

**DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, September 23, 2020 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School, 68 Dudley-Oxford Road, Dudley, MA 01571, 7 p.m., and via Live Stream - Vimeo: <https://vimeo.com/dcrsd> <https://vimeo.com/460126584> and via Video Conferencing - Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/91279277863>

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Kenneth J. Laferriere, Chair  
Pauline J. Aucoin, Vice Chair, joined via Zoom  
Cathleen Carmignani at 7:24 p.m.  
Jordan W. Evans  
Catherine M. Kabala, joined via Zoom  
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; joining via zoom were William F. Chaplin Daniel D'Arcangelo, Jennifer A. Desto, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Christopher E. Starczewski, Michael Tucker, Peter Olson, Kelly True, Richard Earle, Nicole Heroux, representatives, Sandra Sullivan, secretary. Attendees from Zoom and Vimeo live streaming.

**I. Call to Order**

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Moment of Silence**

**IV. Approval of Minutes**

*Minutes of Special Meeting of Friday, September 4, 2020*

A motion was made by C. Kabala, second by P. Aucoin to approve the minutes of the Special School Committee Meeting of Friday, September 4, 2020, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote:

J. Evans: yes  
C. Kabala: yes  
S. Reed: yes  
J. Terry: yes  
P. Aucoin: yes  
K. Laferriere: yes

*Executive Session Minutes of Friday, September 4, 2020*

A motion was made by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala to approve the minutes of the Executive Session of the Special Meeting of Friday, September 4, 2020, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote:

J. Evans: yes  
C. Kabala: yes

S. Reed: yes  
J. Terry: yes  
P. Aucoin: yes  
K. Laferriere: yes

*Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, September 9, 2020*

A motion was made by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala to approve the minutes of the regularly scheduled meeting of Wednesday, September 9, 2020, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote:

J. Evans: yes  
C. Kabala: yes  
S. Reed: yes  
J. Terry: yes  
P. Aucoin: yes  
K. Laferriere: yes

**V. Approval of Warrant**

Posted Treasury Warrant 14 and 115 were approved by members electronically. There were no comments or questions from the committee.

**VI. Citizens' Forum**

No one spoke at this time.

**VII. Communications**

There were no communications to report this evening.

**VIII. Superintendent's Report**

Mr. Lamarche said this is our second effort to hold a live meeting. School Committee members are wearing headphones with microphones to cut down on feedback. Other adjustments have been made, and Mr. Lamarche said he appreciates the public's patience as we move to more in-person activities in the district.

The 2020-2021 School Year opened for students virtually on Wednesday, September 16, 2020, and Mr. Lamarche said the opening was the best day of school since last year. Mr. Lamarche said efforts are underway to make a swift transition to hybrid, and outlined the items that are critical to staying our longevity:

- Wear mask, hand washing, social distancing
- Communication
- Requiring self-certification staff and students 5 x week This will also serve as the attendance element. Using a Google form to submit a google form.
- Rolling out new software that will handle data collection and automation, can self-certify on the app.

Shared again that we have a FY 21 budget, but state has three month approved budget. We can't make projections. If this were the final budget we would need to make reductions at a time when we need to do more.

Mr. Lamarche offered a statement about the use of our campus and athletic fields: there are to be no spectators at any try outs or practices. Athletes will be issued one spectator pass for the season, meaning they can invite one parent or friend to attend a game. Mr. Lamarche asked the community to respect these requirements, saying the district is not preventing access, but asking for help by staying away from athletics when they are occurring in the district.

Universal access to food – All families are being provided meals free of charge. Various pick up times have been scheduled, or students may pick up the food following the pivot to hybrid learning schedules.

Mrs. Terry asked on behalf of parents who have indicated they would like to pay for the food to allow others to gain greater benefit from the program. The USDA is allowing the free meals to all for a certain amount of time. Mr. Mathieu suggested those who wish to donate may do so to the district's food service program.

## **IX. New Business**

- A. Report of the Director of Finance and Operations – Richard Mathieu
  - a. DCRSD HVAC Report (if available)/update

Mr. Lamarche said the report is not available this evening as he and Mr. Mathieu held a consultative call today with evaluators from Drummey Rosanne Anderson and Consulting Engineering Services regarding the district's HVAC systems. The report will be completed and made available in a few days.

Mr. Lamarche said that six out of the seven schools are in good operational standing and will require minimal work to ensure the systems are providing optimal air flow as designed and necessary. At Heritage School, however, the current systems, while operational, have areas that were not designed for a COVID-19 world and that we need to redress. Mr. Lamarche said there is no information to indicate at this point to prohibit staff and students from entering and working in the school.

### **1. Energy Management System (EMS) estimated cost of \$175,000**

The EMS system provides automation and builds in efficiencies to the operation of the HVAC system. It has been successfully and efficiently operated manually by our staff for more than five years, but the recommendation to update this system will bring its functionality to optimal.

### **2. Plenum access in the north wing of the school or the wing to the left of the main entrance when walking into the school -The plenum is the space above the hallway ceiling that distributes mechanical ventilation – estimated cost of \$50,000**

3. Specific areas of the school, to include the library media center, reception office area and nurse's office, have no introduction of natural ventilation or mechanical ventilation to bring in outside air. – estimated cost unknown.

These are considered closed air systems and are not appropriate, as is, in a COVID-19 world for full time occupancy. DESE guidelines speak to increasing outdoor air and filtering of air that is recirculating within a room or building to provide a standard of ventilation in a COVID-19 world. The library media center will be closed to staff and students, and office staff and the principal will be relocated, pending further guidance.

Mr. Lamarche said if these occupied areas introduce natural ventilation they meet the standards and

codes for occupancy. If adjustments are made to dampers, we meet the mechanical ventilation standards and codes for occupancy with the exception of the areas identified above in the Heritage School.

Mr. Lamarche said the plan to pivot to hybrid schedules is not affected.

Consulting Engineering Services has indicated representatives will present the results of the study in person.

*FY 2020 closeout:* Mr. Mathieu said he had hoped to bring information to the committee this evening, but will plan to do so by the second meeting in October. Mr. Mathieu said the state has extended the deadline for the annual End of Year Report.

b. Fiscal Year 2021

This topic will be reported in the next agenda as it was discussed by the Budget and Finance Subcommittee at its September 22 meeting.

B. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting – 09.22.2020

Mrs. Kabala said the subcommittee discussed the need to offer the superintendent some flexibility under policy GCG regarding hiring substitutes.

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by C. Carmignani to authorize the superintendent to hire a 12-week math substitute within budget under Policy GCG, and this was approved by unanimous roll call vote:  
Within budget

C. Carmignani: yes

J. Evans: yes

C. Kabala: yes

S. Reed: yes

J. Terry: yes

P. Aucoin: yes

K. Laferriere: yes

Mrs. Kabala said the subcommittee revisited the plan to reestablish its list of capital projects which had been a topic of the Safety Committee last March before the Covid-19 shutdown. The Safety Committee has merged with the Capital Subcommittee. Mr. Mathieu encouraged committee members to begin a conversation about the district's true needs and to put together a plan as a first step.

Mr. Lamarche said the Charlton selectmen asked have asked what our capital items might be, suggesting the timing is appropriate.

This will be the topic of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee's October 27 meeting, as well as a topic for the school committee's October 14 meetings.

A review of Mr. Mathieu's budget sheets shows no changes. The good news is that the towns have agreed to share Municipal CARES Act funding with the district with \$359,308 from Dudley and \$533,359 from Charlton, for a total of \$892,667. Mr. Mathieu said this is how the district will pay for the HVAC repairs. The towns will absorb the costs of their schools and share those incurred at Shepherd Hill.

The committee agreed to send a letter to the towns with thanks for collaborating on this issue.

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

Dr. Ackerman reported that there have been eight meetings of this committee, which has completed much consequential work, and recognize that much significant work lied ahead.

Dr. Eakins provided a second session on Implicit Bias to detect how each of us, in one way or another, has bias. Staff feedback has been mostly positive.

The committee has crafted a statement to inform the community about the mission, vision and expectations for the work that lies ahead. Letting the community know the why of our work is paramount.

Dr. Ackerman read the committee’s statement which will be refined to ultimately go on the district website: “Collectively, the entire Dudley-Charlton Regional School District community students, staff, administration and community members are on a journey. We, as a district, have partnered with Dr. Sheldon Eakins to provide us with a set of tools to combat bias and racism. We recognize that this journey will take years, but it is work that all of us must undertake. Racism and discrimination against individual that identify as LBGQTQIA + exists everywhere and remains a potent force in society. We need to be explicit in calling out this reality where we see in in both Dudley and Charlton and naming this injustice publicly. Silence is no longer an option as not being purposeful and confronting the issue of racism and bias only allows these forces to manifest. We look forward to partnering with our town and our community to make this work happen.”

The committee established the following action items:

- a. Hire consultant to evaluate our programs, policies and staffing – this has begun with Dr. Eakins
- b. Intentional shift in curricula to address areas of bias and equity
- c. Collect and catalog a compendium of resources for anti-bias education
- d. Explore emergent options for staff to consider
- e. Recommend tangible policy changes in grading and discipline
- f. Identification and training of staff to ensure that all students in traditionally underserved groups have trusted adults with whom to form relationships
- g. Intentional recruitment of educators with diverse backgrounds

Mr. Lamarche shared the work of the district’s subcommittee during a webinar with DESE representatives today. DESE is also undergoing equity training. It was well received and appreciated.

Equity Committee representative Ms. Evans said she is excited to see where we will bring this committee.

D. Update of Professional Training and Development Plan – Dr. Brian Ackerman

Dr. Ackerman said if there is any possible silver lining to the affect of the school calendar due to COVID-19 is that the district was able to provide nine days to build capacity for staff through of professional development opportunities.

Dr. Ackerman said he knows the demand that has been placed on teachers. The work done was collaborative, purposeful and hugely important. We need to have aligned standards and expectations as well as relationships.

Connection between Equity Committee and PD team. This means that students are exposed to rigorous materials and the results of staff collaboration.

The main themes of the nine days of professional development were:

1. G Suite – multiple webinars
2. Two webinars by Dr. Sheldon Eakins from Leading Equity Center
3. Multiple, cross district curriculum and instructional design days
4. K9 math and ELA staff received IXL training – which is a diagnostic tool provides real time data.
5. Social emotional self-care for staff and students

The November professional development day will be used to revisit the G Suite platform.

Mrs. Terry said the Google Meets platform may provide the same options as Zoom. Dr. Ackerman said the district is committed to using the G Suite, and work is being done on those settings. There are workarounds that will be pushed out to staff. Chromebooks interface better with G Suite products.

Dr. Ackerman said there will be training videos on the district website.

Mr. Lamarche said he will bring forward a revised 2020-2021 school year calendar. To date, the only change has been the first day of schools.

Mr. Lamarche commended Dr. Ackerman for his work to string together nine days of professional development. This is unprecedented. He reported that all staff was present and engaged in the content.

E. Update Opening School Year 20/21 – Steven Lamarche

Mr. Lamarche reviewed the timeframe as the district prepares to move to hybrid learning:

- Oct 1 - first day of in-person hybrid for Cohorts C and B, PK-4
- Oct. 5 - first day of in-person hybrid for Cohort A PK-4
- Oct. 15- first day of in-person hybrid for Cohorts C and B 5-12
- Oct 19 – first day of in-person hybrid for Cohort A grades 5-12

Details will be sent by each school.

Mr. Lamarche said recommendations for adjustments will be made as hybrid begins, such as more engagement on Wednesdays.

a. Student Services – Ms. Lorinda Allen

Cohort D students began on Sept. 17 with full day, in person.

The district has a full roster of Special Education Coordinators following a transfer and a resignation over the summer.

Mrs. Allen said 563 students receive services, including out of district placements. Of that number, 20% chose to remain fully remote, and less than 1% selected home schooling.

Last spring there was a backlog of special education testing. Mrs. Allen said DESE allowed waivers and was told to make up the testing this fall. There are no more waivers. Staff has done a great job catching up. Mrs. Allen said we have provided neutral locations for remote learners and home schoolers.

Charlton Middle School has offered space, and Mrs. Allen thanked the Town Administrator Jon Ruda for providing space in the Dudley Town Hall.

Mr. Lamarche thanked Mrs. Allen for her remarkable job of Getting to Go despite many questions, regulations and staff changes.

b. Enrollment

Mr. Lamarche provided enrollment figures for students who have selected remote, hybrid, home school and private schools.

Mrs. Terry said the enrollment does not show a significant increase in the number of students attending private school as had been discussed in the community.

Mr. Lamarche said the school choice numbers trending around 160.

c. New Guidance

There is no new guidance available at this time.

F. Consideration to Appoint a Delegate to the MASC/MASS virtual conference

As the new member, Ms. Evans indicated her interest in attending the all-virtual meeting set for November 6.

A motion was made by S. Reed, second by P. Aucoin to appoint Jordan Willow Evans as the delegate to the Joint Conference of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents, November 6, 2020, was approved by a vote of 6 in favor, one abstention.

C. Carmignani: yes

J. Evans: abstaom

C. Kabala: yes

S. Reed: yes

J. Terry: yes

P. Aucoin: yes

K. Laferriere: yes

**X. Next Meeting Dates**

Special meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, Wednesday, September 30, 2020, at Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, at 7 p.m. There will be two items on the agenda: HVAC and Draft of 2020-2021 School Year Calendar.

**School Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, October 14, 2020, In-person, 7 p.m. Shepherd Hill Regional High School and via Zoom/Vimeo

**Budget and Finance Subcommittee:** Tuesday, October 27, 2020, 4:00 PM

**Policy Review Subcommittee:** TBD

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

**Capital and School Safety Subcommittee:** TBD

**XI. Future Agenda Items:** Fiscal Year 2021 budget, Equity Committee Update, Transition to Hybrid Learning, MASC Resolutions, Superintendent’s Goals on Oct. 14

**XII. Adjourn**

A motion by S. Reed, seconded by C. Carmignani to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:02 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 September 23, 2020	Minutes of the Special Meeting of Friday, September 4, 2020	Minutes of the Executive Session from the Special Meeting of Friday, September 4, 2020
Minutes of the regular meeting of Wednesday, September 9, 2020	Superintendent’s Report, 9/23/20	Report of the Director of Finance and Operations 9/23/20
Report of the Assistant Superintendent: Equity Committee Update	Report of the Assistant Superintendent: Professional Development	Reports of the Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Cohort Enrollment Totals	MASC Resolutions and Voting Delegate	

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, secretary