

March 31, 2020

Minutes of the Lawrence Alliance for Education Board

A virtual meeting of the Lawrence Alliance for Education Board was held at 4:00 P.M. 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.

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

The Chair, John Connolly, called the meeting to order at 4:05 P.M

I. Pledge of Allegiance

John Connolly held the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. Public Participation

The Chair read for the record the Public Participation, which was submitted through written comments via email (info@lawrenceallianceforeducation.org).

Maria Gomez – What will happen to the school children’s grades; possible to continue school through the summer; education is more important than summer activities.

Jamile Alvarez –

Marianela Rivera -

Chair Connolly noted the business to be discussed at this meeting was:

1. LPS Closure,
2. Student Opportunity Act Update
3. Turnaround Plan Update

LPS Closure – Superintendent Paris opened in noting the schools will be closed until May 8, 2020. DESE has assisted in providing guidelines for remote learning which was to connect teachers and students with the focus on the skills already covered this school year. MOUs were to proceed with remote learning. With the support of Mayor Rivera, 10,000 devices are available for LPS students. Over three days, most of the devices have been distributed to LPS families. There are additional families who need to be contacted to receive the devices. Meals are being distributed at various LPS sites. The Facilities department is continuously disinfecting all the school buildings. Central Office remains open from 7AM-3PM with most of the staff working remotely. Special Education’s team has worked towards a robust plan for these students. This plan is available on the LPS website and has been mailed out to the families.

Teachers are currently working on their students modules; the remote learning will be implemented once all the students have received a device. Communication from the district to parents is very important to have access to the resources needed at this time. Mayor Rivera provided a City update pertinent to the current Covid-19 crisis. Superintendent Paris responded to Student Representative Joseph Trinidad's concern on the plan for high school juniors and seniors who are planning or are heading to college. She noted that the LHS Team are working on the guidelines with DESE, principals and teachers for possibly an all grades "credit/no credit" option and to hopefully have an answer shortly.

Student Opportunity Act

Chair Connolly noted that at 4:25 PM, correspondence was released that DESE is requesting an extension to the April 1 submission deadline with the Mass. Legislature.

Superintendent Paris opened the SOA discussion with a PowerPoint presentation. She reviewed the SOA application process, etc. The LPS priorities were aligned to DESE's identified evidenced-based programs, survey provided to stakeholders for feedback prior to the school closings and the feedback from Special Education and Parent/Family surveys post-closing. The summary shows the highest-to-lowest percentage was: teachers to school administrators to student/parents. From the survey, the top three of nine recommended programs were: 1) Inclusion/Co-teaching for student with disabilities and English learners; 2) Increase personnel and services to support holistic student needs; 3) Research-based early literacy programs in pre-kindergarten and early elementary grades. The top three will be the SOA proposal with the inclusion of the remaining six throughout the year. Superintendent Paris noted each of the LPS SOA priorities which were: 1) Student Achievement, 2) Support Services and 3) Family Engagement. Assistant Superintendent Mary Toomey, Assistant Superintendent Denise Snyder, provided information on how the SOA plan's submission is created by PowerPoint and Masiel Jordan, Chief Financial Officer, provided budget information for the SOA plan.

The members acknowledged the great work performed by the leadership for this proposal, but discussed the need to receive more feedback from students and parents, requested the hard numbers of who provided the survey responses and representative cross-sections, less focus on structural items and more focus on engaging family and students and on diversifying staff. They would like the draft plan to provide more description to the proposed priorities. To the credit of the district, mental health and cultural materials were included in the draft plan.

With the extension of the SOP deadline, the members requested that there be more survey outreach with students and parents. Possibly a survey provided to students through Google Chrome and/or utilize the Paraprofessionals to reach out and survey families. Mayor Rivera requested that the word "infrastructure" be added to item #5 of the SOA Budget Proposal – Year 1 to read: Improve facilities and **infrastructure** to create healthy and safe school environments.

Upon the motion made by Mayor Rivera, seconded by Jessica Andors, it was

VOTED: To direct LPS to continue the SOA outreach to students and families in particular through an online survey, phone survey and/or any additional means that will enable a represent sample of LPS students and families.

The Vote: Yes – Mayor Dan Rivera
 Yes – Julia Silverio
 Yes – Jessica Andors
 Yes – Ventura Rodriguez
 Yes – Patricia Mariano
 Yes – Noemi Custodia-Lora
 Yes – Chair John Connolly

At the regular meeting on April 8, 2020, LPS can present the SOA update and the requested matrix related to the proposed budget.

Turnaround Plan Update: Chair Connolly noted for the record on behalf of the LAE Board, they understand and appreciate the work performed by LPS on the proposed SOA plan given the time restraint by DESE, along with the current COVID-19 crisis; in addition, the FRC was conducting their annual family survey and in addition two priorities (TAP and EAF) were undertaken with a June deadline as well as work on the current budget cycle.

The Earned Autonomy Framework is on track with a lot of outreach completed and CPRL will provide an update in April with a proposal in May for feedback and vote in June.

The Turnaround Plan's family/student outreach was to be completed in March, but the COVID-19 delayed that plan. He, the Superintendent and TAP Subcommittee have discussed options to continue the outreach but best is to delay the TAP into the late summer/early fall in order to complete a robust student/family outreach to anticipate a September/October vote. The members agreed to delay the TAP process; Julia Silverio mentioned the possibility to do the outreach now while families are at home and possibly implement both surveys during this down time. Chair Connolly will request clarity on her suggestion and return with response at the April 8 meeting.

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

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 6:05 P.M.
 meeting.

John Connolly, Chair