



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1888
September 24, 2024**

Members Present:

Thomas Hatem	Methuen	Chairperson
Julio Mejia	Lawrence	Vice Chair
William Tarbox	North Andover	Asst. Treasurer
Zoila Disla	Lawrence	
Annemarie Faris	Andover	
Bradley Jones	Methuen	

Members Absent:

Edinson Mercedes	Lawrence
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Others Present:

John N. Lavoie	Superintendent-Director
Brenda Richardson	Assistant Superintendent
Melissa Martel	Director of Finance
Gerry DiStefano	Treasurer
Cheryl Dennis	District Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hatem called the meeting to order at 6:00 PM

Roll Call by District Recorder: Ms. Faris (present), Ms. Disla (present), Mr. Jones (present), Mr. Mejia (present), Mr. Mercedes (absent), Mr. Tarbox (present), and Mr. Hatem (present).

2. MINUTES

a. Minutes of August 20, 2024

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes of August 20, 2024.

2ND: Ms. Faris

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Ms. Faris	Yes
Ms. Disla	Yes
Mr. Jones	Yes
Mr. Mejia	Yes
Mr. Mercedes	Absent
Mr. Hatem	Yes

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18434

3. FINANCE REPORT

a. Cash Balance Report

Mr. DiStefano read the Cash Balance Report.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the Cash Balance Report as presented.

2ND: Ms. Faris

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mercedes	Absent
Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Ms. Faris	Yes
Ms. Disla	Yes
Mr. Jones	Yes
Mr. Mejia	Yes
Mr. Hatem	Yes

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18435

b. Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report

c. Revolving Fund Report

d. Budget Report

e. Budget Transfers

Ms. Martel outlined the budget transfers.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to accept the Budget Transfers as presented.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mejia	Yes
Mr. Mercedes	Absent
Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Ms. Faris	Yes
Ms. Disla	Yes
Mr. Jones	Yes
Chair Hatem	Yes

VOTE:

#18436

f. Budget Calendar

Ms. Martel updated the District Committee on the FY26 Budget Calendar.

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to approve the Budget Calendar as presented.

2ND: Mr. Jones

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Jones	Yes
Mr. Mejia	Yes
Mr. Mercedes	Absent
Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Ms. Faris	Yes
Ms. Disla	Yes
Chair Hatem	Yes

VOTE:

#18437

4. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Donations

b. Articles

- Dylan to the District Committee: Smith delivers game-changer for Reggies in Friday shocker, Eagle Tribune

c. Public Participation

MOTION: Mr. Mr. Mejia moved to pause the meeting to allow for the attendance of Supt. Lavoie at 6:12PM.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18438

Back to order at 6:23PM

5. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

a. School Website Update

Mr. Woodroffe, Director of IT and Supt. Lavoie updated the District Committee on the School Website. Supt. Lavoie introduced Mr. Woodroffe, Director of IT who has been spearheading the project. Mr. Woodroffe addressed District Committee members stating the intent of the project is to update its content and modernize and rejuvenate the website while reviewing slides concerning the existing website. GLTS has been working with Finalsite - a meeting concerning design is scheduled for Oct. 2. This will include a GLTS Mobile App that students will be able to download and enable them to interact with their teachers and with the administration. Notifications will also be pushed through the app in the language of the student. Chair Hatem asked if texting was recorded through the GLTS website to which Mr. Woodroffe responded it was. Mr. Woodroffe expects to complete this project by the end of the calendar year with a presentation to the District Committee in November. Mr. Mejia questioned how the data would be stored and for how long to which Mr. Woodroffe indicated it will be encrypted and contained within the platform. Mr. Mejia questioned if conversations would be between parents, students and teachers? Mr. Woodroffe indicated that would be available to and include everyone and would be available at all times, not simply during school hours.

b. School Projects Update

Supt. Lavoie informed District Committee members that Lance Hamel, Director of Facilities was unable to attend the meeting this evening and continued to update the District Committee on the School Projects.

Viewing slide photos Supt. Lavoie stated the foundation for Aviation Building One has been poured and the steel columns would be erected next week. The town required a pump for the sewer line at a cost of \$150,000. This building is scheduled to be completed the end of January. An extension on the ESSER grant was requested and approved by the state and federal government to June of 2025. Mr. Jones asked if it would consist of brick veneer to which Supt. Lavoie indicated it would be masonry. Supt. Lavoie stated the one week of exploratory programming was reduced to one day due to the timing of inspections - final approval of the Dept. of Education will not take place until June which stalls the start of the full program itself until June. Mr. Jones asked if GLTS would be the first in the state to have an Aviation Program to which Supt. Lavoie stated we're third. Mr. Jones

questioned after completion how will students acquire certification? Supt. Lavoie stated when students graduate from the first phase of the program, they'll be certified to work on the frame of planes – landing gear, electronics, technology, etc. In two years, we'll provide power training. Mr. Jones questioned if junior and seniors would get the motor end of the program which Supt. Lavoie affirmed.

Aviation Building Two is complete and the FAA will inspect in October.

Landscape Building: the framing is complete, electrical and plumbing underground work will begin next week.

The new lower cafeteria which is expected to be completed the end of January is currently set up to be used temporarily for seating only. We have hot ovens and cold refrigeration and will begin serving November 1st. Mr. Jones questioned if classes will be assigned? Supt. Lavoie indicated it would and having the second cafeteria will help with the crowding of the hallways. Chair Hatem questioned how many students would fit in the new, downstairs cafeteria to which Supt. Lavoie responded 225 students.

Supt. Lavoie stated GLTS received notification of a grant we'll be receiving that we applied for last May to expand the Auto Collision Shop.

We have a request from Beyond Soccer, the Lawrence Youth Soccer Program, asking if the District Committee would consider putting a turf field on field four in exchange for a contract where they would receive a lease from five to ten years to utilize it. GLTS students would always have first preference.

c. SAFE Office Report

Supt. Lavoie provided a report to the District Committee regarding the SAFE Office.

Supt. Lavoie reviewed slides: 9% absentee rate which is a good rate, Safe Office visits: three vaping incidents - will provide regular updates going forward. SAFE Office personnel will review our disciplinary calls and procedures relative to specific issues at our next meeting. Mr. Jones felt 472 tardiness was a very high number. Supt. Lavoie said it's not as bad as it looks percentage wise given the number of weeks and students. Mr. Jones questioned what PASS was which Supt. Lavoie explained that instead of inhouse suspensions, students are sent to the Y. Ms. Faris acknowledged September can be a tough month for tardiness and absenteeism. Mr. Jones questioned how the three vaping incidents were addressed, were they sent to PASS to which Supt. Lavoie said they could be. Ms. Disla stated that vaping and suspensions were critical and should be a priority for the safety of the students and should be communicated to parents. Ms. Disla strongly voiced her position that the handling of incidents and communication to parents of every incident should be reported to the District Committee in detail. Supt. Lavoie stated he'd keep them informed of any major incidents and asked Committee members to email him specific questions you want reported out. Chair Hatem asked Ms. Disla to cc him on any questions she emails to Supt. Lavoie on this topic.

d. Capital Improvement

Supt. Lavoie updated the District Committee on the Capital Improvement Projects and asked for a vote to approve the following which the Capital Improvement Committee met on August 28th and approved the funds:

\$100,000 for the District Committee schematic design for the Roof Project.

\$90,000 to be transferred from Capital Improvement into the ESSER III Grant for learning loss.

Supt. Lavoie stated the Capital Improvement Committee makes decisions on the capital needs of the District Committee school which meets once a month to consider funding – makes recommendations and District Committee makes final vote. The funds are received from our cities and towns as a line item. We access 1 million each year from cities and towns. The Capital Improvement Committee met on August 28th. Chair Hatem stated the Capital Improvement Committee is a subcommittee of this committee comprised of

Chair Hatem, Brad Jones, Supt. Lavoie, Lance Hamel, Lauren Jones and Melissa Martel. Ms. Disla questioned how it was put together. Supt. Lavoie reported Capital Improvement Committee has been in existence for some time. Traditionally, the Superintendent, Director of Finance, Director of Facilities, Vocational Director, and two District Committee members sit on the Committee. Chair Hatem filled the position vacated by Mr. Lamontagne. The Committee needed one more member and Chair Hatem suggested Mr. Jones. If District Committee members would like to vote for someone else, that can take place. Ms. Disla feels members appointed to the Capital Improvement Committee should be approved at a District Committee meeting. Supt. Lavoie what you say makes sense. Ms. Disla reported that we need to approve the organization here. Mr. Mejia agreed that the subcommittees under the District Committee must be approved and appointed by the District Committee.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to add the appointment of members to the Capital Improvement Committee onto tonight's agenda.

2ND: Ms. Disla.

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18439

Supt. Lavoie, Chair Hatem, Mr. Jones-District Committee member, Mr. Hamel-Director of Facilities, Lauren Jones-Vocational Director, Ms. Martel-Finance Director.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the Capital Improvement Committee Members as stated.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Disla Yes

Mr. Jones Yes

Mr. Mejia Yes

Mr. Mercedes Absent

Mr. Tarbox Yes

Ms. Faris Yes

Chair Hatem Yes

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18440

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve the \$100,000 for the District Committee schematic design for the Roof Project.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18441

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to approve the \$90,000 transfer from CI into ESSER III Grant as presented.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18442

e. Admissions Policy

Assistant Superintendent Richardson updated the District Committee on the changes to the Admissions Policy. Supt. Lavoie stated GLTS is required to submit our proposal to the Dept of Education by October 1. Asst. Supt. Richardson comes before District Committee to approve selective criteria used in the policy which Supt. Lavoie will submit to DESSE. Submitting this year's data that will be available in the spring. After Covid, the school applications have gone up significantly. We've increased our number of multilingual learners. The changes reflected in the policy are aimed at decreasing the gap with equity and access. Specific changes were reviewed

via slides: criteria for grades, created a new criterion for student activity to express their interest for up to five points. Ms. Faris questioned the creation of a new section for student activity - why wouldn't an application be considered incomplete if they didn't complete that portion? Asst. Supt. Richardson responded we don't want to hold up their application if they don't complete it. We do not interview as some District Committee schools do. Ms. Faris feels its beneficial to the applicant and it doesn't have to be long - its' important for them to verbalize their desire. Supt. Lavoie asked if Ms. Faris wanted it to be a requirement before we score to which Ms. Faris responded yes. Supt. Lavoie stated she could make that recommendation. Asst. Supt. Richardson stated it's possible a student could score perfectly in every other category and end up with 70 points that may be high enough for their acceptance without a response to that question. In addition, the Dept. of Education has a serious issue with us reporting incomplete applications and to do so only because an applicant did not answer this particular question could be a red flag to the Dept. of Education to call out. She feels a student who wants control over that extra five points will make the effort to do it. Regarding scholastic achievements scored by letter grades, Mr. Mejia questioned if there is a way to make easier for everyone to understand standardized grading? How would you approach that? Asst. Supt. Richardson indicated we have a conversion scale that we use. We could make a notation in the policy that we use a conversion process for that. Mr. Mejia sending school recommendations are we not using the four rated scale for meeting and not meeting for the different criteria? Asst. Supt. Richardson no, it's still being used but it's ten points now instead of fifteen but we added an updated scale. All policy changes will be explained to sending school counselors who attend the breakfast in October. Mr. Mejia questioned the inclusion of participation in career discovery? Asst. Supt. Richardson responded it's a required part of the admission policy. On the application itself, students choose their top three shops. All freshmen go through a one day pre-exploratory-in addition to choosing exploratory, clarifies the placement process. Mr. Mejia questioned if we approve the recommendations to make the student activity question a requirement, can we recommend guidance counselors of the sending schools and parents to make sure the student is completing this requirement? Could we follow up with the parents? Asst. Supt. Richardson stated we could make every effort and say they need to submit something or the application is incomplete. Out of 1600 students we could have a couple hundred still choose not to complete that section regardless of our efforts resulting in that number of incomplete applications which could prove problematic to DESE. Ms. Faris why wouldn't it be complete? How are we accepting these applications? Online? Mail? Asst. Supt. Richardson stated we're using online. We're looking into uploading for students and parents, we're working with GoTo Solutions. Ms. Faris stated that this is part of the application, as a compromise they would have to answer it some way, either personalized voice or clearly stated their wish not to answer this question. Asst. Supt. Richardson said yes, that could be done. Ms. Disla reported that if you make that required in the application and the applicant chose not to fill it out they should loose five points-they need to know. I have a problem with admissions from day one - want to know when these changes are due October 1 and its now September 24th - I want it recorded that I want time to read through this before making changes. We need to be very clear on how we're communicating the admissions process to applicants. Asst. Supt. Richardson stated that if the District Committee decides not to approve these this evening, we can apply for an extension. Mr. Mejia stated this was presented to us months ago, I've read it, it has been discussed and I don't feel an extension is necessary. We don't want to wait and apply for an extension that's not guaranteed to be granted. These are recommendation that are being recommended for a reason and can be changed in the future, we just need to come to common ground - lets meet at the middle and get this through. If students want to come to GLTS, they should complete the application. Ms. Faris agrees with Mr. Mejia and is not in favor of an extension. Supt. Lavoie stated we can clearly note on the application that that question requires a response; and if one is not provided, they should state they do not want to provide one. We can send it back and notify the applicant, parent and school they'll lose five points and ask them if they'd like to reconsider. Mr. Jones was a 70 the average score we're looking for to be accepted? Asst. Supt. Richardson stated it was 68 this year. Mr. Jones suggested listing the student activity as bonus points, Supt. Lavoie doesn't believe DESE would accept that as it's not equitable for all students. Asst. Supt. Richardson said that a band of five points could impact hundreds of students. Ms. Disla stressed we just received the changes in red on Thursday. I'm one member and I want to be clear the choices I make are to ensure I'm doing my due diligence. I do not want to be accused of putting

things off just to make a point. I want all members to be well informed to make responsible decisions for our communities. In response to Ms. Disla's point, Mr. Mejia stated, yes, we got this just a few days before October 1st and it should not happen again. Mr. Jones asked if changes occur every year? Supt. Lavoie stated not necessarily, but we have to assess every year if it's an equitable policy based on the data we collect. Mr. Jones questioned the definition of a special ed student to which Supt. Lavoie responded a student on an IEP. On a personal note, Chair Hatem stated we don't give our students and families enough credit. They want to do the application the right way but they have difficulty getting through it. Ms. Disla again stressed her point of view and frustrations with the admissions process and procedures.

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to accept the admissions policy changing the student activity section to a requirement with an opt out statement which will impact their score as well as standardized grading will be converted to a conversion scale.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Faris	Yes
Ms. Disla	No
Mr. Jones	Yes
Mr. Mejia	Yes
Mr. Mercedes	Absent
Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Chair Hatem	Yes

VOTE:

5 yes', 1 no, 1 absent

#18843

f. Admissions Report

g. Co-Op Report

Supt. Lavoie stated 106 students are presently on Co-Op which is the highest number we've had this early in the school year.

h. Grading for Equity Policy Update

Supt. Lavoie reviewed slides, stating the biggest change in the policy is that students will receive the actual grade for the assignment when it is completed. Last year the lowest score on any assignment was a 40. Now we'll have a better indication of what students know and are capable of doing. When the grades are averaged at the end of quarter, the lowest grade will be a 40. This particular change gives us clarity where the gaps in learning exist. Another change requires a student to communicate within 5 days a schedule for completing makeup work.

i. Organizational Chart

Supt. Lavoie provided the updates to the Grading for Equity Policy reviewing an organizational chart via a slide that depicted who reports to who.

6. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

7. OLD BUSINESS

a. District Committee Priorities

b. Policy

To approve BGE, Policy Dissemination as presented. Mr. Mejia wanted to double check what was changed? Supt. Lavoie was not aware of any changes but decided to delay voting on this until the next meeting where he'd provide clarification as to whether a change had occurred or not.

8. NEW BUSINESS

a. Dress Code

Supt. Lavoie stated we're creating committees comprised of faculty and administrators and students and faculty.

9. TABLED MATTERS

10. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS/REPORT

a. Resignations

- Joshua Ouellette, Coordinator of Curriculum, Effective 8/9/24
- Jennifer DeStefano, Assistant Principal-Humanities, Effective 8/9/24
- Michelle Rota, Child Care Assistant, Effective 6/30/24
- Kimberly Bachmann, Cosmetology Instructor, Effective 6/30/24
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b. Leaves of Absence

c. Retirements

d. Appointments

- Dante Correa, LTS Physical Education Para, Effective Date: 8/28/24
- Marina Eleftheriou, Long-Term Substitute, Effective 9/3/24
- Panagiota Athinelis, Director of Teaching and Learning, Effective 9/19/24
- Amy Glavin, Reading Specialist, Effective 8/27/24
- Noreen Lafleur, Reading Specialist, Effective 8/27/24
- Kaitlin Lajoie, Licensed Practical Nurse, Effective 9/3/24
- Kellie Tavoularis, Cosmetology Instructor, Effective 9/30/24
- Brendon Sullivan, Assistant Principal-Humanities, Effective 9/16/24
- Bridget Grenham, Child Care Assistant, Effective 8/27/24

e. Job Postings

- (2) Cafeteria Utility Workers, help with preparation and serving of the lunches to students, New Positions, Effective 9/2024 (See attached)

Mr. Mejia questioned if it's a union position; and if so, how is it classified. Supt. Lavoie stated it was and it's classified as cafeteria workers.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the Job Posting as presented.

2ND: Mr. Jones

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mercedes	Absent
Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Ms. Faris	Yes
Ms. Disla	Yes
Mr. Jones	Yes
Mr. Mejia	Yes
Chair Hatem	Yes

VOTE:

#18844

11. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM

Noting that half a dozen parking spaces were currently marked for day care, Ms. Disla requested the time frame be noted on the signage as well to allow for after hour usage.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to enter into Executive Session without the attendance of the Director of Finance at 8:23PM.

2ND: Ms. Faris

VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18845

Supt. Lavoie displayed a photo of the plane acquired stating GLTS was the sole District Committee school in Massachusetts that has a jet that actually flies.

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved the District Committee rescind the vote of the non-rep merit increase that was taken in July.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18848

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to approve a 1% merit increase for all non-rep contracts for this year.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

Roll Call by District Recorder

- Mr. Mejia Yes
- Mr. Mercedes Absent
- Mr. Tarbox Yes
- Ms. Faris Yes
- Ms. Disla Yes
- Mr. Jones Yes
- Chair Hatem Yes

VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18849

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to approve a new three-year contract for the Director of Finance beginning July 1, 2024, of a \$25000 increase the first year of the contract and \$5000 for both year two and three of the contract.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

Roll Call by District Recorder

- Mr. Jones Yes
- Mr. Mejia Yes
- Mr. Mercedes Absent
- Mr. Tarbox Yes
- Ms. Faris Yes
- Ms. Disla Yes
- Chair Hatem Yes

VOTE: Unanimously Approved
#18850

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve a new three-year contract for the Comptroller beginning July 1, 2024,

of a \$25000 increase the first year of the contract and \$5000 for both year two and three of the contract.

2ND: Ms. Faris

Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Disla	Yes
Mr. Jones	Yes
Mr. Mejia	Yes
Mr. Mercedes	Absent
Mr. Tarbox	Yes
Ms. Faris	Yes
Chair Hatem	Yes

VOTE:

#18851

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Ms. Disla moved to adjourn at 9:11PM.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18852

Respectfully Submitted:



Cheryl Dennis
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:



Supt. Supt. Lavoie N. Supt. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director