descoteaux responded and stated that this is a good point. He also stated that all special needs transportation is citywide as well.

Ms. Thompson stated that the breakdowns show some diversity, but are not all equitable and although two (2) miles is the standard in urban settings she doesn't believe that two (2) miles is safe in Lowell. She stated that there has been an increase in walkability in Cambodia town, but not citywide.

Ms. Phillips asked what we want the external consultants to analyze.

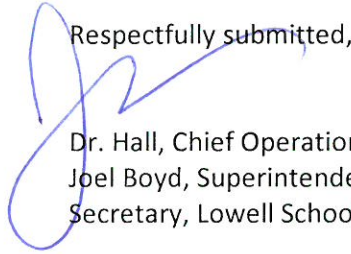
Dr. Hall asked if we should have the City Solicitor advise the district before we start the RFP process.

Ms. Doherty stated that the primary focus is what is best for our families.

**Ms. Thompson made a motion to recommend the administration come back to the Committee with a scope for an RFP as well as seek advice from the City Solicitor; seconded by Mr. Lay. 4 yeas APPROVED**

**Ms. Delrossi made a motion to adjourn at 6:29 p.m.; seconded by Chairperson Thompson. 4 yeas APPROVED**

Respectfully submitted,



Dr. Hall, Chief Operations Officer for Dr. Joel Boyd, Superintendent and Secretary, Lowell School Committee

JPH/mes