



LOWELL SCHOOL COMMITTEE
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David J. Conway
Vice-Chairperson

Finance Subcommittee Meeting

Wednesday, February 11, 2026

Central Administration Building

TV Studio - 5th Floor

5:00 p.m.

Fred Bahou
Eileen Delrossi
Dominik Lay
Connie A. Martin
Danielle McFadden

Subcommittee Members Present:

Chairperson Bahou, Mr. Conway and Ms. Martin

School Department Personnel Present:

Dr. Pinto, Assistant Superintendent of Finance

Chairperson Bahou called the meeting to order at 5:10 p.m. The following agenda items were discussed:

1. Maintenance of Effort update for 25-26 School Year
2. Update on Development of 26-27 Budget, including Governor's recommendations on state allocation.
3. How will transportation costs, Health Insurance increase, and contractual commitments will affect overall budget?

Dr. Pinto opened the meeting by discussing the Memorandum of Agreement (MOA). He stated that the MOA proposal was submitted to the City Manager and Chief Financial Officer in October 2025. The proposal was prepared using the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's per-pupil cost calculator. Dr. Pinto explained that the proposal included items such as health insurance, operational expenses, and the maintenance of school facilities. He noted that a recommendation was made to hold quarterly meetings to review all related charges. It was agreed that the parties would reconvene in January after the newly elected City Council and Committee were in place. Dr. Pinto added that the school department is now making adjustments to the MOA and plans to resubmit a revised version to the City.

Ms. Martin asked whether the City had made a counteroffer to the original proposal.

Dr. Pinto responded that the proposal is currently being refined, as the City has not yet provided a formal counterproposal. He indicated that another draft will be sent once revisions are complete.

Mr. Conway asked whether the School Department and the City are meeting regularly and maintaining open lines of communication.

Dr. Pinto replied that communication remains open. He noted that he is invited to City meetings when they occur, although only one meeting has taken place in recent months. He also stated that the auditor is invited to School Department meetings and attends regularly. Additionally, the Facilities Department meets frequently and will provide and update to the Finance Office.

Mr. Bahou asked whether the Committee would like to make recommendations or meet with the City Council to further discuss the MOA/Maintenance of Effort (MOE), and he invited members to share their thoughts.

Dr. Pinto stated that his plan is to provide a revised MOA/MOE proposal and attempt to schedule a meeting with the City during the last week of February.

Ms. Martin asked whether materials could be sent to the City next week to allow sufficient time for review and the possible submission of a counterproposal by the end of February.

Dr. Pinto responded that he would make every effort to do so but noted that it may be challenging due to other ongoing work.

Mr. Bahou asked whether the threshold for parking requirements could be increased. He also requested a discussion regarding the cost of the School Resource Officer (SRO), specifically questioning why the School Department is responsible for funding both a Sergeant's and a Captain's salary.

Dr. Pinto provided an update on the Governor's FY26 budget allocation. He reported increases of 5.5% in both Chapter 70 funding. He further noted that the City's projected cash contribution is \$12 million. Dr. Pinto explained that while the required district contribution has steadily increased, the City's cash contribution has not kept pace since 2016. He stated that preliminary budget allocations were provided to schools using weighted formulas and established guidelines. He added that contractual salary increases of 3.5% are anticipated, while health insurance costs are projected to rise by as much as 8.9%. Transportation expenses are expected to increase by 6%. Many of these projections are based on anticipated enrollment figures. Dr. Pinto explained that he uses average salaries and incorporates them into each school's workbook as best practice for budget planning. He also noted that transportation costs, particularly those associated with homeless student services, have been increasing significantly. Dr. Pinto asked members of the subcommittee for their thoughts on the City's proposed \$12 million contribution.

Ms. Martin responded that it is difficult to evaluate the figure without a clearer understanding of the Maintenance of Effort. She stated that once additional information regarding the MOE is available, the Committee would be in a better position to assess whether the amount is sufficient.

Ms. Martin moved to adjourn at 5:58 p.m.; the motion was seconded by Mr. Conway. The motion passed with 3 yeas.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dr. Pinto".

Dr. Pinto, Assistant Superintendent of
Finance for Liam Skinner,
Superintendent

DP/mes