

October 20, 2021

Minutes of the Lawrence Alliance for Education Board – LAE

The Lawrence Alliance for Education Board meeting was held virtually with the following members present: Jessica Andors, Executive Director for the Lawrence Community Works, Patricia Mariano, Lawrence School Committee member, Julia Silverio, Silverio Insurance, Dr. Noemi Custodia-Lora, Vice President of Northern Essex Community College (NECC), Lawrence Campus, Maria Moeller, CEO/The Community Group, Lawrence, Daniel Rivera, CEO/President MA Development, Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, Chair.

Also present was Superintendent Cynthia Paris and Maria L. Campusano, Recording Secretary for this meeting.

Chair, Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m. He held the Pledge of Allegiance; noted the board meets every second Wednesday of the month. Explained that he called this meeting with the focus on the current state of student performance, how the schools are doing, and how the district is responding to the needs of students. Chair also stated for the record, this meeting is being held remotely including all board members and staff, streaming real time through the district Youtube account. Public comments were asked to be submitted via the website www.info@lawrenceallianceforeducation.org where comments are entered for public records and then shared with LAE Board members.

Superintendent Updates

- Superintendent Paris provided an account of the incidents that took place at the LHS Campus. Shared on continuing working with the community partners, meeting with parents of elementary and middle schools regarding these issues. In addition to continuing meetings with parents of LHS, the creation of a task force, and the continuation of conversations with stakeholders to secure the main safety priority at the high school.
 - Noemi Custodia-Lora, shared being troubled by what happened. Addressed the systemic issues, how to address the situation with the kids that are not in trouble. Look into the cause to de-escalate situations. Commends the Superintendent for her work.
 - Patricia Mariano shared that the community needs to come together, accept the fact that representatives of the community need to understand that this is a community issue and the finger pointing needs to stop.
 - Maria Moeller expressed a systemic community issue, and the history of Lawrence coming together during the crisis. It is a job that the district can't do alone.
 - Daniel Rivera expressed his concerns for kids who prior to the pandemic experienced the gas explosion trauma. Also, asking the Superintendent what type of services are being provided to the students.
 - Julia Silverio, expressed the city and school being in crisis starting with school personnel taking care of the students, the parents and teachers being disengaged, so they will not perform the way they are expected to perform. Adding that school should have more security personnel. Figuring out what is happening in the schools because the kids are not fighting in the neighborhood.

- Ventura Rodriguez expressed the need of leveraging how other communities are supporting their kids, structures, student cabinets, families experience and aligning a city-wide experience. Acknowledge the conversations regarding Receivership, and their role as the Board for education. Addressing the issue of staffing across the district. Where are we at? Where is the most need, and what strategies are currently in place.
- Superintendent Paris explained that schools in grades PK-12 with the building-based educators position continuing to be vacant in LPS, also having a need for paraprofessionals, and classroom educators. The challenge is folks who are on leave and the COVID protocols also contributing to staffing instability. We are always looking for support personnel.
- Kristyn Sullivan, Office of Assessment and Accountability presented the 2021 MCAS results for the Lawrence Public Schools. Explained that with the exception of a small group of high need students, LPS students were fully remote explaining that DESE encourages schools to focus on using the 2021 MCAS for diagnosis and improvement purposes. Accountability designations will resume in 2022.
 - Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, was curious as to how the researchers are measuring the impact on academic learning for the kids who were fully remote.
 - Noemi Custodia-Lora is interested in learning how this data will be utilized; could it be utilized as a framework to support the students? Would like to see specific strategies and goals transferred into the classroom.
 - Patricia Mariano, asked if there was a comparison by the state to see third graders against the state level third grade just to see how it presents?
 - Maria Moeller. Are there other benchmarks, so we can have our own internal review to get early ideas even before the year starts so we can pivot to anything that needs to be changed.
 - Julia Silverio. It will take us at least two years before we get a real scenario of where the students are at; even counting with the attendance issues.
- Superintendent Paris provided an overview summary of the School Quality Review (SQR) data – rubric framework SY2020-2021. Schools were measured under 10 indicators in remote instruction and in-person instruction. Every school received its own data which was then reviewed with their own teacher leadership team and they designed an action plan.
- Masiel Jordan, Chief Financial Officer introduced Christopher Heath, Director of Grants. who shared a presentation on ESSER III stakeholder survey which included stakeholder responses by role, top 3 priorities, and timeline.
 - Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, asked how are the kids in the schools doing, deeper dive on what has been done since last summer through the start of the year; are we using federal money to support our kids. In our next meeting we want to go deeper in these areas.
 - Daniel Rivera. will like to go deeper in the SQRs, requested to make the words more simple
 - Noemi Custodia-Lora, needed more time to revisit the data that was submitted in the folder.
 - Patricia Mariano. SQR pinpoints exactly the specific needs of the schools.
 - Maria Moeller. should go out to the community; also ask parents how they can be involved in the process.
- Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, addressing the superintendent’s evaluation process, reminded the board members to submit the superintendent’s individual evaluation, asking if they have any questions

to reach over to the superintendent or to himself to be submitted in the months of November or December.

- Upon the recommendation of the Chair, Ventura Rodriguez, with a motion made by Dan Rivera, seconded by Jessica Andors, it was

VOTED: To approve the June 9, 2021 minutes as revised

The Vote: Abstain - Maria Moeller
Abstain - Julia Silverio
Yes - Patricia Mariano
Yes - Dan Rivera
Yes - Jessica Andors
Yes - Noemi Custodia- Lora

- Upon the recommendation of the Chair, Ventura Rodrigues, with a motion made by Jessica Andors, and seconded by Patricia Mariano

VOTED: To adjourn the meeting at 8:24 p.m.

The Vote: Yes - Jessica Andors
Yes - Noemi Custodia- Lora
Yes - Patricia Mariano
Yes - Daniel Rivera
Yes - Julia Silverio
Yes - Maria Moeller

Dr. Ventura Rodriguez, Chair