

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Approved minutes of the meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee held remotely Wednesday, November 18, 2020 at 7 p.m. via Live Stream - Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/dcrsd>
<https://vimeo.com/478937262>

Video Conferencing - Zoom:
<https://zoom.us/j/98096210535>

All School Committee members were present, participating remotely.

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

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, William F. Chaplin Daniel D’Arcangelo, Jennifer A. Desto, Andrew Leach, Lori A. Pacheco, Dean W. Packard, Kathleen E. Pastore, Michael Resener, Christopher E. Starczewski, Michael Tucker, Peter Olson, Kelly True; Nicole Heroux, Rich Earle, Audio-Visual Coordinator, Sandra Sullivan, secretary. There were 70 additional attendees via 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, October 28, 2020

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala, to approve the minutes of Wednesday, October 28, 2020, as corrected, 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 Executive Session of Wednesday, October 28, 2020

A motion by P. Aucoin, second by C. Kabala to approve the minutes of the executive session of Wednesday, October 28, 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

V. Approval of Warrant

Warrants continue to be received and signed electronically by a majority of members.

Accounts Payable Warrants:

22	\$1,711,662.41
23	\$634,173.52
24	\$168,453.86
25	\$157,773.42
26	\$324,531.43
<i>Total</i>	\$2,996,594.64

Payroll Warrants:

1405D	\$541,258.06
1405P	\$1,518,057.59
1406D	\$375.31
1406P	\$2,340.00
1410D	\$495,892.65
1410P	\$1,333,349.51
<i>Total</i>	\$3,891,273.12

VI. Citizens' Forum

Meeting moderator Rich Earle noted the presence of 70 remote attendees, but no hands were raised.

VII. Communications

Committee members indicated they have received similar communications concerning a transition to the learning plan, but will wait until discussion on that agenda item to address them.

Ms. Evans noted she was contacted by Ross Lemansky, whose company RSI Construction LLC was a bidder for the snow plow contract awarded at the October 28 meeting. Mr. Lemansky noted a calculation error in the rate for partial plowing. Mr. Mathieu said even with the math corrected, the bid was still higher than the winning bid.

Ms. Evans also heard the concerns of a parent about MCAS and what the administration's plan going forward.

Mrs. Terry reported on the successful flu clinic for Dudley and Charlton residents on November 7 at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. The location was tested as a site for possible distribution of a Covid-19 vaccination should one become available in the future.

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

Miss Cluett said students have had a great first quarter. She noted grades closed last Friday, and report cards will be available Friday, November 21.

- Fall sports teams close out their seasons in three days. Senior recognition events have been held.
- The Shepherd Hill Student Council has begun planning many winter events.
- The National Honor Society enjoyed a successful Halloween event.
- Virtual clubs are going strong. The Shepherd Hill Show Choir annual holiday show. Multiple drive up shows.

IX. Superintendent's Report

Mr. Lamarche said we remain in a divisive, polarized world with high levels of anxiety. Educators strive to provide stability through predictability.

Mr. Lamarche said the increase in the number of cases state wide, adds to the collective unrest. Ensuring the health and safety of our students remains the number one priority.

As for the rising number of cases in the district, Mr. Lamarche said there is no evidence that these are as a result of in-person learning. The administrative team agrees that the half day on in person learning provides the right structure.

Mr. Lamarche said the proposal he will present later in the meeting will not require a vote, and there is no recommendation for any changes prior to the upcoming holidays. While the district has a responsibility to present the plan, he asked the committee to not act on it tonight to allow for planning and further study.

The district will create a new parent survey to assist with planning the next steps. The results will be reported at Dec. 9 school committee meeting.

Regarding the expectations for Thanksgiving, Mr. Lamarche said they are in line with state guidelines. Parents and staff need to notify the school nurse about any out of state travel, and quarantine or obtain a test when necessary. The self-certifications rate is high for the two days per week students are in school; however, Mr. Lamarche said students need to self-certify five days per week.

Mr. Lamarche thanked the Charlton/Brimfield Masonic Angel Fund masons for their generosity and support of Charlton families during the upcoming holidays. Each Charlton school will receive five letters to give to families in need. The letters contain \$100 gift cards.

Mr. Lamarche reported on the successful Dudley-Charlton Flu Clinic held at Shepherd Hill Regional High School on Saturday, November 7.

The local Dunkins is offering morning provisions to all educators this week.

X. New Business

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

a. Donations

There were no donations to report this evening.

b. Update HVAC systems and planning

Mr. Mathieu said the district continues to use a combination of mitigating strategies: hand washing, face masks, social distancing, and proper cleaning and HVAC systems. Work has been ongoing since August, and the recommissioning at Mason Road School, Dudley Elementary School, Dudley Middle School and Charlton Middle School is complete. MERV-13 filters are on order and should be delivered in the next two weeks, barring further delays. Mr. Mathieu said Airadigm of New Hampshire completed the testing portion of uni-vents, will return to do the middle schools and to install the MERV 13 filters when they arrive.

At Heritage, a final plan has been developed to address the school's design shortfalls.

B. Report of the Budget and Finance Subcommittee Meeting – 11.17.2020

The subcommittee canceled its meeting as there have been no numbers from the state regarding the FY 21 budget. The House version included additional money -- \$25 per student, to cope with Covid-19 related expenses. Mr. Mathieu said there has been no additional word from the governor about additional money. The state's Covid-19 grant monies were used to hire additional teachers, nurses and custodians. The grants are set to expire on Dec. 31, and with no talk about extensions, the positions will be gone as well.

C. Report of the Capital Outlay/Safety Subcommittee Meeting – 11.13.2020

The subcommittee met Friday, November 13 to organize and discuss strategy with respect to establishing a capital plan. Mr. Mathieu suggested using \$25,000 as the amount for capital items. Items below that amount will be funded through the operating budget. Building administrators are assisting the Central office administrators in assembling a list of capital projects.

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

The Equity Committee continues its work. Three webinars were held with Dr. Sheldon Eakins, Director of the Leading Equity Center. Participants indicated their time with Dr. Eakins was a value and helpful, while the committee is exploring the most effective way to focus the message and follow up on the presentations.

Dr. Ackerman said the committee is building a student coalition of leaders to support its work.

Mr. Lamarche commended the work of Dr. Ackerman and the committee as it shows that the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District is moving ahead with a number of initiatives in the face of Covid-19. This is important, sustainable work.

Ms. Evans said equity was the theme of the recent Joint Conference of the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents and the Massachusetts Association of School Committees. She said Dudley-Charlton Regional School District is an early innovator.

E. Request for Additional Staff - Department of Pupil Personnel Services – Lorinda Allen

Mrs. Allen is requesting the committee's approval of an additional 1.0 FTE 1:1 instructional assistant at Heritage School to meet the needs of a student moving from the general education setting at another school to the Intensive Learning Center there.

A motion by C. Kabala, second by S. Reed to approve the additional 1.0 FTE instruction assistant at Heritage School, 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 position will be funded by the Circuit Breaker.

F. MASC Resolution for MCAS – Chairman Laferriere

Mr. Laferriere requested this item as thought there was an additional resolution being proposed by the Massachusetts Association of School Committees, from what was passed at the joint conference delegate meeting in early November. A motion to table this resolution failed. This resolution is not binding on the legislature. The state would need to act on any moratorium on future testing.

The resolution seeks to exclude last year's grade 10 students from the making up the test prior to graduation, and seeks a moratorium on all high stakes testing this year.

Superintendents have been lobbying the governor during the weekly press conferences.

G. Update Opening School Year 20/21

a. Teaching and Learning – Dr. Brian Ackerman

Dr. Ackerman said the district has been able to provide training to elementary teachers on the early reading screening tool DIBELS 8 thanks to a grant from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Dr. Ackerman presented the results of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District Learning Survey, which answered questions posed by parents. Dr. Ackerman said there is a genuine concern that the hybrid learning model is a bad idea, with many questions about returning to full time in person learning. Dr. Ackerman said the hybrid model is not the best choice, it is the best among imperfect options. District educators continue to build their capacity for remote instruction and to meet students' learning needs.

The committee discussed the availability of equipment and staff ability to live stream classes. The governor recently stated that districts, where feasible, return to full time in person learning, while maintaining a fully remote option for parents and students.

Mr. Lamarche reminded the committee the district is limited in resources. We are one of the lowest ranked in terms of per pupil expenditure in the state. Without resources to add staff, there must be increases to independent learning days. A full day hybrid or full day in person model would create the need for additional staff.

b. Transition Recommendation – Steven Lamarche

At his Friday, Nov. 6 press conference, Governor Charlie Baker set expectations that schools designated as grey, green or yellow return to full in person learning, if feasible.

Mr. Lamarche said the current hybrid learning model provides the right controls for data in the event of positive COVID-19 cases. The hybrid model allows the district to monitor close contact and contact tracing and has managed and minimized student transmission within the schools.

In presenting this proposal, Mr. Lamarche noted all is subject to change. A survey will be sent to the community on Friday to elicit feedback.

Mr. Lamarche said the original target date for movement from hybrid was November 30, but since moved to Dec. 7. Now, administrators agree that the more realistic target date is Jan. 4 to allow more time to understand the virus spread, to increase the stability and predictability, and time to address the HVAC and energy management system.

The recommendation is as follows:

Start full in-person learning Monday, January 4, 2021 as five morning half days in-person for K-12

- Four afternoon days of synchronous remote learning for K-12
- One half day (Wednesday) of asynchronous learning for educator collaboration Increase in person learning.

Adjust COVID-19 protocols

- Classroom environments of not less than 3-feet
- Educators remain 6-feet distance from students
- If educational community member is positive, entire class may have to quarantine and move to remote learning for 14 days
- If positive COVID-19 and rides school bus, entire ridership must self-quarantine for 14 days

Elementary unified arts synchronous learning in the afternoon

All other cohort designations will be combined for in-person and remote learning

Cohort D increases attendance for one half day morning on Wednesday

School committee members expressed concern for the 3-feet social distancing, the loss of Wednesday prep time for teachers.

Mrs. Terry requested the boards of health attend the December meeting.

Mrs. Carmignani suggested waiting until mid-January, or two weeks following the holiday break.

It was noted that students will receive a free meal daily.

Miss Cluett asked that students have a voice in the conversation as well, and the principals agreed to create a survey for high school and middle school students.

Mrs. Kabala suggested that teachers and staff be included as well.

Mr. Lamarche said the discussion will provide direction to the administration.

XI. Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, December 9, 2020 7:00 PM SHRHS

Budget and Finance Subcommittee: Tuesday, December 15, 2020, 4:00 PM remote
Policy Review Subcommittee: TBD
Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning: Monday, November 30, 2020, 4 PM, remote
Capital Outlay/Safety Subcommittee: Friday, January 8, 2021, 10:00 AM remote

XII. Future Agenda Items: Update HVAC, Update Fiscal Year 2021, Update Equity Committee, Update Plan Transitions, Update Student Services Department, SHRHS Show Choir (video), Superintendent’s Award of Academic Excellence (January), SHRHS Principal’s Award (January), Fiscal Year 2022 (January), Report of the MASC Resolutions. Mrs. Terry asked that the boards of health from Dudley and Charlton be invited to attend.

XIII. Adjourn

A motion by J. Evans, second by C. Carmignani to adjourn the meeting was approved by unanimous vote at 10:26 p.m. 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 Wednesday, November 18, 2020	Superintendent’s Report – November 18, 2020	Report of the Director of Finance and Operations Wednesday, November 18, 2020	Equity Committee Update – November 16, 2020
Request for Additional Staffing, Director of Pupil Personnel Services November 13, 2020	Lifetime Achievement Recognition – letter to Mary Antocci	Teaching and Learning Subcommittee Update – November 18, 2020	Minutes Regular Meeting of October 28, 2020 Executive Session of October 28, 2020

Respectfully submitted by Sandra Sullivan, Secretary