



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1868
June 20, 2023**

Members Present: Chairman Lamontagne Lawrence Chairperson
Thomas Hatem Methuen Vice Chairperson
Marilyn Fitzgerald Andover Assistant Treasurer
Zoila Disla Lawrence
Francisco Surillo Methuen
William Tarbox North Andover

Members Absent: Vivian Marmol Lawrence

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lamontagne 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 (absent), Mr. Tarbox (present), Mr. Lamontagne (present).

2. MINUTES

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the June 6, 2023, minutes as presented.
2ND: Mr. Surillo
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18556

3. FINANCE REPORT

a. Cash Balance Report
Superintendent Lavoie read the Cash Balance report into the record.
MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve the Cash Balance report as presented.
2ND: Ms. Fitzgerald
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18557

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

Greater Lawrence Tech Dedicates Second Phase of Alumni Field Project

c. Public Participation

None

Chairman Lamontagne went over the guidelines for public participation. Christopher Cyr and Angela Santana addressed their concerns relative to the Grading Policy before the School Committee this evening and having a fourth teacher next year in the Business Technology Dept.

5. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

a. Equity Grading Team Presentation

Superintendent Lavoie invited members of the Administrative Equity Team: Jennifer DeStefano, Kate Burnham, Lindsay Gangi and Ryan Brown, to present a PowerPoint presentation of the Equity Grading Practices Policy for the Committee. Ms. DeStefano began by stating it was based on extensive research and the anchor text utilized was the book, Grading for Equity. The policy supports students that might not learn as quickly as others and focuses on what a student knows and what are they able to do. The presentation included the Team's 5-year timeline. Mr. Brown went over the research based equitable grading practices. Ms. DeStefano mentioned the CBTE curriculum and stated we've posted and hired a grading for equity teacher implementation group. The Team has worked very thoughtfully and truly believes this policy and these practices represent what is best for students.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved for discussion.

2nd: Mr. Hatem

Mr. Surillo stated that the 5 schools in the pilot program did not match our current population and questioned how long its been implemented in these particular schools and what data has been collected from them? Ms. DeStefano said Revere and Springfield are very diverse and South Shore while not as diverse, it is a technical school. Melrose is more middle class with less diversity. Mr. Surillo it may take 2 to 6 years to see results and asked what changes this brings to our curriculum? Ms. DeStefano said being the first year of a 3-year grant pilot program the results are not yet available but the data will be forthcoming from those 5 schools. Though in agreement with a lot of this, Mr. Surillo questioned if we would fault students for not making the grade or the deadline. He stated he would have liked this presented to the Committee earlier in the year as opposed to the last meeting. He also voiced his concerns relative to piloting a program we have no measurements towards. District Committee members will have to deal with calls and questions about this. Is our curriculum changing? Ms. DeStefano replied no, it will not affect curriculum. Mr. Surillo asked if a survey had been taken of the staff and students? Ms. DeStefano said no, it was shared with the staff and they provided feedback and input but not with the students and parents as yet. Mr. Hatem stated he agreed we do need updates to our grading policy however, as a vocational learner he noticed a vocational coordinator hadn't presented as yet. Ms. Gangi addressed the Committee as a vocational coordinator. Mr. Hatem presented a seatbelt safety scenario where a student received a 40. Ms. Gangi responded the student would receive a 50 and be worked with until he achieved proficiency. Mr. Hatem asked for a selling point, not something from a text book. Ms. Gangi asked if you would send a student to work if they weren't proficient in seatbelt safety? Mr. Hatem responded possibly

as an apprentice. Ms. Gangi asked with the expectation the student would continue to work on that at work to which Mr. Hatem responded yes. Ms. Gangi said that's what we're teaching them here. We're creating a space for them to make mistakes and continue to learn. Ms. Fitzgerald agreed with Mr. Hatem that changes are needed in our policy but also said it would have been helpful to have this sooner. We don't typically vote on something immediately following a presentation. She went on to say she wasn't ready to vote on this tonight and she wants to read Joe Feldman's book also stating she was concerned about being compared with a charter school which she doesn't believe in. Applicants to GLTS expect to be educated and competent to perform in the workforce. She finds it offensive that we cannot put value on the term's soft skills and work habits. Equitable means equal. Flexible is wonderful. How is a 50 equal to 100? Is 50 the new zero? She was surprised that there was no faculty on this. Not ready to vote on this tonight. Will this actually result in more students not graduating? She went on to say a student missing a lot of school due to being absent might end up with a zero. With this they'd get a change to make it up but where does that burden fall on the teacher? She doesn't want to water down who we are, we've worked so hard to get where we are. Ms. DeStefano stated that absences were not tied into this policy. Superintendent Lavoie said we're looking for a vote to implement a process to find a better way to grade students equitably, it's not because of the book. We want to make these changes, get rid of zeros, we can't grade them for effort. We need to know what it is they know and are capable of doing. We're not doing that right now. Everything is built on skills and competencies. We need to know why they fail and how we can help them learn and move forward. The District Committee actually received this 2 weeks ago at which time they were asked to review it before voting this evening. Four of those five schools have similar demographics to GLTS. We want but we just got to hold everyone accountable to do a better job. Mr. Surillo acknowledged they received it two weeks ago but the presentation itself was today. The District Committee votes on and makes the policy. He said he'd like to see something done prior to having it mandated by DESE but right now we want to really look at this before voting. He agrees with certain things but as a Committee, we need the time to process and really look at this to move forward. Superintendent Lavoie agreed 100% with Mr. Surillo stating if the District Committee feels they haven't had enough time, he's happy to have a special meeting to address this before the next school year. Ms. Disla stated this is very important and a big deal, not simple. A lot of changes without the benefit of results to measure how it will work. Yes, it's in a trial stage yet we're being asked to vote on something that will change everyone's life. We need time to understand this before voting on it. Principal Zielinski thanked the team for putting this together and presenting it tonight stating it's not our intention to put all this in place next September. We want to constantly look at data. Our intent is to partner with the teachers during this summer. We're looking for approval for a phased in approach with quarterly updates. The Team, Superintendent, and Principal all believe 100% in this and we'll ultimately work with feedback from teachers and families. Mr. Surillo thanked the Team for their hard work too saying we're moving in the right direction. Change can be scary and he wants to thoroughly look at it. Our students are similar to the 5 schools but they're not the same. Chairman Lamontagne stated we're not moving forward on this this evening

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to table this matter.

2nd: Mr. Hatem

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18558

Chairman Lamontagne scheduled a special meeting for July 11th at 6pm to address this. If Committee members have questions/concerns please try to have them answered before the meeting.

Mr. Fitzgerald said she had two questions she needed answers for before the next meeting and wanted to know who to address them with, the Team or the Principal? Chairman Lamontagne said to go through the Superintendent's office.

b. Student Handbook

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the Student Handbook as presented.

2ND: Mr. Surillo
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18559

c. School Improvement Plan

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the School Implementation Plan as presented.

2ND: Mr. Hatem
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18560

Ms. Fitzgerald wants it noted in the record that it's a wonderful document.

d. GLTS Financial Procedures Manual

Superintendent Lavoie updated the Committee on the change to GLTS' Financial Procedure Manual.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve the update to the Financial Procedure Manual as presented.

2ND: Mr. Surillo
Ms. Fitzgerald asked that a date be included when it's added to the manual.
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18561

e. Out of State Travel

Landscape Teacher, Mr. Peter Leonard and students, Hannah Tremblay and Keegan Doherty to travel to the National FFA (Future Farmers of America) Convention October 31-November 4, 2023 in Indianapolis, Indiana, total cost: \$6,312.

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve the out of state travel as presented.

2ND: Mr. Hatem
Ms. Fitzgerald pointed out that the paperwork submitted is from the previous year showing dates from 2022 and it should be corrected. Mr. Tarbox voiced his concern that a male teacher was travelling with 2 female students. Superintendent Lavoie clarified that it's a male and female student. Mr. Tarbox asked if a female chaperone could participate as well. Principle Zielinski suggested a female chaperone, maybe a parent. Superintendent Lavoie said we can do that. Principal Zielinski mentioned FFA did have a female volunteer in the past. Chairman Lamontagne requested a motion to table this matter until the 11th allowing time to arrange a female chaperone and correction of dates on the paperwork.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to table this matter until July 11th.

2ND: Mr. Hatem
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18562

f. Supt. Evaluation

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve Supt. Lavoie's Final Evaluation as compiled.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox
VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18563

g. Supt. Vacation Time Approval

Superintendent Lavoie requested the Committee approve his carry over of any vacation days over 15 days stating he'd have 7 days at the end of the month that he intends to use by the end of July.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to approve Supt. Lavoie to carry over vacation days beyond 15 days as presented.

2ND: Mr. Surillo

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18564

6. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. District Committee Priorities

b. Policy

- Section B: BEDB-Agenda Format

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve Section B: BEDB – Agenda Format as presented.

2ND: Ms. Fitzgerald

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18565

8. NEW BUSINESS

9. TABLED MATTERS

10. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS/REPORT

a. Resignations

b. Leaves of Absence

c. Retirements

d. Appointments

e. Job Postings (Informational)

(New Positions)

- Summer Reading Faculty/Staff PLC Facilitator for SY23-24 (up to 7), \$500 Stipend, New Position (See attached)
- Medical/Co-op Office Assistant, non-rep, August 2023, New Position (See attached)
- GLTS After Dark Program Parent Liaison, para contract, up to 15 hours per week, Grant Funded, Aug. 28, 2023, New Position (See attached)
- GLTS Apprenticeship Program Facilitator, \$40/hr. for up to 15 hours per week, Grant Funded, July 1, 2023, New Position (See attached)

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to approve the new positions as presented.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18566

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved to enter in to Executive Session at 7:31PM

2ND: Mr. Hatem

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Surillo	Yes
Ms. Marmol	Absent
Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Ms. Disla	Yes
Mr. Hatem	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes

#18567

Superintendent Lavoie recommended approval of the job description with a 10% stipend for the lead nursing position for taking on extra duties outlined in the contract.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18570

Superintendent Lavoie recommended approval of Appendix B as negotiated.

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved the recommendation.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18571

MOTION: Mr. Hatem moved to enter in to Executive Session again at 7:57PM

2ND: Ms. Fitzgerald

Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Disla	Yes
Mr. Hatem	Yes
Mr. Surillo	Yes
Ms. Marmol	Absent
Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Ms. Fitzgerald	Yes
Mr. Lamontagne	Yes

#18572

Superintendent Lavoie recommended posting the position of the Director of Grants for Workforce Development with the job description as outlined.

MOTION: Mr. Surillo moved the recommendation.

2ND: Mr. Hatem

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18574


13. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Fitzgerald moved to adjourn at 8:05PM.


2ND: Mr. Surillo

#18575

Respectfully Submitted:


Cheryl Dennis
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:


John N. Superintendent Lavoie
Superintendent-Director