

**SPECIAL MEETING OF THE LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**Election – New Superintendent**

April 28, 2011

A **Special Meeting** of the **Lowell School Committee** was held in Council Chamber, City Hall at 6:30 pm for the purpose of electing the new Superintendent of the Lowell Public Schools.

**ROLL CALL**

On roll call at 6:30 pm, all other members were present, namely: Jacqueline A. Doherty, Alison P. B. Laraba, John J. Leahy, James D. Leary, Mayor/Chairman James L. Milinazzo and David J. Conway.

Mayor Milinazzo stated that this Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee was called for the purpose of electing a new Superintendent. On behalf of his colleagues, he thanked everyone involved in the process beginning with:

- The Blue Ribbon Committee, Robert R. Gilman, Chair
- Members of the Cabinet
- Members of the School Committee

He thanked everyone for their hard work.

Ms. Doherty sincerely thanked Ann Murphy, Assistant Superintendent for Support Services, who went above and beyond her job description in helping the Committee with their search and Michael Cassidy as well from the Central Office.

All members of the Committee thanked all the candidates for their participation. They firmly believed that all the finalists were outstanding and the Blue Ribbon Committee did an outstanding job choosing them.

**For the record**, the five finalists were:

*Pia Durkin, Ph.D.*

- Superintendent of the Attleboro Public Schools, Attleboro, MA from 2006 to present
- Former Superintendent of the Narragansett public Schools, Narragansett, Rhode Island
- Former Assistant Superintendent of the Boston Public Schools

*Jean Franco*

- Deputy Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction, Lowell Public Schools
- Assistant Superintendent for Student Support Services, Lowell Public Schools

*Ferdinand Fuentes*

- President, Re-Imagine Associates, Providence, Rhode Island, 2009 to present
- Assistant superintendent, New Bedford Public Schools, New Bedford, MA

*Mary Ellen Johnson, Ed.D.*

- Superintendent, Sandwich Public Schools, Sandwich, MA 2007 to present
- Local Superintendent, New York City Public Schools, New York, NY

*Charles Wilson, Ed.D.*

- Educational Consultant, 2009 to present
- Superintendent of Pelham Public schools, Pelham, New York
- Superintendent of North Salem Public Schools, North Salem, New York

Ms. Martin moved:

That each member of the Lowell School Committee vote for their selected candidate by name on a roll call vote; seconded by Ms. Doherty. APPROVED

Ms. Doherty, *Jean Franco*; Ms. Laraba, *Dr. Pia Durkin*; Mr. Leahy, *Jean Franco*; Mr. Leary, *Jean Franco*; Ms. Martin, *Jean Franco*; Mayor Milinazzo, *Jean Franco*; Mr. Conway, *Jean Franco*. Six votes, *Jean Franco*; one vote, *Dr. Pia Durkin*. ***Jean Franco*** elected **Superintendent** of the Lowell Public Schools.

Ms. Laraba moved for **reconsideration** of her vote. She changed her vote to *Jean Franco*; therefore *Jean Franco* unanimously voted to be the new **Superintendent** of the Lowell Public Schools.

**For the record**, according to *Roberts Rules of Order*, a Committee members has 24 hours to change his/her vote to the majority rule.

Jean Franco sincerely thanked the School Committee individually past and present by name for their confidence and support. She also thanked former Superintendent Karla Brooks Baehr for seeing a talent in her she didn't see, and; thus, brought her forward. Past Deputy Superintendent Thaddeus (Ted) Rurak, her mentor, who knew what was best for the district, and he knew how to treat people. She has learned a lot from him. She has been working to improve education for the children in Lowell for 17 years. She thanked the teachers of Lowell for welcoming her into their classrooms and the paraprofessionals, the people closest to the children. Jean Franco also thanked the custodians, the principals and everyone here tonight. She stated that we all make the difference in this school district; everybody is working for children. Under her administration, she wanted to make sure that compassion continues. She was proud to be Superintendent of a school system that she cherishes in a city that she loves. Jean Franco ended by stating that she

believes she possesses the honesty, the integrity, the respect, and the knowledge to bring this district forward to the next generation. She will serve as she has done every day since September of 1978. She thanked everyone again for their amazing support.

Mayor Milinazzo stated that the following was voted on this evening:

At this particular point it is voted by the School Committee of the City of Lowell to appoint *Jean Franco* to the position of Superintendent of Schools who shall hold such position during the pleasure of the Lowell School Committee subject to contractual provisions if any.

Mayor Milinazzo recognized City Solicitor Christine O'Connor.

City Solicitor Christine O'Connor stated that the motion can be acted upon by the School Committee. A follow-up meeting can be set up between the School Committee and the Superintendent elect to begin working on certain contractual employment issues, and proceed from there.

Mayor Milinazzo stated that he would entertain a motion to put forward the vote he just read.

Mr. Leary moved to approve; seconded by Ms. Laraba

**For clarification**, the motion reads as follows:

At this particular point it is voted by the School Committee of the City of Lowell to appoint *Jean Franco* to the position of Superintendent of Schools who shall hold such position during the pleasure of the Lowell School Committee subject to contractual provisions if any. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Mayor Milinazzo stated that he would now entertain a motion to set up a meeting as a whole.

Mr. Leary moved:

To set up a meeting of the Committee as a Whole for the purpose of discussing contract negotiations with the Superintendent elect Jean Franco; seconded by Mr. Leahy. Unanimously approved on roll call. APPROVED

Ms. Martin wanted it specified that the meeting would be in **Executive Session**.

City Solicitor Christine O'Connor stated that it would be a Special Meeting of the School Committee. It will open up in public session and then there will be a motion to move it into **Executive Session**.

Mayor Milinazzo stated that the date of the meeting would be set up through the Central Office.

He thanked members of the audience for being here tonight.

**ADJOURNMENT** – Ms Doherty moved to adjourn; seconded by Mr. Leary. This Special Meeting of the Lowell School Committee adjourned at 6:55 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Mayor James L. Milinazzo  
Chairman of the  
Lowell School Committee

JLM:jms

Enclosure (1)