

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee

Wednesday, December 11, 2024, at **7:00 PM**

Shepherd Hill Regional High School

68 Dudley-Oxford Road

Dudley, MA 01571

MINUTES

I. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:00pm

In attendance:

Kelly Szela - Chair (arrived at 7:38pm)

Jaime Dell'Ovo

Caitlynn Panczyk

Maureen Chickering

Nicole Enberg

Cathleen Carmignani (arrived at 7:29pm)

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Moment of Silence

IV. Shepherd Hill RHS Showcase – Show Choir & Principal Elwell

Principal Elwell spoke about how great of a job the Show Choir and Ms Bussiere does for The Holiday Spectacular. The production is Friday 12/13 at 7:00 pm and Saturday 12/14 at 2:00 pm.

Principal Elwell and Mr. Courtemanche, Science Department and Innovation Pathways Coordinator spoke about Clean Energy, a Pathway that has recently been rolled out by the state of MA. The purpose of Pathways in High Schools is to start students on a path towards college and careers. The majority of the courses for this Pathway are already offered at SHRHS and similar to other Pathways funding could be available. The only course that would have to be added is Environmental Sustainability. Mr. Courtemanche stated the Environmental Science Program is the most requested AP course and usually 20-30 students cannot get the course because there's such a high student interest. There's also such tremendous growth in this field that the state will need more workers. Principal Elwell stated SHRHS prepares students for both college and careers. This Clean Energy Pathway could help students that do not go to college get lucrative careers in this field and students that do go on to college in this field would have a great spring board with this Pathway.

V. Consent Agenda Items

a. Approval of the Warrant

b. Approval of Minutes Regular Meeting - November 13, 2024

A motion by M. Chickering, seconded by N. Enberg to approve all consent agenda items was approved unanimously.

J. Dell'Ovo - Yes

N. Enberg - Yes

C. Panczyk - Yes

M. Chickering - Yes

VI. Communications

- Superintendent Lamarche announced Sabrina Webb, cheerleading coach shared that the 3 cheering teams that competed in Orlando, FL all came home with titles. We were the only recreational cheer program from central MA that had 3 teams qualify at the Nationals and come home with titles.
 - U10- Heritage and Dudley Elementary came home with 3rd place
 - U12- Charlton Middle and Dudley Middle came home with 2nd place
 - U16- Shepherd Hill Regional High School came home with 2nd place
- Superintendent Lamarche read a letter to School Committee from the Town of Charlton Board of Selectman, thanking the School Committee for selling a parcel of land to support the Fire Department Substation.

VII. Student Representative Report - Anthony Avoglia

- NHS food drive was able to feed 56 families, over 320 people
- Holiday Spectacular is Friday night at 7:00 and Saturday afternoon at 2:00
- Many field trips are going on and have had positive feedback from students
- The first basketball game is this Friday, December 13, away at Shrewsbury.
- He attended a Delegate Assembly Conference in Marlboro. They talked about turning ideas into actions at the state level.

VIII. Superintendent's Report

- DMS students involved in the launching of the mini boat Anita were able to meet students from Lockeport Regional HS via Google Meet to share updates and discuss the condition and relaunch of Anita.
- The Project 351 Ambassadors for this year are Victoria Norton from DMS and Anthony Heath from CMS. Project 351 is an independent nonprofit organization, that fosters youth-led services. These youths are united for a year of leadership and service, promoting kindness, advancing social justice, and developing the courage, compassion and skills needed to lead change.
- Lesa Patrock, supporting one of the largest community service-learning projects at DMS has been able to assist 350 children in need this holiday season with the help of colleagues and students.

A special Thank You to Darlene Wolcott who donated 100 pajama bags.
- Rams Read, a voluntary summer reading initiative designed to bring staff together, celebrated its 2024 Awards Get-Together on November 7, 2024.

IX. Public Comment

No Public Comment

X. New Business

A. Update Director of Finance and Operations - Joseph DeSantis

1. Fiscal Year 2025

FY 2025 is within established Operating Budget parameters. Federal grant approvals were received and will be disbursed in December. A detailed Operating Budget update will be provided in January 2025, when the 2nd quarter is complete.

2. Fiscal Year 2026

FY2026 Budget priorities and concessions are being discussed with principals and IT director. FY2026 Governor's Budget is due in January. A draft of the FY2026 Operating Budget will be completed in January.

3. Excess and Deficiency (E&D)

The District has provided financial data to the Division of Local Services (DLS) to certify the use of E&D. A further update will be provided in January.

4. Fiscal Year 2024 Auditors

Marcum, LLP was on site in November to perform field testing related to the District's FY2024 financials. There have not been any reported findings or issues for follow up, additional updates will be provided on a monthly basis until the final Audit report is published.

5. Heritage Elementary School

On Friday, December 6, 2024, both heating boilers went down. Multiple vendors suggested cleaning the tanks at a cost of \$12,000-\$13,000 each. Joe Caron, Facilities Director and Custodial staff are working on alternative solutions to remedy the issue that won't cost as much as cleaning the tanks.

- XI. Executive Session:** To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining **[Wage & Benefits Agreements]** or litigating position **[Emergency Planning and Procedures]** of the public body and the chair so declares, only to reconvene into regular session, to take votes if necessary, and adjourn.

A motion by C. Carmignani, seconded by N. Enberg to adjourn the meeting at 8:24pm was passed unanimously by roll call.

K. Szela – Yes

M. Chickering – Yes

N. Enberg – Yes

C. Panczyk – Yes

C. Carmignani – Yes

J. Dell'Ovo - Yes

Executive Session was called to order at 8:26 PM

The School Committee returned from Executive Session at 10:27 PM

XII. Adjourn

A motion by M. Chickering, seconded by J. Dell'Ovo to adjourn the meeting at 10:29pm was passed unanimously.

K. Szela - Yes

C. Carmignani - Yes

N. Enberg - Yes

J. Dell'Ovo - Yes

M. Chickering - Yes

C. Panczyk - Yes

The items listed, which may be discussed at the meeting, are those reasonably anticipated by the chair. Not all items listed may, in-fact be discussed, and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. The School Committee may vote on all items listed on this agenda.

2024-2025 School Committee Goals

Fiscal Responsibility

1. *The DCRSD School Committee will vote to improve a revised 10- year Capital Plan to reflect the needs identified in the 2024 architectural review of all seven schools.*
2. *The DCRSD School Committee will incorporate completed and forthcoming reports, reviews, and evaluations (e.g., Education Resource Strategies, Facilities Conditions Report) into long-range planning. This planning will guide the development of a Fiscal Year 2026 budget, structured to preserve the integrity of existing programs and prioritizing expenditures to provide a comprehensive educational experience for all students.*

Enhance Educational Excellence

1. *The DCRSD School Committee will support hiring, developing and utilizing staff that drive positive school culture and help create a unified district.*
2. *The DCRSD School Committee will support professional development opportunities that align with the District mission for exceptional teaching and learning for all students.*
3. *The DCRSD School Committee will ensure that all students have access to innovative platforms and technologies.*
4. *The DCRSD School Committee will continue their oversight of the implementation of policy IGA Curriculum Evaluation, Development and Adoption to review, revise or adapt high quality instructional materials for all students.*

Enhance Community Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

1. *The DCRSD School Committee will continue to evolve their roles as community liaisons to strengthen relationships with local boards and organizations.*

Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, January 08, 2025 – SHRHS

Budget and Finance Subcommittee: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 12:00 PM - Video Conference

Policy Review Subcommittee: Thursday, January 09, 2025 8:00 AM - District Office

Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning: Video Conference

Capital Outlay/Safety Subcommittee: Video Conference

Future Agenda Items: Amazon STEM Planning (Jan.), FY26 Budget Planning (Jan.), Update School Committee Goals (Dec.), Superintendent Goals update, (Jan.), Student Achievement Report (Jan.), FY26 Presentation (Jan.), All Boards (Feb.), Budget Hearing (Feb.), SEPAC (Apr.)

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Meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee

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Agenda

- I. Call Meeting to Order**
- II. Pledge of Allegiance**
- III. Moment of Silence**
- IV. Shepherd Hill RHS Showcase – Show Choir & Principal Elwell**
- V. Consent Agenda Items**
 - a. Approval of the Warrant
 - b. Approval of Minutes Regular Meeting – November 13, 2024
- VI. Communications**
- VII. Student Representative Report – Anthony Avoglia**
- VIII. Superintendent’s Report**
- IX. Public Comment**
- X. New Business**
 - A. Update Director of Finance and Operations – Joseph DeSantis
 - 1. Fiscal Year 2025
 - 2. Fiscal Year 2026
 - 3. Excess and Deficiency (E&D)
 - 4. Fiscal Year 2024 Auditors
 - 5. Heritage Elementary School
 - B. Update - Professional Development Day, Jan. 3, 2025 – Assistant Superintendent Kelly True
 - C. Fiscal Year 2026 School Committee Budget Priorities
 - D. Update School Committee Goals
- XI. Executive Session:** To discuss strategy with respect to collective bargaining or litigation if an open meeting may have a detrimental effect on the bargaining **[Wage & Benefits Agreements]** or litigating position **[Emergency Planning and Procedures]** of the public body and the chair so declares, only to reconvene into regular session, to take votes if necessary, and adjourn.
- XII. Adjourn**

The items listed, which may be discussed at the meeting, are those reasonably anticipated by the chair. Not all items listed may, in-fact be discussed, and other items not listed may also be brought up for discussion to the extent permitted by law. The School Committee may vote on all items listed on this agenda.

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Next Meeting Dates

School Committee Meeting: Wednesday, January 8, 2025 – SHRHS

Budget and Finance Subcommittee: Tuesday, January 14, 2025 12:00 PM - Video Conference

Policy Review Subcommittee: Thursday, January 9, 2025, 8:00 AM District Office

Curriculum Subcommittee for Teaching and Learning: Tuesday, December 10, 2024 10:00 AM - Video Conference

Capital Outlay/Safety Subcommittee: Wednesday, December 18, 2024 8:00 AM - Video Conference

Future Agenda Items: Amazon STEM Planning (Jan.), FY26 Budget Planning (Jan.), Update School Committee Goals (Dec.), Superintendent Goals update, (Jan.), Student Achievement Report (Jan.), FY26 Presentation (Jan.), All Boards (Feb.), Budget Hearing (Feb.), SEPAC (Apr.),

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

School Committee

12.11.2024



I have a few items to share

As you may recall, the Dudley Middle School showcase for the School Committee featured the DMS mini boat *Anita*, which was retrieved five miles off the coast of Nova Scotia by fisherman Captain Fudge. Grade 7–9 students at Lockeport Regional High School participated in opening the *Anita* to discover the items placed in its hull by DMS students.

Lockeport students and DMS students met via Google Meet to share updates and inform DMS about the condition of the *Anita*. Currently, DMS students are collaborating with Lockeport to develop a relaunch plan for the boat.

We greatly appreciate the efforts of Ms. Stacy Lynch for bringing this program to DMS.



Each year, Charlton and Dudley Middle Schools select Project 351 Ambassadors. Project 351 is an independent nonprofit organization that fosters youth-led service by engaging an unsung hero from each of Massachusetts' 351 cities and towns. United for a year of leadership and service, Ambassadors transform communities, promote kindness, advance social justice, and develop the courage, compassion, and skills needed to lead change.

This year's Ambassadors are Victoria Norton from Dudley Middle School and Anthony Heath from Charlton Middle School.

Ms. Lesa Petrock is in her 23rd year supporting one of the largest community service-learning projects at DMS. Through her efforts, along with those of her colleagues and DMS students, 350 children in need will receive assistance this holiday season.

A special public thank you goes to Ms. Darlene Wolcott, who generously donated 100 pajama bags for this year's initiative.

The annual "Marching of the Gifts" will take place tomorrow, Thursday, December 12, 2024, at DMS at approximately 9:00 AM. Additionally, Channel 4, WBZ, is expected to air a segment highlighting this significant effort to support children in the Worcester County area.

Rams Read celebrated its 2023 Awards Get-Together at Point Breeze on Tuesday, November 7, 2023. Rams Read has been a long-standing program at SHRHS but was expanded to include all schools this past summer.

Rams Read is a fun, summer reading initiative designed to bring staff together. Participation is voluntary, and the program culminates with a celebration in the fall. This incredible effort fosters connections among DCRSD staff across all schools. Full credit for this initiative goes to Ms. Kristen Griffiths from SHRHS.

As we are all aware, the November election resulted in changes to the requirements for the MCAS assessment as a graduation requirement. To clarify, this does not eliminate the MCAS assessment itself, but rather the requirement to pass the MCAS to graduate.

We have been informed that further guidance will be forthcoming, but I want to emphasize the current situation for the Class of 2025. While most people equated graduation with passing the MCAS, the legal term used was for students to earn a Competency Determination (CD) in order to graduate, which until now was passing the MCAS assessment.

Receiving a Competency Determination is still a requirement for graduating from a public high school in Massachusetts. However, once the new law takes effect, the language for earning a Competency Determination will shift to "satisfactorily completing coursework that has been certified by the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District."

For the Class of 2025, students who have already earned their CD through MCAS testing have met the requirements for graduation, provided they also meet our district's graduation requirements.

We will keep the School Committee and the public updated as further guidance is issued by DESE.

School Committee Student Representative Anthony Avoglia attended the Massachusetts Association of Student Representatives (MASR) meeting on Saturday, November 23, 2024. MASR is an organization comprised of student representatives from school committees across Massachusetts, dedicated to connecting, educating, and supporting student members of school committees throughout the state.

This meeting serves as an opportunity for new student representatives and returning MASR members to learn more about the organization, collaborate with one another, and gain a better understanding of the topics that are most important to student representatives in Massachusetts.



Last week, we experienced our first weather-related closure. I want to take a moment to review this imperfect decision-making process, which impacts families in different ways. In these situations, safety remains our top priority—ensuring the safe transportation of students to and from school, as well as the safe travel of staff to and from work. I respectfully ask that families and staff prepare for any of the three difficult weather-related decisions that may arise during the winter months.

The most obvious decision is to close school for the entire day. However, this requires considerable thought and can be made either the night before or the morning of a weather-related event. Ideally, I strive to make the call the night before, but there are instances when additional time is necessary to reach a final decision. If an early morning decision is needed, messaging begins just after 5:00 AM. We use our DCRSD notification system, which includes phone calls, text messages, and emails. Additionally, our closures are listed on local news channels. We did encounter some clunkiness with last week's closure, so I encourage families to check multiple sources for weather-related decisions.

A delayed opening may be used if additional time is required to ensure safe travel for students and staff. This typically results in a 2-hour delay, providing time to prepare the schools for opening or to assist our towns' DPW operations in clearing local roads. While a 2-hour delay is standard, it is not without its challenges. If a delayed opening is announced, there will be no morning prekindergarten classes.

An early dismissal may be necessary depending on the timing of a weather-related event. We strive to follow our established early-release day dismissal schedule, but slight adjustments

may be required. At a minimum, there must be one hour between secondary and elementary dismissals. If an early dismissal is called, there will be no afternoon prekindergarten classes.

We appreciate your understanding and preparation for weather-related decisions in the months ahead.

Here are a few important dates to start our 2024-2025 school year.

December

Monday, December 23, 2024 – First day of the Holiday Break - All

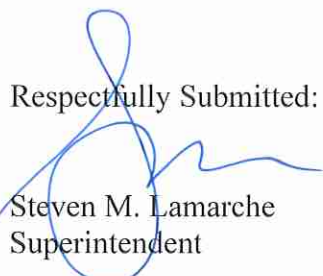
January

Friday, January 3, 2025 – Staff In-service Day, no school all students

Monday, January 6, 2025 – All students return from Holiday Break

Monday, January 20, 2025 – No School – Martin Luther King Day

Respectfully Submitted:



Steven M. Lamarche
Superintendent

<i>DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT</i>

TO: School Committee

FROM: Joseph DeSantis - Director of Finance & Operations

DATE: December 11, 2024

SUBJECT: Finance Director Update

Fiscal Year 2025: Fiscal Year 2025 is still within the established Operating Budget parameters, inclusive of encumbered costs, such as Salaries. FY2025 Federal Grant approvals were received the final week of November, with disbursement expected in December. The Finance Director will work with the Assistant Superintendent to allocate the grant funding appropriately across FY2025 and FY2026 expenditures. A detailed Operating Budget update will be provided in January 2025, when the 2nd quarter of FY2025 is complete.

Fiscal Year 2026: Director of Finance & Operations is currently meeting with building principals and I/T Director to discuss FY2026 Budget priorities and concessions. The FY2026 Governor's Budget is due in January 2025. Collective bargaining of union contracts, increased utility costs, and increased costs associated with Healthcare may have an impact on FY2026 Expenditures. The District is currently investigating ways to mitigate or minimize these potential increases. A draft version of the FY2026 Operating Budget will be completed in January 2025.

Excess & Deficiency (E&D): E&D certification process is nearing completion. The District has provided financial data to the Division of Local Services (DLS) to certify the use of E&D. Once this process concludes, we will know the impact E&D certification will have on the upcoming assessment to member communities. A further update will be provided in January 2025.

Audit of Fiscal Year 2024: Marcum, LLP was on site November 25th and November 26th to perform field testing related to the District's FY2024 financials. To this point, there have not been any reported findings or issues for follow up. Additional updates will be provided on a monthly basis until the final Audit report of FY2024 is published. Copies will be provided to the School Committee once the final Audit report is published.

Heritage Elementary School: On Friday, December 6, 2024, both heating boilers at Heritage Elementary School went down. Multiple vendors have been contacted to survey the problem. There was a suggestion that the tanks be cleaned, at a cost of approximately \$12,000-\$13,000 each. With the strong work and dedication of the Facilities Director and the Custodial staff at Heritage School, the District is working on alternative methods to remedy the heating system issue without having to incur the high cost associated with the an oil tank cleaning. We're looking at potential fixes, such as fuel line cleaning and delivery line replacement. For now, the District is utilizing a backup oil tank to deliver fuel to the boilers.