

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee held Wednesday, April 28, 2021 at Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton, at 7 PM, and via Live Stream - Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/539927707>

Video Conferencing - Zoom:

<https://zoom.us/j/92527147814>

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

School Committee members attending in person were Kenneth J. Laferriere, Chair, Cathleen Carmignani, Stephanie A. Reed, Jamie L. Terry.

Attending remotely were Pauline J. Aucoin, Vice Chair, Catherine M. Kabala, and Jordan W. Evans.

Also attending in person were Steven M. Lamarche, Superintendent of Schools, Richard J.

Mathieu, Director of Finance and Operations, Brian J. Ackerman, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Michaela Cluett, Student Representative, Sandra Sullivan, secretary.

Attending remotely were district administrators Lorinda Allen, William F. Chaplin, Daniel D’Arcangelo, Anne Marie DeMorris, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Rich Earle, and a total of 24 participants.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Moment of Silence

IV. Approval of Minutes

A. Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 14, 2021

A motion by C. Kabala, second by P. Aucoin to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, April 14, 2021, as corrected, was approved on roll call vote of 6 in favor, 1 abstention:

C. Carmignani - yes

J. Evans – abstain

C. Kabala - yes

S. Reed - yes

J. Terry - yes

P. Aucoin - yes

K. Laferriere - yes

B. Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, April 14, 2021

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by S. Reed to approve the minutes of the Executive Session of Wednesday, April 14, 2021, was approved on a 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

V. Approval of the Warrant

Warrants continue to be approved electronically:

Warrant #	Amount
62	\$133,249.90
63	\$554,273.25
64	\$393,613.13
65	\$650,771.68
Total	\$1,731,907.96

VI. Citizens' Forum

No one spoke at this time.

VII. Communications

Mrs. Lemansky sent a communication to School Committee members about the FY 22 reductions of the elementary library coordinators. Mr. Laferriere said the issue has been taken under advisement at this time.

VIII. Student Representative Report – Ms. Michaela M. Cluett

Miss Cluett reported on the return of Shepherd Hill students to full in-person days, saying the school is coming alive each and every day.

The National Honor Society will conclude their spring events with a rescheduled Cornhole Tournament, and the Krispy Kreme fundraiser.

The Drama Club will present *The Show Must Go On* via Zoom on Thursday, April 29, and Saturday, May 1.

The Show Choir will hold its final competition on Saturday, May 8 in person.

Spring sports are underway.

The Senior Class will hold a Senior Sunset concert featuring Charlton's Liam Coleman and his Band the Railriders.

IX. Superintendent's Report

Echoing Miss Cluett's comments, Mr. Lamarche said he is excited to announce the return of K-12 students. We are back as one whole district, which is exciting and provides a feeling of normalcy -- with a mask.

The district has received approval for Phase II of Pooled Testing from Project Beacon to continue through the remainder of the year and into the summer. Mr. Lamarche said this has been a great monitoring system for the district.

Using state guidance, the district has adjusted its protocols regarding quarantine. Close contacts who were exposed to a Covid-19 positive individual in the classroom or on the bus while both individuals were masked do not have to quarantine unless they were within 3 feet of distance for a total of 15 minutes during a 24-hour period. This does not apply if someone was identified as a close contact outside of the classroom or bus, or if masks are not worn by both persons at the time of the exposure. All other close contacts are following the standard protocol.

The state has also issued guidance regarding commencement exercises. Singing is not allowed. Mr. Lamarche said parents may still choose to keep their children home to quarantine in these circumstances.

At this time, Mr. Laferriere paid tribute to Mrs. Reed as this is her last meeting. The Charlton Town Elections will be held Saturday, May 1, and she is not seeking reelection.

Mr. Lamarche said in his two years working with her he found that she always fought for equity for our students, and wanted them to have access and experiences.

Mrs. Kabala noted the Mrs. Reed's time on the committee spanned the ages of her two sons – who were quite young when Mrs. Reed took office. The older of her sons will be graduating from Bay Path this spring.

Mrs. Pacheco noted that Mrs. Reed began as a member of the Charlton Elementary School Council where she was also an advocate for children.

X. New Business

- A. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee and the Director of Finance and Operations –
Catherine Kabala and Richard Mathieu

Mrs. Kabala said the subcommittee met yesterday and discussed the communication received from Mrs. Lemansky, the elementary library coordinator. Mrs. Kabala said she would like to make a motion:

A motion by C. Kabala, second by P. Aucoin to keep the two elementary library coordinators in the budget, funding them from the media support specialist salaries, of \$40,000-\$45,000 and \$20,000 from School Choice.

Mrs. Carmignani and Mr. Laferriere said it would be better to discuss this after the final budget is known as the committee is facing \$500,000 in cuts this evening.

Mrs. Kabala said these media specialists' salaries are already in the budget, and \$20,000 would be added from School Choice. These are important positions. Mrs. Terry, Ms. Evans, Mrs. Reed and Mrs.

Aucoin supported the motion noting there is no impact to the budget, and the positions support the district's new reading program. Mrs. Terry said reading is an area where children may be lacking as they return from remote learning and pandemic isolation. Mrs. Reed said she was opposed to cutting the library coordinators specialists a few years ago, and noted this may be the only library children step into.

Mrs. Aucoin and Ms. Evans noted the value of the library to student learning.

Mr. Lamarche said the district is hopeful to continue the help desk position, to which Mrs. Lemansky was moved earlier this year. He noted no one would lose a job.

Mrs. Terry called for a vote on the motion, which was seconded by Mrs. Kabala.

The committee unanimously approved the motion to call for a vote:

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

The motion by C. Kabala, second by P. Aucoin to keep the two elementary library coordinators in the budget, funding them from the media support specialist salaries, of \$40,000-\$45,000 and \$20,000 from School Choice, was approved by a roll call vote of 5 in favor, 2 abstentions:

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

1. Donations

\$750 to Charlton Middle School and \$750 to Dudley Middle School from Johnson-Williams Middle School in Virginia, for a total of \$1,500.

A motion by S. Reed, second by J. Terry 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

2. USDA

The United States Department of Agriculture announced it is extending its free lunch program through June 2022.

Mrs. Aucoin said this is great news and now there will be no worries about student lunch debt.

3. FY 2022 Budget

Mr. Lamarche said the towns requested their assessments not increase by more than 2.5% over FY 21, which represented a .8% increase in the district's operating budget. Mr. Lamarche said this increase does not cover contractual obligations. Mr. Mathieu said the original budget presented was a 2.86% increase. The district continues to work with the town to present an acceptable budget.

Mr. Lamarche and Mr. Mathieu are seeking the committee's vote on a proposal this evening.

Mr. Lamarche said the best proposal would result in a \$555,000 reduction. Mr. Mathieu presented two versions of the FY 22 budget showing reductions in the towns' assessments. Mr. Mathieu said the second version (Draft 3A) represented the best solution for the towns and the district. This budget will bring the assessment increase for Dudley to 2.87% and Charlton to 2.08%. Dudley would need to invest an additional \$175,000, and Charlton \$200,000. Mr. Mathieu said the towns provide the one-time resources used by the district to meet requests, and the district honors the town's desire to be in the 2.5-3.0% range of assessment increases.

Mr. Mathieu and Mr. Lamarche support Draft 3A featuring a \$550,000 reduction. Mr. Mathieu said he is not ready to recommend specific areas for those reductions this evening but listed the following areas targeted to get to the reduction:

- Reduce Buses by 4 \$200,000
- Move health insurance expense to Food Service budget \$180,000
- OOD tuition increases to the grant \$130,000
- TBD \$45,000
-

A motion by C. Kabala, second by P. Aucoin to support FY 22 Budget Draft 3A which reduced the budget by \$555,000 for a total budget of \$51,693,765, with total assessments of \$23,439,082 as follows:

Charlton \$14,128,484

Dudley \$9,310,599

This motion was approved by a roll call vote of 5 in favor, 2 opposed:

C. Carmignani - yes

J. Evans – no

C. Kabala - yes

S. Reed - no

J. Terry - yes

P. Aucoin - yes

K. Laferriere - yes

Mrs. Reed said the towns regularly make use of free cash, but the district has never requested it, but have done what we can do in good faith. She said she is not in favor of cutting this now. Mr. Mathieu said nobody wants to make these reductions as the district needs to grow, not shrink. He said, however, fighting is not the right approach this year.

B. Dudley-Charlton Paraprofessionals Association Ratification

The Dudley-Charlton Paraprofessionals Association has ratified its Collective Bargaining Agreement beginning July 2021 through June 2023. The school committee must now vote to ratify the agreement as well.

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala to ratify the Collective Bargaining Agreement for the Dudley Charlton Paraprofessionals Association was approved unanimously by roll call vote:

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

Mrs. Kabala said it was a pleasure to work with this union. Although the process was smooth, the negotiations were affected by the pandemic.

C. Update SHRHS end of the year student activities – Principal Chaplin

Principal Chaplin offered an update on upcoming activities for the class of 2021: Staff are encouraged to wear the colors of their college, military branch or post-graduate plans on Monday, May 3.

The Senior Banquet will be held at Wachusett Mountain with two different, two-hour events. The Senior Prom will be held at the new Polar Park with a cap on the number of participants. Commencement will be held at the DCU Center, in Worcester, Sunday, June 6 at 4 PM.

Mr. Chaplin said there will be pooled testing before each of these events.

D. School Choice Vote – Steven Lamarche

1. To participate
2. Overall number 201

The committee will vote whether to participate in the state-sponsored School Choice program for the 2021-2022 school year, and, if participating, set the number of seats they will open. Mr. Lamarche recommends participation at the same level as the present school year, with 201 slots opening in grades 5-12 as follows:

Charlton Middle School – 38
Dudley Middle School – 19
Shepherd Hill – 144

A motion by J. Terry, second by J. Evans to approve participation in the state-sponsored School Choice program for the 2021-2022 school year, and to open 201 seats in grades 5-12 as outlined, and this was approved unanimously on roll call vote:

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

Principals will monitor the acceptances to maintain a class size of not more than 22 students.

E. Request for unpaid leave of absence per Massachusetts Nurses Association Article XIV
Sec. E.

Other leaves of absence without pay may be granted by the school committee

A motion by C. Kabala, second by S. Reed to approve the request of a staff member for a leave of absence, was tabled, with Mrs. Reed withdrawing her second, and Mrs. Kabala withdrawing her motion, pending further information about the length of the leave.

F. Update transitions – Steven Lamarche

1. Report – April 5, 2021 (K-4) Principal Pastore and Principal Pacheco

Mrs. Pacheco said seeing the children back in school provided the greatest joy this year. Since they have been back to school, she has seen them hard at work enjoying such extended learning activities as looking for rectangles in the hallways of the school, and special art projects.

Mrs. Pastore said lunchtime has provided a great opportunity to catch up with the students who are smiling and enjoying being back together with their friends.

2. Report - April 26, 2021 (5-12) Principal Packard and Principal Chaplin

Mr. Packard said 563 students returned to Charlton Middle School. He thanked maintenance workers and staff for getting the building and classrooms ready for students' reentry.

Mr. Chaplin echoed Michaela Cluett's words that Shepherd Hill is coming alive more and more every day.

Ms. Evans inquired about trauma informed learning approaches by general education teachers.

Mr. Lamarche said the district is taking a multi-tiered approach through adjustment counselors, guidance counselors and outside agencies.

3. Update Social Emotional Learning (SEL)

Mr. Lamarche said there are layers that still need addressing. The district is planning an extended school year program, as well as a summer teaching and learning program. The school committee approved three new adjustment counselors, at Charlton Middle School, Dudley Middle School, and the elementary schools. Mr. Lamarche announced the hiring of Delia Galloni and Courtney Allen at the

middle schools. These individuals will begin their roles in the current school year to assist in building relationships that will carry them through to the 2021-2022 school year.

XI. Next Meeting Dates

- School Committee Meeting:** Wednesday, May 12, 2021 7:00 PM, Shepherd Hill Regional High School
- Budget and Finance Subcommittee:** Tuesday, May 11, 2021, 4:00 PM
- Policy Review Subcommittee:** Friday, May 7, 2021, 9:00 AM
- Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning:** Tuesday, May 4, 2021, 2:30 PM
- Capital Outlay/Safety Subcommittee:** Friday, May 7, 2021, 11:00 AM

XI. Future Agenda Items: Update Fiscal Year 2021, Update Fiscal Year 2022, Dudley-Charlton Leadership Council (May), Enrolling DCRSD students of staff per agreements (May) unpaid leave of absence.

XII. Adjourn

A motion by S. Reed, second by C. Kabala to adjourn the meeting was approved unanimously at 9:08 PM by roll call vote:

- 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 4/28/2021	Minutes of regular meeting of 4/14/2021	Minutes of the Executive Session of 4/14/2021	Superintendent’s Report of 4/28/2021
Report of the Director of Finance and Operations, 4/28/2021	FY 22 Budget Update Drafts 4/26/2021	Class of 2021 Update	Commencement Guidance Update 4/28/2021
In Person Learning Guide – DESE	Request for Leave of Absence	Corrected Minutes – 3/24/2021	

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, Secretary