

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Meeting of the Budget & Finance Subcommittee

Friday, October 31, 2025, at **10:00 AM**

Via Video Conferencing

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/82604582343>

Meeting Minutes

In Attendance: Anthony Aube, Caitlyn Panczyk (10:06 am.) Kelly Szela, Joseph DeSantis, Cheryl Kozub.

I. Call the Meeting to order. 10:02 a.m. on October 31, 2025

Chair declaration:

In accordance with Mass. General Law Charter 30(A), Sec 20 and in accordance with Chapter 2 of the Acts of 2023 I announce this meeting is being recorded by the (Dudley Charlton Regional School District) and I ask if there is anyone else present that is recording today's meeting?

Please let the minutes reflect.

II. Approval of Minutes

- a. 3-3-25. Motion to approve the minutes of 3/3/2025 by K. Szela, seconded by A. Aube. Approved 2/0.
- b. 9-26-25 – Table this to next meeting.

III. Committee reorganization.

Cross over. This has been done at the previous meeting.

- a. Chair
- b. Vice Chair

IV. Public Comment (Limited to 1 minute) None.

V. Subcommittee Communications. A. Aube reported that Governor Healey is soliciting feedback on a Chapter 70 school financing formula. Gov. Healey is scheduling listening sessions across the state, which began on October 30, 2025. However, there are subsequent meetings in November, including a virtual meeting. A. Aube sent an email to Mr. Lamarche and Mr. DeSantis regarding this. Consider addressing this if time permits at the next School Committee meeting. J. DeSantis stated that he too is tracking government spending. District Food services have been approved through December 2025, which was an announcement that came out yesterday. Medicaid reimbursement is quarterly, Circuit Breaker twice per year and School Choice is reimbursed monthly. J. DeSantis will keep the committee updated of any changes in Food Services benefits.

VI. Director of Finance and Operation Standing Update(s) as available:

- a. Cherry Sheets. J. DeSantis reported that this information will be available at the end of the calendar year, most likely in November-December after completion of the audit.
 - i. Proposed Chapter 70 Funding by House / Senate / Governor. Potential changes to formula, with minimal funding.
 - ii. Proposed Regional Transportation Funding by House / Senate / Governor. Uncertainty, until numbers are released.
- b. Circuit Breaker. Going through all of revolving accounts, balance was 650K was increase by 150K. FY25 auditor will be here next and J. DeSantis will have more information for items b,c,d,e, which will be addressed after audit is completed.

- c. E & D. J. DeSantis reported that there is a little over \$1M in this account. The District will stay with current formula. This will need to be reduced this year and next year. We can pull up to 5% of operating budget, but no more. Allow us to tap into designated fund balance. Half of capital fund was funded by \$4.2M bond. Can create capital revolving account and fund. Pay more of operating budget and use that. Provides flexibility and access to funds.
- d. Anticipated enrollment numbers for next fiscal year. SIMS October data submitted to the DESE, which will be certified by the DESE. This report shows enrollment down by approximately 100 students. At the next meeting, J. DeSantis will have where the decrease in enrollment is targeted.
- e. School Choice. Balance will be verified with auditors, who will be here next week. Balance increased to \$975,000. The District keeps a certain percentage of operating budget with balance of school choice funds. Keeping this balance is healthy fiscal decision for this year. Teachers with students in the district are considered school choice. Joe will provide an update if teachers whose children attend our schools and are out of district if revenue is provided.
- f. FY27 Healthcare cost projections. Going up to 60% increase for retirees. IAC and MSHG meetings will discuss this increase for control of this cost. District pays 50% of the retirees. Planning to split the 75/25 cost to employer/employee to 70/30. Further updates will be provided on how much the actual increase will be. MSHG will set the rates for next year within 60 days or so.
- g. Utility cost projections. Costs are increasing. We are looking for ways to mitigate lighting costs, i.e. lighting conversion. Dudley landfill solar project is in the works.
- h. Transportation cost projections. J. DeSantis reported still have until the end of next year under the current contract. No additional transportation costs at this time, so will stay relatively stable. Van Pool is stable as well.
- i. Contractual cost projections. Biggest contractual cost increase based on union negotiations of salary increases of 3.5%. J. DeSantis will provide dollar amount for the next meeting.
- j. Proposed budget request / needs and justification. Table this item.
- k. Audit update. Week of Veterans Day auditors will start the FY25 audit. More information as field work commences.
- l. End of year report. FY25 End of Year Report was submitted the first week of October. Amendments may need to be done based on the FY25 Audit. A. Aube asked where we send our reports. J. DeSantis reported that E&D Report is submitted to DOR, EOY Report goes to DESE and FY25 Audit to both.
- m. Budget updates. J. DeSantis will continue to monitor the FY26 budget and will provide a quarterly update to the School Committee within the next few weeks. No need to put a freeze on purchasing as we are in a good position with the budget currently.

VII. Discussion on a possible "Technology Efficiency Fund".

A. Aube proposed that this Fund be created and states this is standard practice in other municipalities. Create a small fund that could have a longstanding financial savings in place. Reviewed on a case-by-case basis. If funds not used, they are rolled back into E&D. K. Szela says a great idea. J. DeSantis states this is a good idea in principle. We are planning to create an OPEB fund based on audit results. Having a tech fund is a good idea. How much unreserved fund balance from E&D and operating, how much OPEB fund? How implemented, funded, etc.? Timing is important and would need to find out how much is in accounts, which will be based on finalized audit. A. Aube suggested set to a small amount of \$10K. Later agenda item for further discussion. E-RATE, FCC run program, and receive over \$100K

a year and supplement technology budget, depending what government pays, usually 60% and we pay 40%. Don't know if this will continue. This will provide a safety net.

VIII. Timeline for budget creation.

J. DeSantis reported that now is the start for budget season with the first budget workshop held at the last SC meeting. J. DeSantis will continue monitoring contractual costs and health care costs. Discussions being held with building leadership. S. Pusateri will address the needs of custodial/maintenance aspect. Creation of E&D .

IX. Topics not reasonably anticipated at time of posting. None at this time.

X. Future Agenda Items.

A. Aube - Subsequent/future meetings –
Updated capital projects for this year.
Next meeting date: December 5, 2025 @ 10:00 a.m.

XI. Adjourn.

1st Kelly; 2nd Caitlynn; All in favor. 3/0.
10:52 a.m.