



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1904
October 14, 2025**

<u>Members Present</u>	Thomas Hatem	Methuen	Chairperson
	Julio Mejia	Lawrence	Vice Chair
	William Tarbox	North Andover	Asst. Treasurer
	Zoila Disla	Lawrence	
	Annemarie Faris	Andover	
	Bradley Jones	Methuen	
	Edison Mercedes	Lawrence	

Members Absent

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. STUDENTS REPORT

Ambar Salomon and Layla Guerrero presented the Students Report reviewing Hispanic heritage month, the homecoming game and dance, PSAT testing, summer reading, GLTS clubs, the spicket river cleanup, a fall athletics update, the cross-country senior night, Massachusetts biliteracy test, and the Nicey 5K walk in honor of Coach Niceforo.

3. MINUTES

a. *Minutes of September 23, 2025*

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the minutes of September 23, 2025.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19041

4. FINANCE REPORT

a. *Cash Balance Report*

Mr. DiStefano presented the Cash Balance Report.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to accept the Cash Balance Report as presented.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

b. Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report

c. Revolving Fund Report

d. Budget Report

5. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Donations

b. Articles

c. Public Participation

6. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

a. T-Shirts (Academic Week) Petition

Two students addressed the District Committee about a petition signed by 600 students, relative to the uniform policy. They reviewed their reasons for being in opposition to the proposed a uniform policy.

Supt Lavoie thanked the students for expressing their beliefs and having the courage to do so. Ms. Faris thanked the students as well and asked them what they thought was the issue here. Ms. Faris reviewed the high skirts and low shirts. Student’s agreed that abuse of the school’s dress code can be an issue but feel’s it is a small minority that wear inappropriate clothing. Mr. Jones acknowledged the large number of students that got behind the petition and proceeded to review the process that had taken place leading to the t-shirts.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to rescind the vote taken in June to have shop week t-shirts worn during academic week as presented.

2nd: Ms. Faris

Speaking in support of wearing uniforms, Mr. Mercedes addressed the students stating it’s about more than expressing oneself and feels every student should wear the same clothing. Ms. Disla thanked the students stating she had expected to see more students in attendance at this meeting. She expressed her opinion that uniforms serve a purpose and we want students to leave GLTS as professionals and uniforms will prepare students for that. Addressing the costs associated with the uniforms, they won’t be costly and will actually save money. The District Committee approved \$60,000 to cover the initial cost for uniforms. The uniforms will promote inclusiveness. We’ve been working on this for roughly two years and now we’ll reverse our decision due to a petition? She stated she was not in support of rescinding the vote. Ms. Faris reviewed the previous process regarding the implementation of uniforms and feels strongly it’s unsafe for everyone to be dressed alike. Mr. Mercedes reported that they have no problem wearing a uniform in shop, what’s the difference? We all originally approved the uniforms - it’s a financial burden on my community to purchase regular clothing. Mr. Jones asked Administrative Dean Gillis of how much loss of teaching time would be involved in dealing with an inappropriately dressed student. Ms. Gillis addressed the District Committee responding that the student would be sent to the SAFE Office resulting in loss time in class. A call would be made to parents to bring the appropriate clothes to school. With regards to safety: every shop currently has a different color making it easy to identify students. If everyone were to wear black t-shirts, all the boys and girls would look very similar making it difficult to identify them. She expressed her belief that implementing a uniform policy on the academic side would take away from academic learning and present a safety issue. Supt. Lavoie stressed that voting yes rescinds the original vote and voting no would keep uniforms on academic week.

Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mejia	Yes
Mr. Mercedes	No
Mr. Tarbox	Yes

Ms. Faris	Yes
Ms. Disla	No
Mr. Jones	Yes
Mr. Hatem	Yes

5 yes', 2 no's
 Motion Passes
 #19043

b. Measures of Academic Performance (MAP) Presentation

Principal Jackson introduced the team comprised of administration and teachers and reviewed slides before the District Committee. Results of the strategic planning were displayed. The focus is on student ownership of learning. MTSS: Multi-Tiered System of Support - a collaborative effort. English Department – reviewed MCAS data from 2022-2025 - PRISM Grant received from DESE. Ryan Brown, math and science, high quality instructional material – reviewed growth over the last 3 years. Competency determination requirements from DESE. Chair Hatem asked about the PRISM Grant – the district already purchased the equipment so the grant covers our work with TNTP and provide money to stipend teachers outside of school hours. Ms. Faris commented that math and science sound more promising than productive, GLTS is not on top in vocational schools. Would like to know how many students are in a classroom. I’m hearing there are too many; and if that’s true, how does this high-quality instruction deal address that? Principal Jackson indicated he did not bring data to speak to class size this evening but stated the data indicates movement in the right direction. Supt. Lavoie said class size is consistent with every other year. Currently the largest class is 25 to one while we have some 15 to 1 or 10 to 1 which is consistent with other schools. Every Tuesday our administrative team comes together to discuss instructional practices and provide feedback – feels we are on the right track. We’re recalibrating after COVID.

Ms. Faris feels there are more students in each classroom which brings down the effectiveness of teaching. Mr. Mejia my understanding with the elimination of the MCAS, the state will evaluate the new assessment tool. Principal Jackson responded we’ll come back and address that next month.

MOTION: Mr. Tarbox moved to remove the Public Safety Program from tabled matters.

2ND: Ms. Faris

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19044

c. Public Safety/Criminal Justice Presentation

Ms. Lauren Jones, CTE Director and Lindsay Gangi, CTE Coordinator presented and updated the District Committee on the Public Safety Program (Criminal Justice). Joined by Brooke Leavitt, lead teacher, Medical Assisting. The CTE Expansion Grant was reviewed via slides. Supt. Lavoie followed up the two career opportunities discussed and the vision is to expand opportunities for an additional 200 students which aligns with workforce needs in the health and public safety sectors. Proposing a 2-story addition - \$9 million-dollar project.

Mr. Jones asked about students going out on healthcare, what’s the average starting pay? Ms. Leavitt reported that seniors going out at \$15 and going up to \$18 an hr. Fifty-one seniors are out this year which is 80%. Ms. Faris asked is there anywhere the three new pathways overlap into what we already have? Supt. Lavoie

reported that yes, they are part of health and medical but we can't teach the whole curriculum without expansion. We are working with Northern Essex on a health program for dual credits. Mr. Jones asked if the EMT training would allow students to go out on a Co-op program? Ms. Leavitt reported that they have to be 18 which a lot of our seniors are 18. Ms. Faris, reported that she cannot see how it could exist in a high school. Ms. Disla reported that this is a bad setting for a meeting and apologized to presenters. This presentation has been difficult for me to get involved in due to the setting. We spoke about the safety program last meeting, in which two individuals addressed us and as a group we understood we did not want to focus on the safety program itself – we already have programs that need attention. Now this is being presented in another way. Would have wanted them to come to the last meeting. Supt. Lavoie stated that Chair Hatem had requested additional information and that's why we're providing this additional info this evening. We're trying to address two separate programs addressed by one grant. Mr. Mejia agreed with Ms. Disla with the way it was presented. A more positive note about this program is seeing the list of schools, all predominately white, and we don't have this on the north shore nor more specifically in the Merrimack Valley. Want us to think more positively of the program which I've favored all along but not proposed in the proper manner. Ms. Faris, I voted not to this last month. I don't want any more programs but you've peaked my interest here – didn't favor it as a criminal justice program – this is a little different and you have my interest but where is the bldg. going to go? Supt. Lavoie reported that we already had an architecture look at the building. We can put it by corner of the new barn which is 10,000 sq. ft. Ms. Faris my concern is about the students, concerned with learning. Supt Lavoie, education and learning are the most important things and to offer more opportunities for students. It cannot be done without the space and equipment. Mr. Jones, last month titled as criminal justice I was not in favor of it but hearing the medical students that could not get into classes next year, we need to go toward the grant to increase our medical. Chair Hatem, we have a well of Spanish speaking students here that are needed in both of these industries.

MOTION: Mr. Tarbox moved to approve the Health and Public Safety Program as presented.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19045

d. Update & Vote to use Bond for and addition at GLTS

Supt. Lavoie asked the District Committee to seek approval from its four sending communities to amend the previously authorized \$4,000,000 bond to be utilized for the construction of an addition at GLTS to expand the District's Medical Programs.

Mr. Mejia questioned if this would be dedicated to the project just discussed regarding public safety to which Supt Lavoie responded yes.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to use the Elks Lodge bond for an addition at GLTS: That the Greater Lawrence Regional Vocational-Technical School District hereby authorizes the Superintendent-Director to seek approval from its four sending communities to amend the purpose of the previously authorized \$4,000,000 bond, initially intended for the acquisition of the Elks Lodge property located at 652 Andover Street, Lawrence, Massachusetts, so that the funds may instead be utilized for the construction of an addition to the District's existing facility at 57 River Road, Andover, Massachusetts. The objective of this amendment remains consistent with the original purpose-namely, to expand the District's medical programs.

2ND: Mr. Jones

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19046

e. Admission's Policy

Supt. Lavoie reviewed recommendations made from our attorney which are not included within the District Committee packages this evening – we have to add immigration language, put GLTS instead of spelling out the school name, instead of saying cities and towns put communities - some terminology changes. Mr. Mejia to be clear this is to be unweighted to which Supt. Lavoie responded yes – we wanted to show the differences side by side. Asst. Supt. Richardson stated that weighted is actually inconsequential - everyone goes into the lottery regardless - community seat allotment is very important for equity purposes going forward. Mr. Mejia voiced his opinion that unweighted is the way to go. Perceived issues have to go with the state formula. Supt. Lavoie pointed out that this has to be re-voted on every year and suggested going with 5, 5, 25 and 65 percent and see how it plays out the first year.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the Admission's Policy as presented.

2ND: Ms. Faris

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19047

MOTION: Chair Hatem requested the DC enter Executive Session without the attendance of the Superintendent to conduct a strategy session.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19048

f. Discussion on Supt. Lavoie's Letters to the School Committee

Supt. Lavoie stated he'd written two letters: one stating that the open meeting law had been violated and the other letter was to withdraw his resignation. Ms. Faris was offended about the allegation that this committee had violated the open meeting law stating that's an assumption that is untrue - it's a reach on your part. Supt. Lavoie indicated he based that on a conversation he had had with Chair Hatem. A vote in an open meeting must take place to accept my letter of resignation. Ms. Faris questioned having personal conversations with members in the office of the superintendent to which Supt. Lavoie responded that may be true. Supt. Lavoie said there was a lot of pressure for me to put in my resignation and I submitted to that. Ms. Faris questioned why he wouldn't have simply taken that back? Why wait until four or five months after it was made public. Supt. Lavoie mentioned that everyone does it all the time - I had every right to pull my resignation. Chair Hatem mentioned there's no reason I would say no you can't leave. Supt Lavoie stated he would not be hiring any lawyers.

7. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

8. OLD BUSINESS

a. District Committee Priorities

b. Policy

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. TABLED MATTERS

11. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS/REPORT

a. Resignations

b. Leaves of Absence

c. Retirements

d. Appointments

- Allyson Ligor, CTE Coordinator, Effective October 6, 2025
- Kristen Bilapka-Cowpar, Special Ed. Instructor, Effective October 6, 2025
- Mario Rahi, Help Desk/IT Support Technician, Effective October 6, 202

e. Job Postings

- Clerical Position for Adult Evening ESL Classes SY2025-2026, person to maintain records of attendance, maintaining data spreadsheets (attendees’ hours of attendance, tracking language growth, communication for absences, etc.) and support the tracking of program expenditures, Title III Grant funded, Per Clerical CBA, New position. (See attached).

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the Clerical Position for Adult Evening ESL Classes SY2025-2026.

2ND: Mr. Jones

Roll Call by District Recorder

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

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19049

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to enter into Executive Session at 9:50PM.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19050

Enter Executive Session

Enter Open Session

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to accept the language changes stating that the academic/support staff bargaining unit employees are required to attend (1) “Back to School Night” and “Open House”. Open house has to have a minimum of thirty-five academic/support staff. All CTE teachers are mandated to attend “Open House” and (1) instructor from each career area must be scheduled for “Back to School Night”.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19053

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve in section 8.2 to add academic and CTE teachers who give up a preparation period at the request of an administrator shall receive \$50 per period.

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 Yes

Mr. Hatem Yes

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19054

Correction in the minutes of September 23, 2025:

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to increase the new teacher facilitator to \$6000 a year and for the assistant mentor facilitator recommend a stipend of \$1500.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19055

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to adjourn at 10:18PM.

2ND: Ms. Faris

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19056

Respectfully Submitted



Cheryl Dennis
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed



Supt. Lavoie N. Supt. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director