

March 10, 2020

## **Minutes of the Lawrence Alliance for Education Board**

A meeting of the Lawrence Alliance for Education Board was held at 6:00 P.M. in the North Common Educational Complex Library, 233 Haverhill Street, with the following members present: Honorable Dan Rivera, Mayor of Lawrence, Patricia Mariano, Lawrence School Committee Member attended the meeting via phone, Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, Associate Commission for statewide support DESE, Dr. Noemi Custodia-Lora, VP of NECC Lawrence Campus and Chairman John Connolly, Executive Director of The 1647, Inc. and Joseph Trinidad, Student Representative. Absent: Julia Silverio, Lawrence City Councilor and local business owner and Jessica Andors, Executive Director for Lawrence Community Works,

Also present was Superintendent Cynthia Paris and Joan Milone, Recording Secretary for this meeting.

The Chair, John Connolly, called the meeting to order at 6:02 P.M

### **I. Pledge of Allegiance**

John Connolly held the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **II. Public Participation**

No Public Participation.

Chair Connolly recognized School Committee Member Enrique Matos in attendance.

Chair Connolly noted that the purpose of the meeting is to discuss the Student Opportunity Act, a new funding passed by DESE for school districts throughout Massachusetts.

Superintendent Paris presented an overview of the SOA guidelines, which outlines the implementation process for the LPS priorities for the funding of \$21+M the first year. The district is required to submit a 3-year plan to DESE committing to do a few things well with feedback from stakeholders by April 1, 2020 for fiscal SY20-21. The district needs to meet four commitments of the SOA within the submitted plan. She presented the three proposed LPS Priorities (Student Achievement, Support Services and Engagement) along with DESE's guidelines and the plan possibilities and ideas based on the LPS data and community needs.

Dr. Rodriguez noted for the record as a DESE employee, who will be reviewing the SOA plans, that he will participate solely as a LAE member on this subject and recuse himself from reviewing Lawrence's SOA plan.

The Superintendent noted the information is initial input; with analysis, the LAE Board will review the data at the next meeting on March 31, 2020.

Ms. Mariano referred to the 5-year strategic plan proposed a few years ago for inclusion; could Priority II-Support Services include this possibility. Superintendent Paris noted that it includes Priority II includes that as one of the considerations, but the process will narrow these down.

Chair Connolly noted the district's need to look beyond the three-year funding based on the State's funding formula's impact on years four and beyond.

Chair Connolly noted that Family Engagement is a high priority and the use of the funding for the most benefit.

Noemi Custodia-Nora arrived at 6:25 P.M.

Superintendent Paris provided a document with the list of various stakeholder groups participating with input for the plan along with the dates and times the district will be meeting with them for their input. To this date, 10 groups have provided their feedback. High school students are receiving the information but need interpretation on the priorities either through Face Time or at group meetings.

Mayor Rivera commented that the timeline is difficult to implement a 3-year plan where in the rush the district could possibly miss important priorities. Chair Connolly concurred but believes the implementation of a more understandable survey for high school students could provide significant guidelines to the district for priorities.

Dr. Rodriguez noted for information that the SOA became a law on 11/26/19 with the deadline for April 1, 2020 and it is very quick. The district's reflection to work with ongoing district structures is strong especially with the possibility to expand and there is room to elevate on the priorities already in process.

Joseph Trinidad agreed the survey be revised to a simplified version for high school students.

Chair Connolly noted that the LAE's monthly meeting is scheduled on March 11, 2020, a Special Meeting on March 31, 2020 and April 8, 2020.

Upon the recommendation of the Chair and motion made by Mayor Dan Rivera, seconded by Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, it was unanimously

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 6:45 P.M.  
meeting.

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John Connolly, Chair