

## DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, August 26, 2020 at 7 p.m. via video conferencing

Video Conferencing - Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/99705169110>

and

Live Stream - Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/dcrsd>

<https://vimeo.com/449770368>

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Kenneth J. Laferriere, Chair  
Pauline J. Aucoin, Vice Chair  
Cathleen Carmignani  
Jordan W. Evans  
Catherine M. Kabala  
Stephanie A. Reed  
Jamie L. Terry

Also in attendance were Steven M. Lamarche, Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations, Brian J. Ackerman, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; district administrators Lorinda C. Allen, William F. Chaplin Daniel D’Arcangelo, Jennifer A. Desto, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Christopher E. Starczewski, Kelly True, Andrew Leach, Michael Tucker, Peter Olson, Kelly True, James Scanlon, Athletic Director; Rich Earle, Moderator, Sandra Sullivan, secretary. 23 attendees and 18 panelists from Zoom and Vimeo live streaming.

### **I. Call to Order**

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

### **II. Moment of Silence**

The chair called for a moment of silence.

### **III. Approval of Minutes**

*Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, August 5, 2020*

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by S. Reed to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of Wednesday, August 5, 2020, was approved by unanimous vote.

C. Carmignani – Yes

J. Evans – Yes

C. Kabala – Yes

S. Reed – Yes

J. Terry – Yes

P. Aucoin – Yes

K. Laferriere – Yes

J. Terry noted that there had been a corrected set of minutes sent to the committee ahead of the meeting this evening.

*Minutes of Emergency Meeting of Monday, August 10, 2020*

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by J. Evans to approve the minutes of the Emergency Meeting of Monday, August 10, 2020, as amended, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

C. Carmignani – Yes

J. Evans – Yes

C. Kabala – Yes

S. Reed – Yes

J. Terry – Yes

P. Aucoin – Yes

K. Laferriere – Yes

**IV. Approval of Warrant**

Warrants #8 and #113 were signed remotely by members.

**V. Citizens' Forum**

The committee agreed to hold off on this agenda item until the end of the meeting.

**VI. Communications**

Mr. Laferriere asked members and the public to observe a moment of silence in memory of Mrs. Elizabeth Gaddis, who passed away last week. She served the district for 22 years as a teacher of Chemistry at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. Mr. Laferriere expressed his condolences to the Gaddis family during this time.

**VII. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Lamarche reported on the continuing work within the district buildings to adhere to safety protocols during these unchartered times. The district has contracted with Drummey Rosanne Anderson of Waltham, to analyze the HVAC systems and complete any necessary repairs. The firm will provide a written evaluation in mid-September, but will address any immediate needs.

Staff will return to the buildings beginning September 1 for professional development opportunities. All will be required to wear masks and maintain a six-foot distance. Participation in any one area is limited to 25 people. Mr. Lamarche said town health agents will join district nurses, principals and school committee member Jamie Terry to tour the buildings prior to any entry by staff.

According to Mrs. Terry, while originally recommended, temperature checks of individuals entering the buildings will not be conducted as this has been too problematic.

**VIII. New Business**

A. Report of the Director of Finance and Operations – Richard Mathieu

a. Donations

Mr. Mathieu presented for the committee's consideration, a donation of 20 3-D printed face shields from Henke Sass Wolfe of Dudley. Mr. Mathieu expressed his appreciation for this generous gift, and recommended the committee's approved.

A motion by J. Terry, second by S. Reed to accept the donation from Henke Sass Wolfe, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

C. Carmignani – Yes  
J. Evans – Yes  
C. Kabala – Yes  
S. Reed – Yes  
J. Terry – Yes  
P. Aucoin – Yes  
K. Laferriere – Yes

Although the committee’s vote is not necessary, Mr. Mathieu reported that the Shepherd Hill Chorus was recently awarded a grant in the amount of \$16,000 from the Janet Malser Humanities Trust. Mr. Mathieu expressed this thanks to the trust for its generosity. Mr. Laferriere also thanked the trust, adding that he remembers Ms. Malser as a kind and generous person.

Mr. Mathieu said items b. and c. were discussed by the Budget and Finance Subcommittee, and will be deferred until that agenda item.

Item d. Transportation Contracts

Van Pool Contract – Mr. Mathieu presented the proposed new, three-year contract with Van Pool Inc. of Wilbraham, which provides transportation to in-district special education students. The contract outlines costs for per day, fixed for three years for the vans at \$200 per day, and prices per van per day during Covid-19 related closures as \$100 per day. Other language discusses the potential for shutdowns, negotiating unforeseen expenses of personal protection equipment, and the cleaning of vehicles. Mr. Mathieu recommended the committee’s acceptance.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by P. Aucoin to accept the 2020-2023 contract with Van Pool Inc as presented this evening, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

C. Carmignani – Yes  
J. Evans – Yes  
C. Kabala – Yes  
S. Reed – Yes  
J. Terry – Yes  
P. Aucoin – Yes  
K. Laferriere – Yes

The contract with First Student will be discussed in executive session this evening.

Mr. Mathieu reported the district has thus far purchased 15,000 gloves, 80,000 masks, 1,000 gallons of hand sanitizers, a pallet of wipes to cover the first 12 weeks of in-person learning. This is in line with DESE recommendations.

A. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting – 08.25.2020  
a. Pre-school and Parking Fees

Mrs. Kabala was elected chair of the subcommittee at the first meeting of Tuesday, August 25.

Shepherd Hill Regional High School assesses parking fees to seniors at \$200 per year. Because of the pandemic, the subcommittee recommends holding off until January before assessing any fees. Students were asked to complete the necessary paperwork and sign up for passes. The subcommittee agreed that with the different student cohorts during the hybrid learning, more parking permits can be issued.

Similarly, the subcommittee discussed the Preschool fee of \$1,000 per year, and recommended a payment schedule for parents with \$250 due by end of October. The subcommittee will reassess the issue in January.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by P. Aucoin to charge \$250 of the \$1,000 preschool fee, due by the end of October, and discuss plans for the remainder in January, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

C. Carmignani – Yes  
J. Evans – Yes  
C. Kabala – Yes  
S. Reed – Yes  
J. Terry – Yes  
P. Aucoin – Yes  
K. Laferriere – Yes

b. Fiscal Year 2021

This item was also discussed at the Budget and Finance Subcommittee. Mr. Mathieu explained three possible budget scenarios. After speaking with town administrators, Mr. Mathieu and Mr. Lamarche agree on Scenario #2, which relies on the district's Covid-19 grants as well as those shared by the towns. The budget is still in flux, something that would have been unthinkable in a normal year. Mr. Mathieu said budget certainty and finality are impossible as there is no solid information from the state, and the federal government has not provided additional funding as the state had anticipated. The deadlines for Covid-19 relief grants has been extended, but the grants are slated to expire on December 30, 2020.

Mr. Mathieu said the district will file for Covid-19 school grants to cover such potential expenses as permanent building substitutes, custodians, nurses, speech pathologists and occupational therapists, remote learning teachers and coordinators, as well as any related benefits. The monies could also be used for additional technology and HVAC service needs, which, in addition to the cost of the study, carries a potential of \$235,000 in repairs. Any remaining monies could be used for technology.

The subcommittee has agreed to hold its meetings on the Tuesday prior to the second monthly school committee meetings at 4 p.m. The next meeting will be held Tuesday, September 22, 2020.

B. Update on District Equity Committee – Dr. Brian Ackerman

Dr. Ackerman reported that since the Equity Committee's formation in early July, there have been six weekly meetings, and has worked quickly to establish a vision for increasing equitable practices with the district. The committee has partnered with Dr. Sheldon Eakins, head of the Leading Equity Organization, to provide anti-bias and anti-racism training to staff beginning in September.

In addition, the Equity Committee has begun its review of instructional materials to include surveying staff to find instances of inclusion of books, poems, and texts that reference the lives experiences of traditionally non-dominant groups. The group has reviewed how to purposefully include a more diverse faculty through recruitment strategies, and intentional recruitment.

Mr. Lamarche reinforced the committee's work, stating that he is proud of the work that members have done in earnest, moving forward forthrightly. He is pleased to report that their work has been well received and truly appreciated.

C. Update Reopening School Year 2020-2021 – Steven Lamarche

At this time, all staff will return September 1 with majority of in-person training and some remote pd and training, sept. 16 first day, introduction to independent learning. Cohort, D possible first day.

Oct. 1 in person/hybrid for Cohorts C and B, PK – 4

Oct. 5 in person / hybrid, for Cohort A, PK – 4

Oct. 15, in person hybrid for Cohorts C and B for grades 5-12  
October 20 Cohort A for grades 5-12

District administrators will continue to evaluate the plan.

a. Homeschooling enrollment

Mr. Lamarche said there are 80 students approved for home schooling at this point, which is double the amount received in a typical year.

b. Full Remote Learning enrollment

Mr. Lamarche reported that 600 students have requested full remote learning at this point, which is 17-18% of the student population.

New guidance has been provided by the state requiring all students in remote learning through in person, to obtain a flu shot by December 2020. Mr. Lamarche said state tracking data has shown over 81% of students have already been receiving the vaccine. Mr. Lamarche said the school has no role in this. While he has received inquiries from vendors, he has not responded, pending further guidance.

c. New Guidance

Mr. Lamarche said some guidance was received during a conference call with the commissioner today, which is being processed with the Dudley-Charlton Teachers' Association. He said there is nothing needing school committee action at this time. More guidance will likely arrive this week or next.

Mrs. Terry clarified that Wednesday, September 16 is the first day to introduce remote learning, but moving forward, Wednesday will be an Independent learning day for all cohorts.

The goal is to provide a time for students to meet their teachers prior to the start of remote learning.

Mr. Lamarche said parents may revert to fully remote or hybrid, but a two-week notice is requested due to mitigating practices.

Friday, August 28 is the target date for giving families information about cohorts, but identifying the teachers is more cumbersome at this point. The initial target date for that information is September 1 is the target date, but may be affected by the intricacies of the work.

D. Report of Professional Training and Development Plan September 1-15 – Dr. Brian Ackerman

Dr. Ackerman said the pandemic has provided educators with an opportunity to reimagine learning and teaching, and to set high expectations for all. The school year will begin with nine days of full professional development for staff. Typically, only 3 are provided in a school year.

The district has partnered with TEQ to provide two days of training in the use of the G Suite products, the platform of choice for remote learning within the K-12 space. Staff have filled out multiple surveys and the training will be driven by staff need and opportunities for growth.

District teachers will be given multiple days to build units of study to deliver high quality, research-based curriculum and instruction. In addition, the work with Dr. Sheldon Eakins of the Leading Equity Center in several webinars, while adjustment counselors will provide sessions on coping with self-management

and self-care to combat stress in Covid-19. Dr. Ackerman said it is vitally important that they are emotionally positioned to work for the benefit of our students.

Special education and support staff will be provided professional development in the areas of record, keeping, safety, ELL students, and data management.

E. Report of preparations for MIAA Athletics – Athletic Director James Scanlon  
Mr. Scanlon provided MIAA EEA and DESE documents and plan to potentially return to athletics. He reported that the return of interscholastic athletics has been an evolving landscape beginning in March right through this afternoon.

Mr. Lamarche said all other extra-curricular organizations and activities will be studied as well, and a report will be provided to the committee.

Mr. Chaplin said a letter will be sent to the community by the end of this week. Mr. Scanlon said he is working to get the information out via Twitter and Facebook.

There will be additional information, as well as a recommendation for a vote, at the September 9 school committee meeting.

Item V. Citizens' Forum

Mr. Laferriere asked participants who wishes to ask questions to provide their full name in the chat with their questions.

Nadine Donahue, Dudley, asked how many students have left to go to private school.

Mr. Lamarche said he does not have that information at this time. The administration was asked to have that information for a future meeting.

#### **IX. Next Meeting Dates**

**School Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, September 9, 2020, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 7 p.m.

Mr. Laferriere is proposing in-person school committee meetings be resumed September 9 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. Mr. Laferriere said the Zoom meetings will be continued for those who do not want to attend face to face. The public would be asked to attend the meeting via Zoom.

The majority of the committee agreed, saying if students and staff are returning, it is right that the school committee returns as well.

The chair urged residents who have questions to email committee members or administrators as the chat was shut down following an inappropriate comment.

**Budget and Finance Subcommittee:** Tuesday, September 22, 2020, via remote, 4 p.m.

**Policy Review Subcommittee:** TBD

**Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning:** TBD

**Capital and School Safety Subcommittee:** TBD

#### **X. Future Agenda Items:** Fiscal Year 2021 budget, Equity Committee Update, 2020-2021 Reopening

**XI. Executive Session:** To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining [**Dudley-Charlton Teachers Association**] if in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position [**Transportation**] of the public body and the chair so declares.

The chair entertained a motion to enter Executive Session, “To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining [**Dudley-Charlton Teachers Association**] if in open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position [**Transportation**] of the public body and the chair so declares, and to exit executive session to return to open session for a vote or votes, if necessary, and to adjourn, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 8:29 p.m.

- C. Carmignani – Yes
- J. Evans – Yes
- C. Kabala – Yes
- S. Reed – Yes
- J. Terry – Yes
- P. Aucoin – Yes
- K. Laferriere – Yes

The committee returned to open session at 9:52 p.m.

**XII. Adjourn**

A motion by C. Carmignani, second by S. Reed to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:52 p.m.

- C. Carmignani – Yes
- J. Evans – Yes
- C. Kabala – Yes
- S. Reed – Yes
- J. Terry – Yes
- P. Aucoin – Yes
- K. Laferriere – Yes

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for Wednesday, August 26, 2020	Report of the Superintendent – 8/20/20	Report of the Finance Director – FY 21 Budget,
Reports of the Assistant Superintendent: Equity Committee Professional Training and Development Plan	Report of the Athletic Director MIAA / DESE sports guidance Phase iii, Step 1 Youth and Adult Amateur Sports	Minutes of the regular school committee meeting of Wednesday, August 5, 2020
Minutes of the Emergency Meeting of the School Committee of Monday, August 10, 2020	Vanpool In-District Transportation Contract	

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, secretary.

