

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee
Wednesday, February 13, 2019 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, MA 01571, 7 p.m.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

- Mary N. Antocci, Vice Chair
- Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair
- Cathleen Carmignani
- Catherine M. Kabala
- Elaine M. Rabbitt
- Jamie L. Terry

Stephanie A. Reed was not in attendance.

Also in attendance were Lorinda Allen, Karen Ares, William Chaplin, Jennifer Desto, Barbara Marderosian, Diane Seibold, Christopher Starczewski; Kevin Foley: Nurses Anita Hickey, Marilyn Gerrard, Christine Harrington, Kathleen Wilson, Steven Hemmen, Paul Gagliarducci, MARS, Tracy Novick, MASC, Kenneth LaFerriere, Stefan Sage; 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

- *Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, January 23, 2019*

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by C. Kabala to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of Wednesday, January 23, 2019, as corrected, was approved by unanimous vote.

- *Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, January 23, 2019*

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by M. Antocci to approve the minute of the executive session of Wednesday, January 23, 2019, was approved by unanimous vote.

- *Minutes of Budget Session of Wednesday, February 6, 2019*

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by C. Carmignani to approve the minutes of the budget meeting of Wednesday, February 6, 2019, as corrected, was approved. Mrs. Antocci abstained.

- *Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, February 6, 2019*

A motion by J. Terry, seconded by C. Carmignani to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, February 6, 2019, was withdrawn. These minutes will be considered at the next regularly scheduled meeting.

IV. Approval of Warrants

The following warrants were signed by a majority of members without further comment or questions.

Payroll Warrant		Subcommittee Warrant		Accounts Payable Warrant	
Warrant #	Amount	Warrant #	Amount	Warrant #	Amount
1268D	\$360,491.98	83	\$45.00	86	\$15.00

1268P	\$1,237,071.07	84	\$1,597,084.44	87	\$433,118.32
1269PV	\$-1231.43	85	\$58,276.63	88	\$45.00
1270PV	\$1231.43				
1271D	\$482,993.00				
1271P	\$1,319,397.96				
1273Preis	\$261.25				
1271PV	\$-261.15				
1274PVoid	\$-221.25				
1275PReis	\$221.25				
Total	\$3,399,954.11		\$1,655,406.07		\$433,178.32

V. Student Representative Report – Ceilidh O’Brien

Miss O’Brien reported that Shepherd Hill is wrapping up an eventful winter season. Highlights included Molly Springer attaining the 1,000 point mark. The cheerleaders are gearing up for the Winter Invitational Tournament on Feb. 22.

Shepherd Hill senior Natalie Baclawski continues her swimming feats.

Ten Shepherd Hill students have been selected to display art in Boston.

Holocaust Survivor Joyce Davis will present on *50 Children: The Rescue Mission of Mr. and Mrs. Kraus* Wednesday, February 27 from 8-9 am in the Shepherd Hill auditorium.

VI. Citizens’ Forum

No one spoke at this time.

VII. Communications

1. Dr. Nash read the letter from Dudley Elementary School Custodian Michelle Bilis, who announced her intent to retire, effective immediately. A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by C. Carmignani, to accept Mrs. Bilis’ retirement with regret, and this was approved by unanimous vote.
2. Shepherd Hill has received a STEM grant through Project Lead the Way that will better prepare our students to navigate career pathways in engineering. The Innovative Pathway Grant, expand access to opportunities.
3. Dr. Nash recognized three students for their innovative approaches in science/technology: The Innovative Students of the Month are Jacob Powaza, Dudley Elementary School, for training students in project-based learning class design; Barry Hanson, grade 8, Charlton Middle School, for his successful approaches to problem solving; Vikram Jha, grade 4, Heritage School, for his passion for ship building. He leads his fellow students in studies of the Titanic.
4. Dr. Nash said the aforementioned Holocaust presentation will also be held for the community on Tuesday, February 26 at Dudley Middle School.
5. Print out legislative action mass/masc

VIII. Superintendent’s Report

IX. New Business

A. District Reorganization Study – MARS Update, Dr. Steven Hemman, Dr. Paul Gagliarducci
 Dr. Hemman and Dr. Gagliarducci presented the results of the recently completed interviews with central office staff, and to answer questions.

Dr. Hemman said each central office staff member was asked to review the job description that was on file, and to update any duties that were not included. The consultants will work on the job descriptions and will present those with their recommendations for changes in the positions.

Mr. Gagliarducci noted that there is no backup for key positions in the event of illnesses or absences. Both agreed that too many people report directly to the superintendent, taking time away from here schedule.

Timeline was second meeting in March for final report and recommendations.

B. Director of Finance and Operations Report *(Vote Required)*

To Dudley Middle School from the Dudley Women's Club to be used for the Be Better Club	\$200
To Dudley Middle School from the Hickey Family to reduce food service deficits	\$100

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to approve the donations as presented.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by M. Antocci to accept the donations as presented above, was approved by unanimous vote.

Mr. Mathieu reported the FY 18 Audit is complete, and copies of the documents will be shared with the committee at its March 13 meeting, which will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Mathieu reported the Department of Revenue has certified the district's Excess and Deficiency Account at \$1.4 million. These funds may be used to support the FY 20 budget process.

Mr. Mathieu reported that work on the water loop that will connect Heritage School and Charlton Middle School to town water slated for completion in the summer of 2020.

Mr. Mathieu said the Insurance Advisory Committee will present information about the Mass Strategic Health Group's joint purchasing proposal with the towns of Douglas, Millbury and Webster. There will be presentations to the staff and school committee leading to a vote by the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee on March 27.

Mr. Mathieu said the district would remain self-insured with three other communities. The IAC is adamant that this new public entity created to procure and provide health insurance would duplicate's Dudley-Charlton Regional School District's current plan design, although the insurance carrier might be different.

C. Budget and Finance Subcommittee Report *(Vote May be Required)*

Mrs. Rabbitt reported on the subcommittee meeting held Monday, February 11. The meeting focus was on capital planning. The subcommittee will meet with two companies that conduct facilities studies.

As follow up to the budget meetings, the subcommittee discussed subscribing to Frontline to manage teacher substitutes, as well as e-rate reimbursements as a funding source for the capital plan study.

Mrs. Rabbitt said School Choice will be a topic at the subcommittee's next meeting on Monday, February 25.

D. FY 20 Budget Discussion

Dr. Nash said the purpose of this agenda item is to continue the discussions that were raised during administrator's budget presentations last week.

Dr. Nash reminded the committee we are still in the early stages of budget development, and there are many unknowns.

Knowns: the district is out of compliance and must hire an ELL teacher, 2.0 Sped instructional assistants at the elementary schools. The committee is concerned about several positions, especially a second nurse at Shepherd Hill.

Mr. Mathieu presented an updated budget memo showing funding mechanisms. The \$52,000 cost for two instructional assistants will be taken from Circuit Breaker.

Dr. Nash said the district has traditionally used E & D and School Choice funds to balance its budget. Both of these sources fluctuate.

Mrs. Kabala said the special education reorganization plan will result in some instructional assistants losing their jobs. She asked if those individuals will be able to fill the new position. Dr. Nash said several current instructional assistants are qualified for teaching positions or other assistant roles.

The recommendation is that the costs of the nurse and ELL teacher be taken from E and D, which is now at \$1.4 million. Dr. Nash said we had planned to use \$1 million to balance the budget. Dr. Nash said the original plan was to make personnel adjustments at Shepherd Hill to fund the positions, but after speaking with Principal William Chaplin, it became clear that this is not something we want to go forward with, and are therefore going with E and D.

Mrs. Carmignani asked if the cost of roof repairs are in the budget.

Mr. Mathieu said he and Dr. Nash are still putting together a capital plan to present to the towns and figure out how we are going to approach that.

With the input from administrators, Dr. Nash and Mr. Mathieu prioritized the personnel requests. Moving forward with reorganization, this will allow the committee to make decisions regarding positions to approve should additional funding become available. Dr. Nash and Mr. Mathieu found creative solutions, such as moving the cafeteria monitor salaries to the cafeteria revolving account, which resulted in funding for the elementary library coordinators. With the proposed restructuring of the Team Chairs, the savings would allow us to fund three positions: special education teacher at Shepherd Hill, and the job coach at Shepherd Hill. An additional board certified behavioral analyst (BCBA) will be funded by offsets in the contractual service account.

Concerning assessments, based on the state formula, Dr. Nash and Mr. Mathieu are projecting the total assessment would increase by \$150,000. The committee can choose to use a different approach with the budget.

Mrs. Kabala said she does not think this is the time to seek additional monies beyond the minimum from the towns. She said in working to secure an override last year, voters were told the district would not seek additional monies.

Dr. Nash said she is looking for direction from members with a caution that the monies from the override will carry the district through only next year. Dr. Nash said the committee needs to have serious discussions regarding the FY 21 budget.

The committee discussed cutting a health teacher at Shepherd Hill to help fund the full time athletic director position.

Mrs. Kabala said someone would lose their job and this is already occurring in the special education reorganization proposal. She said it bothers her that so many people would be losing jobs.

Mr. Chaplin said the proposal deals with a position, not person, and there would still be health offered at Shepherd Hill. Mrs. Terry asked if Shepherd Hill would increase the number of students in a health class. Mr. Chaplin said 28 students can be accommodated in a class.

Mrs. Rabbitt said all of the positions were well validated by principals. She said there is not one being proposed that we do not need. She said the budget was presented in such a way as to know what is next in the event more money becomes available.

Mrs. Antocci said the committee made the difficult decision several years ago to cut the library coordinators, and we are now talking about adding them at the four elementary schools. Mrs. Antocci asked how much direct instruction happens at middle schools libraries.

Charlton Middle School principal Dean Packard said the library/media specialist teaches one exploratory out of six-day cycle.

At Dudley Middle School Principal Christopher Starczewski said there are gaps in the schedule created by the unified arts model that are filled by the library/media specialist. If the reorganization of exploratories does occur, the school would not need the librarian. Having her at Dudley Middle School full time solves a scheduling issue.

Mrs. Rabbitt asked if the committee should address the deficiency before adding something new.
Mr. Packard and Mr. Starczewski agreed.

Mrs. Carmignani asked that new staff proposals include the actual cost of benefits.

Mrs. Terry said she appreciates the work that went into the budget. It is easy to follow, and will assist the committee as we are faced with opportunities.

A poll of the members indicated support for constructing two versions of the budget to show with and without increases.

Mrs. Rabbitt spoke in favor of having a conversation with town officials. We can't keep the assessments where they are and grow.

Dr. Nash and Mr. Mathieu will set up a meeting with both town administrators, and agreed they may get a better sense after that of how this would work.

Speaking in favor of constructing both budgets, Mrs. Terry said the committee would be doing its due diligence to approach the town.

Mrs. Aucoin said there is no harm in looking at both budgets although we made a promise to the town that we would not seek a new assessment.

Mrs. Kabala said she would not consider an increase, saying, we passed the override by being up front and saying this is it for two years.

Mrs. Rabbitt said the committee has worked very hard over the last couple of years in the budget process to present to the town what our needs are. She said she is more comfortable if the decision is for a budget with no increase, but we need to inform the towns what we are sacrificing. She said the committee needs to tell the towns the cost of educating students.

The Massachusetts Association of School Committees is pursuing legislative action to lower the required contributions on the part of towns. The towns are asked to pay 59% of the cost of education, with the state contributing the remainder. Mrs. Rabbitt said we need to bring this information to our town boards, and to the taxpayer, to put pressure on the legislature to lower the contributions by the town.

The Superintendent Search Committee presented four finalists to the full committee for interviews. Two of the candidates, Steven Lamarche, and Dr. Michael Whaley were interviewed Monday, February 11 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, and have had their site visits.

The second interview originally scheduled to Tuesday, February 12, has been rescheduled to Tuesday, February 26 at 5 p.m. with Jennifer Haggerty and Dr. Julie Carlson. Ms. Haggerty will have her site visit on that day.

F. Policy Review Subcommittee Report - Consideration to Amend District Policies

- GCG, Substitute Teachers, Second Reading (*Vote Required*)

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by E. Rabbitt to waive the reading of the policy was approved by unanimous vote.

A motion to approve the amendments to Policy GCC on this second reading into the record, was approved by unanimous vote.

- JF, School Admission Residency, First Reading (*Vote Required*)

Dr. Nash presented a memo and draft form from District Registrar Anne Marie LaFond in response to a recurring issue during the registration process.

Over the past few years, there has been an increase in family members sharing housing with relatives. This makes verifying residency for new families more difficult, which in turn delays the children's start date in their new school. In an effort to better deal with residency verification for those individuals who do not have a lease or own, but rather live with someone, policy changes are being proposed.

Dr. Nash recommended discontinuing the Landlord Affidavit and replacing it with a shared housing affidavit to better describe the living arrangements.

The forms will not be part of the policy, but will be used as a registration procedure to allow for residency verification that more strictly adheres to Policy JF, alleviates the need for the superintendent to review these circumstances, and overall speeds up the start date for the children to start school.

Mrs. Rabbitt asked if there is any consideration to assess penalties to these non-resident families. Dr. Nash said the legal costs to the effect any penalties would likely outweighs any money reaped from the penalties.

The policy will be further revised and brought back for first reading at a future meeting.

Mrs. Terry requested a staff member be cross trained and housed in Charlton to allow parents to avoid traveling to Dudley to register their children.

G. Consideration of Request to Increase Nurse Substitute Rate (*Vote Required*)

District Nurse Coordinator Marilyn Gerrard said it has been 12 years since the daily rate for nurse substitutes has been raised. She requested an increase from the current rate of \$135 to \$175, noting there have been 11 times during this school year when a substitute could not be located, and there was no nurse in a school building. Mrs. Gerrard said this is a liability. Mrs. Gerrard said the district could attract qualified substitutes if we paid individuals if we were able to pay a little more.

Dr. Nash indicated her support of this request. She noted the cost would be \$360 to \$375 per day if we hired through an agency.

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by C. Kabala to approve the increase of the nurse substitute rate to \$175 per day, effective immediately, was unanimously approved.

The committee thanked Mrs. Gerrard for her thorough report.

H. Consideration of Requests for Home Instruction, Policy IHBG (*Vote Required*)

Dr. Nash presented the requests to establish home school programs for the remainder of the 2018-2019 school year.

- Grade 8 student from Charlton
- Grades 3 and 6 from Charlton

A motion by M. Antocci, seconded by C. Kabala to approve the requests by two Charlton families to establish home school programs for the remainder of the 2018-2019 school year, was approved by unanimous vote.

X. **Next Meeting Dates**

Superintendent Finalists Interviews, Jennifer Haggerty, Dr. Julia Carlson, Tuesday, February 26, 5 p.m.

School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, February 27, 2019, Charlton Middle School, 6 p.m.

Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting: Monday, February 25, 2019, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 8:30 -10:30 a.m.

Policy Review Subcommittee: Thursday, February 28, 2019, Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 9 a.m.

XI. **Future Agenda Items** – Vote Preliminary FY 2020 Budget; Selection Superintendent of Schools; Report of the Policy Review Subcommittee, budget and finance capital planning

XII. **Executive Session: 2.** *“To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with nonunion personnel or to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with nonunion personnel.”*

The chair entertained a motion to enter executive session, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:39 p.m.

The committee returned to open session at 10:41 p.m.

XIII. **Adjourn**

A motion by E. Rabbitt, seconded by C. Kabala, to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 10:42 p.m.

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for School Committee meeting Wednesday, February 13, 2018	Minutes of Regular School Committee meeting of January 29, 2019	Budget and Finance Subcommittee meeting minutes of February 6, 2019
Current Policy GCG Policy GCG Proposed for Amendment Substitute Rates memo	Current Policy JF Policy JF Proposed for Amendment Proposed Residency Affidavit	Request for Nurse Substitute Rate Increase
Finance Director’s Report FY 20 Budget Assessments FY 20 Budget Revenues FY 20 Summary	MARS Report Status Report Comparison Data	Superintendent’s Reports: Special Topics New Business Items

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary