

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, October 12, 2016 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley- Oxford Rd. Dudley, MA 01571, 7 p.m.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Mary N. Antocci
Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
Raymond J. Chalk, Vice Chair
Catherine M. Kabala
Joseph M. Pietrzak
Elaine M. Rabbitt
Stephanie A. Reed

Jack A. Cederberg, Student Representative, was not in attendance

Also in attendance were Gregg J. Desto, Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations; district administrators: Lorinda Allen, Karen Ares, William Chaplin, Jody O'Brien, John D. Paire, Dean W. Packard; teachers Diane Seibold, Kevin Foley; Kelly Brown, Dudley Fire Chief Dean Kochanowski, Dudley Selectman Chair Jon Ruda; media representatives Rich Earle, audio-visual coordinator, Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 7 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Approval of Minutes

A. *Minutes of Special Meeting of Wednesday, September 28, 2016*

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by J. Pietrzak to approve the minutes of the special meeting of Wednesday, September 28, 2016, as amended by Mrs. Rabbitt, was approved by unanimous vote.

B. *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, September 28, 2016*

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the school committee meeting of Wednesday, September 28, 2016, as approved by unanimous vote.

IV. Approval of Warrant

The following warrants were distributed and signed by a majority of members without further comment or questions:

Warrant #	Amount
1095D	\$432,923.39
1095P	\$1,152,782.44
Total	\$1,585,705.83

V. Citizens' Forum

No one spoke at this time.

VI. Communications

There were no communications to report.

VII. Student Representative Report – Jack Cederberg

This item was tabled as Mr. Cederberg was not present.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

1. The first Parent-Teacher conferences of the 2016-2017 school year will be held Thursday, October 13 for grades 5-12.
2. Mr. Desto will join several Central Massachusetts superintendents, school committee members and business managers Friday for the Regional Budget Roundtable at Oxford High School at 10 a.m. The meeting will provide an opportunity to discuss the budgetary issues that affect the area, and to discuss the possibility of a meeting with local legislators.
3. Mr. Desto reminded the committee of the Community Reading Days scheduled throughout the district October 17-27.
4. Charter School Ballot Question: The committee offered feedback on a draft of a "fact sheet" regarding the upcoming election's Ballot Question #2. Mr. Desto said the facts he found in his research bear out that charter schools do hurt public schools in many areas, particularly funding.

The committee agreed that the statement should be released to the public via local newspapers, the district website, and as a text alert. Mrs. Antocci said we are providing facts, not trying to sway votes.

Mrs. Rabbitt said 170 school committees are opposed to lifting the cap on charter schools, despite claims that charter schools will make public schools better by creating competition. Mrs. Rabbitt said the district tries to do its very best every day to keep students in the district.

Mr. Desto will contact Stonebridge Press. Rather than present the entire statement, he will use the first paragraph and a link to the article on the district website.

5. Mr. Desto has confirmed with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education that the district will administer the minimum required computer based MCAS 2.0 tests this spring. Grades 4 and 8 ELA and math tests are computer based, while all others are paper.
6. Mr. Desto updated the committee on the October 5 meeting of the Shepherd Hill Building Committee. The task before the building committee is to discuss the potential for this 45-year-old building that is well kept but sometimes a barrier to 21st century learning. The committee is discussing whether to upgrade incrementally, or to go forward and look into a total renovation.

It was decided that Mr. Desto and Mr. Mathieu will meet with an architect to get cost for a design, and will return to the committee with the estimate and to discuss a strategy for financing the project. Finally, the subcommittee would review the priorities.

Mr. Mathieu said the first step is Request for Qualifications to find an owner's project manager to lead the district through the process. The next step is put out another RFQ for designer architect to come up with technical estimates for such issues as HVAC, roof repair, fire alarm panels, ADA compliance, fire suppression and more.

Mr. Desto presented a draft of policy FEB, which governs designer selection. Mr. Desto asked the committee to consider this at the next meeting.

Mr. Mathieu said if the committee opts to continue seeking MSBA funds, that organization has its own criteria for designer selection.

IX. New Business

A. Dudley Fire Department Building Project

Fire Chief Dean Kochanowski spoke to the committee on efforts to build a new fire station. The \$9.2 million project was turned down by voters last spring. The scope of the project has been reduced by \$2.7 million for renovations and additions to the existing fire station on Mason Road. Voters will consider this project at the Fall Town Meeting on Monday, October 24, 2016.

Chief Kochanowski said the additional cost to the average taxpayers will be \$42.40 per year, or \$10 per quarter. The project will be financed by a United States Department of Agriculture loan at 2% for the life of the loan, as well as \$800,000 in grants. The Fire Department is holding an open house on Saturday, October 15 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Mrs. Kabala commended the chief on an excellent project.

Mr. Desto said first responders play a major role in our emergency response planning. Mr. Desto said their quick response was evident last spring during two incidents.

Mrs. Aucoin offered her personal support of the project.

B. Green Communities Initiative

Mr. Mathieu introduced Kelly Brown, Central Regional Coordinator for the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources, to report on the Green Communities Designation and Grant Program. The Town of Charlton is pursuing designation, while Dudley has adopted the program, which assists towns in finding clean energy solutions that reduce long term energy costs while strengthening the local economy.

Charlton Town Administrator Robin Craver requested the school committee be informed of this program because the Charlton school buildings are included in its efforts to win grant funding. Towns can also adopt the Stretch Energy Codes.

C. 2016 MCAS Presentations – District Wide Results

Mrs. Allen and Mr. Desto offered an overview of the results of the required Spring 2016 MCAS using the Celebrate, Concentrate and Innovate process. In 2014-2015, the district was given the option to pilot the PARCC test and opted to stay with the MCAS. In 2015-2016, the district was required to choose either the next generation MCAS or PARCC, and the district choose the next generation MCAS.

Mrs. Allen reviewed the results of the cohort beginning in grade 3 who were in grade 10 last year. This group's performance rose from 63 percent to 95 percent proficient in ELA, and from 68 percent to 80 percent in math. The data shows that students with disabilities experienced similar performance. Among high needs population, the ELA scores rose from 30-83 percent. Students with disabilities did not show the same growth in math.

Mrs. Allen said several students missed moving to proficient by one questions. Through data analysis, Mrs. Allen determined the district needs to concentrate on open response questions, key ideas and details, integration of knowledge and details. In math, the key areas are interpreting and analyzing data, fractions and decimals, and identifying patterns.

Mr. Desto said there is a need for urgency to do better, but that this is only one piece of the pie. In those other areas we are exceptional.

Challenges ahead:

- Unknown test this spring
- All Mass. schools held harmless this year
- Grades 4 and 8 will test online, phasing in additional grades in 2018 and 2019, with full phase in in 2020.
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Areas of celebration include conventions of standard English, vocabulary acquisition and use, craft and structure, and in math, measurement, number and operations in base 10, relationships between items, geometry and statistics and probability.

Mr. Desto said it is important to look at what other districts do. Do they employ smaller class sizes, additional support staff? Mr. Desto said this information is important as we get into budget discussions later in the year as we can take this information and put it to work for us.

Mrs. Rabbitt requested future presentations look at the trajectory of the needs improvement students as to whether they are making gains, and to identify trends, especially with sub groups. Mrs. Rabbitt said the information supplied for those who are proficient/advanced shows they are where they are supposed to be, but she is concerned with the needs improvement category, and asked that this information be included in future presentations. Mrs. Rabbitt said the insight concerning reading skills and the complexity of the questions may be helped by the committee's work to lower class sizes. Mrs. Rabbitt said this is important information to review as the committee begins work on the FY 18 budget.

Mrs. Rabbitt asked Mrs. O'Brien to provide information about the students who participated in the alternate assessments.

Mrs. O'Brien said the danger in comparing cohorts from year to year is that the tests students took in 2015, 2016 and will take in 2017 are not the same. We are not comparing apples to apples. Up to 2015, we can predict how well the students were doing as there were no major changes in the test. Mrs. O'Brien said we are creating a new baseline beginning in 2017. In her analysis of cohorts, they did not perform poorly, compared to previous years as the test was very different. She said the goal is for

all students – general education, special education and high needs groups, is to move forward and improve.

Mrs. Antocci said the district needs to focus on the areas we are celebrating, as these may become challenges with the new tests.

Mrs. Rabbitt said all the discussion about testing and Common Core comes down to an emphasis on skill sets they are expecting at certain grade levels. Mrs. Rabbitt said even though the change is creating an evolution in what is expected, it will give us insight into those core skills that have not been emphasized enough as a preparation to a particular grade. Mrs. Rabbitt said the hills and valleys of performance will reveal clues about these areas of emphasis.

Mrs. Kabala said the math tests assess reading as well. She said this is not fair as for a good math student, the reading could hold them back.

Mr. Desto said the district will proceed with the idea that all kids can improve.

D. Director of Finance and Operations Update (Vote May Be Required)

1. Mr. Mathieu sought the committee's acceptance of three donations:

David Halloran, Dudley, donation to Shepherd Hill Golf Team for golf bags	\$500
Amy Constantino, donation for purchase of high school class ring	\$250
P&P General Contractors, to Dudley Middle School to assist families in need	<u>\$1,000</u>
	\$1,750

A motion by J. Pietrzak, seconded by S. Reed to accept the donations as presented, was approved by unanimous vote.

2. The driver education program is in need of a replacement vehicle. Mr. Mathieu received four quotes for a 2017 Ford Fusion: Place Motor, Webster, Prime Ford, Auburn, Herb Chambers, Westboro. The district also secured a quote from MHQ, which is on the state bid list, for \$17,984. Although MHQ was the lowest bidder, the district would be required to sell its current vehicle. The next lowest selling price was from Place Motor at \$18,858. Place Motor would accept the current car as a trade-in, thereby reducing the selling price to \$16,358.

Mr. Mathieu said he plans to award the bid to Place Motor. No vote is necessary as the car will be paid for with funds from the driver education revolving fund.

3. The district's independent auditor, Powers and Sullivan, has completed the FY 2016 audit. Mr. Mathieu will invite the firm to speak to the committee at the first January meeting.

E. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee

Mr. Desto brought forward information obtained from the guest speaker at the recent meeting of the Worcester County Superintendent's Association that the state's revenues are short of projections. According to Tom Scott, President of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, this opens the doors for the Governor to enact 9c cuts, although Mr. Scott told the superintendents he did not expect this to happen. Mr. Scott also emphasized that legislators want to hear from their constituents.

Mrs. Rabbitt reported that Melissa King has left her position with the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Finance office.

F. Update on School Brains Parent Portal

Mr. Desto reported district had to change student information systems two years ago, as the IPASS system was being phased out. The change to School Brains has been a challenge, but the parent portal has been up and running at Shepherd Hill for two years.

Both middle schools are poised to begin using the portal for core subjects at the beginning of the second quarter, which begins Nov. 7. Information for parents will be forthcoming from the schools. Elementary schools use a different grading systems and employ other ways to keep parents updated.

G. Update on Student Travel Commitments

The committee received a report on recent travel requests approvals. Mrs. Rabbitt said the information allows them to know when our students are traveling with all that is happening in the world.

H. Consideration of Use of Facilities (Rental) Request, (Vote Required)

The Worcester County Afterschool Tennis Association has requested to run a tennis club for Mason Road School pupils. Mr. Desto said Principal Robin Parmley has worked with this organization at her previous school and strongly endorses this as a program that will be of benefit to the students. There is a nominal fee for the students to participate on four afternoons this fall. Mr. Desto recommended approval.

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the request for first time use of facilities by Worcester County Afterschool Tennis Association, was approved by unanimous vote.

I. Consideration to Appoint Delegate to MASC Annual Business Meeting (Vote Required)

Mrs. Rabbitt nominated Mrs. Reed to serve as the delegate to the Massachusetts ASC annual business meeting during the Joint Conference of the MASC and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents November 3-5. Mrs. Reed accepted the nomination.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by C. Kabala to elect Mrs. Reed as the delegate, was approved by unanimous vote.

X. Next Meeting Dates

- Wednesday, October 19, 2016 (Budget and Finance Subcommittee) – District Office, 5 p.m.
- Wednesday, October 26, 2016 (Regular Meeting) – Charlton Middle School, 6 p.m. special meeting and the regular meeting at 7 p.m.

XI. Future Agenda Items – Review of District Policy Manual, Superintendent's Goals, 2016 MCAS Presentations - school level results, MASC Resolutions, Policy FEB

Mrs. Rabbitt suggested waiting until after the conference’s policy seminar before reviewing the policy book.

Mrs. Reed suggested the community be reminded of school committee meetings via an *Ed Alert* message.

XII. Adjourn

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by R. Chalk to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 8:39 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for October 12, 2016	Superintendent’s Report of October 7, 2016	Minutes of special School Committee meeting of September 28, 2016	Minutes of regular School Committee meeting of September 28, 2016
Charter School Ballot Question #2 Fact Sheet	MCAS 2016 District Wide Results presentation	School Committee Travel Approvals	Dudley Fire Department proposal
Green Communities Designation and Grant Opportunities			

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary