

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the Meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee held Wednesday, October 14, 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/466541434>; <https://vimeo.com/dcrsd>; Video Conferencing - Zoom: <https://zoom.us/j/98334326719>.

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Kenneth J. Laferriere, Chair
Pauline J. Aucoin, Vice Chair, participating remotely
Cathleen Carmignani
Jordan W. Evans
Catherine M. Kabala, participating remotely
Stephanie A. Reed
Jamie L. Terry
Student Representative Michaela Cluett

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, Lorinda C. Allen; attending via video conferencing: district administrators William F. Chaplin, Daniel D’Arcangelo, Jennifer A. Desto, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Christopher E. Starczewski, Michael Tucker, Kelly True; district staff: Nicole Heroux, Richard Earle, Matthew Greenberg, Sandra Sullivan, secretary. There were 22 attendees via Vimeo live streaming.

I. Call to Order

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Moment of Silence

IV. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, September 23, 2020

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by S. Reed to approve the minutes of the regular meeting of Wednesday, September 23, 2020, 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

Minutes of Special Meeting of Wednesday, September 30, 2020

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala to approve the minutes of the special meeting of Wednesday, September 30, 2020, was approved by unanimous roll call vote:

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

V. Approval of Warrant

Warrants continue to be approved by a majority of school committee members remotely. Warrants signed since the meeting of September 23, 2020 were: **Accounts payable:** # 115 FY20; W# 14-18 FY21; W# 17, W# 18; **Payroll:** #1399P; 1399D.

VI. Citizens' Forum

There were no questions from those in attendance via video conferencing.

VII. Communications

Committee members indicated they have received communications from district staff concerning their experiences with remote learning.

Mr. Laferriere introduced Michaela Cluett as the student representative. Miss Cluett reported that middle and high school students (in cohorts B and C) are returning to in-person learning tomorrow. She said Shepherd Hill Show Choir and Band have started, as have the two soccer teams, field hockey, and clubs. Miss Cluett said the Academic Decathlon and Math Team have virtual contests. The Student Council has been working to create videos for students coming into Shepherd Hill. These have been sent to families via Mr. Chaplin. The National Honor Society held an induction two weeks ago, and is planning a Haunting on the Hill trick or treat drive through event.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Lamarche reported the excitement concerning the return of students in Cohorts B and C to hybrid learning tomorrow.

Shepherd Hill Regional High School has been named an official Special Olympics Massachusetts Unified Champion School.

Mr. Lamarche announced the retirements of long-time district employees Karin Kirkland at Mason Road School, Julie Brown of Dudley Middle School, and Dolores Jastrzebski, who began her career the year Shepherd Hill opened in 1973.

Charlton's Special Town Meeting was held at Shepherd Hill Tuesday, October 13, 2020. Mr. Lamarche said the venue provided a safe environment for the town to conduct its business. Dudley will hold its Special Town Meeting Monday October 19 in the Shepherd Hill auditorium as well.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health had confirmed Dudley as a Red Community last week with 8 new cases of Covid-19. This single data point will not alter the district's current learning plan. This week, Dudley has been labeled as yellow, with Charlton moving to yellow from green.

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Mr. Lamarche praised the district's nurses for their daily efforts to respond to questions and concerns among families about Covid-19. Mr. Lamarche said we need to be aware of positive cases among our communities so we can provide the right guidance and increase the longevity of in-person learning.

The district website lists testing sites, and staff, students and vendors are asked to self-certify upon entering the building each day. The district is creating an app to assist with this process. Mr. Lamarche said there are no positive cases in our schools, if there were we would send a communication to families.

At a press conference earlier today, Gov. Charlie Baker announced he has filed legislation and the legislature acted on a year's worth of unrestricted local government aid and Chapter 70 aid. The district received a prior fiscal year level funded budget. Gov. Baker has made \$5.3 billion available to towns and schools, especially those who are disproportionately affected by Covid-19.

Dudley and Charlton Boards of Health are organizing a flu clinic for both towns to be held at Shepherd Hill.

Schools and principals receive daily requests by parents to enroll their children in either full remote or reenroll or enroll in hybrid. Mr. Lamarche said this has been difficult to navigate. Once a request is received to enter full time remote or hybrid, the student is assigned to a different general education teacher, and takes two to four weeks to accomplish.

IX. New Business

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

Mr. Mathieu presented two donations:

To Dudley Middle School from the Doud Family – three novels for the library

To the district from Gentex – 10 gallons of hand sanitizer and 50 face shields. The hand sanitizer will be used on the buses and vans during the year.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to accept these donations.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by J. Evans to accept the donations as presented, 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

Mr. Mathieu said the Senior Plans for Medex are due for renewal with the Massachusetts Strategic Health Group. The district has received a guaranteed rate for 2021 and 2022 and a portion of the rate was attributable to federal regulations which have since been repealed. The rate for 2021 is \$275.84, which is a 6.5% decrease from the 2020 rate.

Mr. Mathieu said the move to MSHG has been positive for everyone.

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Mr. Mathieu presented the annual asbestos notification showing that Charlton Elementary School and Shepherd Hill do have asbestos present, but it is encapsulated and monitored.

B. Update DCRSD HVAC systems and planning – Richard Mathieu

As a follow-up to the presentation two weeks ago from Consulting Engineering Services, the district has contracted with a certified testing and balancing firm, Airadigm Solutions to provide services at all schools.

At Heritage School, air purification units will be installed as an appropriate solution to the \$1.6 million construction project that was recommended by the consulting firm. This solution has been confirmed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The consulting firm is calculating the accurate sizing. Mr. Mathieu and Mr. Lamarche have discussed this with the towns, who indicated their support. Funding is available through the Charlton municipal Covid-relief grant.

These efforts will require some work during school and after students leave for the day.

Mr. Lamarche thanked Mr. Mathieu for working tirelessly to resolve these issues.

Concerning the FY 21, early indications are that the regional transportation reimbursement is the same. Mr. Mathieu said the House and Senate numbers may be different. Also, Mr. Mathieu said there been an increase in the number of students attending charter schools to date.

C. Report of the Food Services Program – Matthew Greenberg

Food Services Director Matthew shared the good news that the United States Department of Agriculture has extended the Universal Free Meals program through the 2020-2021 school year. No students will be charged for meals this year, regardless of financial status. Mr. Greenberg said participation is needed to receive reimbursement. All students are urged to take the food home each day.

Mrs. Aucoin said this program benefits families greatly.

Lunch pick-up is available at all schools every day, and can be picked up in the evenings at Heritage School and Shepherd Hill, on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday.

Mr. Mathieu said it is a pleasure to work with Mr. Greenberg, who offers a different lens to the position and has blended the nutritional and fiscal aspects of the job very well. Mr. Greenberg highlighted changes made to the Food Services tab on the district website. He thanked employee Lara Carpenter and website manager Kelly McDonald for their assistance with this project.

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

Dr. Ackerman reported on the committee's 10th meeting in which discussions continue concerning increasing the capacity of students and adults to confront incidents of bias and racism. The committee will develop ways to increase student participation in the larger process. Dr. Ackerman continues to consult with Dr. Sheldon Eakins.

The Equity Committee has contacted local colleges to develop ways to seek out a diverse teaching staff, and has connected with Renee Paire to find ways to partner with the John Paire Foundation.

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- E. Update Opening School Year 20/21
 - a. Hybrid Learning – Steven Lamarche

The district has been in the hybrid learning model for two weeks. Mr. Lamarche said seeing students coming back into the elementary buildings was the best day. Cohorts B and C, grades 5-12 returns to school tomorrow. Mr. Lamarche said it finally feels whole with this first major transition from March 2020.

Mr. Lamarche said the transition is not simple, yet educators strive to provide rigor and accountability. There are no changes proposed this evening. While it is not perfect, collectively, our educators have moved mountains to make this work this year.

Committee members shared that they have been receiving communications about the teachers working tirelessly to meet the needs of students and parents.

- b. Transitions/Next Steps – Steven Lamarche

Mr. Lamarche and the administrative team meet weekly to discuss the next steps. Parents continue to request options for their children, creating transition points.

Mr. Lamarche said moving to full hybrid is not an option at this time, as the district does not have the resources. Moving to full day hybrid would necessitate need more educators to carry remote afternoon schedule. DESE has indicated there is an educator shortage. As all students would be assigned to more educators, there would no longer be any access to the teacher of record; support for full scale lunch times; improvement to technology infrastructure.

To go to full in person is not possible without relief from Covid-19 restrictions such as the 6 feet social distancing requirement.

Mr. Lamarche said the district is using every resource available to mitigate the spread and meet the needs of students. There are no additional funds as the state has level funded from last year's budget.

In response to comments that some students are struggling with the lack of academic rigor from last spring, Dr. Ackerman said part of the work by educators during the nine days of professional development was to plan out the first four to six weeks of school. Part of that was building on the idea that some students would be behind academically. Educators identified and delineated the most clearly important standards and where needed, went back to an earlier point to reinforce skills. The IXL program helped greatly with this task.

- c. Professional Development – Dr. Brian Ackerman

Dr. Ackerman reported the educators have been working with IXL, while support staff received training in the Google Suite applications by TEQ. Support staff also received instruction in the School Brains application. Dr. Ackerman said as Wednesdays are learning days, the goal is to provide all staff with a real opportunity to engage deeply and meaningfully with the tools.

Mrs. Carmignani said parents need to know an adequate time for their children to complete assignments. Dr. Ackerman said for a third grader, 10-15 minutes are adequate. He said we are in an historically different environment and while homework is strategic parents need to be mindful of the day. For teachers, it is OK not to give homework.

- F. MASC/MASS Resolutions

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The Joint Conference of the Massachusetts Association of School Committees and the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents will be held virtually this year on Saturday, November 7, 2020. The committee will offer directions to conference delegate Ms. Evans to vote on the 10 resolutions put before the Assembly:

Resolution 1: MCAS – a moratorium on high stakes testing, as well as to hold 10th graders harmless as they missed the opportunity to take the test in the spring. IF this resolution passes, students will not be required to make up the test.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by S. Reed to support Resolution 1 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

Resolution 2: Covid-19 state funding - the state must guarantee full reimbursement for mandated expenditures.

A motion by J. Evans, second by C. Kabala to support Resolution 2 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

Resolution 3: Anti-racism resolution – all school districts guarantee racist practices are eradicated.

School committee members would ensure school culture is anti-racist and all lives cannot matter until black lives matter.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by C. Carmignani to support Resolution 3 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

Resolution 4: Lowering voting age for municipal elections – Call upon Massachusetts legislators to pass the Empower Act and take other means to establish a minimum voting age of 16.

The committee took no action on Resolution 4.

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Resolution 5: Supporting stimulus funding - urge Mass. legislators to advocate and approve funding through progressive tax legislation.

The committee took no action on Resolution 5.

Resolution 6: Retention of Medicaid revenue - urges the General Court to require 100% of Medicare reimbursements be provided to public schools through a revolving account.

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala to support Resolution 6 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

Resolution 7: Funding for private schools – urges the MASC to petition the attorney general to review and recommend new statutes that determine the disbursement of federal funds.

The committee took no action on Resolution 7.

Resolution 8: School committee membership on state Board of Education – seeks to appoint a school committee member from a list of three nominees provided by the MASC.

A motion by J. Evans, second by C. Carmignani to support Resolution 8 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

Resolution 9: Legislation for LGBTQ+ - add sexual orientation and gender identity to the list of protected classes

A motion by J. Evans, second by C. Carmignani to support Resolution 9 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

Resolution 10: Monitoring attendance of students during the pandemic - Parents can hold children home from school due to health risks, and waive all accountability requirements.

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A motion by J. Evans, second by J. Terry to support Resolution 10, 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 chair noted the committee's support for all resolutions except 4, 5, and 7.

The committee asked the superintendent to write a letter acknowledging that former member Elaine M. Rabbit has been nominated for Life Membership in the MASC.

G. Superintendent Goals – Steven Lamarche

Mr. Lamarche presented three goals for the 2020-2021 school year:

1. Establish Dudley-Charlton RSD organizational leadership to navigate and implement a high quality, comprehensive learning program to all students during the COVID-19 pandemic.
2. Establish methods and methodologies to identify individual student achievement and progress as a result of the various models of learning implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. Advocate for a district-wide culture that embraces equity for all students, staff and community members.

Mrs. Kabala said everyone should have these goals as this is what the entire year should be about.

Mrs. Aucoin said these are excellent goals because of the times we are in right now.

The superintendent's evaluation will be conducted in the spring of 2021.

X. Next Meeting Dates

Mr. Laferriere sought discussion on allowing the public to attend future meetings in person to allow them to ask questions of the committee. Mr. Laferriere noted the district's Citizens' Forum Policy BEDH does not allow for questions and answers, only to raise issue. Mrs. Reed said she has received comments from parents who wish to attend in person.

Mr. Lamarche agreed to explore that and offer a proposal at the next meeting.

The committee disagreed with the need to open the meetings to the public now due to social distancing requirements. Mrs. Kabala said there are more attendees via video conferencing than she has seen live in her 35-year tenure on the committee.

The committee dismissed the proposal to conduct a survey of the public to gauge interest and in a poll of 5-2 in favor of leaving the meeting as is for now. Policy BEDH will be reviewed by the Policy Subcommittee at a future meeting.

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School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, October 28, 2020, In-person, 7 p.m. Charlton Middle School and video conferencing

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

Policy Review Subcommittee: October 2020

Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning: October 2020

Capital and School Safety Subcommittee: October 2020

- 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 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 (DCTA) as an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position, and to return to open session for a vote, or votes, if necessary, and to adjourn. This motion was made by P. Aucoin, second by C. Carmignani, and approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:27 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 9:56 p.m.

A motion by S. Reed, second by C. Carmignani to approve the Memorandum of Understanding with the DCTA concerning the working hours for the Athletic Director, 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

- XII. Future Agenda Items:** HVAC update, Fiscal Year 2021 budget, Budget and Finance Subcommittee report, Teaching and Learning Subcommittee report, Equity Committee Update

XIII. Adjourn

A motion by S. Reed, second by C. Kabala to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:58 p.m.

C. Carmignani: yes
J. Evans: yes
C. Kabala: yes
S. Reed: yes
J. Terry: yes

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P. Aucoin: yes
K. Laferriere: yes

Items used for this meeting include:

Agenda for Wednesday, October 14, 2020	Superintendent's Report – 10/14/20	Minutes of the Regular meeting of Wednesday, September 23, 2020	Minutes of the Special Meeting of Wednesday, September 30, 2020
Report of the Director of Finance and Operations	Equity Committee Update – Dr. Ackerman	Professional Development Update – Dr. Ackerman	2020 MASC/MASS Resolutions
Food Service Website Presentation			

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, Secretary