

May 13, 2020

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: 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, Joseph Trinidad, Student Representative and Joan Milone, Recording Secretary for this meeting.

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

1. Pledge of Allegiance

John Connolly held the Pledge of Allegiance.

2. Public Participation

No Public Comment

Superintendent's Report

Closure Update – Superintendent Paris noted that Summer School will begin on June 29 remotely. The hotpots are still being addressed. There is a need for additional laptops for families with multiple students, which is being addressed for additional devices and/or staggered schedules for these families.

Ventura Rodriguez joined meeting at 6:05 PM.

There will be a virtual graduation on June 5 with in-person ceremonies at a later date. We are currently reviewing the Promotion/Retention Policy with the consensus that no student will be retained. The district will be applying to the Cares Act - federal funding for closure- related expenses related to Covid-19.

Mayor Rivera provided an update on the City's status with Covid-19. Lawrence is 5th highest diagnosed in the Commonwealth. He noted that the budget process will possibly be effected by the pandemic and he does not expect the State funding the SOA. Ventura Rodriguez noted that the Cares Act's funding is flexible, which could possibly support some of the priorities in the SOA application.

CDA and RISE Update – The partnership with RISE and the Lawrence Family Public Academy will be ending this school year; RISE will be moving to a new space and negotiations will determine the location and robust programs to be implemented with expansion to middle school students. LFPA will implement plate-based programming and centers with adoption of the district-wide curriculum.

CDA Update – Kinnon Foley provided a summary of the transition planning from the partnership with The Community Group to the new partnership with Great Schools (GSP), which started in the fall of 2019 through winter 2020 and has paused due to Covid-19 and will continue upon schools reopening. With the transition, the school will no longer an EMO.

Mayor Rivera suggested the gathering data of the pros and cons of this partnership. Superintendent Paris acknowledged that importance and Kinnon Foley noted there was data compiled by GSP since the Community Group partnership, which she would share with the members. With the new partnership the staffing and FTEs will remain and a family engagement position will be available.

District-wide Calendar (amendment) – Superintendent Paris noted that the Governor has officially made September 14 as the official holiday for the Boston Marathon. She requested an amendment to the approved district-wide calendar to reflect this as a non-school day. Kinnon Foley provided the calendar to review and added with this additional non-school day, the last day of school would amended from June 21 to June 22, 2021.

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

VOTED: To amend the 20-21 District-wide calendar as presented.

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

Code of Conduct presentation /discussion – Denise Snyder with Atty. Angeles Magula introduced the new handbook for SY21. The current Code of Conduct book needed to be updated to current restorative practices. The LPS and LTU collaborated to build a strong climate for students. The handbook highlights students’ rights and the schools’ regulations. Attorney Magula noted that the handbook will be reviewed annually for revisions/updates. Ms. Andors noted for the record that the handbook should emphasize that the taking away of a child’s recess should not be the first option for behavior management. She requested more information on the training/education on the handbooks contents for staff and families. Superintendent Paris noted that the District-wide School Climate and Culture Committee will implement a training plan for groups.

Budget Overview/discussion – Chair Connolly noted that the Budget Subcommittee has reviewed the budget to bring forward to the whole Board for discussion. Masiel Jordan provided and information presentation of the proposed FY21 budget (including District-wide and individual school budgets).

Chair Connolly requested a recess and 7:23 PM and returned out of recess at 7:25 PM. He noted that he will schedule a meeting for the LAE Board to vote on the budget as the final step.

Patricia Mariano asked for clarification if the budget to approve will have the SOA (\$5M – 1st year funding) included in the final budget total. The budget will include the SOA (\$5M) funding. Superintendent Paris added that there is no SOA funding, cuts will be made for the Board to approve.

4. Report of the Chair

- Earned autonomy update
- Student Opportunity Act Update

Earned Autonomy Update – Chair Connolly stated he will be reconvening the Earned Autonomy Subcommittee by the end of May. He introduced Maddy Sims and Grace McCarty from CPRL to update on the Earned Autonomy with the draft Framework/Dashboard, which was previously presented to the Joint Steering Committee.

Ms. Sims presented a PowerPoint of the School Dashboard, which is being consistently revised based on feedback. The dashboard is implemented through:

- Building an effective Theory of Action, which forms the foundation of
- Earned Autonomy Framework, which equips LPS with strategically selected indicators
- Framework Dashboard, which produces a snapshot which allows LPS to understand how each school is performing

Ms. McCarty (Program Associate) continued by providing the Dashboard program and overview. She reviewed each of the schools' Dashboard Categories (8) with one Dashboard Domain Example – Prepared for Success.

Ms. Sims completed the presentation noting that the manual will be prepared to present once more to the Joint Steering Committee for their review prior to the final presentation to the LAE Board for approval in June 2020.

Chair Connolly invited the Board to attend the Joint Steering Committee meeting to gather more information and have questions answered. Mayor Rivera questioned how each schools' rating could become public information. Ms. Sims explained that the dashboard's public information is always in an accessible format for that specific person/group's need. Ms. Custodia-Lora noted her concern of the implementation of the Dashboard based on each school may be at different levels. Chair Connolly explained that if the tool is implemented this school year, the ratings for this school year would establish the baseline for all schools to determine their rating in the second school year. Ms. Andors noted her concern and hope that these indicators would be accepted by DESE (not just MCAS results). She suggested in future years that the LPS budget document's investments be lined up against the Dashboard's categories. Dr. Rodriguez agreed that this Dashboard is in alignment with State data, but the State also has a statewide accountability system. Ms Sims added that CPRL believes these domains are needed to show success and meet DESE's measures. Chair Connolly added that the Earned Autonomy should align with the Turnaround Plan.

Jessica Andors left the meeting at 8:30 PM.

Student Opportunity Act - Chair Connolly noted that there is no update at this time. This will be added to the next meeting's agenda. At June meeting, the Board can decide whether to submit application.

Chair Connolly noted that an Earned Autonomy subcommittee meeting will be held within the week.

5. Other Business

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

VOTED: To approve the April 8, 2020 Regular Meeting minutes as submitted.

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

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 7:50 P.M. meeting.

John Connolly, Chair