

**DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee held Wednesday, April 29, 2020 via Video Conferencing, 7 p.m.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Pauline J. Aucoin, Chair  
Mary N. Antocci, Vice Chair  
Cathleen Carmignani  
Catherine M. Kabala  
Kenneth J. Laferriere  
Stephanie A. Reed  
Jamie L. Terry

Also in attendance were Steven M. Lamarche, Superintendent of Schools, Richard J. Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations; district administrators Lorinda C. Allen, William F. Chaplin, Jennifer A. Desto, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Diane D. Seibold, Christopher E. Starczewski; approximately 35 members of the public viewing the meeting; Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

**I. Call to Order**

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

**II. Approval of Minutes**

*Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, February 26, 2020*

A motion by M. Antocci, second by C. Carmignani to approve the minutes of the School Committee meeting of Wednesday, February 26, 2020, was approved by unanimous roll call vote:

Mrs. Antocci - yes  
Mrs. Carmignani -yes  
Mrs. Kabala -yes  
Mr. Laferriere - yes  
Mrs. Reed -yes  
Mrs. Terry -yes  
Mrs. Aucoin -yes

**III. Approval of Warrants**

Warrants were approved electronically.

**IV. Citizens' Forum**

No one from the public spoke at this time

**V. Communications**

Mrs. Carmignani reported on comments received from parents who have said the staff is doing a wonderful job providing remote learning opportunities for their children. She also noted that Friday is Principal Appreciation Day.

Mrs. Terry echoed Mrs. Carmignani's report, noting that teachers have gone above and beyond the normal call of duty during this time.

Mr. Laferriere said remote learning is going well in his household, and thanked teachers and principals for this huge undertaking.

## **VI. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Lamarche said he will present a full report regarding the school closure under item B of New Business, but offered some opening comments on the effects to the district and communities.

He said we are at the mercy of state and federal approaches to the pandemic. Governor Charlie Baker has closed schools through the end of the 2019-2020 academic school year, and has delayed the possibility of opening non-essential businesses until May 18.

Mr. Lamarche said the depth of the change to schooling on our community varies from home to home. As a school district our efforts will continue to provide support, access and equity to all homes and students.

By May, the district will establish a reentry working group with nurses, custodians, teachers, support staff and administrators to prepare and apply the appropriate protocols to keep our students, staff and communities safe upon reopening.

The State Board of Education is waiving the requirement to pass MCAS to graduate. Mr. Lamarche said this affects approximately 1,000 students statewide and one SHRHS senior.

Mr. Lamarche said a comprehensive understanding of fiscal year 2021 is lacking to guide the district in preparing for town meetings. There are no bailouts or stimulus bills on the horizon. Administrators will develop strategies and options to reduce our FY21 budget to prepare for the impact. This will not be easy as the district budget was based on minimally recommended assessments to the towns. Mr. Lamarche dispelled the perception that the district is saving money during the shutdown. We are still operating as a school district, and while we may realize some savings with transportation or use of electricity, the overwhelming majority of the operating budget expenditures is tied to salaries.

Mr. Lamarche said he will continue to work with town leaders and financial personnel to build, share and establish a mutual understanding of the fiscal forecasts.

The district was notified of its successful grant application and will receive a \$50,000 Safer Schools and Communities grant to upgrade our use of video entrance ways across all of our schools and the central office. Credit for the application goes to Interim Assistant Superintendent Karen Ares and Finance Director Richard Mathieu.

Mr. Lamarche thanked Paragon Power Washing for donating their time and equipment to power wash all of our district playgrounds.

## **VII. New Business:**

### **A. Report of the Director of Finance and Operations (*Vote Required*) *Acceptance of Donations***

Mr. Mathieu presented for the committee's approval the donations from the Shepherd Hill Boosters of in-kind materials with an estimated value of \$8,175, plus labor. Mr. Mathieu recommended approval

A motion by C. Kabala, second by M. Antocci to approve the donation of in-kind materials and labor by the Shepherd Hill Boosters, was approved on unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci -Yes

Mrs. Carmignani -Yes

Mrs. Kabala - Yes

Mr. Laferriere- Yes  
Mrs. Reed - Yes  
Mrs. Terry -Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin -Yes

*Fire Alarm Panels – Charlton Middle and Dudley Elementary (Vote requested)*

Mr. Mathieu recommended financing the fire alarm panels in the FY20 budget process by using the \$70,000 reserved for a facilities study as it is unlikely this will be used by June 30. Mr. Mathieu said these funds can be transferred to cover the costs of the two necessary fire panels, as well as the replacement of one loop of devices, which will allow the old devices to be used as replacements for the other existing loops if needed. Mr. Mathieu said the district will have five years to decide on a solution for replacing the loops – either through annual budget appropriations or all at once through a capital program.

In addition to the \$70,000 contingency, Mr. Mathieu requested budget transfers as follows for the new fire panels and one loop of devices at Dudley Elementary:

Charlton Middle– Maintenance of Building	\$36,500
Dudley Elementary – Maintenance of Building	\$29,678

A motion by S. Reed, second by M. Antocci, to approve the budget transfers of \$70,000 in contingency, and \$36,500 from Charlton Middle– Maintenance of Building, and \$29,678 from Dudley Elementary – Maintenance of Building, to fund the fire alarm panels at Charlton Middle School and Dudley Elementary School, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

*Insurance Renewals (Vote requested)*

The Mass Strategic Health Group has proposed a 0% increase for the Dudley-Charlton Regional health insurance plans for the upcoming year. The Insurance Advisory Committee (IAC) held a meeting on Tuesday March 10 and voted to recommend this renewal.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by K. Laferriere to approve the proposed insurance renewals at a 0% increase as recommended by the Mass. Strategic Health Group, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

*Dental Insurance Plan Renewal*

The district's dental insurance carrier, Blue Cross/Blue Shield, has recommended a 2.3% decrease in FY 21 rates. The Insurance Advisory Committee met April 15 by video conference and recommends approval.

Mr. Mathieu said the actual benefit year for this plan is January-December, and it is possible we may look to change the benefits offered at that time depending on the impact on the rates.

A motion by M. Antocci, second by S. Reed to approve the FY 21 Dental Insurance Rates at the proposed 2.3% decrease, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes

Mrs. Carmignani-Yes

Mrs. Kabala-Yes

Mr. Laferriere-Yes

Mrs. Reed-Yes

Mrs. Terry-Yes

Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

#### *School related payments and refunds*

With the school closure through the end of the 2019-2020 school year, the district needs to process refunds of monies from certain programs. Some items, such as spring athletic fees, are clear as the activity never took place. However, programs such as After the Bell activities which completed some but not all of the expected classes and Pre-School tuitions are less clear. The District will proceed to process refunds on the assumption that partial/per diem refunds be provided to families. Feedback on this process is welcomed.

Mr. Mathieu said payment of spring athletic stipends requires more discussion. While funds received by the district for certain programs could be rolled over to next year, everyone's financial situations may vary, and the district will want to do what is right for them.

Prepaid lunch fees remain on deposit and roll over to next year.

#### *FY21 Budget and Town Meetings*

Mr. Mathieu said the statewide House Ways and Means hearing on revenues and the impact of the virus shutdown elicited a variety of forecasts. A negative impact to state revenue can be expected. Mr. Mathieu said it is prudent to wait for FY21 revenue numbers from the House before making any adjustments to the district budget.

Annual Town Meetings have been rescheduled to June 15 in Charlton, and June 22 in Dudley. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is preparing guidance for regional schools about the 1/12<sup>th</sup> budget process, which will be in effect if we do not have an approved budget by June 30. Mr. Mathieu said a 1/12<sup>th</sup> budget would be challenging for the District as we do receive discounted rates on insurance and retirement expenses if they are paid in full. This practice may be impacted by the 1/12 budget process unless specific exemptions are created. Given the unique circumstances it is hoped that DESE will be able to act to create those exemptions.

#### *General Ledger Software*

After a thorough review of three different software solutions, the district office team is recommending to proceed with the purchase of Infinite Visions as the most cost-effective complete solution for the District. The product integrates with both School Spring and Aesop/Frontline websites, employee portal access and standardized state reporting tools. Mr. Mathieu said this must be put on hold for the immediate future to determine the fiscal impact of the statewide shutdown. No vote is necessary at this time. It is hoped that this can be a priority after FY 21 budget is solved.

## **B. Extended Closure Update**

### *Remote Learning Opportunities, Rubrics, Senior Planning*

Mr. Lamarche expressed sincere appreciation to entire staff for planning these opportunities for students. He said the district will support homes where we can as we know that parent support is not the reality in each home. Achieving this equity and access is the starting point. Building principals will offer an update on remote learning opportunities.

The Commissioner of Education released a guiding document last Friday recommending weekly rather than daily doses of online lessons, recorded lessons vs live lessons.

Custodians will begin returning to work in each building, but with precautions in place such as maintaining distance, face coverings, and staying home if sick. Work spaces will be cleaned frequently.

Grab and Go meals distribution continues on Mondays and Fridays from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., at Charlton Middle School and Shepherd Hill Regional High School, and from 4:30 to 6 p.m. at Charlton Middle School. Distribution of food continues for those who qualify and those who think they qualify. There is no program to allow others to purchase the food. The meals do qualify for USDA reimbursement.

Principals Jennifer A. Desto, and Lori A. Pacheco

Principals noted that district parity has never been closer than during this time. K-1 staff from Mason Road School and Dudley Elementary School work together to provide weekly themes. Teacher teams plan with general education staff for special education and ELL opportunities, and Title I and instructional assistants participate in professional development sessions. Staff at both schools have delivered food, Chromebooks and lessons to students as needed.

Online learning resources will remain in place throughout the summer.

Principals Kathleen E. Pastore and Diane D. Seibold

Principals noted that the staff works with parents as well as students to ease the burden of instruction and offering help and referrals for a variety of family situations. Mrs. Pastore tells parents that everything they do at home with their children counts. Lessons do allow for some variation according to need and resources.

Teams of teachers for grades 2-4 have identified rubrics to evaluate student engagement. nt rubrics to see how students are performing and engagement. The object is to prevent regression and held children learn the skills they will need at the next grade. The online work is not designed to replace a regular school day.

Principals Christopher E. Starczewski, and Dean W. Packard

Mr. Packard said he and Mr. Starczewski began in mid-March to design one school / one lesson opportunities, and pulled the schools together collaboratively to ensure the assignments are the same on both sides of the district. The lessons have been adapted as guidance has come from the state. The shut-down has helped educators gain tools they never knew they had.

Mr. Starczewski said this innovation and collaboration is exciting and has forced us to provide those educators time to engage, and share expertise.

Reports cards will feature credit, return for credit and no credit.

Mrs. Terry commended Charlton Middle School Assistant Principal Peter J. Olson for providing technical expertise where needed.

Principals were urged to encourage their staff to maintain their own physical and emotional health during this time.

Principal William F. Chaplin

Mr. Chaplin said he and staff continue to look at ideas for a commencement or to celebrate with the Class of 2020, or even to join with them in mourning all they have lost. The seniors will earn number grades while their GPAs will be frozen. High schools across the state are working with colleges to discuss what the high school transcript will look like.

Advanced Placement exams will continue in May. In the district, 243 students will take some 493 45-minute take-home exams. Students in danger of not graduating have been identified, and will be given a chance to complete necessary work.

B. Enrollment of DCRSD Employee Children (*Vote Required*)

The superintendent provided the current enrollment as well as the four requests for student enrollment consistent with Article XXIII of the Agreement Between the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and the Dudley-Charlton Teachers' Association, and Article XXI of Agreement the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and the Massachusetts Nurses Association.

Mr. Lamarche recommended approval and to allow three kindergartners and one fourth grader to enroll in the 2020-2021 school year.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by S. Reed to approve the requests for student enrollment under the terms of the Article XXIII of the Agreement Between the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and the Dudley-Charlton Teachers' Association, and Article XXI of Agreement the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and the Massachusetts Nurses Association, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

C. School Year 2020-2021 School Choice (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Lamarche and principals recommend accepting students in grades 5-12 with the following criteria:

Charlton Middle School 5-8:	21 slots
Dudley Middle School: 5-8:	19 slots
Shepherd Hill:	8 slots

This will bring the total school choice enrollment to 201 total slots next year, which will help offset the fiscal downturn.

The following criteria has been established by administrators for school choice acceptance:

- i. Class size average does not exceed 22 in grades 5-8 by adding School Choice students
- ii. Application open until September 15, 2020

A motion by C. Kabala, second by K. Laferriere to accept school choice students in grades 5-8 as outlined above, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes

Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

Mr. Lamarche said the numbers of available school choice slots does not need to be set at this point, as this is an administrative function.

The committee was concerned about class sizes should large numbers of students move into the district over the summer, as well as school choice reimbursements vs actual cost to educate children, especially if the economy suffers from the shutdown.

Mr. Lamarche said the administrators have indicated these are manageable numbers.

*Note: Mrs. Reed's connection was lost at 9:19 p.m., but returned at 9:28 p.m. prior to the vote.*

Mrs. Antocci said the committee's goal is to reduce reliance on school choice monies. She said an increase in the number of students at this time creates a heavier reliance that may force tough decisions later on.

Mr. Lamarche said the additional enrollment helps existing programs and well.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by M. Antocci to limit the school choice slots to not more than 21 at Charlton Middle School, 6 at Dudley Middle School, and 8 at Shepherd Hill, or 35 slots total, was withdrawn.

A motion by K. Laferriere, second by M. Antocci to set a school choice target to not exceed a class size of 22 students, was approved by a unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

D. Recommendation to appoint Assistant Superintendent pending contract negotiations (*Vote Required*)

Mr. Lamarche recognized the members of the Dudley-Charlton Search Group: Lisa Fitton, Tracy Julian, Katie McQuade, Kenneth Laferriere, Mary Antocci, Lorinda Allen, Jennifer Desto, and William Chaplin. The interview process to hire a permanent assistant superintendent began prior to the quarantine, and concluded with finalist interviews held via Zoom and a district-wide survey.

Semi-finalists

Mr. Lamarche thanked Interim Assistant Superintendent Karen Ares for taking on the role and for giving it her all.

Mr. Lamarche recommended Dr. Brian Ackerman for the position, pending final contract negotiations.

Dr. Ackerman has been the principal of the William Windsor Elementary School in the Smithfield Public Schools, in Smithfield RI since 2015. Dr. Ackerman has experience in elementary through high school. He has a background in

Special Education with two master's degrees from Rhode Island College in Special Education and Educational Leadership. Dr. Ackerman earned his doctorate in educational leadership from Northeastern University.

A motion by M. Antocci, second by K. Laferriere to appoint Dr. Brian Ackerman as the Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, pending final contract negotiations, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes

E. Shepherd Hill Regional High School MSBA Statement of Interest (SOI) *(Vote Required)*

Mr. Lamarche said although this is a difficult time for communities, the district must maintain its momentum toward gaining consideration by the Massachusetts School Building Authority. The Statement of Interest for the MSBA's CORE program is being finalized and readies for submission by the May 6 deadline.

Mrs. Aucoin entertained the following motion, which was made by K. Laferriere, second by M. Antocci:

Resolved: Having convened in an open meeting on April 29, 2020, prior to the SOI submission closing date, the Regional School Committee of Dudley-Charlton in accordance with its charter, by-laws, and ordinances, has voted to authorize the Superintendent to submit to the Massachusetts School Building Authority the Statement of Interest Form dated May 2020 for the Shepherd Hill Regional High School located at 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, MA which describes and explains the following deficiencies and the priority category(s) for which an application may be submitted to the Massachusetts School Building Authority in the future.

Such priorities are: the renovation of our outdated building that jeopardizes the health and safety of students and staff, prevention of the loss of accreditation, replacement, renovation or modernization of school facility systems, such as roofs, boilers, heating and ventilation systems, to increase energy conservation and decrease energy related costs in our school facility, replacement of or addition to obsolete buildings in order to provide for a full range of programs consistent with state approved local requirements, and; hereby further specifically acknowledges that by submitting this Statement of Interest Form, the Massachusetts School Building Authority in no way guarantees the acceptance or the approval of an application, the awarding of a grant or any other funding commitment from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, or commits the City/Town/Regional School District to filing an application for funding with the Massachusetts School Building Authority.

This was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

F. Student Opportunity Act (SOA) Short Form *(Vote Required)*

This item was tabled.

G. Request for 1-year School Committee approved leave of absence, Mr. C. Lindstrom *(Vote Required)*

This request was tabled.

**VII. Next Meeting Dates**

**School Committee Meetings:** Wednesday, May 13, 2020, Video Conferencing 7 PM  
*(Public Hearing and Vote on Final FY 21 Budget)*

Wednesday, May 27, 2020, Video Conferencing, 7 PM

**Budget and Finance Subcommittee:** TBD

**Policy Review Subcommittee:** TBD

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

**School Safety Subcommittee:** TBD

**Future Agenda Items – May:** FY 21 Budget Hearing, 2020-2021 School Year Calendar Amendment: The governor has established September 14 as a holiday to make up for Patriots Day and the running of a Boston Marathon.

**VIII. Executive Session:** To conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel [**Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent**], and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with personnel. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining [**Massachusetts Nurses Association**] or litigation [**First Student**] if an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares.

The chair entertained a motion to enter executive session to conduct strategy sessions in preparation for negotiations with non-union personnel [**Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent**], and to conduct collective bargaining sessions or contract negotiations with personnel. To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining [**Massachusetts Nurses Association**] or litigation [**First Student**] if an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares, and to reconvene for the purpose of a vote or votes if necessary, and to adjourn.

This motion was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:53 p.m.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes

Mrs. Carmignani-Yes

Mrs. Kabala-Yes

Mr. Laferriere-Yes

Mrs. Reed-Yes

Mrs. Terry-Yes

Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

The committee returned to open session at 10:45 p.m.

First Student

A motion by C. Kabala, second by K. Laferriere to support an adjustment to the transportation contract with First Students as a formal memorandum of agreement or memorandum of understanding, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

*Superintendent's contract*

A motion by C. Kabala, seconded by K. Laferriere to allow Mr. Lamarche to enroll his children in the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District despite their anticipated residency in Connecticut, was approved by a majority roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-No  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

*Assistant Superintendent*

A motion by K. Laferriere, second by M. Antocci to approve an annual salary rate for Assistant Superintendent Dr. Brian Ackerman of \$132,000, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

**IX. Adjourn**

A motion by C. Carmignani, second by K. Laferriere to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 10:50 p.m.

Mrs. Antocci-Yes  
Mrs. Carmignani-Yes  
Mrs. Kabala-Yes  
Mr. Laferriere-Yes  
Mrs. Reed-Yes  
Mrs. Terry-Yes  
Mrs. Aucoin-Yes

Minutes of the School Committee  
 Meeting of Wednesday, April 29, 2020

Items used for this meeting include

<i>Agenda for 4/29/20</i>	<i>Superintendent's Report 4/29/20</i>	<i>Minutes of School Committee Meeting of 2/26/20</i>	<i>MSBA 2020 Statement of Interest – Shepherd Hill</i>
<i>DOF Report 4/29/20</i>	<i>Grades 2-4 Common Rubrics</i>	<i>Grades 5-12 Common Rubrics</i>	<i>Grades K-1 Common Rubrics</i>
<i>OML Remote Notice</i>	<i>Signed Open Meeting Law Order</i>	<i>Warrants 61, 62, 63, 64,65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71</i>	

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary