

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, May 13, 2020 at 7 p.m. via **Video Conferencing** :

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84448426951?pwd=ZHZWbzk4TDV2NzhFK3hqSkw2djhEQT09>

Meeting ID: 844 4842 6951

Password: 4pKCLT

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, Karen A. Ares, Interim Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; 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; District Auditor Frank Serreti; district staff members Lisa Provost Julie Winans; Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary.

I. Call to Order

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

II. Approval of Minutes

Minutes of Regular Meeting of Wednesday, April 29, 2020

A motion by S. Reed, second by M. Antocci to approve the minutes of the meeting of Wednesday, April 29, 2020, was approved on unanimous roll call vote.

C. Carmignani-yes
C. Kabala-yes
K. Laferriere-yes
S. Reed-yes
J. Terry-yes
M. Antocci -yes
P. Aucoin-yes

Mr. Laferriere noted the numbers approved by the committee may change based on the principals' recommendations, as long as class size does not exceed 22.

Minutes of Executive Session of Wednesday, April 29, 2020

**Minutes of the School Committee
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A motion by S. Reed, second by C. Kabala, to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, April 29, 2020, was approved on unanimous roll call vote.

C. Carmignani-yes
C. Kabala-yes
K. Laferriere-yes
S. Reed-yes
J. Terry-yes
M. Antocci-yes
P. Aucoin-yes

III. Citizens' Forum

No one from the public spoke.

IV. Communications

Shepherd Hill Regional High School has received notice from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges regarding the vote to accept the Five-Year Progress Report, and to continue the school's accreditation. Mr. Lamarche said this item will be on the agenda for the school committee's May 27 meeting. The next cycle begins in 2023. The report described many positive aspects of the school.

V. Superintendent's Report

1. Mr. Lamarche continues to collaborate with surrounding districts as they seek guidance from the state concerning opening school buildings to staff and students, complete data submissions, and provide extended year or summer programming to meet the needs of all our students. Issues such as the state-required Student Opportunity Act (SOA), the 2021 MCAS, and access to Federal Cares Act funding, MEMA reimbursements of Covid-19 related expenditures, and any FY 21 budget guidance.

Local health agents are available to provide guidance as well.

Mr. Lamarche said district educators have been exceptional, and are doing what they can to reach all students. The last official day of school is June 18, 2020.

2. Lorinda Allen updated the committee on the findings of the recent Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's Tiered Focused Monitoring Review, also referred to as the special education audit.)

The performance "tiers" are as follows:

- Tier 1/Self-Directed Improvement: Data points indicate no concern on compliance and performance outcomes — **meets requirements.**
- Tier 2/Directed Improvement: No demonstrated risk in areas with close link to student outcomes — **low risk.**
- Tier 3/Corrective Action: Areas of concern include both compliance and student outcomes — **moderate risk.**
- Tier 4/Cross-unit Support and Corrective Action: Areas of concern have profound effect on student outcomes and ongoing compliance — **high risk.**

The department achieved the highest performance results in Meets Requirements.

Mrs. Carmignani thanked Mrs. Allen and the special education staff for this effort.

VI. New Business

A. Auditor Report – Mr. Frank Serreti

Mr. Mathieu introduced Mr. Frank Serreti, of Powers and Sullivan, the district's independent auditor. Mr. Serreti is new to the team following the retirement of Richard Sullivan.

Mr. Serreti thanked Mr. Mathieu, the superintendent, and the business office for cooperation and assistance throughout the audit. Mr. Serreti said there are no adjustments of records, as all have been found to be accurate.

Mr. Serreti said there is a \$1.4 million unassigned fund balance, which will be put toward next year's excess and deficiency fund. The district saw a decrease of \$89,000 in expenditures, rendering a clean opinion from the auditors.

The team also examined Federal awards, and offered a management letter. The Special Ed Department was also audited with no findings.

In its management letter, Powers and Sullivan said a previous recommendation to document policies and procedures has been resolved. A progress assessment is in the works with an outside consultant. Mr. Serreti said Cyber Security is becoming a bigger and bigger problem nationwide, with incidents up 65% from the prior year. The district has purchased cyber insurance. Powers and Sullivan recommended a risk /cyber security assessment to expose vulnerable areas.

Mrs. Kabala asked the superintendent to send a letter to the business office staff thanking them for their part in this clean audit.

**B. Report of the Director of Finance and Operations (*Vote Required*)
*Acceptance of Donations, FY20 Budget Transfer***

Acceptance of Donation:

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to accept the following donation
To Heritage School from Fresh Kicks Dance Studio, \$430.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by C. Carmignani to accept the \$430 donation to Heritage School from Fresh Kicks Dance Studio, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

- C. Carmignani-yes
- C. Kabala-yes
- K. Laferriere-yes
- S. Reed-yes
- J. Terry-yes
- M. Antocci-yes
- P. Aucoin-yes

Request for Budget Transfer

Mr. Mathieu said the settlement reached with First Student for payment during the shutdown has resulted in a \$400,000 savings in FY 20; however, the district will receive less transportation reimbursement revenue in FY21 than originally projected within the FY21 budget. Mr. Mathieu said the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has indicated the district can utilize its Regional Transportation Revolving Fund for such transfers, and then use those savings to replace the known lost revenue in FY21.

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This amount represents a little more than what we would have expected from the actual revenue as we are reimbursed less than 100% of our actual expense. This amount may also increase once we have finalized the negotiations with Special Education Transportation contracts.

Mr. Mathieu asked the committee to approve a transfer of \$400,000 from the Transportation – Contractual line item to the Transportation Revolving Fund.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by M. Antocci to approve the transfer of \$400,000 from the Transportation-contractual line item to the Transportation Revolving Account, was approved by unanimous roll call vote.

C. Carmignani-yes
C. Kabala-yes
K. Laferriere-yes
S. Reed-yes
J. Terry-yes
M. Antocci-yes
P. Aucoin-yes

End of Year Report Audit

The FY19 End of Year report audit has been finalized, and Mr. Mathieu reported there are no findings.

Versatrans Routing update

The implementation of Versatrans has continued through the school shutdown, and at this point all existing routes and stops are in the system. The next steps are to review these routes for Safety, Efficiency and Economy. First Planning Solutions will provide training and a review of the routes with an eye towards increasing efficiency.

Mr. Mathieu said recommendations may come in the fall, hopefully in time to affect the budget.

C. Remote Learning Update – Ms. Karen Ares and Principals

Mr. Lamarche expressed appreciation for the staff, who has worked hard to respond to the shutdown of schools. He said teachers have accomplished amazing things. He also congratulated parents for taking on the role of teacher, and principals for facilitating with their staff through this uncharted time. Mrs. Ares has worked with principals to maintain equity and parity across the district. Communication has been the key to success.

Mrs. Ares reviewed the district’s remote learning opportunities since the governor’s closure effective March 17. At that time there was little guidance provided by DESE. Now, Commissioner Riley has developed four phases.

Phase I: Concentrated on students’ health and wellness via food distribution, and the state’s partnership with WGBH to provide academic programming.

Phase II: With the announcement that schools would be closed until May 4, the district introduced Enhanced Remote Learning Opportunities. DESE offered some guidance for remote learning to include a focus on skills that have already been taught. No new skills were introduced.

Phase III: The announcement that schools would be closed for the rest of the 2019-20 school year. Staff, students and parents enjoyed the April vacation and returned to extended learning for the last seven weeks of school. The state advised two areas of deep focus: those content standards most critical for student success, and preparing students for

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the next grade level. At this point, remote learning opportunities addresses fundamental needs. Principals and staff facilitate efforts to check in on students who have not been engaged.

This process will evolve to Phase IV, which is to prepare students to enter school in the fall.

Principals explained the district's learning outlines by grade level.

Mrs. Terry asked if the students' work would be showcased. Mr. Lamarche said this will be a topic of the next Administrative Council Meeting.

Mrs. Carmignani expressed concern for parents who may be stressed out, and how teachers and administrators may be able to assist. Mr. Lamarche said it is the district's goal to engage with every family and student to monitor their progress. Mr. Lamarche said communication is ongoing and is at a higher level than it would be when school is in session.

D. Shepherd Hill Regional High School Update – Seniors – Principal Chaplin

The celebration of seniors has begun. Principal Chaplin provided seniors with an update on Friday. Lawn signs will be delivered to students' homes this week. There will be a virtual talent show, athletic recognition, and end of the year videos as the Covid-19-imposed shutdown has forced cancelation of a June graduation.

E. Fiscal Year 2021 Update

Mr. Mathieu said there has been no guidance from state or federal agencies regarding any stimulus monies. The general sense is that money is tight and school districts should plan for worst case scenarios.

The district will proceed with its Public Hearing on the FY 21 Budget during the committee's May 27 meeting. Mr. Mathieu said we must reduce from the governor's budget as the House has not produced its budget. We are eligible for CARES grant. Towns would rather have an approved budget than a 1/12th budget.

VII. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, May 27, 2020, Video Conferencing, 7 PM

Budget and Finance Subcommittee: Tuesday, May 19, 2020, 8:30 a.m. video conferencing

Policy Review Subcommittee: TBD

Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning: TBD

School Safety Subcommittee: TBD

VIII. Future Agenda Items – May 27, 2020: FY21 Budget Hearing, NEASC Update,

IX. Executive Session: To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining [**Massachusetts Nurses Association**] if an open session may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining or litigating position of the public body and the chair so declares. To reconvene to take votes if necessary and to adjourn.

The chair's motion to enter executive session was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 8:28 p.m.

Mrs. Carmignani-yes

Mrs. Kabala-yes

Mr. Laferriere-yes

Mrs. Reed-yes

Mrs. Terry-yes

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Mrs. Antocci - yes
Mrs. Aucoin-yes

The committee returned to open session at 9:20 p.m.

X. Adjourn

A motion by S. Reed, second by M. Antocci to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous roll call vote at 9:20 p.m.

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

Items used for this meeting include

<i>Agenda for 5/13/20</i>	<i>Regular Meeting Minutes: Wednesday, April 29, 2020</i>	<i>Executive Session Minutes: Wednesday, April 29, 2020</i>	<i>Superintendent's Report 5/8/2020</i>
<i>Director of Finance and Operations Report 5/8/2020</i>	<i>FY 21 Budget Update</i>	<i>Submitted Statement of Interest MSBA</i>	<i>DESE Guidelines for Remote Learning</i>

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, recording secretary