



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1890
November 19, 2024**

Members Present:

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

Members Absent:

<u>Others Present:</u>	John N. Lavoie	Superintendent-Director
	Brenda Richardson	Assistant Superintendent
	Gerry DiStefano	Treasurer
	Melissa Martel	Director of Finance
	Cheryl Dennis	District Recorder

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chair Hatem called the meeting to order at 6:00PM
Roll Call by District Recorder: Ms. Faris (present), Ms. Disla (present), Mr. Jones (present), Mr. Mejia (late arrival), Mr. Mercedes (present), Mr. Tarbox (present), Mr. Hatem (present).

2. STUDENTS REPORT

Student Representatives presented the Student’s Report some topics of which included: girls volleyball and boys soccer, senior night, fall season highlights, the annual middle school counselors breakfast, the annual college fair held on October 31, financial aid information sessions, spirit week which runs from October 21 through October 25, the GLTS pep rally taking place on October 25, homecoming 2024, GLTS was featured in a Boston Globe article on October 9, 9th grade career exploration selection, end of quarter one, the student council gift drive, the community service project, and the GLTS systems being back online on November 17.

3. MINUTES

a. Minutes of October 8, 2024

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve the minutes of October 8, 2024.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18862

4. FINANCE REPORT

a. Cash Balance Report

Mr. DiStefano read the Cash Balance Report.

MOTION: Ms. Disla moved to approve the Cash Balance Report as presented.

2ND: Ms. Faris

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18863

b. Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report

c. Revolving Fund Report

d. Budget Report

e. Budget Transfers

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

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18863

5. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Donations

- 2003 Ford Mustang, valued at \$6,425.00 by Mr. & Mrs. Michael Ouellette of Hampstead, NH
- 2002 Volvo, valued at \$3,875.00 by Mr. Alexander Culver and Ms. Pamela Bloomfield, Andover, MA

b. Articles

- Greater Lawrence Tech Students Participate in Spicket River Cleanup

Supt. Lavoie stated the students had participated in the river clean up on September 21.

- Nothing will stand in Beato's way

Supt. Lavoie reviewed the success of the soccer year stating it was the best season in the history of the school.

- Greater Lawrence Technical School Awarded \$750,000 Skills Capital Grant to Enhance Auto Collision and Advanced Manufacturing Programs

Supt. Lavoie indicated the funds would be utilized to expand the auto collision and manufacturing programs. Mr. Mercedes questioned how is the money determined to the schools? Supt. Lavoie responded it's not just how well you write the grant, it can be about how much you've received in the past. We were surprised we received \$750,000. Mr. Mercedes questioned how it's determined the funds will be used to which Supt. Lavoie said we met with the CTE, for equipment and expansion labs – a team from CTE and we surveyed teachers to determine their program needs.

- Healey-Driscoll Administration Awards \$17 Million for Career and Technical Education

Skill capital money came from this and lists which schools received how much money.

- MIAA Tournament Games Email

Volley ball team tournament.

c. Public Participation

6. REPORTS OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

a. Dress Code Update

Attorney Simmons provided an update regarding the Dress Code and addressed the District Committee referencing a memo included in their packets. In addition to federal laws, state law limits dress codes in the schools essentially allowing them to wear what they want without obstructing schools. Schools have taken two drastic approaches on dress codes - complete strict codes or no formal dress code policy. Schools have a wide latitude. It is important to enforce a dress code that is in place. As vocational school GLTS has added flexibility within the shops to have limits for safety reasons. Mr. Mercedes stated it would be easier to identify students if students wore uniforms. He went on to say the financial difficulties of some parents in the city of Lawrence puts them at a disadvantage to meet the requests of their children to maintain the status quo – expressed his strong favor to require uniforms. Att. Simmons indicated there are no legal issues against having school uniforms. Mr. Mercedes stated a shirt and/or dress should have the school logo or the colors of the school - something that identifies the school. Att. Simmons indicated Lawrence and Boston do have flexibility for students with financial issues. Putting in uniforms would take time to institute. Ms. Faris feels strongly that the policy already in place should be enforced. The standards are not where they should be and we should advocate for self-respect. I can go full uniform or enforce what is in the handbook now, I can support either. Mr. Mejia questioned why the dress code was removed to which Supt. Lavoie clarified it had not been removed, members of the District Committee wanted to revisit it. Mr. Mejia questioned if GLTS has an issue with enforcement now? Is it high on the list of infractions? Is it being enforced? Supt. Lavoie said the expectation of the dress code being enforced has not changed but enforcement happens through instructors – it's supported as well as the teachers support it. Mr. Mejia questioned if the policy is as stringent as it should be. Supt. Lavoie stated if you open the door to make revisions on dress code, you'll have more eyes and more challenges making it far more difficult to enforce - feel we should keep what we have in place. Mr. Mejia stated I've had discussions with multiple individuals that have more stringent policies without being challenged and they've successfully enforced uniform policies. It's up to the will of the District Committee whether or not the policy should be updated. Att. Simmons stated that a uniform policy is legally stronger than a piece meal violation policy, less subject to legal issues. Mr. Jones mentioned that this conversation started last spring because a constituent's daughter was wearing a shirt that was deemed inappropriate and it went from a discussion of the dress code to the possibility of instituting a uniform policy. I would be in favor of a uniform - easier to enforce. Supt. Lavoie asked Att. Simmons if a rationale were required to institute a uniform policy to which Att. Simmons responded it wasn't necessary as long as it's imposed equally on everyone. Mr. Mercedes feels uniforms will take the stress off of students as to what they are going to wear on any given day. Mr. Jones recalled a group consisting of staff members and students was supposed to gather to study GLTS current dress code and questioned if that were in place.

Supt. Lavoie indicated it was not. Mr. Jones requested they look into uniforms.

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to seek out the creation of a dress code.

Mr. Mejia moved for an amendment to Mr. Mercedes Motion: seeking for an updated, modified dress code derived from a working group consisting of teachers, student, parents and administrators. Once devised, it would be presented to the District Committee to develop a uniform policy.

2nd: Mr. Mercedes

Voting on an amendment, not modifying the current policy, it's seeking a new uniform policy working with a working group so the teachers and students have an input in the modified policy. We want to create a new uniform policy designed by a working group and brought back to the District Committee. Supt. Lavoie suggested Mr. Mejia put in the amendment the District Committee wants a uniform policy put into place with a committee putting forward what that will look like. Mr. Mejia this is going to be a new uniform policy and the role of the working group is to collect input to provide to the District Committee. The District Committee sets policy, I simply want their input. We will have a full-blown uniform code after reviewing the information from

the working group. We could enter or remove information we don't agree with and add what we'd like to see in accordance with the law.

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18864

Att. Simmons stated we realized back in October that District Committee members did not currently have a policy in place for CORI checks on members. We'd like the District Committee to create a policy to comply with background checks.

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to add CORI to Agenda for Future Business.

2ND: Ms. Disla

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

VOTE: Passes - 6 in Favor / 1 Abstention

#18865

b. Professional Development

Asst. Superintendent Richardson provided an update on Professional Development.

Asst. Supt. Richardson presented her report.

c. Middle School Breakfast

Asst. Superintendent Richardson provided an update on the Middle School Breakfast that was held at GLTS on Friday, October 18, 2024, attended by roughly 30 councilors. Fifteen of the attendees toured the building.

GLTS will schedule community events in December and January if necessary.

d. Substitute Pay Increases

Current and Proposed Substitute Pay was included in the packet

Supt. Lavoie stated that he would like to increase our daily rate for GLTS substitute teachers. Teachers are going to other schools because they pay more than we do and there hasn't been an increase in three years for substitutes. Some of the reviewed increases included: raising the minimum daily rate from \$110 to \$140, \$160 for individuals with a bachelors' degree and \$190 retired teachers. Mr. Mejia questioned if the proposed rates were competitive with other districts and whether the funds would come out of the same budget? Supt. Lavoie responded yes regarding the budget and believes the rates were in the middle. Mr. Mejia questioned if there was room to go higher than what was being proposed; and if so, by how much? I'm asking because we haven't been successful in obtaining substitutes and I want to ensure we're being competitive. Ms. Martel indicated she'd learned about this just today. We have savings because we haven't had subs but I have no projection on rates. Ms. Faris feels the increases are in line and is in favor of this but wanted to learn why so many teachers

were absent from school. Supt. Lavoie said they used sick and personal days. Ms. Faris questioned if there aren't enough subs are teachers covering; and if so, what is that pay rate? Supt. Lavoie indicated it was \$20 an hour. Mr. Jones was shocked to learn 27 teachers were out on a particular day and that it was not just once. Can a representative from the teacher's union meet with us? Are there certain employees taking more time off than others? Supt. Lavoie suggested they address this subject when contract negotiations take place – put something in place within the contract to encourage teachers to come to work, that's our only leverage. Mr. Mercedes questioned how many times throughout the school year teachers were out? Shouldn't we hire someone on payroll regularly to fill in where needed rather than hire subs? Supt. Lavoie stated that would be very expensive and one or two people wouldn't have much of an impact on the situation - too costly and not effective. Ms. Faris agreed that suggested solution wouldn't work on a facility as large as GLTS, hiring one person with benefits won't make a difference. Mr. Mercedes requested an opportunity to review the numbers to assist us in making our decision.

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to approve the substitute pay increase as presented.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18866

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved Supt. Lavoie compile and present to the District Committee numbers of absenteeism for teachers.

2ND: Mr. Mercedes

VOTE: Unanimously approved

#18867

e. Field Rental Rates

Supt. Lavoie discussed the field rental rates stating two votes were necessary.

The first vote pertains to an increase for the rental of GLTS fields. Mr. Mercedes questioned the average rental time stating an increase of \$25 an hour could be a substantial increase for some. Supt. Lavoie said it's very competitive - our current rate has been in place for a long time and our costs are increasing for maintenance. Mr. Jones questioned if there was a minimum number of rental hours in place? Supt. Lavoie stated not necessarily though we do prefer 2 hrs.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the new rate as presented.

2ND: Ms. Faris

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18868

The second vote involves placing a 10-year lease on the small grass field – a nonprofit organization in the city has expressed an interest. Mr. Mejia asked if it were to be a ten-year lease or a bid to which Supt. Lavoie responded, a bid. Supt. Lavoie indicated it would still be a rental but with a ten-year lease. Supt. Lavoie stated language will be in the contract crafted by our attorney to protect us – they'll be required to follow our rules and regulations. Ms. Disla questioned why the District Committee was being presented with this as opposed to an RFP to review and approve? Supt. Lavoie indicated an attorney to put a contract together has not been hired yet. Ms. Disla claimed what she had received and read did not state what Supt. Lavoie had stated - we'd essentially be approving something we don't have. To clarify, Supt. Lavoie said he'd like members of the District Committee to approve he work with our attorney to put out a 10-year lease to rent a small grass field. Mr. Mejia stated the motion as presented is too vague. For the motion, it would be to approve pending a 10-year lease which we would review before granting final approval. Supt. Lavoie suggested moving the motion or the District Committee could create their own motion.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to allow the Superintendent to open an RFP for a 10-year lease on the small grass field pending it be presented to the District Committee.

2ND: Mr. Jones

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

VOTE:

#18869

f. Capital Improvement

Supt. Lavoie provided an update on Capital Improvement stating the Committee met and approved to support the items listed below for a vote before the District Committee. Mr. Hatem questioned the current balance of the Capital Improvement budget to which Ms. Martel responded just over 2 million dollars, with an additional 1 million coming in December and 1 million in June.

- New doors and locks at a cost of \$30,000.
- Furniture for \$30,000 to build new academic classrooms
- Complete cafeteria renovations, \$200,000
- Airport hangar renovations, \$300,000
- Complete the landscape barn, \$250,000
- Lighting for field 4 and tennis court - \$68,000
- Expansion of the back-parking lot - \$20,000

Mr. Mercedes asked where the figures originated from; and if they're being bid on, how are we creating the proposal – requested more details. Supt. Lavoie stated they're projected cost figures – the academic classrooms, aviation hangar, landscape barn, and cafeteria will not be put out to bid. The geothermal system is out to bid and it's being covered by a grant. Lighting field four was put out for a bid. We have our own support staff handling some of these items and contractors. Mr. Hatem stated these were discussed during the Capital Improvement meeting and estimates would be obtained.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the Capital Improvement funds as presented totaling \$1,098,000.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18870

g. Grants

Supt. Lavoie updated the District Committee on Grants.

h. MSBA

Supt. Lavoie updated the District Committee on the MSBA.

GLTS submitted a letter of interest to replace the roof and we were invited into the pipeline. The cost of the design will not be known until the MSBA appoints an architect and project manager to oversee the project. District Committee approval is required to take the funds from Capital Improvement to pay for this - the money will be reimbursed 70 to 80%. Mr. Jones indicated it states a partial roof replacement. Supt. Lavoie said the roof will not be replaced over the gym or the area under 25 years old. Mr. Mejia questioned why a dollar amount was not provided? Supt. Lavoie indicated it wouldn't be available until the study by the architect and project manager is completed to determine what exactly needs to be done. Mr. Mejia questioned what would

occur if the money isn't in Capital Improvement - we're essentially doing a blind approval. Supt. Lavoie stated there isn't a lot of choice, the roof needs to be fixed. Mr. Hatem questioned if a cap could be placed on it to which Supt. Lavoie responded no, it must be approved or not but it will not cost 3 million dollars. Once we receive the price, if you don't want to move forward on it, you can say no. Mr. Mejia recommended to amend the motion requesting the Superintendent come back with that dollar amount for the District Committee to vote on. Supt. Lavoie emphasized the vote this evening was only for where the money would come from for the schematic design.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve conducting the schematic design study using funds from Capital Improvement pending the Superintendent return to the District Committee for final approval whether to move forward.

2ND: Mr. Mercedes

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

VOTE: Passes 6-1

#18871

i. MCAS

Supt. Lavoie updated the District Committee on MCAS and the requirement to graduate.

7. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

8. OLD BUSINESS

a. District Committee Priorities

b. Policy

Mr. Hatem stated these were from the Mass Committee of School Committees and Mass General Law, polices are being updated, not removed.

- Remove ACAB-E, Sexual Harassment-Regulations
- Remove ACAB-E-1, Amendment to Sexual Harassment Policy
- New Revised Policy: ACAB-Sexual & Sex Based Harassment and Retaliation (MASC)
- Remove JIE, Pregnant Students
- Remove JLCCA, Aids Resolution
- Remove JLCCA-E-1, Aids School Attendance Policy
 - New Revised Policy: JIE, Pregnant Students (MASC)
 - New Revised Policy: JLCC, Communicable Diseases (MASC)

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the updated policy changes as presented.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Passes 6-1 (Ms. Disla out of the room)

#18872

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. TABLED MATTERS

11. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS/REPORT

a. Resignations

- Yevette Garcia, Workforce Development Program Manager, Effective 10/17/24
- Tyler Peters, Plumbing Instructor, Effective 10/18/24
- Heather Silva, ML Instructor, Effective 10/11/24

b. Leaves of Absence

c. Retirements

d. Appointments

- Sarah Couto, Medical Assisting Instructor, Effective 9/30/24

e. Job Postings:

- Boys Basketball Assistant Head Coach, \$4,516.00, Effective 12/2/24, New Position (See Attached)

Mr. Mercedes what exactly is the amount for to which Supt. Lavoie stated it was their pay for the season. Ms. Faris questioned how many coaches are there to which Supt. Lavoie responded one head and two assistant coaches.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve the position as presented.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18873

- Clean Energy Technical Curriculum Developer, \$50.00/hr., for up to 150 hours per curriculum developer. 12/1/24-6/30/25, AGO Funded MVRF Clean Energy Grant, New Position (See Attached)

Supt. Lavoie stated this was the 1.2 million dollars grant from the Attorney General's Office. Mr. Jones asked if there will be 11 positions? Supt. Lavoie responded yes.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve the position as presented.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18874

- Grading for Equity Team Facilitator (2, up to 15 hours each) (See Attached)

Supt. Lavoie stated these were all per teacher contract at \$50 per hour. Mr. Mejia suggested combining both Grading for Equity and for MTSS. Ms. Faris questioned the need for these, especially MTSS - didn't we previously hire someone for these? I'm abstaining from voting as I'm not in favor of more personnel stating more money going out and without seeing results. Supt. Lavoie said we've had three reports from the grading for equity team who focus on continuing to determine what is and isn't working, it takes time. Mr. Mejia questioned whether Grading for Equity and MTSS were in the contract to which Supt. Lavoie responded we put in for a grant to improve our student performance and the strategies we use - the salary we pay them is in the contract. Mr. Mejia asked if this will be internal to which Supt. Lavoie responded yes. Mr. Mejia asked where the money comes from? Supt. Lavoie indicated Tier 1 funds are from grants and from our operational budget. Asst. Supt. Richardson addressed the need for these positions: we need the staff to be part of the work, the staff needs to have a voice, they're essential to carrying out the plan.

- Grading for Equity Team Member (up to 10, up to 7 hours each) (See Attached)
- MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Action Team Co-Facilitators (2) (up to 17 hours each) (See Attached)
- MTSS (Multi-Tiered System of Supports) Team Member (10 members, up to 7 hours each) (See Attached)
- WIN/Enrichment Team Co-Facilitator (2) (up to 15 hours each) (See Attached)
- WIN/Enrichment Team Member (up to 10 members, up to 7 hours each) (See Attached)

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to combine and vote on all six positions in one vote.

2ND: Mr. Jones

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

VOTE: Passes 6-1

#18875

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to receive reports from the Superintendent of the administration regarding Grading for Equity, MTSS and WIN once the positions are in place.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18876

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEM

- Mr. Jones learned that photos of homes previously built by students had been removed to make room for the lockers and would like to have them on view again - 50 years of bragging rights.
- Mr. Mejia would like an update on the legislative breakfast.

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to enter into Executive Session at 9:15PM.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18877

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to approve the Blue Cross/Blue Shield coverage.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18880

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to adjourn at 9:45PM.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#18881

Respectfully Submitted:



Cheryl Dennis
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed:



John N. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director