

# REGULAR MEETING OF THE LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

January 21, 2009

The regular meeting of the Lowell School Committee took place in the Council Chambers, City Hall, at 7:00 pm, on the above-mentioned date.

## ROLL CALL

On roll call at 7:07 pm, all members were present, namely: John J. Leahy, James D. Leary, Connie A. Martin and Mayor/Chairman Edward (Bud) C. Caulfield, David J. Conway, Jacqueline A. Doherty and Regina M. Faticanti

## SPECIAL ORDER OF BUSINESS

1. **Spotlight on Excellence**: Massachusetts Association of School Committees honors *Senator Steven Panagiotakos* as Legislator of the Year

Senator Steven Panagiotakos, Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, was named the Massachusetts Association of School Committees' Legislator of the Year.

Debra Bibeau, Amesbury School Committee member and President of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees stated that even though it has been a very difficult year for state legislators, Senator Panagiotakos has been an advocate for quality education. During the past budget session, his efforts were to secure **\$223 million** in local school funding (3<sup>rd</sup> consecutive increase), he was instrumental in directing **\$24 million** in lottery aid to the school districts and in ensuring an increase of **\$61.3 million** in regional school transportation monies (reimbursements of 87 % of costs). His political career started serving two terms on the Lowell School Committee. He has served two terms in the Massachusetts House of Representatives. For the past decade he has served as a board member of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Lowell.

Mayor Caulfield awarded Senator Panagiotakos with a citation from the City Council and the School Committee. He was awarded the key to the City, which, according to Mayor Caulfield, opened every door in the City except the Treasurer's office.

Senator Panagiotakos sincerely thanked the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, the City Council, the School Committee and all residents in the City of Lowell for the high honor they bestowed on him this evening.

Senator Panagiotakos was given a standing ovation.

Ms. Faticanti moved for a 5 minute recess; seconded by Mr. Conway. This meeting recessed at 7:19 pm.

**ROLL CALL after RECESS**

On roll call after recess at 7:27 pm, Ms. Martin was recorded as absent (she arrived at 7:28 pm). All other members were present.

- 2. **Spotlight on Excellence:** Lowell High School Student Activities (Operation Rosebud): A presentation by Headmaster William Samaras and Chief Sergeant Robert Jacques

Chief Jacques of the Junior Air Force ROTC at Lowell High School gave a detailed description and breakdown of Project Rosebud, volunteer snow shoveling by the Lowell High School Air Force Junior ROTC cadets for senior citizens.

Mayor Caulfield commended the Lowell High School Air Force Junior ROTC students for their dedication to community services and their concern for the elderly.

**MINUTES**

- 1. Regular School Committee Meeting of January 7, 2009

Mr. Leary moved to approve; seconded by Ms. Faticanti. Minutes APPROVED

**PERMISSION TO ENTER**

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, presented and recommended the following contracts for School Committee approval:

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 UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT LOWELL -----\$ 7,100  
 Office of School University Partnerships  
 One University Avenue  
 Lowell, MA 01854

To co-develop program goals and strategies for faculty study groups, training and ongoing support of study group facilitators and coordination of study groups in cooperation with the onsite planning team at Lowell High School

Funding provided by the School Improvement Grant

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 COMMUNITY TEAMWORK, INC.----- \$ **12,500**  
 167 Dutton Street  
 Lowell, MA 01852

To provide academic and enrichment activities for up to 50 students in the extended time (before and after school) programs at the Greenhalge elementary School

Funding provided by the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Grant  
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Ms. Martin requested that the two contracts for permission to enter be voted on separately.

Ms. Faticanti moved:

To separate the two contracts for permission to enter; seconded by Ms. Martin.

APPROVED

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and to approve permission to enter into contract for the University of Massachusetts at Lowell in the amount of \$ **7,100**; seconded by Ms. Faticanti. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Ms. Faticanti moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and to approve permission to enter into contract for Community Teamwork, Inc. in the amount of \$ **12,500**; seconded by Mr. Conway. On roll call Ms. Martin voted present. All other members voted in the affirmative. Six yeas; one present. APPROVED

**MEMORIALS** - The Committee as a Whole stood for a 'Moment of Silence' in memory of the following:

(by Regina M. Faticanti)

1. Robert P. Dalton, father of Lesley Byrne, Greenhalge School teacher
2. Brian M. Mescall, Courageous U. S. Army Major whose parents live in Lowell

(by the Committee as a Whole)

3. Patricia A. Keegan, retired Morey School Teacher, sister of Robert Keegan, retired Moody School Principal and Jackie Healy, Cardinal O'Connell School Clerk
4. Daniel J. Coughlin, member of a prominent Lowell family
5. Carol A. McAuliffe, member of a prominent Lowell family

**MOTION**

1. (by Connie A. Martin) – Requesting that the Superintendent implement the established publication standards for all school newsletters and parent communications; seconded by Ms. Doherty. APPROVED

Ms. Doherty stated that she wanted the Superintendent to determine the best way to implement established recognizable publication standards.

**SUBCOMMITTEES**

1. Safety Subcommittee – Report and Approval of the Minutes of January 7, 2009, by Regina M. Faticanti, Chair

Ms. Faticanti stated that the following topics were discussed:

**Student Travel/Field Trip Policy**

Ms. Faticanti stated that the Safety Subcommittee came up with recommendations. She wanted full School Committee approval of the following:

- ✓ Educational trips which are linked to academic advancement, extra curricular activities, or competitions representing the Lowell Public Schools as opposed to optional, selective, recreational trips;
- ✓ If trips involve missing school, the trip must be tied to an educational purpose and all students involved in the sponsoring club, team, or program must be eligible to attend regardless of financial costs;
- ✓ Staff cannot collect money, book hotel rooms or issue parent permission forms for overnight trips without prior School Committee approval;
- ✓ Applications for approval must include written justification and a statement of the learning strands to be addressed by the trip; Guidelines were revised to include four additional requirements (#1-4) with two guidelines being eliminated (#3 and 7) from the existing policy.

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Safety Subcommittee to approve the revised Lowell School Department Field Trip Policy File: IJOA-1; seconded by Mr. Leahy. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

**Crossing Guards**

Ms. Faticanti stated that Ms. Doherty expressed concern with the crossing guard schedule at the intersection of Stevens and Parker Streets. The crossing guard schedule is 1:55-2:25. Some students dismissed at 2:10 from the Daley Middle School do not reach the

intersection of Stevens and Parker Streets until 2:30 (5 minute difference). The Lowell Police Department works out the schedules for the crossing guards.

Ms. Faticanti moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Safety Subcommittee to ask the Transportation Coordinator John Descoteaux to submit a report in May 2009 on the start and stop times of all Lowell schools for the 2009-2010 school year. This report will then be presented to Lowell Police Superintendent Ken Lavallee to coordinate the crossing guard schedules with the school schedules; seconded by Ms. Martin. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Ms. Faticanti moved:

To accept the Safety Subcommittee Report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Ms. Martin. APPROVED

2. Joint Personnel and Finance Subcommittee - Report and Approval of the Minutes of January 15, 2009, by Connie A. Martin, Chair of Personnel and James D. Leary, Chair of Finance

Ms. Martin stated that the agenda items for discussion were:

### **Proposed Reorganization of the Parent Information Center**

Ms. Martin stated that the new name will be the '*Family Resource Center*'. The Parent Information Center Coordinator position and the Transportation Director positions will be eliminated. These positions will be replaced by the Family Resource Center Coordinator.

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and the Joint Personnel and Finance Subcommittee and that the Committee as a Whole approve the reorganization of the Parent Information Center and to change the name to the Family Resource Center; seconded by Mr. Leary. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Ms. Doherty stated that she wanted to make sure that the bilingual staff was kept. A lot of parents coming to the Family Resource Center do not speak English.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that the staff at the Family Resource Center speaks two languages, and she will continue to hire bilingual staff. Throughout the Lowell Public Schools, forty languages are spoken.

**Teacher/Staff Travel**

Ms. Martin stated that a report was requested on all encumbered and unencumbered funding that was designated for professional development in the local budget.

**Sick Leave (nonaffiliated staff)**

Ms. Martin stated that a motion was made and seconded requesting an opinion from the City Solicitor on the legality of the sick leave buyback for non-affiliated staff.

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the Joint Personnel and Finance Subcommittee Report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Ms. Doherty. APPROVED

3. Finance Subcommittee - Report and Approval of the Minutes of January 15, 2009, by James D. Leary, Chair

Mr. Leary stated that the following topics were discussed:

**2008-09 Budget Status (Second Quarter) and General Discussion**

Mr. Leary stated that Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, reported that the projected personnel salary liability for the remainder of the fiscal year was \$ **57,018,637**. The remaining personnel salary appropriation for the remainder of the fiscal year was \$ **57,091,832**. Mr. Lang will monitor this on a regular basis.

Mr. Leary moved:

To request a report from Susan Mulligan, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel and Recruitment, at the mid-point of the current 2008-09 school year illustrating by school as well as level (elementary, middle, and high school) the sick leave usage for all school-based staff; seconded by Mr. Conway. APPROVED

**Net School Spending – FY2008 actual and FY2009 Budgeted**

There was a failure to meet the net school spending requirement by \$ **101,483** in FY2008. For FY2009, there is the budgeted amount of \$ **1,269,000** in excess of the required FY2009 net school spending.

**Administrative plan and general discussion related to; potential cuts to the 2008-2009 budget****Administrative plan and general discussion related to the upcoming 2009-2010 budget**

Governor Patrick is expected to announce the local aid reductions early next week.

After discussion, Mr. Leary moved:

To accept the Finance Subcommittee Report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Leahy. APPROVED

4. Facilities Subcommittee - Report and Approval of the Minutes of January 20, 2009, by John L. Leahy, Chair

Mr. Leahy presented a detailed report highlighting repairs and projects made to Lowell's twenty-six schools during the 2007-2008 school year.

Mayor Caulfield commended Mr. Leahy on an excellent, detailed report covering each individual school.

Mr. Leahy moved:

To accept the Facilities Subcommittee Report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Ms. Faticanti. APPROVED

5. Curriculum Subcommittee - Report and Approval of the Minutes of January 20, 2009, by Connie A. Martin, Chair

Ms. Martin stated that the following issues were discussed:

**Video Taping Requests**

- Teachers for Teachers/Choice Literacy
- Jon Saphier, Research for Better Teaching

Ms. Martin stated that her subcommittee requested additional information from both parties before any permission for video taping would be recommended.

**Update on Adolescent Literacy**

Jean M. Franco, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, gave the subcommittee an update on the Adolescent Literacy Workshops, which took place on January 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>. The five schools included were: Daley Middle School, Wang Middle School, Sullivan Middle School, Payne Arts Magnet School, and the Bartlett Community Partnership School.

**Professional Development Planning**

Half-day release days were discussed. A comprehensive implementation model was needed. A motion was made, seconded and approved that the Superintendent comes up

with a comprehensive implementation model for half-days. The report will include the educational and cost benefits of half-days as compared to the present model.

After discussion, Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the Curriculum Subcommittee Report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Ms. Doherty. APPROVED

## **REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT**

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, presented and recommended approval of the following reports:

### **1. New Refugee Students from Burma and Iraq**

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent stated that 100 free cases of Burmese and Iraqi refugees will resettle in Lowell between October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2008 and September 31<sup>st</sup>, 2009. This translates to 300 individuals including around 100 children. The Lowell Public Schools has to meet the educational needs of these refugee students.

Committee members wanted to know if there was a dollar figure attached to the new refugee students.

Jean M. Franco, Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment, stated that there wasn't any dollar figure mentioned as of today.

Mayor Caulfield stated that Lowell has always welcomed refugees with open arms. During the Vietnam War, Lowell took in thousands of refugees.

### **2. Social Skills and Violence Prevention Programs**

This was a detailed list of the Social Skills and Violence Prevention Programs offered in all of Lowell's elementary, middle and high school put together by Ann C. Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services.

### **3. October 1<sup>st</sup> Enrollment**

The Superintendent reported the following facts:

- 13,400 students presently enrolled in the Lowell Public Schools
- 8,183 (61%) minority students
- 5,217 (39 %) are non-minority students
- 6,044 (45 %) first language not English
- 4,227 (32 %) English Language Learners (limited English proficient students)

Of the 40 different languages spoken:

- English 55 %
- Khmer 18 %
- Spanish 16 %
- Portuguese 3 %
- Lao 1 %
- Vietnamese 1 %

Birthplace of students:

- 94% in United States
- 1 % in Cambodia
- 1 % in Brazil

Free and Reduced lunches:

- ❖ 8,694 (64 %) of our students

Special Education Services:

- ❖ 2048 (15 %) of our students

Number of students in private, parochial, charter schools:

- ✓ 3,753 students
  - decrease of 568 students (13 %) from last year

#### 4. Parent/Teacher Conference

A lengthy discussion followed. Committee members thought that (since this was included in the teacher negotiation contract), a parent/teacher conference would be scheduled during the school day fifteen minutes after the dismissal of school, and another one would be scheduled at night of a regular school day.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that she would poll the principals to set up two parent/teacher conferences (one fifteen minutes after the close of a school day and another one during the evening hours) before the end of this school year.

#### 5. Community Service Learning Grant

The Superintendent stated that students at the Rogers Middle School, led by teachers David Grenier and Kim-Soo Mottola, and students at the Daley Middle School, led by teacher Barb Fauvel, have been participating in community service learning activities during their after-school programs. Combined, these two schools received a **\$10,500 DESE Community Service Learning Grant** funded by Learn and Serve America for their 2008-09 projects (ATTACHED TO AND MADE PART OF THESE MINUTES)

6. Lowell Lodge of Elks 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Dictionary Giveaway

Ms. Faticanti stated that she was looking forward to receiving this dictionary. It not only covers the meaning of words, but it contains important geographical facts.

Mayor Caulfield stated that the Elks do a lot of great things for the community.

Ms. Faticanti moved:

To send a letter of thanks to the Lowell Lodge of Elks for their 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade Dictionary Giveaway; seconded by Mayor Caulfield. APPROVED

Mr. Leahy moved:

To accept all six reports as reports of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Leary. APPROVED

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Ms. Faticanti moved for a **Suspension of the Rules** in order to bring in a motion; seconded by Mr. Conway. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Ms. Martin moved:

That the Committee accept and approve the position of Family Resource Center Coordinator and Specialist for Community Outreach and Support of all English Language Learners and their families; seconded by Ms. Faticanti. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

### **CONVENTION/CONFERENCE REQUESTS**

The Superintendent presented and recommended approval of the following convention/conference requests:

1. Superintendent Chris Scott, Lowell High School Headmaster William Samaras and United Teachers of Lowell President and LHS Teacher Paul Georges to attend the *American Federation of Teachers (AFT) 11<sup>th</sup> Annual Center for School Improvement Institute* schedule in New York City from Thursday, January 22<sup>nd</sup> through January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009. There are no costs to the School Department budget.
2. James DeProfio, Athletic Director, to attend the *MIAA Leadership Training* in Franklin, MA from Monday, January 26<sup>th</sup> through Friday, January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2009. There are no costs to the School Department Budget and no substitute is needed.
3. Lowell High teacher Khalida Hakam, to visit Jeremiah E. Burke High School in Dorchester, MA., from Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> through Wednesday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2009, as

part of the *New England Associations of Schools and Colleges Visiting Team*. Only cost will be \$300 for substitute coverage and will be paid by Individual School Funds.

4. LHS Wrestling team and Coach Tim O'Keefe to attend the following MIAA Sponsored and sanctioned events: Friday/Saturday, February 20 & 21, 2009 – *MIAA Divisional State Championship* in Springfield, MA and Friday/Saturday, March 6 & 7, 2009: *New England High School Wrestling Championship* at New Haven, Ct. Cost for both events will be paid by the LHS Athletic Department Budget.
5. Deborah Webster, Physical Therapist, to attend the 25<sup>th</sup> *International Seating Symposium* to be held on March 12-14, 2009 in Orlando, Florida. The cost is \$1532 and will be funded through Special Education Grant.

Mr. Conway stated that he had a problem with convention/conference request number 5.

Ms. Faticanti moved:

To separate convention/conference request number 5 from the other convention/conference requests; seconded by Ms. Doherty. APPROVED

Ms. Faticanti moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent and to approve convention/conference requests 1 through 4; seconded by Mr. Leahy. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Mr. Conway stated that the cost to attend the 25<sup>th</sup> *International Seating Symposium* in Orlando, Florida was **\$1,532**. He wanted to know if a similar *Seating Symposium* was held in Massachusetts or somewhere in New England.

Ann C. Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services, stated that she wasn't aware of any *Seating Symposium* being held in Massachusetts. She would get in touch with Deborah Webster, the Physical Therapist who fits Special Education students to wheel chairs, to see if one (*Seating Symposium*) was being held closer to the Lowell area. Ann Murphy further stated that there were 34 Lowell students confined to wheel chairs. Deborah Webster was the only Physical Therapist qualified to fit students to a wheel chair. As the child grows, the chair has to be adjusted or changed to properly fit the child.

Ms. Faticanti moved:

To delay number 5 Convention/Conference request until the next regular School Committee meeting (February 4, 2009); seconded by Ms. Doherty. On roll call the votes were: Mr. Leahy, no; Mr. Leary, no; Ms. Martin, yes; Mayor Caulfield, yes; Mr. Conway, yes; Ms. Doherty, yes and Ms. Faticanti, yes. Five yeas; two nays. **Delay** APPROVED

**COMMUNICATION** - None

**PROFESSIONAL PERSONNEL** - None

**ADJOURNMENT** – Ms. Faticanti moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Conway. This meeting adjourned at 9:15 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent and  
Secretary to the Lowell School Committee

CAS: jms

Enclosures