



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
OPEN MEETING MINUTES  
MEETING #1861  
March 28, 2023**

**Members Present:** Leo Lamontagne Lawrence Chairperson  
Thomas Hatem Methuen Vice Chairperson  
Marilyn Fitzgerald Andover Assistant Treasurer  
Zoila Disla Lawrence  
Vivian Marmol Lawrence  
Francisco Surillo Methuen

**Members Absent:**

**Others Present:** John N. Lavoie Superintendent-Director  
Susan Zielinski Principal  
Melissa Martel Director of Finance  
Gerry DiStefano Treasurer  
Cheryl Dennis District Recorder

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Vice Chairman Hatem called the meeting to order at 6:00PM  
*Roll Call by District Recorder: Ms. Fitzgerald (present), Ms. Disla (present), Mr. Hatem (present), Mr. Surillo (present), Ms. Marmol (present), Mr. Lamontagne (present).*

**2. EXCEPTIONAL REGGIE**

Superintendent Lavoie introduced Edgar Martinez from our Dental Assistant Program. He has been a student at GLTS since 2019. He is OSHA and CPR state certified and is currently employed at Smile Design Dental in Lawrence through our Cooperative Educational Program. Mr. Martinez has a 4.43 GPS and is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> out of 405 students in the class of 2023. Superintendent Lavoie mentioned the many awards and accomplishments Edgar has achieved including that he will graduate from high school with nine undergraduate credits. He was presented a certificate for being the Exceptional Reggie this month.

**3. MINUTES**

**MOTION:** Mr. Surillo moved to approve the March 7, 2023 minutes as presented.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Hatem

**Vote:** Unanimously approved  
#18446

**MOTION:** Mr. Surillo moved to adjust the agenda to the student report

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Ms. Marmol

**Vote:** Unanimously approved  
#18447

*a. Student's Report*

Ms. Maureen Wright and Mr. Yeison Mora alternated presenting the students report to the committee along with a slide presentation. The Haus of Athletics was recognized for providing students with two weeks of conditioning to prepare them for the spring sports season. Tryouts and practices have begun and the schedule for girls and boy's baseball/softball and outdoor track for the next few days was mentioned. The NHS Candle Lighting Induction Ceremony took place on March 16<sup>th</sup> and nine juniors and 44 sophomores were inducted. The Reggie Let's Get Loud talent show was amazing and a big hit. Some short clips of the talent show were shown. There was a door decorating competition to celebrate black history month which students voted on their favorite. The top three were Biotechnology, Cosmetology, and Health Assisting. National African American Read-In lunches and WIN were held from 1-3 in the library-special poetry event honoring black authors.

**4. FINANCE REPORT**

*a. Cash Balance Report*

Mr. DiStefano read the Cash Balance report into the record.

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

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Surillo

**Vote:** Unanimously approved

#18448

*b. Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report*

No Discussion

*c. Revolving Fund Report*

No Discussion

*d. Budget Report*

No Discussion

*e. Budget Book*

Ms. Fitzgerald questioned an amount on the warrant for Ellen Stafford and additionally questioned who she was, position and length of service. Superintendent Lavoie stated that she was hired as a curriculum support coach. She writes the bi-weekly newsletter, is rewriting our new web page and works with new teachers to pass the VTEL and licensure work. She is also working with him on the five-year strategic plan. Her salary is around \$80,000 a year. Part of her monthly salary comes from the grant the Mr. Surillo obtained for us last year Ms. Fitzgerald requested the length of her contract and if she was with a company or was a consultant. Supt. Lavoie responded that she is a consultant with a two-year contract.

**5. COMMUNICATIONS**

*a. Donations*

2003 Chevy Trailblazer, valued at \$4,37500 donated by Ms. Alexander Ames, Methuen, MA

*b. Articles*

None

*c. Public Participation*

None

## **6. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR**

### *a. Admission's Report*

The committee received the admissions report based on each community and each school containing the applicants received from each totaling 1316 as of 3/2/23. Ms. Fitzgerald mentioned not all of the schools are within our district. How do we know if they're moving into or are already living in the district? Superintendent Lavoie stated that in the application process, they must identify where they live and provide proof of living in the district. Ms. Brenda Richardson, Director of Admissions and Guidance, reported that prior to accepting an application of a student, we make sure they're living in one of our four sending communities. She went over situations where they may be outside the district which requires more investigation on our part. It may be that two parents are living in two different places in which case their legal custody paperwork may be required. We may also be dealing with homeless students temporarily living outside the district. Mr. Surillo reported that he has noticed an increase in the student body from Methuen and asked Ms. Richardson what that may be attributed to. Ms. Richardson wasn't certain but did mention a parent Zoom meeting and obtaining email addresses that we haven't had in the past. Students involved in local organizations also provided connections that had an impact.

### *b. Enrollment Process*

Superintendent Lavoie invited questions from the committee for both himself and Ms. Richardson relative to the enrollment process per their previous request. There was a lengthy discussion relative to application letters being dated. Ms. Disla felt strongly that the second round of letters should contain a date as opposed to a reference in the "near future". Ms. Richardson explained it is worded that way because we are waiting for a response from the first round before dating the second round. In the meantime, we are encouraging applicants to respond quickly and we follow-up with calls and emails but we don't know how long it will take. Ms. Disla feels the wait should be factored into setting an actual date. Ms. Richardson said it could only be done if we had an absolute cutoff with a final date on the first round. We're trying to give them every opportunity on every round. Ms. Disla stated that while she understands people taking longer to respond, they should suffer the consequences of doing so. Ms. Disla mentioned a call she received regarding the waitlist which led her to question if applicants were being told exactly what they needed. Superintendent Lavoie indicated that once appealed, the admissions office would have a conversation with the parents and work with them. He said that we do accept students that have exceptions and encouraged committee members to advise parents to contact the school directly. Mr. Surillo questioned the affect a hard date would have on those on appeal. Ms. Richardson responded that the appeals process does hold up filling every spot, there needs to be a balance. We don't want to be filling all spots while dealing with ongoing appeals though it should be a small number as it's for extenuating circumstances only. Mr. Surillo reported they don't know what they should be appealing. Maybe we should look at different verbiage. Ms. Richardson said they did try to add that language: special education, medical and mental health issues, etc. She's open to further suggestions regarding the language. Ms. Disla maintained that having an open application process with so many applicants sets us up for failure. Mr. Hatem asked what is a small number of appeals? Ms. Richardson responded last year there were perhaps 50 which was a lot and there was close to 100 during the pandemic. Ms. Marmol indicated that these numbers further highlight a problem in the initial application process. We wouldn't have as many appeals with a deadline. She agrees with Ms. Disla that during the initial application process there needs to be a deadline. Mr. Surillo doesn't agree with closed dates. Ms. Marmol asked if we always operated without a deadline or did we change a policy and why? Superintendent Lavoie said we did at one time. Ms. Marmol suggested implementing a deadline while continuing to accept applications. Those applications received after the deadline would be informed that they were late and would be considered if something opened up allowing for people meeting the deadline to be focused on. Ms. Richardson said one school does that and it's something that could be discussed. Mr. Surillo stated that a hard-cutoff date could be in violation of the Dept. of Ed. rule. He also feels that we should start at the 6<sup>th</sup> grade level to help eliminate issues due to 8<sup>th</sup> graders not realizing that what they did in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade affects their acceptance. Superintendent Lavoie and Ms. Richardson agreed with Mr. Surillo about the value of speaking to 7<sup>th</sup> graders early in the process and requested that the committee forward something to himself and

the Admissions Director to consider. They will bring something back to the committee.

*c. Classroom Space for New Programs*

Superintendent Lavoie reviewed the space needed for the three new programs and academic teachers. We're in the process of hiring an architect to handle the final design work. We were informed today by the Dept of Ed that the three new programs have been accepted for next year pending an inspection of the Freshman space that is scheduled for early May. The Aviation: 9<sup>th</sup> grade space will be located where the Carpentry Program is now next to the Horticulture Program area which is moving in with the 10<sup>th</sup> graders who work outside more often than not. The Programming: 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders will be up in the mezzanine area. Chairman Lamontagne asked if there were an elevator? Superintendent Lavoie answered yes. Childcare is brand new and ready. Three possible classrooms in the construction area, one by the cafeteria and one near IT which totals five possibilities for classroom space for next year. We are looking at three new teachers in history, science and math. Mr. Surillo questioned if the three extra teachers are in the budget? Superintendent Lavoie stated that he will revisit the three academic teachers needed for the three new programs with Ms. Martel. Mr. Surillo asked for a floor plan showing exactly where the classes would be located. Superintendent Lavoie will bring the school blue print highlighting exactly where the spaces are. Ms. Fitzgerald mentioned her concern that we have it ready for the students for September. There was a lot of construction that wasn't completed over the summer for the renovations last year. She asked if we're looking to do this inhouse or bring contractors in to complete at one time and where is this in the budget? Superintendent Lavoie clarified that the Aviation and Programming space must be ready in May both of which require minor construction and wiring. It's the same in the mezzanine area that only requires a partition, furniture and computers. IT and the custodians are already working on preparing this space. All of these spaces will be done before the end of the school year. We will be putting out an RFP for the larger projects which we won't need until a year from September. Mr. Hatem asked if we were relocating electrical. Superintendent Lavoie answered, just a storage area for organizational purposes, not the shop.

*d. Aviation Program Update*

No discussion

*e. Robotics' Grant*

Supt. Lavoie reported that we received an anonymous grant of \$250,000 to purchase robotic equipment. We are identifying how to spend that grant. Once that is determined, they will be giving us another \$500,000 grant. We met with the CTE staff to propose what we will spend the additional \$500,000 grant on.

*f. Legislative Breakfast*

Supt. Lavoie reported on the Legislative Breakfast that was held on March 24, 2023. The event went well it gave us the chance to show off our Four Winds Restaurant. I had the opportunity to speak with our legislators on where we are as a school and where we are going as well as support for some of the bills that support vocational education. We may be looking at some legislation to help us purchase the airport hangar. It was great to have many of our school committee members attend.

*g. Marketing Update*

Supt. Lavoie reported that he has not done a lot with strategies of marketing as of yet, however we are doing a few things. We do our bi-weekly newsletter that goes out to parents, staff and faculty. I am still looking to send it to our advisory team on a regular basis as well. We would also be looking into sending it out to our news outlets. We do have our marketing company, but we are looking to put out a new RFP for a new company. I was not looking to hire a full-time marketing person at this time, but would like to put together a committee to help get the information out and utilize our staff we have already. We have Ms. Kasandra Ayala, along with Ms. Eleanor Stafford is helping with marketing. We are in the process of hiring a new company to redo our

website. Ms. Fitzgerald reported that she would like to be on the marketing committee when you do put one together. Is there any way we can bring together, marketing and alumni relations? We don't do this very well as other schools. Can we look at the possibility of combining this? Mr. Hatem asked what is the marketing company that we are paying doing? Supt. Lavoie reported that they are supposed to do an article a month, but we ourselves have not put in enough effort to give them the articles to write. We need to do a better job connecting with them and the news outlets. Principal Zielinski reported that there is a new group, New England School Public Association that is specifically targeted for schools in which we just became a member of. They are holding an event in April in which Ms. Kasandra Ayala and other staff members will be attending. I will be updating the Superintendent after the event. Mr. Surillo reported that we have to show the community what we are doing. Maybe we can hire a part-time marketing person. Ms. Marmol reported that she spoke with Supt. Lavoie regarding creating a tour for our alumni. We should start creating these types of events that would bring in more foot traffic. It may also help with hiring alumni's as teachers or shop teachers. We are also behind in social media. We need to revamp the way we market ourselves. Supt. Lavoie reported that we do need more work on social media and platforms that we don't use now. Ms. Fitzgerald suggested that we should see the format and the information provided from the new group that Principal Zielinski mentioned. We can see what the best way to move forward will be.

#### *h. Principal's Report*

Principal Zielinski reported on our Q2 results and presented slides that included SY22-23 Q1 and Q2 Comparisons. She presented her plan of action. As part of schedule change we were looking on providing electives where they could benefit. The next slide was on the potential elective offerings survey. We surveyed our students to see what they are expressing which has been provided. The students are looking for a little bit of a choice. Principal Zielinski reported on MCAS that was taken on March 28<sup>th</sup> & March 29<sup>th</sup>. We had a MCAS pep rally with students to convey the message that we believe in them. The 10<sup>th</sup> graders participated in ELA and all but five students were missing. Mr. Surillo questioned what the curriculum is for World Mythology, seeing the 60% of our students show an interest? Principal Zielinski explained that the class would come out of the English Department and would be built aligning it to the Standards. Ms. Fitzgerald complimented Principal Zielinski on her midseason assessment on the Improvement Plan.

## **7. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE**

### **8. OLD BUSINESS**

#### *a. District Committee Priorities*

#### *b. Policy*

**MOTION:** Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve Section B: BDH-Consultants to the School Committee as presented.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Surillo

**Vote:** Unanimously approved

#18449

### **9. NEW BUSINESS**

No discussion

## **10. TABLED MATTERS**

#### *a. Concussion Policy*

**MOTION:** Mr. Surillo moved to remove the concussion policy from tabled matters

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Hatem

**Vote:** Unanimously approved

#18450

Ms. Disla asked if we have a first aide team certified in CPR in the school. Principal Zielinski reported that we have two nurses, officer Milligan and members of administration. If it involves mental health there would be a social worker. Superintendent Lavoie stated that we have people trained in CPR, first responders and all administrators have walkie talkies. All safety procedures and protocols are reviewed the first day of school. Principal Zielinski reported that we do collect CPR information from staff and we are looking into expanding that training to other staff members. Mr. Surillo added in light of recent shootings, we do need to make certain that students and staff are aware of the emergency protocol for active shooters.

**MOTION:** Mr. Surillo moved to approve the concussion policy

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Ms. Fitzgerald

**Vote:** Unanimously approved

#18451

## **11. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS/REPORT**

*a. Resignations*

*b. Leaves of Absence*

*d. Retirements*

Mr. Victor Martinez, Social Studies Teacher, Effective 6/30/24

Mr. Tim Cusack, Guidance Counselor, Effective 2/29/24

*d. Appointments*

- Ms. Mayreni Villegas Encarnacion, Career Transitions Specialist, Evening Programs, Effective 3/20/23

- Ms. Kourtney Moran, Data & Assessment Specialist, Effective 3/20/23

*e. Job Postings*

- Boys Basketball Head Coach, Annual Position

- Golf Head Coach, Annual Position

- Auto Collision Instructor, per 1707, SY2023/24, Replacement Position (position that was never filled)

**MOTION:** Mr. Surillo moved to approve the job postings as presented.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Ms. Marmol

Unanimously approved

#18452

- Biotechnology Instructor, never filled, per 1707, SY2023/24, Replacement Position (position that was never filled)

- IT Hardware and Operating Systems Instructor, per 1707, SY2022/23, Replacement Position (position that was never filled)

- Auto Collision Instructor, due to waiver, Replacement Position

**MOTION:** Mr. Surillo moved to approve the job postings as presented.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Ms. Fitzgerald

Unanimously approved

#18453

- Robotics/Automation Instructor, due to waiver, Replacement Position

- Biotechnology Instructor, due to waiver, Replacement Position

- Engineering Instructor, due to waiver, Replacement Position

**MOTION:** Mr. Surillo moved to approve the job postings as presented.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Ms. Fitzgerald

Unanimously approved

#18454

- Environmental Science Instructor, due to waiver, Replacement Position
- LTS-Physical Education Instructor (grades 9-10), (tentative dates: May-end of school year), Replacement Position
- Freshman Assessment-Test Proctors and Support Staff, Personnel for Freshman Assessment Testing May 6, 2023 (7:00am-12:00pm), 30 Test Proctors, 6 Registration Staff, 2 Parent Liaisons, 1 Custodian, 1 School Nurse, \$250 Stipend, Annual Positions.

**MOTION:** Mr. Surillo moved to approve the job postings as presented.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Ms. Fitzgerald

Unanimously approved

#18455

## 12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Ms. Disla reported that she would like to see the exit interviews for the last year or two. Ms. Disla additionally mentioned that she read an article in the Eagle Tribune that states parents can sue schools when student do not pass. Ms. Disla reported that she would like to see the law that states that we cannot expel students and would like to know if we can make changes to that. Superintendent Lavoie indicated there are very strict regulations and we are liable for their education. Supt. Lavoie reported that he will provide the information from DESE and he additionally will look into if exit interviews can be shared.

The District Committee agreed to meet on Monday, April 3<sup>rd</sup> at 5:30 for the reorganization meeting.

## 13. ADJOURNMENT


**MOTION:** Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn at 8:23PM.

**2<sup>ND</sup>:** Mr. Surillo

**VOTE:** Unanimous

#18456

Respectfully Submitted:



Cheryl Dennis  
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:



John N. Lavoie  
Superintendent-Director