

## **DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**

Approved minutes of the Special Meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee, held Wednesday, September 30, 2020 at 7 p.m. at Charlton Middle School, 2 Oxford Road, Charlton MA 01507 and via

Live Stream - Vimeo:  
<https://vimeo.com/462597014>  
<https://vimeo.com/dcrsd>

Video Conferencing - Zoom:  
<https://zoom.us/j/92195514779>

In attendance were members of the School Committee:

Kenneth J. Laferriere, Chair  
Pauline J. Aucoin, Vice Chair, Via Zoom  
Cathleen Carmignani  
Jordan W. Evans  
Catherine M. Kabala, Via Zoom  
Stephanie A. Reed, Via Zoom  
Jamie L. Terry, Via Zoom

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 video conferencing 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, Chris Tittle, Scott Cushing, Wayne Tower, Gregory Duval, Mark Andre, James Rivera, Craig Smith, Nicole Heroux, Carl Franceschi, Rich Earle; Douglas Lajoie and Eric Romeo from Consulting Engineering Services; 31 participants via Vimeo; Sandra Sullivan, secretary.

**I. Call to Order**

The chair called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m.

**II. Pledge of Allegiance**

**III. Moment of Silence**

**IV. Citizens' Forum**

No one spoke at this time.

Mr. Laferriere announced that Michaela Cluett, a senior at Shepherd Hill Regional High School will be joining the committee on October 14, 2020, as the student representative.

**V. New Business**

A. Update the 2020-2021 School Year Calendar (Draft) – Steven Lamarche

Mr. Lamarche presented a draft of the revised school year calendar updated through December 23, 2020 MR. Lamarche said he is not looking for a vote at this point. The schedule will be revisited in January, with further revisions possible.

Mr. Lamarche said the student Early Release Days have been removed through December with the exception of the day before Thanksgiving and December 23. The November 3 professional development day has been removed and rescheduled as a full remote learning day for students.

The revised calendar will be posted on the district website.

B. Report of the Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Assessment of the DCRSD schools  
Mr. Lamarche said he and Mr. Mathieu received the Ventilations Systems Assessment from Consulting Engineering Services, LLC of Norwood on Monday, September 28. The firm was hired to analyze functionality and design of the HVAC systems throughout the seven schools.

Mr. Lamarche said the findings outlined in the report do not prohibit the move to hybrid learning tomorrow with the return of students in Cohorts C and B, PK – 4.

Over the last month, the district's custodial staff has joined Mr. Lamarche and Mr. Mathieu for consultative calls with representatives of C.E.S. The systems in six schools are functioning and by providing natural ventilation, will function as designed. As reported at the September 23, 2020 meeting, there are areas of Heritage School that need redressing.

Mr. Lamarche said while HVAC is important, so, too, are all the other mitigating strategies that have been put in place: limiting the number of students in the building, wearing masks, washing and sanitizing hands, no lunches served, and daily self-certification.

1. Introduction – Steven Lamarche & Richard Mathieu

Mr. Lamarche said HVAC is one piece of the whole to get to in-person learning. This has been reinforced by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, who provided a state-wide vendor list of consulting firms on August 3. Mr. Lamarche said within 15 days the district had hired C.E.S. to test systems. The results indicate while not every system is in perfect shape, overall the systems are in great shape.

2. As reported by Consulting Engineer Services (CES)

Eric Romeo and Douglas Lajoie are representing C.E.S. and the discuss the results of the review of existing mechanical systems, and verified the accuracy of drawings that were used to trace duct work, the flow of outside air, and louvers.

The firm found that Heritage School's office suite and media center have no mechanical ventilation. Mr. Lamarche said Heritage School's HVAC was not designed for a COVID-19 world. While it may have met the standards of 1989, it is not applicable to Covid-19. There are three spaces in the school that were not introducing any mechanical ventilation from the outside, and we need to introduce natural ventilation. Those spaces will not be used at this time, affecting six individuals – the school nurse, two administrative assistants, the principal, school psychologist and special education coordinator. Their offices will be relocated throughout the building. Additionally, classroom ventilation ductwork extends down the corridors, but nothing brings air into the classrooms. Natural ventilation through open windows works now, but not in colder weather. The firm recommends extending the ductwork from the corridors into the classrooms. According to Mr. Lajoie, that work could be completed around the students' schedules, at night and on weekends, and could possibly be completed in two months.

Mr. Laferriere said the report indicates HVAC systems need to function as well as they were designed. He said with adjustments such as proper Minimum Efficiency Reporting Value (MERV) filters that grab contaminants, and by providing natural ventilation, all buildings meet the requirement for allowing children back to class. Based on what they tested, not all systems are functioning as designed, but with balancing they will be. Mr. Laferriere said the report indicates there is not a large gap to get it to where it needs to be.

Mr. Lamarche said the administrators and staff have not waited until tonight to begin addressing some of the items found in the report. Custodians have replaced or are in the process of installing some items recommended in the report. The report quotes the cost of redressing Heritage School's plenum at \$600,000. Committee members noted the original estimate was \$50,000. Mr. Romeo said his initial remarks were based on the cost of the mechanical aspect of repairing the plenum. Mr. Lamarche indicated the district will seek a second opinion on this project.

The Shepherd Hill auditorium will be closed to students as it does not provide the required ventilation until the system is balanced. There are multiple sets of doors that could be opened at this point. Committee members expressed concerns arose about using our facilities for town meetings in Dudley and Charlton, as well as the National Election coming up on November 3, as voting is conducted in the Heritage School gym.

Mr. Laferriere asked the C.E.S. representatives if all of the schools are in shape to bring kids back to school. Mr. Lajoie said their task was to look at the buildings to determine if they are operating the way they were intended to operate. He said engineers have conducted an exhaustive study to determine the numbers in the report to show the systems either are or are not in compliance with their original intent.

C.E.S. recommends hiring a testing and balancing agency to adjust those areas and deliver ventilation as designed.

Committee members expressed concern about the findings in the Charlton Elementary School nurse's office. Portable HEPA filters were recommended, or the office can be relocated.

Mrs. Terry requested the calculations on the air turnover rate of classrooms be added to the report.

The reports were sent to the local boards of health.

Mr. Mathieu said he has reached out to testing and balancing contractors throughout the state, but their work is in great demand and we likely would not have anyone onsite until the end of October.

Mr. Mathieu said the cost estimates to address the issues range from \$20,000 per school for balancing. He said the district is sharing Municipal CARES Act monies with both Dudley and Charlton, and has \$466,000 allocated toward HVAC. This amount can be increased if necessary by taking from other line items.

**VI. Next Meeting Dates**

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

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

**Policy Review Subcommittee:** October 2020

**Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning:** October 2020

**Capital and School Safety Subcommittee:** October 2020

**VII. Future Agenda Items:** Fiscal Year 2021 budget, Equity Committee Update, Transition to Hybrid Learning, Superintendent Goals

**VIII. Adjourn**

A motion by C. Kabala to adjourn, received no second as Mrs. Reed asked to add a comment.

Mrs. Reed said if portable HEPA filters were used at Charlton Elementary School, she would be in favor of allowing the nurse to remain in her office and not move to another location in the building.

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

C. Carmignani: yes

J. Evans: yes

C. Kabala: yes

S. Reed: yes

J. Terry: yes

P. Aucoin: yes

**Minutes of the School Committee  
Special Meeting of September 30, 2020**

K. Laferriere: yes

*Items used for this meeting were: agenda for Wednesday, September 30, 2020; Draft Calendar 2020-2021 School Year, Ventilations Systems Assessment, September 28, 2020, Consulting Engineering Services.*

*Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, Secretary.*