

LOWELL SCHOOL FY 2011 Budget Description

Dari Donovan, Principal

Mission Statement

The Lowell School, with the active involvement of its families and neighbors, seeks to provide a supportive learning environment which fosters academic excellence, encourages individual and collaborative endeavors, and promotes social responsibility and respect for diversity. We seek to support students in developing the knowledge, skills and attitudes that will serve them well in their lifetime. This requires all the abilities to effectively engage and contribute to society as they know it, and the imagination and sense of activism to change it for the better.

FY10 Student Enrollment

- Total Students, PreK – 5th grade: 384
- Male: 207 Female: 177
- Special education: 57 (15%); 5 non-Lowell students in out-of-district placements
- ELL: 49 (13%)
- Low Income: 95 (25%)
- Class Size: 16 to 25 students per class with an average of 19 students per classroom.

FY10 Grade Level Classrooms and Enrollment

PreK:	1 class	(17 students)
Kindergarten:	3 classes	(49 students)
1st Grade:	4 classes	(78 students)
2nd Grade:	3 classes	(54 students)
3rd Grade:	3 classes	(59 students)
4th Grade:	3 classes	(72 students)
5th Grade:	3 classes	(53 students)

FY11 Projected Student Enrollment:

PreK:	1 class	(17 students)
Kindergarten:	3 classes	(60 students)
1st Grade:	3 classes	(52 students)
2nd Grade:	4 classes	(78 students)
3rd Grade:	3 classes	(54 students)
4th Grade:	3 classes	(62 students)
5th Grade:	3 classes	(73 students)

FY11 Projected changes in classroom configuration:

Administration

Staffing: Principal, school secretary

Elementary Liaison for Curriculum and Instruction

At the elementary level there is a need for quality curriculum and instruction coordination across the three schools to assist the elementary principals. The district wide aspects of curriculum and instruction are a huge task, frequently distinctly different from the middle and high school and difficult to coordinate without oversight and support.

The responsibilities of such a person/position would be to support curriculum and instruction needs, as articulated by central administration, elementary building principals and professional staff, by:

- Providing support to principals and teachers for curriculum initiatives and implementation
- Facilitating professional development as it applies to curriculum and instruction at the elementary level
- Managing and monitoring district-wide elementary assessment data in reading and mathematics

- Communicating effectively and consistently among and across elementary schools, staff and community
- Assisting technology in practice as it applies to curriculum and instruction at the elementary level
- Coordinating curriculum between elementary, middle and high school when appropriate

Class-based Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

Staffing: 20 FTE Classroom teachers (PreK-5), 2.5 IAs

English Language Arts:

At the beginning of the school year the district-based K-3 Reading Task Force (RTF) introduced newly articulated curriculum expectations in comprehension and fluency, along with tools for instruction and monitoring. Professional development will continue to be focused on the curriculum implementation and effective use of resources.

A plan for the remainder of this year has been put forward to finalize reading assessments in all components, complete vocabulary expectations, complete toolbox with vocabulary materials, reading assessments and reading workshop management resources. The department also plans to develop a set of recommendations for ongoing implementation support.

The next phase of the ELA work is the development of a 3-5 Reading Writing TF and the shifting of K-3 focus from "learning to read" to the acquisition of writing skills and language usage.

Math:

FY 2010 marks the third year in the full implementation of Think Math for all three schools. Think Math is currently being implemented in all regular education classrooms. Consumable materials are a significant cost to the three schools. These costs are borne by the operating/materials budget for each school. For this past year, the cost for Lowell was \$6,326. The costs will be similar for FY 11.

FASTT Math is in its fifth year of operation in the system and in its third full year of implementation for students in grades 2-5. Currently, any ongoing costs for this program are borne by the district budget.

The Math Task Force is currently investigating a Tier Three math program for students who require an alternative math curriculum that has more of a "Life Skills" component. Students who would use this program would not be able to access Think Math through modifications and accommodations. While this Tier Three math program will serve a relatively small percentage of our students, maybe 3-5% at most, there are start up costs for this. (Please see separate Tier Three Math Curriculum Budget proposal.)

Science:

The work of the Science Task Force began its work by concentrating on grades 4-6. With no representation from the middle school any more, the task force has shifted to a grades 3-5 focus. Four budget proposals were created and shared in May of 2009 but these were not funded. The Science Task Force is currently engaged in reviewing and resubmitting a revised materials proposal for grades 3-5. Currently all three schools use existing materials to implement their science lessons and units.

Social Studies:

Attention has been paid to building a library of non-fiction titles to support social studies. In addition, Reading A-Z has many appropriate materials available on line. The district needs to begin a full review of elementary social studies curriculum and materials to ensure alignment with state standards, consistency school to school, and coherence across the grade levels.

Educational Technology:

Class-Based Instruction and Integration Support**(increase in librarian position)

Staffing: 1.4 FTE

For the current school year, class-based educational technology instruction varied by grade level. The 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classes attended regular weekly technology instruction in the computer lab with

the instructional technology teacher. Classroom teachers at these levels also scheduled time to work in the lab with their students, with and without the IT teacher. The 3rd, 4th and 5th grade levels each have a shared laptop cart which allows for flexible use during the school day. 3rd, 4th and 5th grade students access computer, web and server based programs to foster academic skills, explore concepts and create projects.

In addition, the IT teacher performs a variety of vital functions at the Lowell School. She is integrally involved in the development of our Primary Learning Support program as technology is increasingly incorporated into student learning. The IT teacher plans and prepares with self-identified classroom teachers and specialists to explore new resources, innovate on past practices and enhance teaching and learning. This current year the IT teacher has also co-taught some targeted grade levels and special populations to expand the repertoire of content teachers.

Students in PreK through second grade made weekly visits to the school library. A reassigned, shared teacher provided this important experience. Our shared librarian had two days dedicated to the Lowell (Monday and Tuesday) and worked tirelessly to maintain our library and develop resources, as well as meet integration needs of classroom teachers, and directly instruct fourth and fifth graders to foster information literacy and fluency. In addition, the librarian has taken on the challenge of working directly with third grade classes and teachers on the "Live Wire" partnership with Fablevision.

Having shared staff with the Hosmer School has presented programming and scheduling challenges. This fact compromises possibilities. For the Lowell it has meant fewer classes scheduled for direct library services and less than ideal maintenance and development.

Assessment:

Expanding the use of Measures of Academic Progress is a high priority. Teachers find the administration of the assessment reasonable and the data invaluable. Continued development of common assessments on critical curriculum goals also needs to be supported.

Student Support Services

Special Education:

The district has encouraged the individual schools to serve as many children within the district as is possible, based on need, capacity and financial responsibility. To that end, the Lowell has developed a multi-pronged approach to serving our special education students.

Team Leader

Staffing: .5 FTE

This critical role manages the cumbersome process of meeting all legal requirements (laws and regulations) to serve our special education population. The Chair also assists in the challenges of managing both personnel and materials responsibly.

Comprehensive Inclusion Support**(return reading personnel and retain current level of SPED service)

Staffing: 4 FTE, 9 IAs

Our CIS program has been developed for students with complex needs requiring substantial, extended periods with a special educator (1:1 or small group), and in-class support to engage in curriculum. This program also provides consultation and direct service for social / emotional and behavioral regulation issues.

Language Based Partial Day Substantially Separate Program**(growth of new upper level class)

Staffing: 1.0 FTE, .5 IA

For students with significant language based learning disabilities, a program has been developed to provide intensive partial day instruction to develop essential reading and writing skills. In addition to the substantially separate component, the special educator and IA provide in class support to the identified students. This program currently serves several grade two and three Lowell students as well as students

from other schools in the district. The program needs to expand in 2010-2011 to continue to meet the needs of these students as they advance. It is expected that Lowell will have a 2/3 class and a 4/5 class next year. This will require an additional (or re-allocated) special educator and an IA. The Lowell School budget funded all resources required for the start of this program.

Primary Learning Support**(cost shift out of building budget, as well as new class different age group)
Staffing: 0.8 FTE, 2 IAs

PLS has been developed and implemented to meet the physical and academic needs of students with neurodevelopmental disabilities. It is a district-based program to provide integrated services and supplemental educational experiences, along with tailored curriculum. Current enrollment is two Lowell students and two Hosmer students. This program must grow to accommodate the current students, as well new students whose profiles require this specific support. The Lowell School budget has funded all resources required for the start of this program.

Resource

Staffing: 1 FTE

A special educator provides specific instruction for students with learning disabilities in accordance with the plans outlined in student IEPs. The schedule requires the teacher to move from class to class, grade to grade, to meet the needs of all students on the caseload.

Reading**(return 2nd position from SPED)

Staffing: 2.0 FTE

The reading department has undergone significant restructuring. In 2006, the district based ELA coordinator position was eliminated and the reading personnel began to operate under direction from the principal. The need for reading intervention has become the focus. Reading is a gateway skill to all future learning and the Lowell School would like to provide adequate regular education reading support to children having trouble in any of the five components of reading. This new emphasis requires the reinstatement of the reassigned reading teacher and training for the department.

Guidance:

Staffing: 1.0 FTE

The guidance role is complex and diverse in its reach. There is a class-based instruction component that address all aspects of violence prevention, i.e. tolerating difference, conflict resolution and bully prevention. Guidance also conducts the pre-referral process. All state assessments, including proctor training, coordination of accommodations, scheduling, and materials management are handled by guidance. New students and their families are served by guidance through the January to June kindergarten registration process and the transfer process both to and from the school. The counseling aspects of the role are called upon daily, many times without advanced notice. Teachers often seek out consultations with our guidance counselor when challenges emerge around individual students. The guidance role is also involved in many school management issues, i.e. placement, team meetings, safety planning, and the development of protocols and new processes.

Behavioral Support:

Staffing: .5 FTE, 1 IA

Many students with and without learning disabilities experience difficulty regulating emotions and behavior throughout the day. This program, along with guidance and contracted services from the Academy for Physical and social development, provides proactive and responsive programming, respite, consultation and crisis intervention. Contracted services from the Academy for Physical and Social Development have been invaluable. The Lowell needs this ongoing relationship to continue to support many students and the staff that work with them.

ELL

Staffing: 2.0 FTE

Our caseload numbers have been inching up. In addition, a total of seven non-English speaking students enrolled at the Lowell School after the beginning of the school year. The needs of newcomers are dramatic. It would be extremely helpful if programming for newcomers could be considered at the district

level.**

Integrated Arts
Physical Education
Staffing: 1.4 FTE

Art:
Staffing 1.0 FTE

Music:
Staffing 1.0 FTE

Plant Management/Facilities/Capital Expenditures:

Staffing: 3 FT Custodians

Furniture Needs**(Currently no budget for these)

- Two additional stacks of chairs to meet event needs
- Several round cafeteria tables to to meet a range of needs
- Library seating
- Conference table and chairs
- Specific adaptive furniture as children grow
- Room partitions to create flexible work spaces

Equipment**(Learning Commons)

- Large screen LCD TV/Monitor
- Interactive white board
- MP3 Player Recorder four-station listening center
- Digital Voice Recorder
- CD Digital Stereo four-station listening center
- Quickcam
- Cable access

Capital/Maintenance Needs**

- Phone and PA System upgrade
 - The phone system has many glitches, i.e. breaker periodically trips shutting down the system, calls going to the wrong space, and PA dead zones in critical areas.
- Cafeteria noise abatement
 - The cafeteria was not designed for its current use. The high ceilings and wide open space amplify the typical noise of a student group of 120 students. Lunchtime management would be more effective and behavior would improve if we installed soundproofing.
- Interior painting
- Interior door locks/windows
 - Many interior door locks and windows do not function properly.

FY11 Hiring Expectations

At this time, one classroom teacher retirement is anticipated. This position needs to be filled (with some savings) as enrollment is anticipated to be stable. Currently four teachers are on or plan maternity leaves during the remainder of this school year. How many will extend into next year is unknown at this time. As explained before, the Lowell School must return to 2.0 FTE in the reading department to provide adequate Tier 2 reading support. This change will require the allocation of one additional SPED teacher to maintain adequate support to our CIS students.

We are carefully watching indicators for Kindergarten enrollment.

FY11 Anticipated Needs (prioritized)

- Reading Teacher
- Language Based Program development at 4 / 5
- Increase library position to 1.0 FTE
- Elementary Liaison for Curriculum and Instruction
- Materials and Equipment for New Programs (PLS and LB)
- Materials and Equipment General

FY11 Possible Reductions and/or Reallocations

- Savings from 1 teacher retirement