

## MINUTES OF MEETING

**GROUP:** District Accountability Committee

**DATE:** Wednesday, October 21, 2020

**LOCATION:** Virtual via Google Meet

**PRESENT:**

Jill Rickard	Cindi Seidel
Crysti Copp	Nicole Heim
Carol Zimmerman	Alisa Tjelmeland
Tonya Brier	Rachael Liberman
Elizabeth Weishaupl	Amy McCandless
Kirsten Roen	Malaika Hale
Ashley Miller	Brent Wilhemli
Shawna McGuckin	Elizabeth Bednorz
Janna Seiber	Tamara Nolting
Logan Dailey	Jennifer Proal
Jennifer Hicks	Elizabeth Mueller
Michelle Campbell	Anne Warren
Lisa Larance	Julie Fincham
Bridget Monroe	MaryMichael Hawkins
McAllister Johnson	Terese Rainwater, Chair
Melisa Roth	Tera Helmon, Administrative liaison
Angela Boatright	

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Brian Ewert	Donna Villamor
Beth Best	Jonathan Levesque

1. **Welcome, DAC Business**

Terese Rainwater, DAC chair, called the meeting to order. The meeting was held virtually via Google Meet. Terese welcomed those present and thanked students for their attendance.

The minutes of the September 16, 2020, DAC meeting were accepted as corrected.

2. **Superintendent's Update**

Brian Ewert, superintendent, Donna Villamor, chief financial officer, and Jonathan Levesque, director of finance provided information about the state of the LPS budget. Brian highlighted some of the ongoing bond projects, noting that the new elementary school on the Ames campus will be named by the Board at its October 22, 2020 meeting. This school will feature a full size gym, a performing arts area, and will open fall 2021. Newton Middle School will be a state-of-the-art school with a junior stadium that will seat 1,000 people and support Title IX compliance for the district. Other projects include an elevator and new parking lot at Goddard Middle School, new turf fields at middle and high schools to allow for year-round use, and new furniture at all schools over the next 2-3 years. Brian explained that these bond dollars cannot be used for operating expenses.

Brian explained the state's budget stabilization factor, formerly known as the negative factor, which began in 2009. Overall, this has resulted in a loss of funds to LPS of \$156,969,619. School districts across the state filed a lawsuit that was heard in the state Supreme Court, where it was deemed constitutional. LPS has had successful mill levy elections and made budget cuts since 1988 to maintain a balanced budget. In 2020-2021, the district made cuts of \$4.2 million in order to balance the budget. The current pandemic and economic downturn across the state leaves the district facing budget cuts projected at \$12 million in 2021-2022. The Board has determined that a mill levy is the only means to

regain some fiscal stability and has stated the citizens must make the decision to locally support schools.

Donna Villamor reviewed the unfunded cost estimates associated with COVID-19 and reviewed some possible budget reduction measures, noting the Board has had no discussion concerning budget cuts. Brian emphasized that every department and school will be affected by these cuts and they will change the face of LPS. The Financial Advisory Committee (FAC) is looking at costs and potential reductions in preparation for a recommendation to the Board in December. FAC is also looking at revenue generating possibilities.

Jonathan Levesque reviewed the ballot language of the debt-free schools mill levy override and explained the effect on property taxes. He provided a formula for homeowners to calculate their own property taxes. Contact information was provided for the Citizens for LPS campaign committee. Jonathan identified ballot measures that could affect school funding, which include: Amendment B, Proposition EE, Proposition 116 and 117.

**3. LPS Foundation (LPSF) Update**

Beth Best, executive director of the LPS Foundation shared information about the Foundation, its mission, and its positive impact on schools. Beth explained that the Foundation is a non-profit that is governed by its own 13-member board. Beth is the only full-time employee. Foundation support is focused on filling gaps to support student education. These include mental health, educational technology, health and wellness, and grants to teachers and to schools. Funds are raised through partnerships with businesses, grants, employee giving campaign and other donations, as well as annual events. Since the Foundation's beginning in 1991, it has provided more than \$6 million to LPS schools. In 2019-2020, the Foundation supported mental health and wellness, COVID food assistance, internet connectivity for distance learning, summer reading and literacy, and grants to schools and teachers. Already during the current school year, the Foundation has continued to support internet connectivity and Chromebooks for Field and East, school supplies, special education tools, a phonics platform and an arts program for TOPS, all totaling \$125,000.

**4. Board Liaison Report**

There was no Board liaison report.

**6. Meeting Evaluation and Closure**

Terese said the online evaluation survey has been sent. She encouraged everyone to complete it. She explained that the information gathered each month helps in planning future DAC meetings and evaluating the overall success of DAC that becomes part of its annual report to the Board.

**Wrap-up**

The next DAC meeting is November 18, 2020. Planned agenda items include a budget and funding update and a mental health update.

Submitted by  
Kerry Schaper