



Greater Lawrence Technical School

**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1769
April 14, 2020**

<u>Members Present:</u>	Leo Lamontagne	Lawrence	Chairperson
	Marilyn Fitzgerald	Andover	Vice Chairperson
	Frank Rossi	North Andover	Assistant Treasurer
	Zoila Disla	Lawrence	
	Stephany Infante	Lawrence	
	Anngybel Moreta	Methuen	
	Francisco Surillo	Methuen	

Members Absent:

<u>Others Present:</u>	John N. Lavoie	Superintendent-Director
	Elizabeth Freedman	Principal
	Maria Silva	Business Manager
	Gerry DiStefano	Treasurer
	Susan Lally	District Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lamontagne called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM with a pledge of allegiance and a moment of silence. He asked members to remember those who protect us around the world.

2. MINUTES

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the minutes of March 17, 2020

2ND: Mr. Rossi

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

Ms. Disla	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Ms. Infante	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes
Ms. Moreta	Yes
Mr. Rossi	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes

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3. FINANCE REPORT

a.) Cash Balance Report

Mr. DiStefano read the report into the record.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the Cash Balance Report as presented.

2ND: Mr. Rossi

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

Ms. Disla	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Ms. Infante	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes
Ms. Moreta	Yes
Mr. Rossi	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes

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b.) Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report

No Discussion

c.) Revolving Fund Report

No Discussion

d.) Budget Report

No Discussion

4. COMMUNICATIONS

a.) Donations

None

b.) Articles

None

c.) Public Participation

None

5. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

a.) Remote Learning Plan

Supt. Lavoie wanted to thank the Administrative Team who worked on the Remote Learning Plan and especially, Principal Freedman. The Plan is outstanding and is a result of the collaboration of all. He wanted to thank Ms. Zielinski for her hard work helping out with our faculty. He also wanted to thank Mr. Burke as well for his help. Supt. Lavoie reported that the Remote Learning Plan aligns with the recommendation of the Commissioner of Education. It looks at the entire view of our students beyond learning. It recognizes their health, physical and emotional well-being as well as how they are doing at home. We want to help them connect in a way that makes them feel we are there for them while they are learning, but also have some level of expectations of engaging that are reasonable for their growth. Every student has different challenges, so it is important to consider this when engaging the students. We have tried to balance the day to day instruction to three hours per day, 35-40 minutes academics and three hours for shop. This is done either online, remote learning, specific assignments, google classrooms or actual zoom classes. We have taken the ninth and tenth graders that have half day academics and half day shop and broke that into A/B weeks so that it will make it easier for students. There are many opportunities for students to communicate with the instructors. We have established office hours, face to face and one on one learning. We have put a plan in place for those students who are not engaging to have a more effective way of communicating with them and their parents. At first, the teachers were trying to reach out to the students via phone call or email. On the academic side, this was hard because there were several teachers. If a student is not engaging, then they will report it to the student's guidance counselor and also a connected call will go out to their parents. We will try to find out why the student is not engaging, whether it is that they are working full-time, or have some series concerns on an emotional level. The guidance counselors will then upload the results of the meeting into X2 for the teachers to see.

The other part of this plan is the grading system. It is broken up into two semesters. The first semester is based on when they were in school and the second semester is based on their remote learning. We have established a pass/fail or a credit/no credit system. Criteria in which you get credit, or no credit has been established through a rubric in which students are given credit if it shows that the student has been engaging and no credit if they have not. We want all student to pass, so we need to figure out a way to engage all students. There are some different learning plans listed, especially with Special Education which is driven by law. Some students need and IEP throughout this process. Ms. Burnham, Director of Special Education is working closely with the DOE to make sure we meet our requirements. Supt. Lavoie reported that he will share the link on our website. Lots of help from Ms. Zielinski, the Administrative Team, Jason and William, IT. We wanted to create something really easy that was user friendly for students and parents. Jason additionally created a Spanish version of the website. One member reported that everyone did a great job. Supt. Lavoie reported that an enormous number of hours went into creating the plan and website. Fortunately, we have a graduate, Jason Rivera that worked closely with the staff. One member reported that she went through the plan and was proud and grateful how it turned out. She had parents contact her who were grateful for this website. One member had a student reach out to her regarding the grading system. She was concerned about the three pillars, especially the middle pillar. The first pillar states, consistent engagement (90 and above), the middle pillar states, some engagement (60-90) and the third pillar is failures. The student reported that it was unmotivating to have the B and D students mixed in together. Supt. Lavoie reported that there is some confusion that the numbers are not the grades, it is a percentage of the work being completed. Ms. Freedman reported that she too has had students and teachers reach out to her regarding this. She reported that X2 is putting a number on it. And understands the concern. Although we have to put some sort of measure on it, the credit beyond distinction was to give students who go above and beyond credit and to also not hold students accountable if they are struggling, when they do not have the support they need. One member asked, if we are grading based on a pass/fail, then why would we need the three pillars? Supt. Lavoie reported that we put the credit with distinction in place to be fair to the students that have passed in every assignment. It is to recognize them. A regular credit is pass/fail and some students will only do sixty percent of the work and receive that credit. We understand there are different circumstances but if we feel there is some growth, then they should pass. It is not so much about the grade, but more about the effort. One member suggested that we send out a follow-up email to the students to explain the grading system, so they have a better understanding

b.) Budget Confusion regarding Methuen's Assessment

Supt. Lavoie reported that there was some confusion regarding the Methuen's assessment. There was some thought that they were going to cut our budget. Ms. Silva helped them and me understand what was going on. Originally, the budget was sent based on the State assessment and the first go around it was a certain number. On the second go around it was \$84,000 less, making their assessment lower then when they approved the budget. Methuen had gone in to make the adjustment but had worded it wrong so there was some confusion. One member asked if this has been all resolved. Supt. Lavoie reported that it has.

c.) Bussing Payment

Supt. Lavoie reported that Ms. Silva has been working with other Business Managers to come up with a fair payment to them based on what the State wants. Ms. Silva reported that she has been working with seventeen other districts so they can get a consistent plan across all districts. They all had a conference call with the owner of NRT, John McCarthy who was very adamant about only reducing the contract by fiver percent. Two percent was for fuel and three percent was for his profit. Another option is he is willing to reduce the contract to 92.5% if we paid in full to help with his cash flow. Supt. Lavoie reported that he has been in touch with the bus company because the City of Lawrence Community Organization is trying to meals to people in need. They are asking for help because the amount of people coming out is to many. The bus company said that they would help deliver the food. Given the fact that they said they would do this, I would recommend that we give them the 95 percent upfront if we have the cash flow and

keep their commitment to deliver the food. Ms. Silva reported that she would like to speak to Mr. DiStefano to see if we have the cash flow. One member reported that she understands keeping and paying his employees because it is hard to get competent drivers but wondered if he is contracted to pay his suppliers a certain price for gas, because the price has gone down drastically. Ms. Silva reported that never came up on her call, but insurance did. He said that no discount has been given yet, because it is still being discussed at the legislative level. He reported that in order for him to reduce his insurance, he would have to return all his plates and reregister all his buses and that would not be done for September. He did report that the State is talking about giving them a tax rebate and if that does happen, he would give that back to the districts. One member asked how many busses we have. Ms. Silva reported that we have 28 busses, but they are not only used for us. They are used for other districts.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve paying the bus company 95% of the contract if they continue to provide assistance to the Lawrence Community Organization for delivering meals and transportation.

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

Ms. Disla	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Ms. Infante	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes
Ms. Moreta	Yes
Mr. Rossi	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes

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d.) Field Project Update

Supt. Lavoie reported that the project started yesterday. They turned the dirt over and spent the last two weeks preparing the site for conservation to approve. The conservation department were not doing inspections, but Bob Douglas, Director was able to help us get it inspected. We were able to get it started this week. The expected completion date is July 2020.

e.) Budget Adjustments due to the Coronavirus

Supt. Lavoie reported that Ms. Silva, Ms. Freedman and me, will be sitting down to go over this year's budget. We expect that there will be excess funds and we will still have to meet school spending requirements of this year. You will see some budget transfers and if we have to purchase items, we are looking first of those that have an impact on education, such as equipment, educational materials, books, and software and technology. We anticipate we will have around one million dollars due to being out of the building. We do not want to have excess funds, or we would be fined by the state, or they could lower our assessment the following year because we did not spend our money. It has happened in Methuen. We will be looking at where the excess funds fall as well as looking at some grants. I think we will be alright with grants, because they are giving extensions in order to move some money into next year's budget, so we do not have to spend them just to spend them. Supt. Lavoie reported that he will be keeping the District Committee up to date on this and by our next meeting we should probably have a plan in place. One member asked if we think that the State will change the game plan and take some of the money away. Supt. Lavoie reported no. They made a commitment to this year's budget and the governor already reported that they will not be doing that.

f.) Student Breakfast and Lunch Program

Discussion under Bussing

g.) Admission's Report

Supt. Lavoie reported that the responses are coming back slowly. We have about 250 responses and the guidance department will start to make calls to those who are accepted. We will also be calling our ascending communities guidance counselors to see if they can help. The process is a little slower now and once we have a few more, I will feel better. In about four weeks, if we are not where we should be, we will be going to the waitlist. Coming back slowly, about 250 responses and the guidance department is going to make calls to those who are accepted and calling our ascending schools to see if they can help.

h.) Administrator's MOU

Supt. Lavoie reported that the Administrators would like an MOU and sent in a proposal. There is more work that has to be done on it, but hopefully it will be completed by the next District Committee Meeting.

i.) School Calendar

Supt. Lavoie reported that Commissioner Riley has reported that he is giving the option to schools who would like to work during April vacation in order to close school four days earlier, because one day is a holiday. We have surveyed our teacher, administrators who spoke to the union and we would like to do this. We need the District Committee to vote on this change in our calendar

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the adjustment to the School Calendar

2ND: Mr. Rossi

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

Ms. Disla	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Ms. Infante	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes
Ms. Moreta	Yes
Mr. Rossi	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes

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6. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

7. OLD BUSINESS

a.) District Committee Priorities

b.) Policy

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS /REPORT

a.) Resignations

b.) Leaves of Absence

c.) Retirements

d.) Appointments

e.) Job Postings

- Medical Assisting Instructor, Teacher's Contract, SY2021, New Position.

Supt. Lavoie reported that this is the fourth year and we have more students, therefore, needing a fourth teacher.

- Robotics Instructor, Teacher's Contract, SY2021, New Position.

Supt. Lavoie reported that this is the 2nd year and we now need a 10th grade instructor.

- Ell Instructor, Teacher's Contract, SY2021, New Position.
- Evaluation Team Chair, SY2021, Replacement Position

- Special Education Instructor, SY2021, Replacement Position
- Part-time Speech and Language Instructor, Replacement Position

Supt. Lavoie reported that we wanted to hire an in-house person in place of a contracted person.

One member asked if the new instructor for Robotics will be paid out of Perkins. Supt. Lavoie believes it will.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the job postings as presented.

2ND: Mr. Rossi

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

Ms. Disla	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Ms. Infante	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes
Ms. Moreta	Yes
Mr. Rossi	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes

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10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn at 7:00 p.m.

2ND: Ms. Infante

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

Ms. Disla	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Ms. Infante	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes
Ms. Moreta	Yes
Mr. Rossi	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes

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Respectfully Submitted:



Susan Lally
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:



John N. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director