

Lawrence, Massachusetts

April 24, 2019

An Informational Meeting of the Lawrence School Committee held this evening at 6:00 P.M. in the Library at the North Common Educational Complex, 233 Haverhill Street, with the following members present: Patricia Mariano, Donna Bertolino, Stacy Seward, Adderly Gonzalez and Marianella Rivera, Vice Chair. Absent: Mayor Dan Rivera, Chair, and Elissa Salas.

Also present was Cynthia Paris, Superintendent, and Joan I. Milone, Recording Secretary.

Marienela Rivera called the meeting to order at 6:15 P.M., recited the Pledge of Allegiance and held a Moment of Silence.

- Public Participation

Homayan Maale, 53 Chester Street – He addressed the board on his and community’s support for Superintendent Paris work in the district this year. He asked for their support in the current custodial union negotiations.

Marienela Rivera, 2A Washington Street – On behalf of the constituents she has interviewed in order to widen her perspective on issues occurring under the Receivership, the following concerns were brought to her attention: teacher retention, bribery, teachers’ credentials, bullying, harsh discipline and school lunches. These items need to appear on the School Committee agenda.

Elizabeth Lavasta, 131 Brookfield Street – As a parent of three LPS students, she appreciates the ability to be able to voice her opinion. Thanked the Mayor for being an example to children who are first generation Latino Americans can be leaders. Education is a privilege and asked the Superintendent and the School Committee Members to fight for the rights of the children, such as monitoring spending – ANET being an example. The budget should go towards students’ education not a measurement tool for teachers and these savings used towards hiring teachers with the appropriate credentials and towards trauma and competency training.

Katherine Montero, 70-71 Parish Road – Former LPS teacher and currently CEO for Lowell Deeds who works in tandem with corporations in support of public high schools, their teachers and students. A discussion on “lack of funding” took place with a group of high school students. The following was their input: 1) School Sustainability Project competition (ways to save money); 2) The group with best proposal will manage \$1M of schools’ budget through a Participating Budget Process (PBP) under guidance of trained teachers.

Liz K, 20 Knox Street – Does not agree with School Committee’s meeting schedule-there should be monthly meetings in order to transition from Receivership. There is a need for additional funding for school programs such as student special services.

### Communications and Reports

Superintendent Paris presented the proposed FY20 budget by highlighting the budget process by PowerPoint. Her points of discussion were:

- Budget Process and Review
- Funding Sources
- State Aid for Budget
- Net School-Spending (local and State aid)
- Budget Priorities
  - Student Achievement
  - Student Services
  - Educational Infrastructure

The Superintendent responded one budget question for the School Committee. Vice Chair Rivera commented she appreciated the time involved in implementing the budget, but the extent of the presentation was not sufficient if the intention is to transition back to local control. She added that

this meeting highlights how disenfranchising the Receivership is to the community. The School Committee should have an active role in the budget process; the lack of involvement is impairing this Board on how to govern the school system.

Vice Chair Rivera allowed Katherine Montero to address the board members. She asked what their thoughts were on implementing a Participatory Budget process in LPS.

Vice Chair, Marianela Rivera requested a motion to add Participatory Budget to the next meeting's agenda; Stacy Seward seconded - - there was no first motion. Marianela then asked who was for the vote - Stacy, Adderly and Marianela said yes. Pat Mariano and Donna Bertolino did not vote and Vice Chair Rivera did not ask for the response if any member was against the motion.

Upon the motion made by Marianela Rivera, seconded by Patricia Mariano, it was unanimously

V-03-19      VOTED:      To adjourn the meeting at 6:45 P.M.



Cynthia Paris, Superintendent