

October 7, 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. at the Parthum School's auditorium with the following members present: 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. Absent: Honorable Dan Rivera, Mayor of Lawrence and Julia Silverio, Lawrence City Councilor and local business owner.

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

The Acting Chair, Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, called the meeting to order at 6:08 P.M, and held the Pledge of Allegiance.

Public Participation

Cheryl Travers, PreK Teacher @ Breen School and LTU's Financial Secretary – She addressed the Members with her concern in the possibility of cross contamination of both students and/or staff based on the City is in high risk for spreading Covid through the process of transportation.

Superintendent's Report

Leahy Educational Plan/MSBA Update – Atlantic Construction presented the draft of the schematic design for the Leahy School to accommodate 1,000 students (Grades 1-8). It included the floor plan for each of the four floors and rooftop, which would be utilized as additional space for students' activities. Principal Ethel Cruz presented information on the space utilization for the education plan. Information was also provided on the estimated construction costs and the projected schedule for the project – students will be relocated for the SY-22-23. They opened the discussion to respond to LAE Board members' questions. The LAE Board noted their approval of the presented plan.

Upon the motion made by Patricia Mariano and seconded by Jessica Andors, it was

VOTED: To approve the submission of the preferred schematic report as presented by Atlantic Construction and Mt. Vernon Group to the MSBA as submitted.

The Vote: Yes – Jessica Andors
Yes – Patricia Mariano
Yes – Noemi Custodia Lora
Yes – Ventura Rodriguez

Reopening Plan Update - Superintendent Paris provided an update of the district's attendance with comparison from 2019 vs 2020 information showing a slight decrease in attendance this year. There were 255 students absent within the first 8 days of school. She presented data on how many and reasons/context why students are absent from remote learning. She shared the supports provided to families with students who are absent, which will assist in returning these students to attend again. Patricia Mariano requested more information on the student engagement and the process in taking attendance. Jessica Andors noted that the attendance rates underscores the importance and need for the students to return to in-person learning with the implementation of correct safety protocols. Superintendent Paris believes the current plan is correct at this time. Ms. Andors requested the Superintendent provide information from other districts who have implemented in person safety models. Ventura Rodriguez agreed how disproportionate the impact (Covid and otherwise) is to urban schools education versus private schools in the State and how important it is for the students to be back in school. He requested the Superintendent provide attendance rates from other City programs and provide updated attendance/enrollment information at each LAE meeting.

Superintendent Paris continued with an updated summary for the requested staff waivers and the meal distributions for students/families. Jessica Andors noted that the district should exercise a generous approach to granting the teacher remote work requests especially based on family dynamics. Ventura Rodriguez reiterated her thoughts with consideration for the teachers returning to teach the high needs students in the classroom. Superintendent Paris noted that each request is reviewed thoroughly and the district is mindful of these requests. Ms. Andors and Ventura Rodriguez requested this be an ongoing open meeting item.

Superintendent Paris provided a facilities update - CDI has conducted the first study of seven schools in Phase I; the district will meet with CDI to review the report and can share with the LAE Board at the next meeting.

Superintendent Summative Goals Report – Ventura Rodriguez opened the discussion noting that an evaluative form for the Superintendent's Goals will be sent to each member to complete and return to him for compilation for review, discussion and approval at the next meeting. Superintendent Paris presented the review/update of her five goals/progress towards her key actions for June SY2020. Member discussion included the Turnaround Plan's process - the TAP draft will be brought to the LAE Board in December for discussion/feedback from stakeholder groups. Ms. Andors requested that the School Committee be included as a stakeholder group. Patricia Mariano requested the Superintendent's summative report include the timelines such as completed or ongoing to assist with their evaluative report.

Other

Upon the recommendation of the Chair, motion was made by Jessica Andors, seconded by Patricia Mariano, it was

VOTED: To approve the September 23, 2020 minutes as submitted.

The Vote: Yes – Jessica Andors
Yes – Patricia Mariano
Yes – Noemi Custodia Lora
Yes – Ventura Rodriguez

Upon the recommendation of the Chair, motion was made by Patricia Mariano, seconded by Noemi Custodia Lora, it was

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:02 P.M.

The Vote: Yes – Jessica Andors
Yes – Patricia Mariano
Yes – Noemi Custodia Lora
Yes – Ventura Rodriguez

Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, Acting Chair