



Greater Lawrence Technical School

**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1784
November 10, 2020**

Members Present: Leo Lamontagne Lawrence Chairperson
Marilyn Fitzgerald Andover Vice Chairperson
Frank Rossi North Andover Assistant Treasurer
Anngybel Moreta Methuen
Francisco Surillo Methuen

Members Absent: Zoila Disla Lawrence

Others Present: 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 October 27, 2020.

2ND: Mr. Surillo

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

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

#17552

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	Absent
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Ms. Moreta	Yes
Mr. Rossi	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes

#17553

b.) Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report
 No Discussion

c.) Revolving Fund Report

Ms. Fitzgerald reported that there is \$47,000 new money deposited in the facilities rental since the last time this month. Is any of this from the field rentals or from our evening classes rental? Ms. Silva reported that she will look into and let her know. Ms. Silva reported that we have received money from Seacoast United, but not much from the classroom rentals. I will provide you a report. Supt. Lavoie reported that we did receive two checks from Seacoast United, one in September and one in October.

d.) Budget Report
 No Discussion

e.) Budget timeline

Ms. Silva reported that the Budget Timeline was pushed back to help with not being back in the school and to help with the Advisory Board Meetings. We wanted to give them enough time to build their budget. Supt. Lavoie reported that we have our Advisory Meetings in January. The advisors request that we push our budget back until after they have their meeting so they can have input into what the program will need. We believe the governors' numbers will be late given what is happening in the state.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjust the agenda item to In-Person Learning.

2ND: Mr. Surillo

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

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

#17554

Roll Called by District Recorder for the purpose of reporting members attending virtual or in-person. Mr. Surillo, Ms. Moreta and Mr. Rossi are attending virtual. The members in-person are Ms. Fitzgerald and Chairman Lamontagne.

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

a.) In-Person Learning

Supt. Lavoie reported that we have been in remote learning since the start of school. We are continuing to look at the issues with regards to bringing students in. Our first priority would be to bring in exploratory students and high needs students. Lawrence will always be in the red and it is not so much what is going on in Lawrence, but what is going on in building and can we keep people safe. The communication from the Commissioner is that he wants all schools to bring in students for in-person learning even if their town is in the red. What I am looking to do is have the District Committee approve bringing in exploratory students first and overtime transition students in the building. I am looking to bring them in on November 30th. We have done a lot of work preparing the building and have had input from experts in the field to help us prepare for the return of the students. We have gotten reports from the HVAC Engineer and an Infectious Coach. I have communicated with the Assistant Director of the School of Public Health, Harvard. The most important thing is to make sure our building is safe. We had each room inspected for their ventilation. The HVAC firm tested and inspected it. They spoke to us about airflow and the recommendations. Last Friday, the professor and engineer from Harvard did a webinar to all the superintendents across the state. Everything on air flow/quality that they spoke about meets our HVAC standards and more. The engineer reported that we should open the damper twenty percent to keep the room safe. Merv13 filters were recommended and ordered. They should be in the end of next week. We have an automation system which allows us to monitor every space. Another recommendation as term as air quality is to put air purifiers in a classroom. They believe it is not necessary, but helpful. During our COVID Task Force Meeting, we had the HVAC engineer member state that our building was one of the safest buildings that he has seen as far as our HVAC system. I researched air purifiers and they are on order. This is for additional protection to make the staff feel safer. We have gone above and beyond as far as air quality. As terms of other precautions, we have plexiglass in the building and at every student desks. Protocols and procedures are in place; 6ft apart, masks on all day and keeping your hands clean. We have cleaning products at every door and hallway, and we will be cleaning every day. We had a case, and that space was cleaned; surfaces, air, floor and everything in the space. Each classroom that is utilized will be cleaned as well. Our goal is to bring in the exploratory students first. We will have 18 buses for every program. Each bus will have 12 students and will go around and pick up all 12 students and they will all stay in a cohort. The cohort will never change. They will be social distanced and be dropped off at the shop door. Their space both vertically and horizontal will be 6 ft apart. They should have their own toolboxes. Each shop needs to develop protocols. It will be the responsibility of the teachers to maintain their protocols. Half the students in exploratory will come in for two days Monday/Tuesday for 8 periods and virtual learning on Wednesday. Then the other exploratory students will come in on Thursday/Friday. We are only bringing in 200 students at a time. This process will take place for 18 weeks, until all shops have been explored. The student's temperature will be taken on the bus and on the way home. We have applied for testing already and we are waiting for final approval. We have a room that we have redone the HVAC system. It has a separate ventilation specific to that room, so the virus cannot spread anywhere else. If a student is sick, while in the building, that is where they will go. If positive, then we will test the other 11 students. Those students will be quarantined for 14 days. I would suggest if one student has the virus and everyone follows the protocol, then it is highly unlikely another student will get it. That is what protocols and procedures are for. I am not saying it is easy, but there are responsibilities on our part to bring the students in. There are students that are failing and struggling out there. Ms. Freedman reported that it is high, but we do not have anything to compare it to. Supt. Lavoie reported that students are also struggling emotionally. We are trying to teach students on a career area, remotely. They are trying to make a decision on their livelihood. I do know it can be done safely. Other schools are in session and continue to be in session and do not have what we have in our building to keep it safe. People are less likely not to get the virus in the building, then out and about. Ms. Freedman repeated that the failure rate is not compared to anything last year, but for freshman the failure rate doubled for quarter one. It is certainly something we are concerned about and the teachers are doing amazing in their cohorts. Supt. Lavoie reported that the failure rate is not because of the teachers, they are working harder and longer and doing an outstanding job. They are doing amazing work, with students.

That goes to show you, that with this, it is the struggles that students are having at their home with remote learning. Ms. Fitzgerald reported that I agree with Supt. Lavoie, that our building is as safe with regards to the air flow, cleanliness, safety protocols we have taken and PPE equipment. The bottom line is we can't stop the virus. I am concerned about the timeline. I was hoping for January 4, 2020, after the holidays. I think the potential for spreading the virus, is going to be the highest in the next thirty days. Are the cohorts already in place and are they the same students that will be together on the bus? Supt. Lavoie reported that they are going through all the programs again, regardless if they have gone remotely. It is not what is going on in Lawrence, it is what is happening in the building. If a student has the virus, it does not mean the teacher will get the virus if all protocols are followed. I have ordered the N95 masks. We found a company that are willing to manufacture the masks for us, so we are not taking them away from the health professionals. We are looking at an app that we would like staff and students to use on their phones to help us identify who they have been in contact with. If we are not ready to bring the students back in November, then we can push it out a week. We need to get them started sooner rather than later because there is a need to do it. We have everything in place. The Department of Education, want the students in. It doesn't mean you will not get a case if you are in the red, yellow, green. We are only bringing in 230 kids not 1600 spread all over the school. It will be managed in the shops. We have connected with the clinic and they are willing to test all 400 students before they come in, if that is what you want us to do. I think it is critically at this point to open the school. Mr. Surillo asked if DESE's request to open the school, is a guideline or is it a mandate. Supt. Lavoie reported that it is not a mandate at this time. Mr. Surillo reported that if it is a guideline, then it is up to us to decide. We are the ones that will get blamed for reopening the school and an outbreak occurs. Buildings do not transmit the disease, people do. Currently Lawrence's numbers are higher and, in the red. We are not just bringing in Lawrence, we are bringing in kids from Andover, Methuen and North Andover. We do need to have the students all tested prior to entering the building. Supt. Lavoie agrees that it is the District Committee's decision. Lawrence may be in the red all year. All the experts that I have spoken to, say that we have the ability to get rid of the virus if it exists. The passing of the virus from one to the next, is why we have the protocols in place. The building is not going to be any different in two months as it is now. Mr. Surillo reported that there is no data about the transmission of students in schools. Supt. Lavoie reported that the transmission rate for that age group is lower. It all comes down to when you are in the building, can you get it from someone else that is in the building. That is the only thing we can control. All we can do is put all the protections in and if everyone follows the rules, then likely you will not get the virus. That is all we can do today, in two months or six months from now. If we base our decision strictly on what is going on in Lawrence, then we will never open the school this year. Mr. Surillo reported that he has heard that if we don't open up the school, then the commissioner wants to perform an audit. If we test them before they start coming into the school, I would be fine with a delay to have that done. Ms. Moreta agreed with Mr. Surillo. She reported that the virus is inevitable and the fact that most of our students come from Lawrence, at least if they were tested prior to entering the building would be a good start. Supt. Lavoie reported that yes, it is inevitable that the virus will spread, but not inevitable of the virus spreading in the building. It is possible, and I have no problem having the students tested, before they come into the building. I had a meeting today with a Biotech Firm and MIT who are doing research on testing, which may make it possible to test on a weekly basis. We are working with our clinic to get the exploratory students tested. If they are coming in on a Monday, we would test them on a Friday, so we would have the results. This is one more step to prevent the spread of the virus. Mr. Surillo reported that if we are going to start testing the students it should be the Wednesday before they come in. Ms. Fitzgerald reported that she believes that Lawrence will get out of the red, however she would be willing to have the students start if she sees a consistent downtrend for at least one week. Right now, the numbers in Lawrence increase every day. I would like to see anything that shows some stabilization with the numbers in Lawrence.

4. COMMUNICATIONS

a.) Donations

b.) Articles

c.) Public Participation

Mr. Burke, History Teacher at GLTS and President of the Teacher's Union spoke. He reported that he is glad to be here and thanked the District Committee. Supt. Lavoie has worked tirelessly on getting the building safe and thanked him from him and the faculty. Remote learning is not perfect, but there are different successes that we have not seen before, whether it be more communication with parents/guardians or seeing a student a screen away and other opportunities that present itself. This faculty, staff and union want students back in the building. We are all on the same page. We just want it to be done in a manner where it is safe. The housing project was done in a safe way, but bringing students in the building, does not make sense. The problem is complacency reported by the mayor of Lawrence and people are making bad choices. Lawrence Public Schools have had outbreaks and had to shut down the building with only faculty in the building. There are a lot of opportunities to make the wrong choice during the holidays. Teenagers make decisions that are not the best and do not see the long-term consequences. The other challenge is the positivity rate is that one out of ten is testing positive. We will have students that have doctors' notes, that say they do not have to wear masks. We all know that there are two ways to mitigate the risks. We can put all these different protections in place, or we can wait until community spread balances out. I don't think that everyone in this room wants to wait until Lawrence turns yellow, but Lawrence is so high right now and presents some danger. If any one of those measures, we put into place start to fail, the risk factors goes up significantly because of the community. We all want to be in a partnership. We need to hold up our end, but people need to make the right decisions in the communities we serve. We are bringing four communities together. If there is a bad outbreak in our school, no one will be surprised because of the high numbers in Lawrence. Who are we doing this for? I understand it is difficult for parents, this is not easy. This is a pandemic; it is not permanent. There is an end in sight. If we are talking about bringing in students, the idea is for teachers to teach and students to learn. If they are not comfortable in a room, are they going to learn? When you are talking about students sitting in a classroom behind plexiglass with an N95 mask on and another cloth mask over it, with cold air and teachers with N95 masks on, the question becomes, how effective you can be. It just starts not to make much sense. We do want students back into the school, but it is just not a safe time to bring students back. This faculty and staff hope that the right decision is made and air on the side of caution. I want to thank the District Committee for the time and really appreciate everything that you bring into this. It is not an easy decision.

Ryan Brown, Assistant Principal, member of the MAPSA Executive Board and works with Supt. Lavoie on the COVID Team spoke. He reported that he has had the pleasure of working with Supt. Lavoie and commend all the hard work he has done to make all of us safe. I have heard from DESE that the spread is not happening in schools. The concern is the longevity of that data. The state is not in normal session. We are talking about 2 ½ months of data. Another concern is the PCR testing. There is an incubation period for the virus. The PCR test within five to eight days has a likelihood of coming back a false negative. We need to understand how to implement that so that it is effective.

Mr. Rossi reported that he wanted to address the District Committee and the faculty about the students coming back into the school. The governor stated there is no problem with these students coming back to school and on the other hand he talks how dangerous this is and for this reason, I would say no on having these students come back at all until the virus is under control. I will say that I am opposed to bringing these students back into the school with the hotspot Lawrence is in. Supt. Lavoie reported that he wanted to stress is that we are talking about twelve students in the one shop. They are only with eleven students and one teacher. They come into the shop, explore and go back on the bus. They will not be going around the building. The assumption is that if one student has the virus, that all eleven students will get the virus. We are only talking about these students and sixty high needs students. We can try it and if we find that we are having a problem, then we can shut it down. Everything we have done is to keep everyone safe in our schools. Is it important for the students to explore their shops? At what point does it

matter to those students having this opportunity. We could put a survey out to the parents, if there are too many parents that will not send their students, then we will not do it. We will do everything possible to keep them safe and comfortable. We will not bring in any other students in until if we see how well this works. It is a matter of trying it and doing it under safe cohorts and safe conditions. I have had many shop teachers begging to bring in the students. Mr. Rossi reported he is concerned about the faculty and if they have underlying conditions. Supt. Lavoie reported that he has allowed many staff members to continue to work at home if a staff member cannot come in. As educators it is your job to make sure they do follow protocols. One report that I am getting from our clinic there are very few reasons doctors are granting students a note, not to wear a mask. I believe we can be successful, and we are taking baby steps. I have spoken to the bus company and they reported the bus behavior has been outstanding. The expert from Harvard reported that if you crack the bus window one inch the ventilation is better than the building. Ms. Fitzgerald reported that she agrees that this plan has been so sought out. I wasn't expecting the date to be two weeks away. I always thought we were looking at January. I would agree and vote for this if there was some type of provision, if we can see a decrease in Lawrence for ten days. It would need to peak, plateau and go down or we would be crazy to bring the students in. Supt. Lavoie reported it is not what is going on in Lawrence, it is what is going on in GLTS. What is critically important, is that person that has the virus going to spread it. That is all we can control in our own school. We have paid an enormous amount of money to come in and inspect our building and give us procedures and recommendations. Their livelihood is based on inspecting buildings on mitigating the spread of the virus. It is always about what is going in the building. Supt. Lavoie recommends that we test the students before they come in, follow all protocols, get the Merv13 in place and air purifiers and that we just open up the exploratory students in at this time. I would like the high needs students to come additionally and would like this for the first week of December.

Roll Called by District Recorder to make sure that they heard Supt. Lavoie's motion.

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

MOTION: Supt. Lavoie recommends that we test the students before they come in, follow all protocols, get the Merv13 in place and air purifiers and that we just open up the exploratory students in at this time. I would like the high needs students to come additionally and would like this for the first week of December.

No Motion

Motion Dies

5. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

b.) Co-op Report

Supt. Lavoie reported that we have 73 students. Metal Fabrication and Electrical have eleven students out on Co-op. Plumbing has ten students. This is a little lower than usual, however I want to commend our Co-op Coordinator for his outstanding work under these circumstances. A lot of that is from the efforts of our staff helping with placement. A big challenge has been driving since we do not have our driving school anymore. We are putting out an RFP this week for a new driving school. The fact the seniors cannot be in-person while learning, being out to on-the-job site is a huge benefit to them. We will continue to put students out to work.

c.) November Calendar

d.) Letter from Andover Fire Chief

e.) Open House Update

Supt. Lavoie reported that we moved open house back a week, in order to be able to put together the videos of each shop in order to be ready for our virtual open house. Ms. Infante reported that last meeting there was a mistake, and the postcards did not go out. The postcards are going out this week. I have been in touch with Rumbo and our half page add will be going out the week of November 16th and Methuen Life will be doing a segment with local high schools, open houses. We are continuing our efforts of each individual shop highlight videos. We are working on alumni highlights and photos and we are gathering all the videos and photos. Everything is moving along, and we will be ready for November 22, 2020. Supt. Lavoie reported that Ms. Infante is doing a great job getting us ready for Open House. It is giving her a good opportunity to meet all the staff in the building and will help with her work around public relations.

f.) Approval of Robotics Program

Supt. Lavoie reported that the Robotics Program was approved by the DESE as a chapter 74 program. A lot of work has gone into this. The application went in last March. DESE met with our advisory members and came in and did a safety inspection. We had to add one sign. The shop was in perfect order. This was the outstanding job done by Ms. Jones and Mr. Hardacre, with Ms. Jones taking the lead as CTE Director. We are thrilled to have that program approved and will offer opportunities to our students in an industry that is growing quickly.

Admissions Policy

Supt. Lavoie reported that there was a change that DESE wanted us to make regarding students that are denied entrance and ask for a hearing. We rewrote the policy and sent it in, and they approved it. It needs a vote from the District Committee on the Change. Supt. Lavoie read the change. The big change is that there needs to be extenuating circumstances if denied and verified by the guidance counselor or administrator from the sending school that such existed. If that is the case, then they will be granted an appeal hearing.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the revised Admissions Policy.

2ND: Mr. Rossi

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

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

#17555

Supt. Lavoie reported that he wanted to recognize Ms. Richardson, Director of Guidance on the work she has done to get the policy written and approved.

g.) Employee Covid-19 Handbook

Supt. Lavoie reported that this is all the work that was done by the COVID Task Force. Chairman Lamontagne asked about the After Dark Program. Supt. Lavoie reported that there are four programs going at this time, Machine Tech, HVAC, Automotive and Metal Fabrication. They are working remotely, and the programs have been doing well.

h.) Principals Report

1.) Back to School Night

Ms. Freedman reported that we had our first virtual back to school night that went really well. Parents found their links and it was well organized by all the cohorts and all the teachers in the cohorts. Feedback was good from the families that came to it. Faculty really pulled together across the board. The turnout seemed about the same as in-person. We will have a part two this Thursday. We didn't want to send out too many links and have parents have a three-hour night. They had their individual students schedules for academic and career area this night. We will have a session with special ed parents, guidance, English learners and a parent portal support session and MCAS and where the state is at and with junior parents.

2.) *NEASC Visit*

Ms. Freedman reported that we have our ten-year visit that was set for this year. It will be virtual and will be in December. All the work has been done. Ms. Infante has worked on our video and we are asking our District Committee if you are willing to say a few words about the communities you represent. It will give an idea of the diverse communities that we serve. I apologize for the short notice. Ms. Infante reported that the recruitment video is done, so if Committee Members want to participate please let me know before November 24, 2020. Chairman Lamontagne reported that if you wish to participate, please get in touch with Ms. Lally

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*

- Remote Learning Fitness Instructors, SY2020-21, Local 1707 Contract, New Position

Ms. Fitzgerald asked how this program differs from what our Physical Education Teachers are doing through remote learning. Mr. Nelson reported that this is for all students. Teachers are teaching during the day, physical education. Fifty percent is health classes and fifty percent is physical education. This will be an additional conditioning for our kids. The fitness coach will work with all athletes as we know not having sports, the students are missing out. Through zoom they can shut their cameras off and get a total workout before and after school.

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

2ND: Mr. Surillo

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

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

#17556

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to go into Executive Session

2ND: Mr. Surillo

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

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

#17557

Enter Executive Session

Enter Open Session

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to direct the Supt. to go into negotiations with our bus company for no higher than seventy percent reimbursement.

2ND: Mr. Surillo

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

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

#17558

10. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

11. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn at 8:15 p.m.

2ND: Mr. Rossi

VOTE:

Roll Called by District Recorder:

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

#17560

Respectfully Submitted:



Susan Lally
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:



John N. Lavoie
Superintendent-