



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
SPECIAL MEETING #1908
January 9, 2026**

Updated to remove Brenda Richardson as present 1/27/26

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

<u>Members Absent</u>	Zoila Disla	Lawrence
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<u>Others Present</u>	John N. Lavoie	Superintendent-Director
	Melissa Martel	Director of Finance
	Susan Lally	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 (absent), Mr. Jones (absent), Mr. Mejia (present), Mr. Mercedes (present), Mr. Tarbox (present), Mr. Hatem (present).*

2. MASC-SUPERINTENDENT SEARCH PRESENTATION

Ms. Ayala, Director of Human Resources, introduced MASC Field Director and Search Coordinator Alicia (Curtin) Mallon. Information was distributed to the School Committee for review as Ms. Mallon delivered her presentation. Ms. Mallon stated that the School Committee in each city, town, and regional school district has the authority to appoint and terminate the Superintendent. She outlined two legal requirements for appointing a Superintendent in Massachusetts:

1. The appointment of an individual who holds, or is eligible to obtain, Massachusetts licensure as a Superintendent; and
2. The appointment must be made at a properly posted public meeting by a majority vote of the School Committee.

Ms. Mallon reviewed the Superintendent appointment process, including a potential timeline and the option of hiring a search consultant or conducting the search independently. If a consultant is hired, costs may range from \$9,000 to \$35,000. MASC’s fee is \$11,500. She explained which services are included in that fee and which services would be available at no cost should the

Committee choose not to hire MASC or another outside consultant. Chair Hatem asked whether a CAGS license would be accepted for a Superintendent position. Ms. Mallon stated she would need to research that question further. Chair Hatem also asked how many Superintendent openings currently exist. Ms. Mallon reported that there are approximately three openings in the Northeast, six in Western Massachusetts, and about ten in the Boston/Cape area, with no openings at vocational schools.

Vice Chair Mejia asked whether a Superintendent must hold a Vocational Superintendent license or whether a standard Superintendent license is sufficient, and if there is a separate certification required specifically for Career and Technical Education (CTE). Ms. Mallon stated she would need to research that question further. Superintendent Lavoie reported that he holds several CTE certifications. Vice Chair Mejia also asked whether there is a pathway program for new Superintendents. Ms. Mallon explained that MASC offers a New Superintendent's Induction Program.

Ms. Faris asked whether candidates come from a predetermined pool. Ms. Mallon stated that in Massachusetts, candidates must be individuals who hold, or are eligible to obtain, Massachusetts licensure as a Superintendent. Districts may require additional qualifications and may solicit feedback from the community.

Vice Chair Mejia asked whether the Superintendent contract is handled at the School Committee or subcommittee level. Ms. Mallon explained that MASC can assist with baseline contract elements, but District Legal Counsel typically assists with contract development. Mr. Jones asked whether sample contracts are available. Ms. Mallon stated that salary ranges are available, but not necessarily full sample contracts, and that any available resources can be shared.

Vice Chair Mejia asked what is recommended regarding the screening committee. Ms. Mallon responded that the School Committee appoints the screening committee. The Committee may conduct its own research, utilize an online survey facilitated by MASC, or create a search subcommittee. Volunteers may be solicited, and participants' relationships to the district should be identified. Screening committees typically include between seven and fifteen members, with no more than two School Committee members recommended. While School Committee members on the screening committee do not lose their authority as final decision-makers, they may not discuss details of the screening process outside of appropriate settings. Only the School Committee has the authority to hire the Superintendent.

Ms. Mallon concluded by stating that the Committee must determine which path it wishes to take for this process. When you are looking for a Superintendent, you are looking for someone skilled but also someone who will sit at this table with you and be your partner. You always discuss the negotiations in Executive Session with District Counsel. Vote on it in Open Session.

3. PURCHASING OF NEW HANGAR

Superintendent Lavoie reported that he added this agenda item to the meeting because a School Committee vote was required to pursue the purchase of a new hangar for the Aviation Program. He explained that the seller had two other interested buyers, requiring the District to move quickly.

Superintendent Lavoie stated that he contacted District legal counsel, who advised that the transaction could be handled similarly to the prior hangar purchase. He expressed that acquiring a new hangar would be a significant benefit to the Aviation Program. The hangar is located adjacent to the District's current hangar and remains part of the Westside Hangar Association. He noted that the proposed hangar is substantially larger than the District's existing hangar and offers improved facilities, including a bathroom, air conditioning and heat, improved insulation, and a small office loft space, providing students with additional instructional and operational space. Superintendent Lavoie explained that the District's current hangar was purchased for \$300,000 because it was the only available option at the time and was necessary to secure approval for the Aviation Program. Since that purchase, funds have been allocated for upgrades to the existing hangar, including: installation of air conditioning and heat: \$50,000–\$100,000, construction of a classroom loft: \$20,000 and installation of a sewer line, estimated at \$350,000, to support a bathroom.

The new hangar purchase price is \$975,000. The District anticipates selling the current hangar for approximately \$300,000–\$350,000. The new hangar is valued at approximately \$1.25 million. Superintendent Lavoie reported that, per legal guidance, he contacted the District's member cities and towns to seek approval. Meetings were held on January 5th. Methuen and Lawrence voted in favor. Andover and North Andover must bring the matter to their respective town meetings in the spring. He further reported that the District has available funds in Excess and Deficiency (E&D); however, those funds have not yet been certified and are expected to be certified by the end of January. Superintendent Lavoie explained that the City of Lawrence will purchase the hangar initially, and the District will purchase it from the City of Lawrence in the spring following town meeting approvals. The District will continue to lease the land on which the hangar is located at the airport. He reported that the Mayor of Lawrence and the Lawrence City Council are fully supportive of this plan and agreed to hold the property until the spring.

a. Vote to Purchase Hangar from the City of Lawrence

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved for Greater Lawrence Technical School to buy a hangar at the Lawrence Airport from the City of Lawrence for \$975,000.00.

Vice Chair Mejia opened discussion, stating that he was pleased to hear about the improvements to the hangars but expressed concern regarding a lack of transparency. He noted that the matter had been brought to his attention only a few days prior and that he was surprised others were aware of the transaction before the District Committee. He requested that similar transactions not be presented at the last minute in the future. Chair Hatem reported that two members of the Capital Improvement Committee approved the purchase on December 23, 2025.

Mr. Mercedes stated that when representatives from other towns contacted him regarding the new hangar and he had not yet been informed, it made him feel excluded from the committee process. He expressed hope that this situation would not continue. Mr. Jones suggested that following Capital Improvement Committee meetings, a memorandum be distributed to the District Committee to provide timely updates. Superintendent Lavoie agreed with the Vice Chair Mejia and Mr. Mercedes regarding the communication concerns, apologized, and accepted full responsibility for the lack of timely communication.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Faris Yes
Ms. Disla Absent
Mr. Jones Yes
Mr. Mejia Yes
Mr. Mercedes Yes
Mr. Tarbox Yes
Mr. Hatem Yes
#19085

b. Vote to Change the Original Agreement (School Charter) to Lease Land at Lawrence Airport

Superintendent Lavoie reported that the District must amend the Greater Lawrence Technical School Regional Charter to permit entry into a sublease for land held for school purposes at the City of Lawrence’s Lawrence Municipal Airport. The proposed sublease will have a maximum term of twenty (20) years, with an option to extend for an additional four (4) years at the discretion of the Committee. The monthly base rent will be \$607.65 (\$7,291.80 annually), subject to adjustment every third April based on changes in the Consumer Price Index. The District will also be responsible for its allocable share of common area maintenance costs, including electricity, snow plowing, Secretary of State annual reporting fees, and insurance. The sublease will include any additional terms and conditions deemed to be in the best interests of the District.

MOTION: Vice Chair Mejia moved to change the original agreement (School Charter) to lease land at the Lawrence Airport

2ND: Mr. Jones

Vice Chair moved for discussion: Vice Chair Mejia asked if we can see the amended copy of the charter.

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

Ms. Disla Absent
Mr. Jones Yes
Mr. Mejia Yes
Mr. Mercedes Yes
Mr. Tarbox Yes
Ms. Faris Yes
Mr. Hatem Yes
#19086

Mr. Mercedes spoke regarding the upcoming Superintendent search and suggested either extending the length of regular meetings or scheduling special meetings to begin at 6:00 PM. He noted that the current meeting time of 3:00 PM is difficult for committee members who are working.

4. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to adjourn at 4:20PM

2ND: Vice Chair Mejia

VOTE: Unanimous

#19087

Respectfully Submitted:

Minutes Reviewed:

Handwritten signature of Susan Lally in blue ink.

Susan Lally
District Recorder

Handwritten signature of John N. Lavoie in blue ink.

John N. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director