

February 25, 2019

### **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, Julia Silverio, Lawrence City Councilor and local business owner, Jessica Andors, Executive Director for Lawrence Community Works, Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, Associate Commission for statewide support DESE, Patricia Mariano, Lawrence School Committee member, Dr. Noemi Custodia-Lora, VP of NECC Lawrence Campus, and Chairman John Connolly, Executive Director of The 1647, Inc. Elma “Gabby” Taveras, Student Representative for the board.

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

#### Pledge of Allegiance

The meeting was called to order at 6:14 P.M. by the Chair, Mr. John Connolly; he then held the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### Public Comment

Homayan Maale, 53 Chester Street – He addressed the board for their support for the proposed 2019-20 school calendar and for their support for the teachers and the union.

Lori Burnham, VP for the LTU – On behalf of the Union, confirmed her support for the proposed 2019-20 school calendar.

Frank McLaughlin, President for the LTU – He introduced the LTU Board and they are in full support of the Superintendent and they are attending to show their support for the proposed 2019-20 school calendar.

Chair Connolly introduced and welcomed Gabby Taveras as the new student representative for the LAE Board.

#### Superintendent’s Report

100-Day Listening Tour – Superintendent Paris provided a PowerPoint presentation, which included the process, the district’s (community) strengths, emerging themes and the next steps.

She met and held conversations with students, teachers, parents, community organizations, nonprofits and businesses. The found strengths were the district’s people/staff, school level autonomy, central office’s support, social emotional learning and inclusion, Expanded-learning time, cutting edge curricula, enrichment opportunities and community partners. Emerging themes: Superintendent Paris reviewed the following: Improving teacher recruitment and retention; Strengthening systems to support at-risk students; Reshaping the high school redesign plan; and Ensuring equitable distribution of resources. She concluded in presenting the Next Steps – Look

further into what are the obstacles to accelerated student learning and with the collaboration of school leaders, the revising of the goals and objectives in the Turnaround Plan. This will become a public document and she will discuss her report with teachers and families.

The board members noted the need for teacher recruitment and retention, bilingual/bicultural teachers and local sourcing and the creation of a design plan to do this. The need to highlight the positive of the community and the students' work. The Chair noted the time and hard work of the Superintendent for this report. He also noted that these findings will be discussed within the Turnaround Plan.

### Report of the Chair

Chair Connolly began by designating members to two separate subcommittees. The members for the Chronic Absence subcommittee will be: Patricia Mariano, Jess Andors and Noemi Custodia-Lora. The Superintendent will contact you on further details. The members for the Budget Subcommittee will be: Mayor Dan Rivera, Ventura Rodriguez, Patricia Mariano, Julia Silverio and himself. These members are invited to attend the school meetings if available.

He attended his 2<sup>nd</sup> inclusion planning meeting at the Wetherbee, with very committed teachers and school leaders working to make it successful for Lawrence.

### Enrollment Presentation Update

Denise Snyder, Deputy Assistant Superintendent and Lizoette Young, Enrollment Manager for Community, Family & Student Engagement provided a PowerPoint presentation that outlined the enrollment changes by neighborhood, the current enrollment, the forecasted enrollment and the changes/adjustments the district needs to consider to accommodate the student enrollment to include: moving students to other schools, adjust school caps and their boundaries, remove a grade from a school. The Arlington Middle School has shown consistent gains in students; a proposed short-term solution is to move the Tarbox students (with parents' approval) who go to ARM, to the Up Leonard for 6-8 grade. Meetings will be held with the students' parents and principals to provide all the information. There was discussion in the possibility School Choice could assist the high enrollment and also allow the students to integrate with other school districts.

Mayor Rivera requested that this be presented to the City Council to be informed and for their support. Members suggested: School Choice option, Use of City commercial space (cost prohibited), short-term building lease, reutilize the General Donovan as a school, create a Task Force to research and address a location/space for the ARM.

Superintendent Paris noted that there will be an update with the long-term redistricting and to discuss the proposed task force.

Superintendent Goals – Chair Connolly noted that this is one step of their evaluation of the Superintendent and is the goals that advance the Superintendent's professional development.

Upon the recommendation of the Chair and motion made by Mayor Rivera, seconded by Patricia Mariano, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the Superintendent's Self-Assessment and Goals, as Submitted.

Budget Guidelines and Budget Process Update – Chair Connolly noted that this document is a general statement for the budget process. It was reviewed at the January meeting and slightly revised for approval this evening.

Upon the recommendation of the Chair and motion made by Mayor Rivera, seconded by Jess Andors, it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the FY20 Budget Guidelines and Budget Process as Submitted.

Mayor Rivera motioned as an amendment that the School Budget document mirror the City Budget document. Jess seconded. Ms. Silverio requested that building improvement be added to the third priority of “Strategic and Equitable Allocation of Resources”. Mr. Rodriguez inquired about the context “equalizing spending” on the same priority. Superintendent Paris responded that there still is a perception that some schools receive different funding than others and that is the reason that “equitable spending” is specified. Ms. Custodia-Lora referred to it as “transparency”. Chair Connolly noted the great feedback and requested to hold on its approval to add the revisions/additions and add it to the agenda for March 13 meeting. He noted that there is a professional development for the school budget, which would be well worth attending. Mayor Rivera reiterated that he requests to see the school budget set up like the City’s budget and if it is presented differently, he will not approve it. Chair Connolly noted that the budget’s template is a responsibility of the Budget Subcommittee to allow further discussion.

Upon the motion made by Mayor Rivera, seconded by Julia Silverio, it was unanimously

VOTED: To table the Budget Guidelines and Budget Process until the March 2019 meeting.

School Calendar Proposal – Superintendent Paris presented the FY’20 Proposed Districtwide Calendar including a few recommendations. The guiding principles are the acknowledgement of chronic absenteeism, teacher retention challenges, and family consideration who have multiple children with multiple school start times. The proposed districtwide calendar is recommending a later start date just prior to Labor Day, an extended December break, adopted districtwide half-day professional development dates and requested to maintain student/teacher hours. The schools will provide their proposals for this process with professional development and school autonomy within this calendar. Members agreed with the new start date. Chair Connolly noted concern with the PD days, which does not allow any professional development prior to the start of school and it restricts schools’ autonomy (limits the school’s scheduling of PD). Superintendent Paris noted that professional development is valued in the district; she continued to explain that the particular schools who provide PD prior to school start are the ones with the challenges keeping teachers. Members provided their opinion on the proposed calendar with the proposed recommendations. Chair Connolly requested more detail be added for review at March meeting to understand how schools can gain the professional development, i.e.; how they apply, how a decision is made and budgetary implications. Mr. Rodriguez requested information on how a school earns autonomy. What are the schools and EMOs plans to meet the district’s goals-they need to be accountable.

Computer Donations

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

VOTED: To approve both IPSEN's and Brosco's proposals for donations of laptops.

Adoption of Minutes

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

VOTED: To approve the Executive Session minutes of the January 9, 2019 meeting.

VOTE: Yes – Mayor Dan Rivera  
Abstain – Julia Silverio  
Abstain – Jess Andors  
Yes – Ventura Rodriguez  
Yes – Patricia Mariano  
Yes – Noemi Custodia-Lora  
Yes – John Connolly, Chair

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

VOTED: To approve the Regular Meeting minutes of the January 9, 2019 meeting.

VOTE: Yes – Mayor Dan Rivera  
Abstain – Julia Silverio  
Yes – Jess Andors  
Yes – Ventura Rodriguez  
Yes – Patricia Mariano  
Yes – Noemi Custodia-Lora  
Yes – John Connolly, Chair

The meeting adjourned at 9:00 P.M.

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John Connolly, Chair

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John Connolly, Chair