

**REGULAR SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING OF
THE LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING**
As amended

March 16, 2011

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 7:04 pm, all members were present, namely: Mayor/Chairman James L. Milinazzo, David J. Conway, Jacqueline A. Doherty, Alison P. B. Laraba, John J. Leahy, James D. Leary and Connie A. Martin

SPECIAL ORDER of BUSINESS

1. The City of Lowell Celebrates 175th Anniversary [Celebrating 175 years of Art, History, Heritage and Commerce]: Kick-off Reception – Monday, April 11th, 2011 from 4:30-6:30PM, City Hall

Mayor Milinazzo stated that there was a communication from the City of Lowell Celebrates 175th Anniversary committee. There is a kickoff, Monday, April 11th, 2011 from 4:30 to 6:30 pm at Lowell City Hall. He thanked all volunteers for their participation.

Mayor Milinazzo wanted the Committee to pay attention to page 2. The City of Lowell will be holding a contest to collect “Lowell Stories”. Residents of Lowell who have had experiences working and living in Lowell can write their own stories. The stories will be judged by a panel. He wanted to reach out to our high school and other schools to see if our students want to participate. It was something he thought the schools would actually have some fun with. He wanted to bring this to the attention of his colleagues and Dr. Scott to see if we can get our schools involved in this effort.

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the communication and to place on file; seconded by Ms. Laraba. APPROVED

MINUTES

1. Special Meeting Minutes of Friday, January 28, 2011

Ms. Laraba wanted it addressed on the floor regarding her numerous requests to the Recording Secretary that all the speeches be included or just quoted as spoke in favor or spoke against.

Mayor Milinazzo stated that the minutes he has in front of him, 10 speakers are listed as speaking on the 28th.

Ms. Laraba stated that there were ten speakers. Five of them were quoted. The other five just say, “spoke in favor”. Her feeling is that they should all say, “spoke in favor”, or all have a summary of what was said.

Ms. Martin moved:

For a **Suspension of the Rules**, to bring in a motion; seconded by Mr. Conway.
Suspension APPROVED

Ms. Martin moved:

To amend the Special School Committee Meeting of January 28, 2011 to list all the speakers as, *spoke in favor*; seconded by Mr. Conway. **APPROVED**

2. Regularly Scheduled Minutes of the Meeting of Monday, February 7, 2011
3. Regularly Scheduled Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, February 16, 2011
4. Regular Scheduled Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, March 2, 2011

Mayor Milinazzo stated that we are now back to the four sets of minutes. The Special Meeting of January 28, 2011 will be **as amended**. He wanted to know the wish of the body.

Mr. Conway moved:

To approve all four sets of minutes, namely: Special Meeting of January 28, 2011 **as amended**, Regular School Committee Minutes of February 7, 2011, February 16, 2011 and March 2, 2011; seconded by Ms. Doherty. All minutes **APPROVED**

For the record, the following was moved to be inserted in these minutes at the regularly scheduled School Committee meeting of April 20, 2011 by Ms. Laraba; seconded by Mr. Leary and **APPROVED**

“That all future minutes will follow the format of the City Council minutes and that the Recording Secretary, the Mayor and the City Solicitor reviewed and approved this format going forward. The mayor’s assurance that all requests from the members of the Committee regarding information in the minutes will be honored.”

PERMISSION TO ENTER

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

AUDIO HEARING CENTER ----- \$10,000.00
 77 East Merrimack Street
 Lowell, MA 01852

To amend the existing contract to provide for additional audio logical evaluations, equipment, monitoring and training for Lowell Public School students.

Funding provided by the Special Education Department Local and Special Education Grant Budgets

NRT BUS, INC ----- \$ 2,627,700
 55 Hampshire Road
 Methuen, MA 01864

To amend the existing contract for regular education student transportation services to include the period from July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012.

Funding provided by local budget – Regular Education Student Transportation

STEPS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, USA ----- \$3,500
 80 Washington Square Unit F-30
 Norwell, MA 02061

To amend the existing contract to provide seven (7) days of professional development training to one (1) school math coach from the Murkland School who will receive mathematics instruction training on the STEPS Professional Development in Mathematics Program to become a trainer of trainers for all mathematics teachers in the Lowell Public Schools.

Funding provided by the School Department Professional Development Account

Ms. Martin moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve all three contracts for permission to enter; seconded by Mr. Leary. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

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

1. People of Japan as they deal with the aftermath of the earthquake and tsunami
2. Shirley Lyko, mother of Kimberly Broadhurst, Sullivan Middle School teacher
3. Dorothy Blanchette, mother of Lisa Kuenzler, Molloy School teacher and Rose-Marie Bergeron, paraprofessional at the Murkland School

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Martin stated that the Committee was awaiting a report on Mr. Leahy's motion regarding televising subcommittee meetings. It wasn't in the Committee's packet. She wondered when the Committee could anticipate that report.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, referred this to Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations.

Assistant Superintendent Lang stated that he would have a written report by the next regular School Committee meeting. He has had a discussion with Jack Pinard, our television coordinator from the high school. They looked at some space at the Rogers School. The cost, the ballpark figure, is going to be in the twenty thousand dollar range. He was looking to see if we could receive the funds through the city's cable contract. It will probably take around three months to have everything up and running. Again, a written report will be submitted at the first School Committee meeting in April.

Ms. Martin stated that her concern is that the interviews of the five Superintendent finalists with the School Committee be televised so the general public can observe the process.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Open Public Discussion regarding the Superintendent's Search

Mayor Milinazzo stated that three speakers were registered, but other people in the audience tonight have expressed a concern to speak. He would entertain a motion for a **Suspension of the Rules** to allow these people to speak.

Ms. Laraba moved:

For a **Suspension of the Rules** to allow people in the audience not registered to speak; seconded by Mr. Conway. **Suspension APPROVED**

Mayor Milinazzo reminded the speakers that there was a 5-minute rule.

Mayor Milinazzo acknowledged the following speakers:

1. Michael J. Hayden, 25 Hadley Street

Michael J. Hayden stated that he was born and brought up in Lowell. He went through the Lowell School Systems and believes it is the best school system. He feels what the Committee needs to look for in a Superintendent is:

- a business model

The new Superintendent should realize that the only product he/she has is:

- our children and their education

Someone who realizes that the most powerful tool that we have is:

- the classroom teacher
 - without classroom teacher, can't accomplish anything

We need someone who:

- knows and is willing to interact with our community
- can work with our labor unions to keep things moving
- doesn't micromanage
- isn't going to succumb to political pressure
- is not afraid to say, "No." to a Committee member
 - when it is best for the school district
- is looking to save tax dollars regardless of outside pressures

Bottom line, *"If you go by the model you have in front of you now, I don't think you can go wrong."* He thanked the Committee for allowing him to speak.

2. Kathleen McLaughlin, 11 Dumerle Street

Kathleen McLaughlin stated that she came in a lot of capacities. She is Math Resource Teacher at the Lincoln and Bailey Elementary Schools, she represents the teachers and paraprofessionals as the Executive Vice President of the teachers' union (United Teachers of Lowell), she is a resident of this city, and most importantly, she is a mom. Her two children will enter the Lowell Public Schools during this next Superintendent's tenure. This issue is important to her personally and to the people she represents. She has done a lot of thinking of the essential qualities of a Superintendent. They are:

- must have extensive teaching in an urban classroom

- only way to really understand priorities of our classroom teachers
- need to fall back on his/her classroom teaching when
 - ✓ determining priorities when setting budgets
 - ✓ setting visions for the school system
 - ✓ instituting initiatives that will move our schools forward
- works cooperatively with all parties
- really listens to diverse news
- makes great decisions
 - transparently explains the rationale for those decisions
 - comfortable with the model of shared-decision-making

This job isn't about one person. It is about what we can all do together. We need someone who is comfortable with:

- building capacity within our schools
- empowering our professionals to be just that

Our teachers are really educational experts. We need someone who recognizes that and empowers them to use their knowledge. We need someone who:

- by nature is a problem solver
- wants to resolve issues respectfully
- brings people together towards common goals
- realizes the importance of creating a supportive culture and climate
 - to transform our work
- sees the schools as an integral part of the community
- sees the community as an integral part of our schools
- loves this city as much as she does
- loves this school system as much as she does
- recognizes and cherishes the abilities and talents of our:
 - children
 - faculty
 - community

What we don't need is someone who thinks we are a district to be saved! We are not. We need to be:

- supported
- respected
- considered a vital part of a hopeful, inspired vision for the Lowell Public Schools.

We need a Superintendent who recognizes that the schools in our district demonstrate continuous growth. They are focused on working collaboratively to find solutions that benefit our students. We are building our instructional repertoires together as teachers, as

school communities of the school system. We have a lot of work to do. We need a Superintendent who:

- draws on our strengths
- values our roles as practitioners
- empowers us to make decisions
 - that make a difference in the learning of our students

3. Anita Downs, 48 West Forest Street

Anita Downs stated that she represents the Citywide Parent Council as well as being a parent and taxpayer in the City of Lowell. Her son is a senior. This is her last year as a parent, but she is not going away. She thinks the qualities we are looking for in a Superintendent haven't changed since the last time they were looking for a Superintendent. We need someone who:

- is visible in our school community
- is an ambassador for our city
- is a great communicator
 - to parents
 - to School Committee
 - to teachers
 - with any community member who chooses to be involved with school system
- is able to think outside the box and come up with creative solutions
 - to problems we have here in Lowell
- wants to work with the great system we have
 - not to change it completely
 - lot of good things that are working here
- opened to ideas and suggestions of staff and parents
- has had diverse urban and community experience
- knows what a diverse population is and can work with it

As a parent and listening to parents who have given her input, someone who:

- has a proven track record

She knows the search is on and there are applicants, but, please, if they are not the right candidates, do the right thing. Appoint someone and continue the search later. She thanked the Committee for allowing her to speak.

4. Victoria Fahlberg – 25 Fairmount Street

Victoria Fahlberg stated that she is a person who worked in partnership with the Lowell Public Schools for seven years with at risk students in the middle schools and the high school, and also as a mother of two children who have gone through the Lowell Public

Schools, a daughter and a son. The most important thing she would like to see in a Superintendent is the learning needs of some specific groups will be considered, even if they are not mandated by law and do not have the privilege of an IEP (individual education program). When students' learning needs are not met, these students lose motivation for learning, which can impact their entire life. She spoke about three unique groups whose learning, in her opinion, could be improved. The first is:

THE LEARNING NEEDS OF BOYS – since 2003, only 41 percent of boys compared to 51 percent of girls were going to college. The average college student body today is 58 percent female, 42 percent male. Most of the girls will finish their degree; most of the boys will not. Since 1980, only one in ten boys reads now just because they enjoy reading. In 2007, the National Institute of Mental Health published the results of a long, determined study of brain development that demonstrated that various areas of the brain developed in a different sequence and tempo in girls compared to boys. The implication for education are enormous. It also showed that the teaching style in most classrooms are more conducive to learning for girls than for boys. In 2010, the four-year graduation rate at Lowell High School showed that only 63 percent of our boys graduating in four years versus 76 percent of girls. The dropout rate for boys was 18 percent compared to 9 percent for girls; showing that twice as many of our boys are dropping out of school than girls. She believes that the Lowell Public Schools needs a Superintendent who understands the learning needs of boys and is willing to make changes in the classroom that will address the crisis of boys' unique learning needs that are not being considered. The second thing is:

THE LEARNING NEEDS OF OUR HISPANIC STUDENTS – According to the Massachusetts Department of Education, graduation rates for all of Lowell High hit a high in 2008, but have declined in the last two years. What has been consistent since 2006 when this data became available, our Hispanic students are dropping out at twice the rate of our Asian, black, or white students at Lowell High School. Only 56 percent, just slightly more than half of our Hispanic students, are graduating after four years. She believes that the Lowell Public Schools needs a Superintendent who has experience improving the learning environment for Hispanic students and, preferably, has the cultural and linguistic background that can be used to decrease the dropout rate and improve graduation rates for our Hispanic students.

Finally,

LEARNING NEEDS FOR OUR MOST ADVANCED STUDENTS – During the elementary and middle school years, she has observed that academically advanced students are not sufficiently challenged. By the end of the eighth grade, the school can be viewed by these students as boring and unrewarding. They then enter high school without the study skills and time management skills necessary to do well in programs such as the Latin Lyceum. Once in the Latin Lyceum, it becomes survival of the fittest where students must learn the study skills and develop time management skills to keep up, or they leave. When students leave the Latin Lyceum, she does not believe those students have failed. She believes that we have failed them. We also have a lot of

advanced students who are not in the Latin Lyceum, and we need to do better for them as well. These students, like her daughter who graduated with a GPA of 3.9 and the top 8 percent of her class, did not have the study skills and the time management skills to do well in college. Like students entering the Latin Lyceum, they will sink or eventually learn to swim. Here is what we know based on the 2010 advanced placement test results for those students who placed at the top by gaining a 4 or 5 on that test:

- U.S. History – 55 percent of Latin Lyceum students compared to 42 percent of non Latin Lyceum students placed at the top
- English – 38 percent Latin Lyceum students compared to 10 percent non Latin Lyceum students
- Psychology – 62 percent Latin Lyceum students compared to 38 percent non Latin Lyceum students
- Calculus A,B – 48 percent Latin Lyceum students compared to only half that number of non Latin Lyceum students

This data demonstrates the rigorous preparation of Latin Lyceum students during their ninth and tenth grade years is giving them an advantage that our other students are not receiving. She believes that the Lowell Public Schools needs a Superintendent who can improve rigor for advanced students in K through 8, and can oversee the creation of course curriculum in the high school such that the rigor of all courses can be objectively evaluated. That parents and students can easily access these courses, and which will ensure that all of our advanced students are getting the experience and opportunity in the courses that she believes they deserve. She thanked the Committee for allowing her to express her wishes for the next Superintendent.

5. Dorothy McGrath – 20 Epping Street

Dorothy McGrath stated that she raised three children that went through the Lowell School System. She now has four grandchildren going through the system. She stated that Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, has always stated her door is always open to parents, grandparents and to anyone. She went into explicit detail about her grandchild's conflict with a teacher. This child was afraid to go to school. She stated that she called Dr. Scott. She, along with her daughter, met with Dr. Scott. She cannot tell you how much that meant to her. She hopes that the new Superintendent has the same open-door policy that Dr. Scott has. She felt the Committee should hire someone that thinks that the students, parents and teachers are as important as the Superintendent. She thanked the Committee for their time.

6. Jon Shepherd – 53 Cliffside Road

Jon Shepherd stated that he lived in Lowell. He was a graduate of the Lowell schools. His kids are going to go to Lowell schools. He just wanted to make one quick point. It seems to him that the best thing they can do going forward is to make sure we hire the right

person. It shouldn't necessarily be a person to just get the position filled. This has been played out in the newspapers more than enough. Different opinions have been raised. Again, the one point he wants to make is, "*Let's make sure it is the right person.*" If that means considering an interim Superintendent, by all means let's consider all options rather than to hire somebody just to hire somebody. Let's make sure we have the right person. He thanked the Committee for allowing him to speak.

Mayor Milinazzo thanked the people that spoke tonight about their concerns for the right Superintendent. He stated that their comments would be duly noted. He thanked them again for their participation.

MOTIONS

1. (by John J. Leahy) – Have the Lowell High School Subcommittee discuss how to install the high school letters or signage around the school in the appropriate places; seconded by Mr. Conway. APPROVED

Mr. Leahy stated that when you come into the front doors of Lowell High School, you should be able to look up and know where you are. The appropriate signage is not there. He would like to see, "*Lowell High School home of the Red Raiders!*" He wanted his motion moved forward as quickly as possible.

2. (by Alison P. B. Laraba) – Request that all Regular, Special and Subcommittee meetings of the Lowell School Committee be held at a time and place that allows the working public to participate in the process without undue hardship to their working schedule. If the Committee determines that a meeting needs to be scheduled during regular working hours that said meeting be telecast on the local cable access station; seconded by Mr. Leahy for discussion.

Ms. Laraba stated that what she hasn't seen in the last few years, people want to know and see what is going on. She wanted the Committee to go that extra step to make sure that we have as many meetings as possible, and that they be available to as many people as possible. Whether that means having them in the early evenings or having the ability to televise them so people can at least check in on the meeting after the fact.

For the record, At the regularly scheduled School Committee meeting of April 20, 2011, Ms. Laraba moved to include the following insertion in these minutes:

Ms. Laraba stated that recently there has been a level of interest that she hasn't seen in the last few years. People want to know and see what is going on. She wanted the Committee to go the extra step to have as many meetings as possible televised.

Motion was seconded by Mr. Leary. APPROVED

Mr. Conway stated that there are so many subcommittee meetings. It is a herculean task getting all the Committee members available to set up a subcommittee meeting, and June Cormier (Confidential Secretary to the Superintendent) has done a fabulous job. The LTC (Lowell Telecommunications) has stated that they can only televise a few of the meetings. He agreed with Ms. Laraba. He would like to televise as many meetings as possible, but the average person doesn't realize how many of these meetings are involved.

Mr. Conway moved:

To amend Ms. Laraba's motion by adding *whenever feasible* to the end of her motion.

Mayor Milinazzo asked Ms. Laraba (the maker of the original motion) if the amendment is okay with her.

Ms. Laraba stated that she wanted to make it happen.

Mr. Conway stated that all Committee members want all meetings televised. Right now they are trying to work something out with Jack Pinard (Television Coordinator) at Lowell High School. What needs to be taken into consideration:

- When can we have this done?
- Are students available?
- What are the costs?

Mr. Conway stated that he didn't want an important issue to come up that would affect our students or staff be put off, because it wasn't televised.

Ms. Doherty stated that this sounds like the same motion the Committee had not too long ago. She had the same argument as Mr. Conway at that time. When we are able to televise, do it. She agreed with her colleague on the right (Mr. Conway). She could not support Ms. Laraba's motion without the words *whenever feasible* added, because it locks them into not doing the work of this Committee indefinitely. We have no control over the staffing issues at LTC. Our own television studio at the high school has a mission that's geared towards educating our students. That staffing has been reduced in the last years of budget cuts. She would love to see the Communications Academy grow. She'd love to see the staffing go back up. She thinks Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, idea about creating a separate studio facility is a good idea, but it isn't going to happen overnight. Meanwhile, the work of the district must continue. If the maker of the motion is not agreeable to adding the words *whenever feasible*, she cannot support the motion.

Mr. Leahy agreed with Mr. Conway and Ms. Doherty. He stated that we were kind of going over something that we already do. If Ms. Laraba's motion means not having a meeting, because it is not televised, he would not support her motion.

Mr. Leary stated, through the Mayor to the Superintendent, that they were trying to get a report as to the costs of setting up a facility within the School Department. Mr. Leahy wanted to know if she could guarantee that report would come before the next meeting.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Laraba stated that it certainly wasn't her intent to have business stop. She didn't want to be known as inflexible. She was willing to add *whenever feasible* to the end of her motion. Ms. Laraba seconded Mr. Conway's **amendment** to her motion.

For the record, the motion by Ms. Laraba, **amended** by Mr. Conway, reads as follows:

Request that all Regular, Special and Subcommittee meetings of the Lowell School Committee be held at a time and place that allows the working public to participate in the process without undue hardship to their working schedule. If the Committee determines that a meeting needs to be scheduled during regular working hours, that said meeting be telecast on the local cable access station *whenever feasible*; seconded by Ms. Laraba. Motion as **amended** APPROVED

Ms. Martin stated that the Committee is going to do their best to televise meetings with the recognition that we are not going to be able to televise all of our meetings. We have been told this expressly. It is not going to happen. She thinks they need to be reasonable moving forward. We will try, but the reality is that it is not going to happen all the time. Moving forward at the Rogers, as Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, has discussed, is a really interesting idea. She doesn't know the benefit of doing it at the Mayor's Reception Room as opposed to the Rogers School. We are going to get a report on what these expenses are going to be. We have the equipment already at Lowell High School. What we can't afford is to pay someone to be there. We have the equipment here (Lowell City Hall). What we can't afford is the LTC staff to be here. We need to be cognizant if we are moving in this direction, this is not going to be a one-time twenty thousand dollar expense. It is going to be an on-going expense if we are committed to it. She wanted two things:

- That long-term information included in Assistant Superintendent Lang's report
- Get assurance from the administration that we will be able to conduct business as usual moving forward in our subcommittee fashion

SUBCOMMITTEES

1. Personnel Subcommittee - Report and Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Wednesday, March 2, 2011, by Connie A. Martin, Chair

Ms. Martin stated that she gave her report at the last regular School Committee meeting of March 2nd. She wanted approval of the written report tonight.

Ms. Martin moved:

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

2. Athletic Subcommittee – Report and Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, March 15th, 2011, by David J. Conway, Chair

Mr. Conway stated that the Athletic Subcommittee Meeting took place at 9:00 am in the morning. He was thrilled to have the coaches there. Topics for discussion:

Update on Staffing - Eighteen assistant coaches were cut last year and eighteen again this year. This has had an adverse effect on sports, and has increased the number of students a coach is responsible for, but they still are doing their best to keep the three levels of sports at the high school.

Update on Athletic Finance Reports - Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations distributed the *Profit and Loss Reports* on Athletic Department spending through December of 2010. After every sports season, Assistant Superintendent Lang will provide *Profit and Loss Reports* on Athletic Department spending.

Mr. Leahy stated that the morale has dropped in the sports program at Lowell High School. He believes the coaches belong on the field with the kids; not out fundraising. He stated that sports were the greatest preventive for not dropping out of school.

Mr. Leary stated that there was going to be a joint meeting of the Athletic and Finance Subcommittees. They will be looking at the *Profit and Loss Reports* on Athletic Department spending through December of 2010 as part of the overall budget. He stated that one-third of our student really rely upon the sports program. Even a greater number when you go into the middle schools. Next year if we can really fund the budget, that would be great. If we are not able to do that, we need to put some plans in place before we get into the winter and spring programs.

Ms. Doherty stated that getting all these accounts in order, getting all these accounts on Quick Books is a huge benefit so we can track:

- what revenue is coming in for sports
- how we are spending it

This is going to provide a huge difference for the high school's ability to make recommendations to the Committee. Now, the Committee can really look for efficiencies and savings. Last year we spent \$884,000 on Lowell High School athletics. About \$35,000 of that was for the middle school program. In the end, she believes this Committee cut \$75,000 from athletics last year. It was painful. She has heard what the coaches have said regarding last year's cuts and the cuts prior to last year; what they have done to their programs and how it has impacted them. She also knows, as well as her colleagues know, that our first grade teachers don't have a paraprofessional in the classroom with them all the

time. They are sharing between four classrooms. We don't have librarians throughout the districts. We have to look at ways to save money that doesn't come on the backs of our students and staff. That is her first goal. She wanted to wait until the data from the winter season was in before discussing the athletic budget. They would then have two seasons to compare where they could find savings such as in transportation. She wanted to find savings where it didn't directly impact students.

After discussion, Ms. Martin moved:

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

3. Lowell High School Subcommittee -:Report and Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of Tuesday, March 15th, 2011, by Jacqueline A. Doherty, Chair

Ms. Doherty stated that she doesn't have anything in writing; they just met last night. She gave an oral report.

Ms. Doherty thanked Jack Pinard for working after hours and taping the meeting. The meeting was an hour and a half. Many of the items on the agenda were brought up by the Lowell High School Student Advisory Council that they meet with (usually once a month prior to the regular School Committee meeting). Two members of the Lowell High School Student Advisory Council were at the meeting. She went over the key points.

Latin Lyceum –There were three basic issues.

High School has convened a Committee of people that includes:

- Parents
- Faculty
- Community members

To study the data to come up with plans to strengthen the program by the end of this summer - *ongoing process*.

Weighting Issue – High Honors English Course

Right now Lowell High School has one High Honors Math Course offered to Latin Lyceum and non Latin Lyceum students. A High Honors English Course is now going to be offered. This will be available to non Latin Lyceum students who get an advanced on MCAS (Massachusetts Curriculum Assessment Standards), and middle school students who receive at least a 95 in their English classes coming into the high school. It will be for Freshman only at this point. The idea is to try to balance the rigor of Latin Lyceum students with non Latin Lyceum students.

Profile Letter – goes out to colleges

They are working on a Profile Letter that goes out to colleges explaining what the Latin Lyceum is. They are making it more user-friendly. They are looking at data that speaks to the rigor of the Latin Lyceum program such as:

- Percentage of our students that are advanced on MCAS
- Percentage of students that score over on the SAT scores
- Things like that
- Work in progress that will come before this Committee when completed

Waiver for Physical Education – for student athletes

Currently band students, dance students, and ROTC students can waive out of Physical Education. They are looking at the feasibility of expanding that specifically for our student athletes. Students who are swimming an hour per day, running track, and so forth could take an elective that interests them. The high school is going to look around and see what other schools are doing before making recommendations.

Virtual Classroom Update – regarding James D. Leary's motion

Ms. Doherty stated that they received an update on Virtual Classroom. Right now, the high school is asking students if they were interested in taking online courses. They are checking courses offered and the prices involved. These online courses require a certified teacher in the classroom. You have to pay for the course and for the teacher in the classroom. There will be financial impact to that.

Dual-Enrollment Program – University of Massachusetts Lowell and Merrimack Community College

Looking at meetings with University of Massachusetts Lowell and Merrimack Community College to enhance our Dual-Enrollment Program.

Read 180 Program – regarding John J. Leahy's motion

This is a program to help our 9th and 10th grade students who are not reading at grade level. There was good news. When they looked at the half year, the growth of the 9th graders that were in the *Read 180 Program* since September (2010), they have made one-full-year of growth in their reading levels. Less students are coming in at the very bottom level, but there are still some coming in, and we have got to try to get them up to their appropriate reading levels by doing a better job from K through 8.

Mr. Leahy stated that he disagreed with the criteria to get into *High Honors English*. He felt a 95 average was too high. He wanted that lowered to a 90. Middle school students receive an honors certificate if they receive a 90 or better in a subject so he wanted consistency there. He hoped to offer high honor classes in all of our subjects.

Ms. Laraba stated that when we did discuss this program initially, it was decided to start with one class, roll it out, and see how that works in terms of:

- Number of kids interested
- Number of kids eligible for it

to come up with the requirement of it being Advanced Placement on the MCAS and a 95 in English; we are not the educators. To come up with that criteria, they have put thought into that process. They are still getting the kids that are in the high end of the process. She would really like to see that:

- We do the high honors
- We step up the high honors

More importantly,

- Step up the middle school program

These kids are getting the 95s and the advanced on MCAS. This is a small step in the right direction.

Ms. Martin had concern about the number of students wanting to take *High Honors English*. If the numbers made up for only half a class, obviously, the course couldn't be offered. She wanted to know if they had the number of students yet.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that the number of students that would apply to take *High Honors English* was not discussed. The final cutoff number wasn't determined either. She didn't know if the cutoff number was 75, less, or more. Once she received the number of students wanting to take *High Honors English* from the administration at the high school, she would bring that number before the Committee for further discussion.

Mr. Leahy stated that when the students are selecting their courses, the teachers should be recommending the high honors courses. Obviously, there is a group of kids at the high school that should be taking high honor courses.

Mr. Conway stated that the Guidance Counselors, the Department Heads, and the teachers all give students input on what courses they should be taking.

Ms. Doherty stated that the high school Guidance Counselors should be communicating with the middle schools on this new opportunity to take *High Honors English*. It is a change, it is new, and we haven't done it before. Communication was important to make sure students are properly apprised of it. Once we get the numbers, we can reconvene on the issue.

After discussion, Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the Lowell High School Subcommittee oral report as a report of progress; seconded by Ms. Laraba. APPROVED

REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

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

1. Changes to Preschool Programs for SY 2011-2012

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that the recommended changes to the Preschool Programs throughout the city would be:

- Five half-day sessions per week
- Class time of 2 hours and 30 minutes
- Morning sessions would start at the same time as the regular school day
- Afternoon sessions would end at the same time as the regular school day

Dr. Scott stated that Student Instruction Time:

- Would increase from 10-11 hours per week to 12.5 hours per week.
- Transportation cost would be reduced by **\$18,000**.

Mr. Leahy thanked Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, for putting this report together. This was a big issue for him.

Mr. Leahy wanted the Superintendent to elaborate on the transportation savings.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, referred the question to Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services.

Assistant Superintendent Murphy stated that presently transportation is only provided for preschool children that have it on their IEP (Individualized Education Program). John Descoteaux, Family Resource Center Coordinator, in charge of Transportation, has to rearrange the buses, because the preschool classes start 10 to 15 minutes later than the regular school day and end 10 to 15 minutes prior to the closing of school. They have a staggered schedule. It forces John Descoteaux to put on more buses. If preschool starts at the same time as regular school and ends at the same time, John Descoteaux won't have to put on as many buses. Conservatively, John Descoteaux is saying that he will save \$18,000. It might be as much as \$21,000.

Mr. Leahy wanted to know if the preschool children would still be on the smaller buses.

Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, responded in the affirmative.

Ms. Martin was concerned about preschool safety. Preschool times were set because of the hustle and bustle that happens at the beginning and at the end of the school day. The preschool children were taken out of that; and, also, so many parents were dropping preschool children off. She wanted to make sure that the safety of preschool children was taken into consideration.

Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, stated that the principals were very confident that they would be able to manage the new flow of traffic and that it would actually work out easier for parents who were also bringing a kindergarten or first grade student to school along with the preschool student.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the changes to preschool for the school year 2011-2012; seconded by Ms. Doherty. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

2. Prekindergarten Program at the Murkland – A Partnership with Lowell Public Schools and Community Teamwork, Inc. [Funded in part by the Department of Early Education and Care]

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that Community Teamwork Inc, (CTI)/Head Start will support the Murkland School Pre-K classroom with over **\$133,000** until June 30, 2012. In addition, through the CTI's partnership with the Lowell Public Schools, CTI has been able to apply for **\$50,000** additional funding from the Massachusetts Department of early Education & Care to support the Murkland School Pre-K program. In conjunction with this Pre-K program, parents of the children enrolled must either be working, in job training, or in school/education program. An Adult Education/family Literacy component will be implemented to support parents of preschoolers. She asked the Committee for approval of the establishment of a revolving fund for School Day Care under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 26C.

Ms. Martin stated that she was an employee of Community Teamwork, Inc.; therefore, she could not vote on the approval of the revolving fund.

Mayor Milinazzo stated that he was on the board of Community Teamwork, Inc, but not a paid employee. He was going to vote. He just wanted his affiliation to go on the record.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to establish a School Day Care Revolving Fund under Massachusetts General Laws, Chapter 71, Section 26C and to accept the Murkland School Full Day Preschool Proposal as a report of progress and to place on

file; seconded by Mr. Leary. On roll call Ms. Martin voted present. All other members voted in the affirmative. Six yeas; one present. APPROVED

3. 2011 Graduation Dates [Lowell High School and Adult Education]

Lowell High School will graduate on Wednesday, June 1, 2011 at 6:00 pm at the UMass Lowell Tsongas Center.

Adult Education will graduate on Friday, June 3, 2011 at 7:00 pm at the Lowell High School Cyrus W. Irish Auditorium.

Mayor James L. Milinazzo will be representing the Lowell School Committee at both events.

Ms. Martin moved:

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

4. Update on Current Usage and State of Textbooks

Jean Franco, Deputy Superintendent, provided a detailed list of all textbooks, their conditions and years of use from Pre-K through Grade 12.

Ms. Laraba had concern over the condition of books that were 11 to 14 years old.

Jean Franco, Deputy Superintendent, stated that the Principals keep track of the books that are needed, and they let us know the condition of their books. In budget cuts we have known we need an 8th grade Social Studies adoption, but we haven't been able to do that. The teachers spend as much of the budget that they have internally, then they come to us if there is further need.

After discussion, Ms. Laraba moved:

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

5. Update on Status of Leveled Libraries

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that the funds needed to update our libraries across the city is **\$125,800**.

Jean Franco, Deputy Superintendent, stated that Non-Fiction response and Non-Fiction literature is something we need to work on as a district.

After discussion, Ms. Laraba moved:

To accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Leary.

APPROVED

6. Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Update

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that the preliminary cost for a complete system is approximately **\$1,315**. Life Support Systems is the vendor. For 27 sites, plus three portable units (for athletics), the cost would be approximately **\$39,450** (for 30 units in all). She recommended that this project be funded through the Use of Facilities Revolving Fund. Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, has stated that there is money in the Use of Facilities Revolving Fund to finance this project now.

Mr. Leary wanted to know how much money was in the Use of Facilities Revolving Account at the present time.

Roger (Jay) Lang IV, Assistant Superintendent of Finance and Operations, stated there was approximately 110,000 to 115,000 dollars in the Use of Facilities Revolving Account. Around 60,000 to 65,000 has been allocated this year to do some of the bleacher replacement in some of the schools. There is a projected surplus for the next year. In talking to Assistant Superintendent Murphy, he feels the Automated External Defibrillators is a very worthwhile cause, and it will benefit the users of our facilities to have that device available. He thinks it is a great expenditure of funds at this point in time.

Mr. Leary wanted to know if the Health Department was onboard with this also.

Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, stated that we have been working with the Health Department, and we have actually looked at different units and different companies. This company (Life Support Systems) is the one we felt would be the best company for this school district. The product, Zoll, is what is used in our local hospitals and ambulance services. It is important to have that consistency throughout the system.

Ms. Doherty stated that Trinity Ambulance has stepped forward and has offered to train our staff. She felt this was a real win for all of us.

Ms. Laraba wanted to know what the maintenance cost would be down the road.

Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, stated that the replacement pads are \$132.00 each. We have been told that if there is a need to use the equipment, Zoll products, Trinity Ambulance comes in, they could hook up their machines to the pads we are using, and they would replace those pads for us. Our replacement pads would be just the out datedness of the equipment. If it hadn't been used in a year or two, what we would need to do. The PD pads are \$77 each. The replacement batteries (set of 10) are \$45. We are looking for some grant funding to help us with those costs. Part of the contract is that

Life Support Systems would be coming in to check the batteries and the pads every six months to make sure they are okay. It is a standard service they provide.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the Use of Facilities Revolving Account money to fund the purchase of 30 (27 regular and 3 portable) Zoll Automated External Defibrillators at a cost of approximately **\$39,450** and to accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Conway. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

7. Report on the Desegregation Policy

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that on February 9th and February 16th, 2011, Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, met with former Mayor Richard P. Howe, Former Superintendent George T. Tsapatsaris, and former Deputy Superintendent Thaddeus (Ted) Rurak, Former City Solicitor and presently Special Assistant City Solicitor Thomas Sweeney, and family Resource Center Coordinator John Descoteaux to review the Lowell Public School Voluntary desegregation Compliance Plan. The Voluntary Desegregation Compliance Pan was developed in response to a class action lawsuit on behalf of linguistic minority students emanated from the belief that minority students were not afforded equal access to programs and services in the Lowell Public Schools. Since 1986 and continuing over several years, Lowell experienced a tremendous influx of immigrants. During a six month period in 1988, over 1,000 new minority students enrolled in our public school system with an average gain of 35 new students per week. This brought about:

- Overcrowded classes
- Inadequate learning space
- Insufficient language instruction.

This all contributed to minority parents' claim that minority students were not receiving equitable services. On February 24, 1989, United States Justice Harrington decreed that the Lowell Public Schools Voluntary Desegregation Compliance Plan provided for the sustainability of the equitable distribution of services and be entered as a binding consent order. In the opinion of Special Solicitor Thomas Sweeney, Lowell Public Schools does not have a significant argument to appear before a federal justice seeking to have the Compliance Plan nullified.

At this time it is not recommended that there be any changes to our Voluntary Desegregation Compliance Plan.

Superintendent Scott stated that the plan does not speak to the issue of transportation. Right now Zone 1 is overcrowded. The district demographics must be examined continuously. Realigning schools and zones to alleviate an overcrowded zone 1, maintaining the minority/non-minority balance, and changes to transportation will be examined in the

coming months. As the work progresses, we will bring forth recommendations to enhance educational opportunities for all of our students.

Mr. Leary thanked everyone and all the community members for putting effort into this work. He asked the Superintendent if she knew the exact number of students who do not go to their neighborhood school.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that she would get the number for Mr. Leary, but over 50 percent of the Lowell students do not go to their neighborhood school. She stated that parents really appreciate the transportation option for safety reasons, for family schedules, and a whole host of different reasons. It is definitely a service our parents take advantage of and appreciate.

Mr. Leary wanted to know how long it would be looking at zone 1, zone 2 and our open zone.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that they have already begun to look at this. Her understanding talking to Assistant Superintendent Murphy is that it would be a good 10 to 12 month process. It has to do in part with the influx of students we are expecting from all over the world within the next few months to Lowell. We are not exactly sure what schools will have vacancies. Our English Language Learner classes across the system are really filled to capacity at the moment.

Mr. Leary again thanked everyone for their efforts.

After discussion, Mr. Leary moved:

To accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Conway.
APPROVED

8. Student Enrollment Data - This was our student enrollment from Pre-K through Grade 12 across the district.

Dr. Chris A. Scott, Superintendent, stated that in 2009, the total number of Lowell student population was 13,970. In 2010, the total number of Lowell student population is 14,257. It is up 287 students.

Mr. Leary stated that he knows this report was a lot of work, but it was good information for the budget sessions. He thanked Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services.

After discussion, Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the report as a report of progress and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Conway.
APPROVED

9. Personnel Report - Pursuant to Chapter 71 of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Department of Education's Reform Act of 1993, the Personnel Office hereby informs the Committee of the retirements, resignations, and new hires since the last regular School Committee meeting of February 16, 2011

Ms. Martin moved:

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

CONVENTION/CONFERENCE REQUESTS

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

1. Murkland School staff Kathy Drinan and Kathy Beauvais to attend the *SDE [Staff Development for Educators] 2011 Conference* on April 5, 2011 in Nashua, New Hampshire. The cost of the conference is \$530 to be paid by the Murkland School's Professional Development funds.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve; seconded by Mr. Leahy.
Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

2. **Overnight Field Trip Request:** 44 Lowell High School Show choir students, staff and chaperones, to travel to *New York City* during April 2011 vacation. They will leave Lowell on Monday, April 18th and return on Wednesday, April 20th, 2011. There is no cost to the school department budget.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve; seconded by Ms. Martin.
Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

COMMUNICATIONS

1. Letter dated February 28th, 2011 from Principal of the Stoklosa School Nancy O'Loughlin regarding the Stoklosa 8th grade students.

Ms. Doherty moved:

To accept the communication and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Conway. APPROVED

2. March 4, 2011 United Teachers of Lowell letter of support for Superintendent Scott
– This letter was read in its entirety by Mayor Milinazzo

Ms. Laraba moved:

To accept the communication and to place on file; seconded by Ms. Doherty. APPROVED

3. Flyer regarding Lowell Public Schools Community Resource Fair: Thursday, April 7th from 6 to 8pm at the Rogers School.

Mr. Leahy moved:

To accept the communication and to place on file; seconded by Mr. Leary. APPROVED

4. Lowell Telecommunication [Channel 10] Broadcast of School Committee Meetings:
Live on the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the Month; Thursdays @ 6PM; Saturday and Sundays @ 2PM; Tuesdays @ 10AM. - INFORMATIONAL

ADJOURNMENT – Ms. Martin moved to adjourn; seconded by Ms. Laraba. This meeting adjourned at 9:19 pm

Respectfully submitted,

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

CAS: jms

Enclosures