

February 10, 2021

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

A virtual meeting of the Lawrence Alliance for Education Board was held at 6:00 P.M. with the following members present: Dan Rivera, CEO/President Mass Development, Julia Silverio, Lawrence City Councilor and local business owner, Jessica Andors, Executive Director for Lawrence Community Works, Patricia Mariano, Lawrence School Committee Member, Dr. Noemi Custodia-Lora, VP of NECC Lawrence Campus and Acting Chairman Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, Associate Commission for statewide support DESE.

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

The Acting Chair, Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, called the meeting to order at 6:03 P.M, and noted in accordance with the Governor's Executive Order, the meeting is being held with all Board Members, District Staff and guests remotely. Facebook is streaming the meeting live. He held the Pledge of Allegiance. Public comment may be submitted via [info@lawrenceallianceforeducation.org](mailto:info@lawrenceallianceforeducation.org) by 12 noon the day of the meeting to be included as public record.

- Report of the Chair

Earned Autonomy Update – The district will continue their work with CPRL/Columbia University. The Board was impressed with their work. An EA subcommittee meeting is scheduled on February 24.

Turnaround Plan Update – The Board voted to renew the TAP; the plan has been reviewed by the district and is currently with DESE. The Board/Subcommittee will review the draft to create a robust engagement process. The subcommittee will meet in the next month in time for an update at the March meeting.

LAE Retreat – He informed the Board that a LAE Retreat is to be scheduled for the purpose to review the roles and responsibilities of the Board, which is important for their ongoing functions.

- Superintendent's Report

Superintendent's Student Cabinet Presentation – The Superintendent introduced the members of the Student Cabinet and noted the students in attendance: Chantel Diaz, Samarra Moreira, Jasslyn Rodriguez and Joshua Figueroa. The Cabinet serves students voices in grades 9-12 to the Superintendent on relevant citywide school issues and opportunities. The Student Cabinet in attendance presented a social justice matter - Christopher Columbus Day Name Change proposal.

The Student Cabinet presented the project's timeline, the historical background for the holiday's title and proposed change. A student survey along with the support of 30 community organizations favored the change from Columbus Day to Indigenous Peoples' Day on the school calendar.

The Board were impressed with the presentation and requested that the students be more involved in future decisions.

Upon the recommendation of the Chair, a motion was made by Patricia Mariano, seconded by Julia Silverio, it was

VOTED: To accept the proposal to change Columbus Day on the school calendar to Indigenous Peoples' Day beginning the next school year.

The Vote: Yes – Noemi Custodia Lora  
Yes – Patricia Mariano  
Yes – Dan Rivera  
Yes – Julia Silverio  
Yes – Ventura Rodriguez

School-Based Supports (High Needs Update) – Asst. Superintendent Mary Toomey presented an update on the in-school learning process for the high needs students, which was to be implemented in three phases: Phase 1 - January 19, Phase 2 - February 1 and Phase 3 - March 1. The process is being held in a selected, limited and controlled approach with enhanced safety protocols. Staff members were trained on safety protocols prior to the phase start date. Dr. Toomey thanked everyone who assisted in the process to return the high-need students back to in-person learning.

Members noted the great work of the educators and leadership implementing the process to return 842 students. Julia Silverio inquired if additional compensation would be available to the teachers who agreed to come back.

Dr. Toomey noted that City statistics will determine when and what type of education will be implemented. She added that there will be a dynamic summer program for the high need students to again practice protocols for the fall. Dan Rivera noted the importance in preparing for the students' return this fall with the teachers in the classroom. Ventura Rodriguez requested clarification that teachers receive a stipend for their additional planning for remote instruction to which Dr. Toomey confirmed.

Teaching and Learning Highlights (high school and arts) – The high school team, Victor Caraballo-Anderson, Headmaster, Kevin Dean, Humanities Pathways Supervisor and Mary Alice Murdock, Campus Stem Supervisor presented an overview of the campus' major findings, effective responses and campus projections for 2021 and beyond for Cohesive and shared

leadership, Academic Achievement and Classroom practice with related videos. Mary Alice Murdock presented the same related to Student Support and Kevin Dean completed the presentation providing the overview of the findings for Student Success / Pathways to College and Careers. An MCAS task force was just organized to determine students' needs and implement strategies to meet the needs.

Members noted their concern on student attendance and suggested to implement a cohort of chronic absent students; implement strategies to return data. The Headmaster noted their concern is with the student's need versus attendance based on each student's family situation and what can be done to assist the student with his/her needs such as the partnership with the City for a work study and a possible district pilot for a mentor/mentee program.

Ventura noted and applauded the programs, expansions and strategies presented. He asked for more detail on the cohesive approach with campus programs. Headmaster Caraballo Anderson noted in creating common norms across the campus so if student transitions from one academy to another during high school the instruction is adaptable.

Superintendent Goals - Superintendent Paris summarized her goals including the members suggested feedback provided at the January meeting. Pat Mariano requested the wording of measurable be included under student achievement. The Superintendent noted this information would be included in the Turnaround Plan.

Upon the recommendation of the Chair, a motion was made by Dan Rivera, seconded by Patricia Mariano, it was

VOTED: To accept the FY21 Superintendent Goals as submitted.

The Vote: Yes – Noemi Custodia Lora  
Yes – Patricia Mariano  
Yes – Dan Rivera  
Yes – Julia Silverio  
Yes – Ventura Rodriguez

Ventura noted that the next step is to approve the evaluation timeline. He provided and reviewed a slide with a 9-Month Evaluation Cycle in order to return to a 12-month school year cycle. Noemi Custodia Lora asked if this 9-month cycle have impact on the Superintendent's contract. Ventura Rodriguez noted that contract discussions are separate.

Upon the recommendation of the Chair, a motion was made by Dan Rivera, seconded by Julia Silverio, it was

VOTED: To approve the 9-month Evaluation Cycle.

The Vote:     Yes – Noemi Custodia Lora  
                  Yes – Patricia Mariano  
                  Yes – Dan Rivera  
                  Yes – Julia Silverio  
                  Yes – Ventura Rodriguez

Dan Rivera left the meeting at 8:05 PM

Attendance/Enrollment Update / Family Survey Results - Denise Snyder provided an update since the January data. The February enrollment was 13,141 – a 2.2% decrease from 2019. She provided data on the low number of 9<sup>th</sup> grade students, which explained it was a low birth year. She also provided an update on the monthly attendance rate and presented an overview of what is considered as chronic absenteeism. She noted by data that chronic absenteeism is down from SY20 in most grades. She also provided steps of ongoing efforts the district and schools have implemented to improve attendance. Ashly Dominguez suggested possibly changing student ½ days earlier in the week to increase student attendance.

Denise Snyder presented the results from the LPS Family Experience Questionnaire – 36% response vs. last year’s 9%. She provided the pertinent data and family responses based on the presented survey. The members were pleased with the data and hope to continue to receive information from families.

Social Media Policy - Chris Markuns noted the importance of a media policy especially based on the current year. He presented a proposed policy which defines social media’s use and guidance for the district and staff. The members were asked to provide suggestions and questions for the proposed policy.

- Other

Upon the recommendation of the Chair, a motion was made by Patricia Mariano, seconded by Julia Silverio, it was

VOTED:       To approve the January 13, 2021 Regular Minutes as submitted.

The Vote:     Yes – Noemi Custodia Lora  
                  Yes – Patricia Mariano  
                  Yes – Julia Silverio  
                  Yes – Ventura Rodriguez

Ventura thanked all who presented and Ashly Dominguez for her participation.

Upon the recommendation of the Chair, a motion was made by Julia Silverio, seconded by Noemi Custodia Lora, it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 9:07 PM

The Vote: Yes – Noemi Custodia Lora  
Yes – Patricia Mariano  
Yes – Julia Silverio  
Yes – Ventura Rodriguez

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Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, Acting Chair