

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Meeting of the Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee
Wednesday, January 14th, 2026 at 6:30 PM
Charlton Middle School
2 Oxford Rd.
Charlton, MA 01507

Minutes

I. Call Meeting to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:31pm
In attendance:

Jeanne Costello, Chair
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani, Vice-Chair
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

II. Pledge of Allegiance

III. Moment of Silence

IV. DCRSD Superintendent's Award - Christina Arthanayake

Superintendent Lamarche awarded Christina Arthanayake with the Superintendent's certificate of academic excellence.

SHRHS Principal's Award - Kate Moran

Principal Elwell awarded Kate Moran with the 2026 Principal's academic excellence award.

V. Consent Agenda Items

- A. Approval of the Warrant
- B. Approval of Minutes Regular Meeting – December 10th, 2025
- C. Out of State Field Trips (Policy IJOA) – #266, February 28th 2026

A motion by C. Carmignani, seconded by A. Aube to approve the consent agenda items passed unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

VI. Communications

- A. Aube shared that the Charlton Fire Department is giving free CPR training on the 3rd Monday of the month.
- C. Carmignani stated she received a communication from an 8th grade DMS parent supporting students from Bay Path joining the DCRSD color guard.
- M. Chickering wanted to remind everyone that the next SEPAC meeting will be on January 21st and will be fully virtual.

VII. Student Representative's Report - Hayley Phommala

- Students will begin mid-terms on Friday February 16th.
- Both the girls and boys basketball teams played Marlboro last night. The boys won at home 47-23 and the girls won away 59-42.
- The Drama club presented Letters From the Titanic this past weekend.
- The National Honor Society is selling Krispy Kreme Donuts. Proceeds will support the organization with upcoming events.

VIII. Superintendent's Report - Steven Lamarche

Fiscal Year 2026 stability has provided an important on ramp to the Fiscal Year 2027 conversation. As we look ahead, our focus must remain on prudent fiscal management, proactive planning, and clear communication with our stakeholders. Strengthening and aligning our District Plan, Curriculum Plan, Technology Plan, and Capital Plan will be essential to navigating the years ahead and ensuring that Dudley Charlton remains responsibly prepared to serve students while honoring the trust of our communities.

IX. Public Comment

- Michelle McLaughlin from Dudley, a parent of students in the District and a student attending Bay Path would like our policy JJIBA looked at so Bay Path students can participate in Color Guard.
- Andrew Evanski from Dudley believes that any student that resides in the District, whether they go to Bay Path or not should be allowed to participate in the programs at DCRSD if they are not offered at the school they attend. He asked that the School Committee consider amending the policy and allow Bay Path students to participate in the DCRSD programs.
- Lila Evanski from Dudley and a student at Bay Path would like to participate in SHRHS Color Guard and asked that the School Committee reconsider allowing Bay Path students in Color Guard.

X. New Business

- A. Report of Director of Pupil Personnel Services - Heather Harriman
Director Harriman presented two Special Education Updates. One was on Least Restrictive Environment, LRE and the other on Integrated Monitoring.
Director Harriman answered questions from members of the School Committee.
- B. School Year Calendars 2026-2027 and 2027-2028
Superintendent Lamarche recommended calendars for school year 2026-2027 and school year 2027-2028 be approved.

A motion by C. Carmignani, seconded by A. Aube to approve the 2026-2027 school year calendar passed unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

A motion by C. Carmignani, seconded by J. Dell'Ovo to approve the 2027-2028 school year calendar passed unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

C. Policies

1. Action

a) KBG - Parent Advisory Councils

A motion by C. Carmignani, seconded by A. Aube to accept policy KBG was approved unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

b) KBE - Relations with Parent Booster Organizations
A motion by C. Carmignani, seconded by A. Aube to accept policy KBE was approved unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

c) KI - Visitors to Schools
A motion by A. Aube, seconded by J. Dell'Ovo to accept policy KI was approved unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

d) ECAB - Access to Buildings and Grounds
A motion by A. Aube, seconded by J. Dell'Ovo to accept policy ECAB was approved unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

e) IHBH - Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy
A motion by A. Aube, seconded by J. Dell'Ovo to accept policy IHBH was approved unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

f) Rename current KI to IHBAA
J. Costello entertained a motion to approve the new adopted policy KI being renamed IHBAA. A motion by A. Aube, seconded by J. Dell'Ovo to rename current policy KI to IHBAA passed unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

The motions by A. Aube and J. Dell'Ovo were rescinded due to a mistake that was made while entertaining a motion.

J. Costello entertained a motion to rename the current policy KI to policy IHBAA.
A motion by A. Aube, seconded by J. Dell'Ovo to rename the current policy KI to IHBAA passed unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
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2. Distribution

- a) EFBA - School Food and Nutrition - Meal Modification
- b) IKF - Graduation Requirements
- c) JIH – Search and Seizure

Superintendent Lamarche answered all questions from School Committee members regarding Policy EFBA, IKF, and JIH.

D. Director of Finance and Operations Report - Joseph DeSantis

1. FY25 Fiscal Year Close Out Process Update

FY2025 close out is in process. CBIZ, the District's audit firm, performed their annual audit of DCRSD financial statements with resulting FY2025 financial statements to be issued subsequent to audit testing results. Excess and Deficiency certification (E&D) is in process for finalization with finalized results expected in January 2026.

2. FY27 Student Transportation Contract Renewal

First Student and VanPool contracts have built-in options for renewal in FY2027 and FY2028. Based on the improved performance of both vendors with regards to communication and on-road efficiency over the last year, it is my recommendation to pick up the fourth year option and review the contracts for FY2027. A decision on the second year option for FY2028 will be determined next school year and will be based on continued improved performances and vendor competition.

J. Costello entertained a motion to pick up the FY27 fourth year option for First Student contract. A motion by A. Aube, seconded by J. Dell'Ovo was passed unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Caitlynn Panczyk

Jaime Dell'Ovo
Anthony Aube

J. Costello entertained a motion to pick up the FY27 fourth year option for VanPool contract. A motion by A. Aube, seconded by M. Chickering was passed unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

3. FY27 Budget & Capital Impact Memo

Preparation for FY2027 Operating and Capital Budgets has begun with preliminary meetings between building leadership, central office and School Committee having taken place with initial needs and requests being identified.

E. School Committee Goals Mid-Year Review

- Policy Sub-Committee has a draft handbook that is not ready to come out yet.
- DCRSD School Committee calendar is available for all members
- School Committee liaisons have been assigned to School Council meetings.
- Student advisory council has been started.

- PD and HQIM is discussed at Teaching & Learning Sub-Committee meetings.
- Community round table will be discussed at the Budget & Capital Sub-Committee meeting for a date in the spring.

XI. Adjourn

A motion by A. Aube, seconded by M. Chickering to adjourn the meeting at 9:12 pm was passed unanimously.

Jeanne Costello
Maureen Chickering
Jaime Dell'Ovo

Cathleen Carmignani
Anthony Aube
Caitlynn Panczyk

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.

Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee Goals 2025–2026

Governance and Leadership Capacity:

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee will strengthen its governance practices and leadership capacity by building consistent systems, fostering effective communication, and deepening collaboration with students, families, and community partners.

Educational Excellence and Student Experience:

The School Committee will ensure all students have equitable access to high-quality instruction, effective educators, and enriching experiences that promote learning, engagement, and well-being.

Fiscal Responsibility and Resource Stewardship:

The School Committee will strategically align fiscal planning and resource allocation with the District's 10-Year Capital Plan to ensure financial sustainability and equitable student outcomes.

Next Meeting Dates:

School Committee Meeting: 6:30 PM Wednesday, January 28, 2026 - SHRHS

Policy Review Subcommittee: 4:00 PM Tuesday, January 13, 2026 - District Office

Curriculum for Teaching and Learning: TBD

Capital Outlay/Safety Subcommittee: 9:00 AM Friday January 16, 2026 Video Conference

Budget and Finance Subcommittee: 10:00 AM Friday January 16, 2026 Video Conference

Executive Sessions Minutes Review: TBD

Future Agenda Items: MCAS/Student Achievement Report, Special Education/ English Learner/ 504, PAES Showcase, School Councils, Program of Study HS/MS, Student Handbook updates

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- III. Moment of Silence**
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SHRHS Principal's Award - Kate Moran
- V. Consent Agenda Items**
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- VI. Communications**
- VII. Student Representative's Report - Hayley Phommala**
- VIII. Superintendent's Report - Steven Lamarche**
- IX. Public Comment**
- X. New Business**
 - A. Report of Director of Pupil Personnel Services - Heather Harriman
 - B. School Year Calendars 2026-2027 and 2027-2028
 - C. Policies
 1. Action
 - a) KBG - Parent Advisory Councils
 - b) KBE - Relations with Parent Booster Organizations
 - c) KI - Visitors to Schools
 - d) ECAB - Access to Buildings and Grounds
 - e) IHBH - Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy
 - f) Rename current KI to IHBAA
 2. Distribution
 - a) EFBA - School Food and Nutrition - Meal Modification
 - b) IKF - Graduation Requirements
 - c) JIH – Search and Seizure
 - D. Director of Finance and Operations Report - Joseph DeSantis
 1. FY25 Fiscal Year Close Out Process Update
 2. FY27 Student Transportation Contract Renewal
 3. FY27 Budget & Capital Impact Memo
 - E. School Committee Goals Mid-Year Review
- XI. Adjourn**

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Steven M. Lamarche
Superintendent of Schools

Kelly A. True
Assistant Superintendent
for Teaching and Learning

Heather M. Harriman
Director of Pupil Personnel
Services

Joseph J. DeSantis
Director of Finance and
Operations

MaryEllen Cerbone
Director of Human Resources

January 14, 2026

Superintendent's Certificate of Academic Excellence

Ms. Christina Arthanayake
1 Morton Station Road
Charlton, MA 01507

Parents:
Mr. Deepthi Arthanayake, and
Mrs. Marian Arthanayake

To the Dudley Charlton School Committee and the Dudley Charlton community, I proudly present the 2025-2026 Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents Certificate of Academic Excellence Award to Shepherd Hill Regional High School senior Ms. Christina Arthanayake, ranked first in the Class of 2026.

Christina has earned a weighted grade point average of 4.55 with a consistent A plus average across all coursework. During her senior year, she is enrolled in seven Advanced Placement courses, including two taken independently online, demonstrating exceptional discipline, initiative, and intellectual ambition.

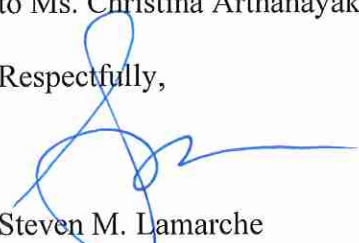
Her academic achievements include a perfect score on the national Project Lead the Way Principles of Biomedical Science assessment, second place honors in the Massachusetts Academic Decathlon, and receipt of the Jae S. Lim Award for Science. Several of Christina's most advanced courses were completed outside the traditional school schedule, requiring a high level of personal accountability and sustained commitment.

Christina applies her academic strengths in service to others through peer tutoring, supporting classmates in mastering complex content and achieving academic success. She is widely regarded as loyal, intelligent, and steady, qualities reflected in her quiet leadership and thoughtful approach to challenges. She credits her passion for science to the mentorship of Ms. Anya Wade.

Christina plans to pursue studies in biology with the goal of attending medical school and becoming a pediatrician or neonatologist. Her desire to work with children, paired with her academic strength and character, positions her for meaningful impact.

In summary, Christina Arthanayake exemplifies academic excellence, integrity, and purpose. With great pride, I present the 2025-2026 Superintendent's Certificate of Academic Excellence to Ms. Christina Arthanayake.

Respectfully,



Steven M. Lamarche
Superintendent of Schools

From: Form Approvals districtoffice@dcrsd.org
Subject: Request #266 for your review
Date: December 16, 2025 at 9:45 AM
To: districtoffice@dcrsd.org

REQUEST #266 | RECIPIENTS: 4 of 8 | DEC 16, 2025

Field Trip/Event Form - Day Trips, In or Out of State and Overnight

You have been requested to review the following:

Principal/School: delwell@dcrsd.org

Email Address: csnow@dcrsd.org

Field Trip/Event Title: Nesba
Percussion/Guard
Show

Field Trip/Event Date Please note that you request must be submitted two-weeks prior to the date entered for a day trip, and, six months prior to the date entered for an out-of-state or overnight trip.: Feb 28, 2026

Departure Time: 3:00:00 PM

Return Time: 8:00:00 PM

Address/Destination of Field Trip/Event Must include street address, city/town and state: Cranston RI

Grade/Group: Winter Percussion
and Winter Guard

Location Contact/Telephone Number: Sam Gaulin 508-
737-1041

Number of Students: 25/30

Number of Chaperones/Adults Proper supervision and adult/student ratio is 10-12 students per adult chaperone. Work with your building office staff to ensure all chaperons have an up-to-date CORI.: 4

List the Names of the Chaperones/Adults: James Bilis
Mandy Baldino
Julie Russell
Christine Aronson

Do All Chaperones/Adults have an up-to-date CORI through DCRSD.:

Yes

Three weeks prior to the event/field-trip, the Special Education Coordinator must receive a list of attending students. The Special Education Coordinator will review the needs of students and identify accommodations or supports that may be needed to ensure each student can access and participate in the planned activities. If this does not occur, the trip/event may be canceled to prevent civil rights violations.:

Understood (by checking this box you take full responsibility and liability if this did not occur)

Three weeks prior to the event/field-trip, your school nurse must receive a list of attending students. The school nurse will review the needs of students and identify accommodations or supports that may be needed to ensure each student can access and participate in the planned activities. If this does not occur, the trip/event may be canceled to prevent civil rights violations.:

Understood (by checking this box you take full responsibility and liability if this did not occur)

Total Cost of the Field Trip/event including transportation:

\$150 registration fee

Per Student Cost:

0

Funding Source:

SHRHS Music Parents Association

As a result of selecting this field-based curriculum experience or event in accordance with School Committee Policy IJOA, how will your students benefit and what will your students know and be able to do as a result?:

Performance opportunity

Additional Funding Source or N/A:

No Funding Required

In accordance with School Committee Policy IJOA, what are your student follow-up activities or lessons?:

rehearsal

Are substitute(s) required in School for the School Day as a Result of this Field Trip/Event. If so Please Explain and Identify the Number of Substitutes Required as an Added Cost to the Request:

no

Administrative Assistant/School:

lpytko@dcrsd.org

Special Education Coordinator:

sproscs@dcrsd.org

School Nurse:

rgoetz@dcrsd.org

Is this an overnight trip request?:

No



Fiscal Year 2027 Budget Process: Stability, Fiscal Discipline, and Strategic Priorities

As we enter the Fiscal Year 2027 budget cycle, our work continues to be grounded in fiscal stability, conservative planning, and a commitment to financial stewardship, informed by a clear understanding of the evolving cost pressures facing public school districts across Massachusetts. While our approach remains deliberate and measured, the fiscal environment in which we operate continues to tighten, and the cost of sustaining our educational program is increasing at a pace that outstrips available recurring revenues.

This reality is reflected in the broader state fiscal outlook. State officials recently reached a consensus revenue agreement projecting \$44.9 billion in total tax collections for Fiscal Year 2027, representing approximately 2.9 percent growth over Fiscal Year 2026. This estimate includes revenue generated by the surtax on high earning households. When surtax revenue is excluded, the forecast anticipates \$42.2 billion in tax revenue, or approximately 2.4 percent growth over the current Fiscal Year 2026 benchmark. While this projection reflects modest economic expansion, it reinforces that state revenues are not growing at a rate sufficient to absorb inflation driven cost growth across state and local government services.

Over the past several years, we have worked hard to stabilize long term contracts and obligations to mitigate substantial increases in transportation, utilities, and other fixed costs. These efforts have helped reduce volatility and support more predictable budgeting. However, the cost of simply continuing operations, even at current service levels, continues to rise. Looking ahead, the fiscal pressures associated with Fiscal Years 2028 and 2029 are expected to intensify, as constrained local and state revenue growth intersects with escalating structural cost drivers.

As we navigate these financial considerations, we are also integrating multiple district planning efforts to ensure that our budget development aligns with both immediate needs and long-term sustainability. Capital improvement needs, instructional priorities, student services, health insurance, and retiree benefit planning must be considered collectively, as each directly influences the district's financial posture and long-term viability.

At its core, our approach continues to prioritize stability as an essential foundation as we prepare the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District and the communities of Charlton and Dudley for the significant capital investments that lie ahead. These upcoming projects require careful financial planning, and our commitment remains to balance fiscal responsibility with the educational expectations of our students, staff, and families.

This year's budget presentations will continue to emphasize clearly defined focus areas that guide fiscal decision making. We recognize the importance of maintaining the priorities that principals and the School Committee advocate for annually, and we remain committed to ensuring that our schools receive the support necessary to meet student needs. At the same time, we must navigate the complexity of negotiating fair and sustainable labor agreements that reflect both respect for our educators and fiscal responsibility to our communities.

A key factor shaping the Fiscal Year 2027 discussion is health insurance, which remains one of the most significant sources of budget uncertainty. Health insurance cost growth continues to place substantial pressure on the operating budget, limiting flexibility and crowding out other investments. These challenges are compounded by the complexity of retiree health benefit planning, which operates on a different calendar than active employee health plans and adds another layer of fiscal risk.

One of our guiding principles remains the maintenance of a level services budget while positioning the district for future growth. This means sustaining the programs, staffing, and instructional resources our students rely on without compromising financial stewardship. As in every budget cycle, we identify potential reductions, but the challenge remains how to preserve the value of existing positions and programs while managing rising costs that are largely outside discretionary control.

In addition, the district continues to leverage statewide and federal programs that help reduce operational costs while directly supporting students and families. Dudley-Charlton participates in the National School Lunch Program and qualifies for the Community Eligibility Provision, in part because district staff understand and actively respond to community expectations to seek available revenue sources and cost-offset programs whenever possible. By maintaining universal free lunch access through this framework, the district supports student well-being while stabilizing participation rates, maximizing reimbursement, and reducing administrative burden. These efforts contribute to our ongoing work to lower local operating costs and reflect the district's broader commitment to fiscal prudence and responsible stewardship of community resources.

At this juncture, it is important to be clear that the needs before us are real and immediate. As a district, we continuously evaluate return on investment, distinguishing between initiatives that are essential to safety, access, compliance, and student growth, and those that may be desirable but not critical at this time. Fiscal prudence requires that limited resources be directed first toward addressing foundational needs, with a clear and defensible return on investment for students, staff, and the broader school community.

The Fiscal Year 2027 budget reflects this discipline. Two proposed examples illustrate this approach. First, the inclusion of a School Resource Officer, in coordination with the Charlton Police Department for Charlton schools, represents an investment in student safety, prevention, and relationship building. This is not an enhancement for convenience, but a necessary measure to support a safe and secure learning environment.

Second, the proposed addition of an Assistant Director of Student Services is driven by the increasing complexity and volume of special education needs, particularly out of district placements. This role is essential to ensuring appropriate oversight of placements, compliance with state and federal regulations, and the consistent application of well-designed processes and procedures. Just as importantly, this position strengthens our ability to apply the right programming and supports, establish access, and promote meaningful growth for students with disabilities while managing costs responsibly.

These investments reflect the district's commitment to sustainability, fiscal prudence, and outcomes. They are grounded in need, aligned with regulatory and operational responsibility, and evaluated through the lens of return on investment rather than preference or convenience.

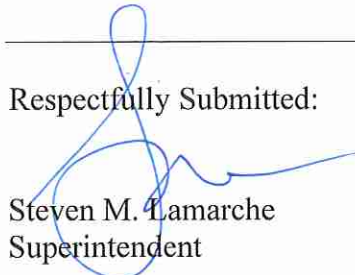
In addition, the district continues to experience a shift in how instructional improvement efforts are funded, as external and continuation grants transition to local fiscal support. We have made intentional investments in high quality instructional materials and curriculum alignment, and these investments require ongoing year over year fiscal support to maintain their effectiveness. While we have applied conservative measures, including level funding of supplies year over year, diminishing external funding reinforces the need for sustainable local support.

We recognize that budgetary constraints are a reality, but our approach must remain collaborative and accountable, working closely with our towns, advocating for the resources our schools need, and making deliberate adjustments where necessary. Conservative budgeting has been essential in meeting community expectations, but it does not, on its own, ensure the return on investment that parents and staff rightly expect.

Conclusion

Fiscal Year 2026 stability has provided an important on ramp to the Fiscal Year 2027 conversation. As we look ahead, our focus must remain on prudent fiscal management, proactive planning, and clear communication with our stakeholders. Strengthening and aligning our District Plan, Curriculum Plan, Technology Plan, and Capital Plan will be essential to navigating the years ahead and ensuring that Dudley-Charlton remains responsibly prepared to serve students while honoring the trust of our communities.

Respectfully Submitted:



Steven M. Lamarche
Superintendent

Here a few important dates in 2026

January

Monday, January 19, 2026 – No School All – Martin Luther King Day

February

Monday, February 16, 2026 – Friday, February 20, 2026 – Winter vacation

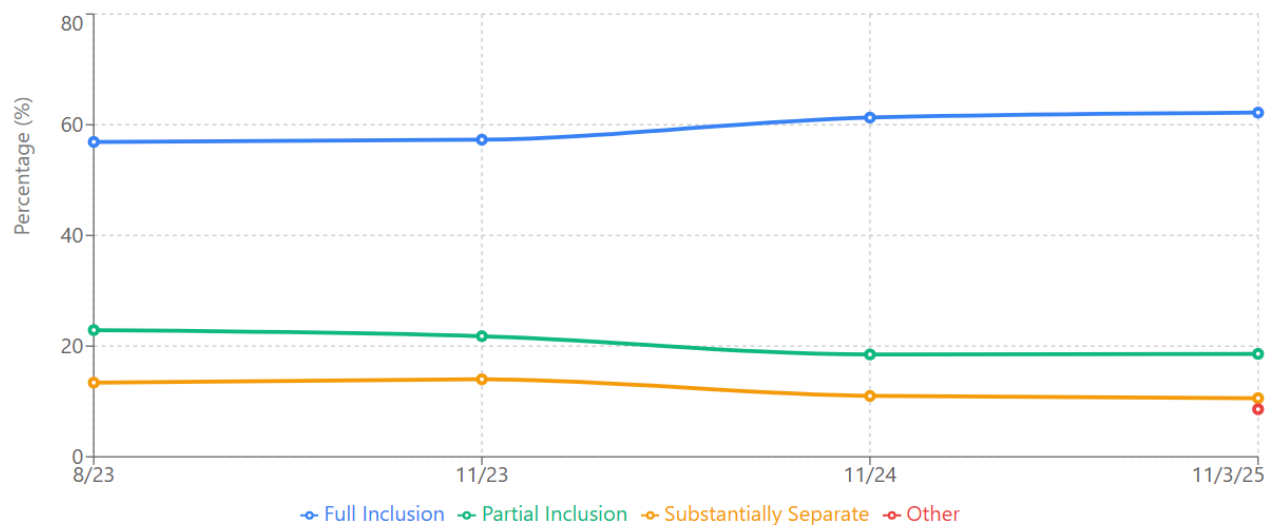
Special Education Update January 14, 2026

Least Restrictive Environment

Overall Trend

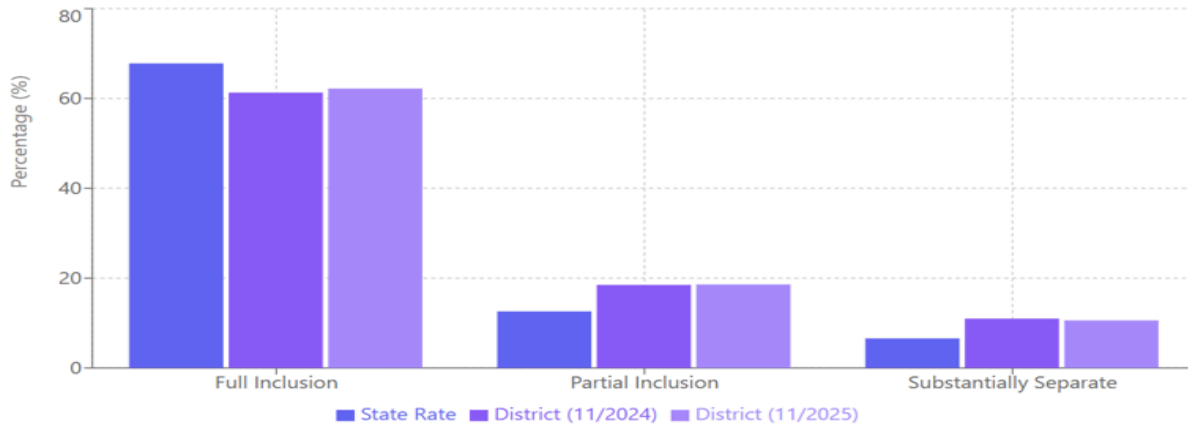
From November 2023 to November 2025, the district has demonstrated steady progress toward more inclusive placements, with an increasing proportion of students with disabilities educated in full inclusion settings and a corresponding decline in substantially separate placements. While the district remains below the state's full inclusion rate, the gap has narrowed over this two-year period.

↗ District-Wide LRE Trends



Progress Highlight: Full Inclusion has increased from 56.9% to 62.2% (+5.3 points), while Substantially Separate placements decreased from 13.4% to 10.6% (-2.8 points). District is moving toward the state target of 67.2% full inclusion.

District vs State Comparison



Key Observations:

- Full Inclusion: District is 5.6% below state rate (gap narrowing)
- Partial Inclusion: District is 6% above state rate
- Substantially Separate: District is 4% above state rate (improving)

Full Inclusion

- District full inclusion increased from **57.3% (Nov 2023)** to **61.3% (Nov 2024)** and **62.2% (Nov 2025)**. The state target for full inclusion for students from kindergarten to 21 for the 2024-2025 school year was 65.49%.
- This reflects a **nearly 5-percentage-point increase** over two years, indicating sustained movement toward educating students in the least restrictive environment.

Partial Inclusion

- Partial inclusion decreased slightly overall, from **21.8% (Nov 2023)** to **18.6% (Nov 2025)**.
- This shift suggests that many students previously in partial inclusion settings are now accessing either **full inclusion** or more appropriately matched placements.

Substantially Separate Placements

- Substantially separate placements declined from **14.0% (Nov 2023)** to **11.0% (Nov 2024)** and **10.6% (Nov 2025)**.
- This downward trend reflects progress in reducing reliance on more restrictive environments across the district.

Subgroup Patterns

- **Hispanic students** generally mirror district trends, with full inclusion rates increasing slightly overall. Full inclusion rates have increased from 54.5% in 2023 to 58.9% at the end of 2025.
- **Early childhood (PK)** shows the most dramatic change. Full inclusion rates increased from 33.3% in November 2023 to 45.8% in November 2025. This is largely attributed to the phasing out of subseparate preschool programming. While 45.8% may initially appear low, this figure reflects the fact that many of our preschool students receive appointment-based services, primarily speech therapy, rather than attending a full preschool program. Since these students are not enrolled in a preschool setting, their services are not classified as full inclusion placements. The state target for full inclusion at the preschool level was 52.31% in the 2024-2025 school year.
- At the **secondary level (Grades 9–12)**, the data shows more variability year to year, indicating an ongoing area for focused LRE improvement and support.

Disability Categories

- When we had the ERS audit in February 2024, our district was found to have identified a high percentage of students with a communication disability compared to the state average.
- During the 2022-2023 school year, 25% of our students were identified with a communication disability. Communication was not even in the top 3 disabilities identified across the state. Specific Learning Disability (SLD) was the most frequently identified disability across the state (24% of students with IEP's).
- SLD is now the most frequently identified disability in DCRSD with 21.9% of students being eligible for special education services under this disability category.
- Communication as a primary disability has decreased from 25% in 2022-2023 to 20.7% currently. The district's identification of Autism remains consistent with state averages.
- At this time, 2 out of the 3 most frequently identified disabilities are consistent between DCRSD and the state.
- DCRSD still identifies a higher level of students with communication than the state and a lower level of students with Health when compared to the state.

ERS Audit 2024 (State)	DCRSD '22-23	DCRSD March 2025	DCRSD January 2026
SLD 24%	Communication 25%	Communication 23.34%	SLD 21.9%
Autism 16%	SLD 20%	SLD 22.3%	Communication 20.7%
Health 15%	Autism 15%	Autism 14.3%	Autism 15.5%

Integrated Monitoring

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) conducts Integrated Monitoring every three years. This year, DCRSD is participating in this process. Districts are divided into two groups (Group A and Group B) that alternate monitoring cycles. This means each group is reviewed every six years. DCRSD is currently in Group B. In three years, DCRSD will be in Group A.

The special education focus in Group B includes monitoring compliance with:

- Child Find, which includes outreach by the district as well as identifying students for tiered intervention, progress monitoring, and referring students for an evaluation if a disability is suspected
- Parent advisory council for special education (SEPAC)
- Assistive technology; specialized materials and equipment
- IEP implementation, accountability, and financial responsibility
- Licensure information for special education teachers, related service providers, and the director of pupil personnel services
- Professional development
- Special education facilities and classrooms
- Special education programs and services are evaluated

Documents were uploaded to the DESE portal this fall as part of the self-assessment. DESE has begun to review the documentation and a team will conduct on-site visits to the district on January 20-21. Following the visit, DESE will issue a report identifying areas where the district was in compliance and areas that are out of compliance. Any areas of non-compliance must be corrected according to DESE's corrective action plan within one year of the report date.

Three years ago, DCRSD was found out of compliance with DESE regarding Least Restrictive Environment (LRE). This required the district to complete a root cause analysis and create an action plan to address LRE concerns. LRE is monitored annually through the Special Education Annual Determination and will be reviewed again in three years during the Group A Integrated Monitoring cycle.

Out of District

Our student population is growing in both complexity and intensity of need. We are serving an increasing number of students with significant disabilities. While the district has successfully educated most students within the district despite limited resources, the rising complexity of student needs is creating new challenges. As a result, we are seeing an increase in the number of students requiring out-of-district placements.

Currently, we have 28 students in out-of-district placements. Of these, four students do not live in the district but we remain fiscally responsible for them. Additionally, one of these students moved into the district this year who was already placed out-of-district.

Three students will age out or graduate at the end of the 2025-2026 school year. However, six students are currently pending out-of-district placements. Based on these numbers, we project 31 students in out-of-district placements at the start of the 2026-2027 school year (28 current + 6 pending - 3 graduating = 31). This number will increase if additional needs arise or if additional students move into the district that are currently placed in out of district programs.

While this represents an increase, our out-of-district placement rate remains significantly lower than most districts in Massachusetts.

District	% Students on IEP's OOD	% Students in District OOD
*DCRSD (Current)	4.05%	0.80%
*DCRSD (Projected)	4.50%	0.89%
Range from Other Districts in MA	2.52-16.67%	0.47-3.49%

Although only a small number of our students are placed in out-of-district programs, they are enrolled across 18 different facilities. Under Massachusetts regulations, our district maintains full legal responsibility for monitoring these placements to ensure each student receives the services outlined in their Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Our district must:

- Verify that each student's IEP is being properly implemented
- Ensure services are designed to help students achieve their IEP goals
- Maintain comprehensive documentation of all monitoring activities and site visits in student files
- Initiate and coordinate all IEP Team meetings while students are in out-of-district programs
- Guarantee students receive all legally mandated special education services and procedural protections under Massachusetts special education regulations (603 CMR 28.09)
- Documentation of monitoring must be kept in the file of each student in an out of district placement

This monitoring process requires significant time and resources, particularly given that some placements are located two hours away from our district and monitoring includes on site visits. We previously had two part-time contracted positions dedicated to out-of-district coordination but these positions were eliminated a few years ago. Currently, one special education coordinator handles out-of-district oversight while simultaneously managing their regular caseload of in-district students. With nearly 700 students receiving special education services district-wide, this dual responsibility places considerable strain on our special education coordinator team.

Dudley-Charlton Regional School District

2026-2027 School Calendar

SC. Draft.01.14.2026

August						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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2	3	4	5	6	7	8
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September (21)						
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March (22)						
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- = Opening/Close of School
- = Holiday/School Vacation - No School All Students
- = Early Release Day All students
- = Educator Orientation/In-Service No School All Students
- = Class of 2027 Commencement

End of Trimester/Quarter Schedule PK-12+

Elementary Trimesters

Term 1 - Friday, November 20, 2026
 Term 2 - Friday, March 5, 2027
 Term 3 - Last day of School June 2027

SHRHS and Middle School Quarters

Quarter 1 - Friday, October 30, 2026
 Quarter 2 - Friday, January 22, 2027
 Quarter 3 - Friday, April 2, 2027
 Quarter 4 - Last day of school June 2027

August 31 - Educator New School Year Orientation

September 1 - First Day of School 1-12+

September 2 - First Day of School K

September 4 - Early Release All

September 7 - No School All - Labor Day

September 8 - First Day of School PreK

September 25 - Early Release All Students/Educator PD

October 9 - No School All Students/Educator In-Service Day

October 12 - Columbus Day - No School - All

November 5 - Early Release All Students/Parent Conferences

November 11 - Veterans Day - No School All

November 25 - Early Release - All

November 26-27 - Thanksgiving - No School - All

December 11 - Early Release All Students - Educator PD

December 23 - Early Release - All

Dec. 24 - Jan. 1, 2027 - No School - All - Holiday Vacation

January 18 - MLK Day - No School - All

February 15-19 - No School All - Winter Vacation

March 11 - Early Release All Students/Parent Conferences

March 12 - No School All Students/Educator In-service

March 26- Early Release - All Students (Good Friday)

April 19-23 - No School All - Spring Break

May 21 - Early Release - All Students/Educator PD

May 24- No School All - Memorial Day

May 30 - Class of 2027 Commencement

June 15 - Early Release - Last Day of School 180th Day

June 18 - Observance Juneteenth Day - No School All

June 23 - Early Release - 185th Day - w/5 Snow Days

State regulations require 185 days be listed in the school calendar; the school year will end after the 180th day.

Changes to the School Year Calendar requires a School Committee Vote

For information on school attendance and observances of religious holidays, please refer to School Committee Policy [JE - School Attendance Policy](#)

Dudley-Charlton Regional School District

2027-2028 School Calendar

SC. Draft.01.14.2026

August (1)						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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September (21)						
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October (19)						
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November (19)						
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December (17)						
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January (20)						
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February (16)						
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March (22)						
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April (15)						
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May (22)						
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June (8)						
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25	26	27	28	29	30	



-  = Opening/Close of School
-  = Holiday/School Vacation - No School All Students
-  = Early Release Day All students
-  = Educator Orientation/In-Service No School All Students
-  = Class of 2028 Commencement

End of Trimester/Quarter Schedule PK-12+

Elementary Trimesters

Term 1 - Friday, November 19, 2027

Term 2 - Friday, March 3, 2028

Term 3 - Last day of School June 2028

SHRHS and Middle School Quarters

Quarter 1 - Friday, October 29, 2027

Quarter 2 - Friday, January 21, 2028

Quarter 3 - Friday, April 7, 2028

Quarter 4 - Last day of school June 2028

August 30 - Educator New School Year Orientation

August 31 - First Day of School All 1-12+ Students

September 1 - First Day of School PreK/K Students

September 3 - Early Release - All

September 6 - Labor Day - No School All

September 24 - Early Release All Students/Educator PD

October 8 - No School All Students/Educator In-Service Day

October 11 - Columbus Day - No School - All

November 4 - Early Release All Students/Parent Conferences

November 11 - Veterans Day - No School All

November 24 - Early Release - All

November 25-26 - Thanksgiving - No School - All

December 10 - Early Release All Students - Educator PD

December 23 - Early Release - All

Dec. 24 - December 31 - No School - All - Holiday Vacation

January 17 - MLK Day - No School - All

February 21-25 - No School All - Winter Vacation

March 3 - Early Release All - Educator In-service

March 23 - Early Release All Students/Parent Conferences

March 24 - No School All Students/Educator In-Service Day

April 14 - Early Release - All Students (Good Friday)

April 17-21 - No School All - Spring Break

May 26 - Early Release - All Students/Educator PD

May 29 - No School All - Memorial Day

June 4 - Class of 2028 Commencement

June 12 - Early Release - Last Day of School 180th Day

June 19 - Juneteenth Day - No School All

June 20 - Early Release - 185th Day - w/5 Snow Days

State regulations require 185 days be listed in the school calendar; the school year will end after the 180th day.

Changes to the School Year Calendar requires a School Committee Vote

**For information on school attendance and observances of religious holidays, please refer to School Committee Policy
[JE - School Attendance Policy](#)**

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

(NEW) File: KBG

PARENT ADVISORY COUNCILS (PACs)

Massachusetts General Law requires the formation and support of specific Parent Advisory Councils. These PACs can provide valuable feedback for School Committees. Committees should engage with their PACs to encourage stakeholder feedback by both designating liaisons to their PACs as with other groups and inviting the PACs to present updates on their activities to the Committee on a regular basis.

PACs must be granted access to district resources to assist them in their operations and activities where available, including but not limited to spaces for meetings and the ability to communicate with parents in the manner most accessible. PACs will not be charged for using district facilities.

Special Education Parent Advisory Councils

Every district in Massachusetts and their school committee are responsible for the establishment and support of a Special Education Parent Advisory Council, or SEPAC, in their city or town.

The "duties of the SEPAC, shall include but not be limited to: advising the school committee on matters that pertain to the education and safety of students with disabilities: meeting regularly with school officials to participate in the planning, development, and evaluation of the school committee's special education programs."

If a district does not have an established SEPAC, the School Committee, in conjunction with the district, shall solicit volunteers to form an interim SEPAC board. The interim board shall then work independently to create bylaws following the guidance put forth by DESE and hold formal elections by the end of the current school year.

In the absence of a SEPAC, the Student Services Department will hold the required annual Basic Rights workshop until one is established.

English Learner Parent Advisory Councils and Multilanguage Learner Parent Advisory Councils

ELPACs, or MLPACs, are required in Massachusetts under the following conditions:

"School districts or charter schools operating a language acquisition program for ELs serving 100 or more ELs or in which ELs comprise at least five percent of the school district's or charter school's student population, whichever is less; and/or

"Schools designated as underperforming or chronically underperforming and operating a program for ELs

ELPACs and MLPACs "are intended by law to advise school districts and schools regarding matters that impact ELs, such as providing advice on English learner education programs, meeting regularly with school officials about educational opportunities for ELs, and providing input on school or district improvement plans as they relate to ELs."

Schools and/or districts will provide notification to parents/guardians annually in a language that is accessible to them.

LEGAL REFS: MGL [Ch 71B, Section 3](#)

603 CMR [28.07](#) (4)

603 CMR [28.03](#) (1) (a) (4)

"Act Relative to Language Opportunity for Our Kids,"

[Chapter 138 of the Acts of 2017](#) (The LOOK Act)

OTHER REFS: Guidance for Special Education Parent Advisory Councils - DESE 2010

Guidance for English Learner Parent Advisory Councils - DESE 2018

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

(NEW) File: KBE

RELATIONS WITH PARENT/BOOSTER ORGANIZATIONS

To enhance communications between parents/guardians and school officials, the Committee encourages the maintenance of formal parent organizations, including booster organizations. For this purpose, the Committee will officially recognize parent organizations with the following requirements:

1. Organizations will be officially recognized by the superintendent or designee.
2. A vote, open to all parents/guardians of children enrolled, will designate the organization to be recognized if more than one organization with the same purpose makes the request to represent the same school or student body.
3. All parent organizations shall obtain 501C3 status and file appropriate paperwork with state authorities and make proof of such status available to school district administration.
4. Parent/booster organizations wishing to conduct raffles and games of chance must comply with all applicable required federal, state, and local laws and regulations, including but not limited to the receipt of all necessary permits, and the filing of all required reports and schedules.
5. All parent organizations need to recognize that spending on student activities must comply with federal law relating to equity among student genders.

LEGAL REFS: Title IX, Education Amendments of 1972

M.G.L. [271:7A](#)

[Massachusetts Attorney General's Guidance on Raffles](#)

940 CMR 12.00

CROSS REFS: ACA - Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex

KHA - Public Solicitation in Schools

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

(NEW) KI

Requires reindexing of current KI to IHBAA

VISITORS TO THE SCHOOLS

"Visitors" in this policy refers to anyone who is not a current student, a school staff member assigned to work in that specific building, or a district-level staff member with legitimate district business in the school building.

The superintendent shall develop procedures for visitor check-in and access to buildings.

Observations of educational spaces and programs by all visitors including parents/guardians will be governed by procedures developed by the Superintendent and/or their designee.

Once authorized, visitors are to proceed directly to the space in the building where the business they are attending to will be held. Staff are authorized to greet visitors in the hall and ensure they are proceeding to the space directed.

While in the building, visitors may not disrupt the building operations or go to spaces to which they are not invited or authorized. Visitors may not record or photograph students or staff while in the building without explicit prior permission of the superintendent or their designee; any such recording or photos must be done in alignment with district policies regarding staff and student privacy.

During non-school hours or on non-school days, access to the school buildings is limited to those attending school and district events or for uses authorized by the superintendent or their designee. Building access will be allowed only to those participating in or attending authorized events. Such access will be limited to only sections of the building required by the event authorized, including appropriate bathroom access.

The superintendent will ensure procedures enacting this, and related policies, are enacted and followed.

CROSS REFS: IHBAA - Observations of Special Education Programs

KF - Community Use of School Facilities

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

(NEW) File: ECAB

ECAB - ACCESS TO BUILDINGS AND GROUNDS

The buildings and grounds of the Dudley-Charlton Regional Schools represent a significant community investment. The primary purpose of that investment is for the students of the school district.

It is in the best interest of the public that this investment be secured while nonetheless providing maximum possible community use of the district buildings and grounds.

During school hours when school is in session, access to the buildings and grounds of the Dudley-Charlton Regional Schools are limited to district students, staff, and those with legitimate business with the school or district. Those visiting for recognized business must follow the district visitor policy and accompanying procedures. Access to school grounds during the school day, except for recognized school or district activities, is limited. Such limited use is secondary to use by any school or district activity or to any community use as provided through rental or donation.

During outside of school hours and on non-school days, the public is welcome to use school grounds from dawn until dusk under procedures promulgated by the superintendent.

Access to school buildings after school hours and on non-school days is only for attending school and district events or for uses authorized by the superintendent or their designee. Access within the building will be limited to only those participating in the authorized event. Such access will be limited to those rooms and spaces required by the event, including appropriate restroom access.

The superintendent will ensure that procedures enacting this and related policies are created and enforced.

CROSS REFS:

IHBAA, Observations of Special Education Programs

KF, Community Use of School Facilities

KI, Visitors to the Schools

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

(Amend) File: IHBH

Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy Purpose and Overview

Purpose and Overview

In accordance with Massachusetts regulations 603 CMR 4.00, the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District (DCRSD) shall maintain a Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy that ensures middle school students are made aware of and gain exposure to career technical education (CTE) schools and programs available to them in the district, regional, agricultural, and other public high schools.

This exploration and awareness shall be intentionally connected to each student's secondary and postsecondary academic and career planning to support informed decision-making as students prepare for high school enrollment and future pathways.

Goals

The goals of the Middle School Pathway Exploration Policy are to:

- Ensure equitable access for all middle school students to information about CTE and secondary school pathways, including Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational High School (Bay Path).
 - Provide structured opportunities for students to learn about career pathways in alignment with their future academic and career goals.
 - Establish clear partnerships between the district and the Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational High School (Bay Path) offering CTE.
 - Support student readiness for secondary and postsecondary planning **by aligning pathway exploration activities with the district's middle school academic guidance and planning processes.**
-

High School Pathway Options

Students enrolled in DCRSD middle schools have access to a variety of secondary school options including:

- Shepherd Hill Regional High School programs
- Southern Worcester County Regional Vocational Technical School (Bay Path RVTHS)
- Other agricultural high schools available to students by application

These pathways provide academic, technical, and career-related experiences that support both college and career readiness and inform students' long-term educational and career planning.

Middle School Career Exploration

The district shall provide middle school students with information about CTE programs and related careers through multiple methods including:

- Presentations delivered at middle schools by representatives from CTE schools and programs
- Written materials available in the school and distributed by mail or email
- Information posted on the district website

All presentations, written materials distributed by mail or email, and information posted on the district website shall be made available to students and families **no later than October 15 of each school year.**

Middle School CTE Tour Opportunities

The district will ensure that all middle school students have the opportunity to participate in tours of CTE schools and programs during regular school hours. Transportation costs for these tours shall be assumed by the school hosting the tours.

Students who participate in approved tours shall not receive an unexcused absence, provided that the CTE school or program confirms attendance.

Participation in tours and related activities shall be used to further support students' understanding of secondary and postsecondary academic and career options.

Collaboration with CTE Schools and Programs

The district will collaborate with CTE schools and programs to inform students about opportunities, admission timelines, expectations, and the relationship between middle school preparation and secondary school success.

Records and Admissions Support

The district will provide information to CTE schools and programs in support of the admission process, **limited to information that is relevant and permitted under the specific application and admission policy of the receiving CTE school**, and consistent with state and federal laws.

By October 15 of each school year, the middle school shall share the names and addresses of all enrolled 7th and 8th grade students with CTE schools and programs, in accordance with 603 CMR 4.03 and applicable privacy laws.

The district shall also maintain documentation of student participation in tours and other activities related to this policy.

Review and Updates

This policy will be reviewed and updated as required by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

REF: 603 CMR 4.03(6)(i)–(f),(j)

Adopted 11.12.2025

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY

KI

Observations of Special Education Programs

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District staff regularly collaborates with parents/guardians to provide timely response to requests received for observation of their children's current or proposed special education programs. Observations may be conducted by the parent/guardian or his/her designated private evaluator or educational consultant. The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District will provide an opportunity for observation of sufficient duration and extent to enable evaluation of the child's performance in his/her current program or to evaluate a proposed program's ability to enable the child to make effective progress.

1. Parents'/guardians' request to observe their child's current program or a potential placement must be made verbally or in writing to the building principal. Parents/guardians are asked to provide the following information: child's name, the observer's name and contact information, and purpose of the observation (including any particular part of the school day the observer wishes to see).
2. In order to assist in timely scheduling, the building principal or designee will contact the identified observer directly. Staff will generally be able to offer a time within a week of the request for an observation of an hour or less. However, if more extensive observation is required, scheduling may take longer. For urgent cases, efforts will be made to schedule the observation as soon as possible. The district does not generally schedule observations for certain portions of the year such as during MCAS testing or during the first few weeks of school. In addition, because it may not be possible to accommodate all requests during the last few weeks of school, parents are urged to submit any observation request they may have as early as practicable in the school year. In addition, school staff retains its right and obligation to restrict program observation where necessary to protect the safety of a child or the integrity of program.
3. The number, frequency, and duration of observation periods will be determined on an individual student basis in accordance with law and regulation. The start and end time of observation periods and a schedule of observation periods will be stated in advance. In order to minimize classroom or student disruption, the length of individual observation periods may be limited.
4. The principal or designee will work with the classroom teacher and the observer to setup the specifics of the observation (including, but not limited to, scheduling and placement of the observer in the classroom). A school staff member will accompany the observer during the observation period and take notes as to what is observed, paying particular attention to note anything that is non-typical during the observation period. Given the ongoing responsibility of teachers or therapists to serve all students, they will generally not be available for conversation/conferencing during or immediately before/after the observation period.
5. If the observer is not the parent/guardian, the parent/guardian must submit written consent for sign a release of the individual to observe.

6. The number of observers at any one time may be limited.
7. The observer will be informed that he/she is there to evaluate the appropriateness of a specific educational program to meet the needs of an individual child. He/she is not there to evaluate a teacher's ability to perform his or her contractual job duties.
8. The observer will be instructed regarding the disclosure of confidential or personally identifiable information relating to other children. Staff must be mindful of removing materials which may be part of students' records from plain view. In the event that removal is not possible the observer may be asked to sign a non-disclosure agreement.

Adopted December 9, 2009

LEGAL REF.: MGL Ch. 363

Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Technical Assistance
Advisory SPED 2009-2 dated January 9, 2009

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

(NEW) EFBA

SCHOOL FOOD AND NUTRITION – MEAL MODIFICATIONS

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District is committed to complying with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nondiscrimination regulation (7 CFR 15b) governing the Child Nutrition Program and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's (DESE) Office for Food and Nutrition Programs requirements.

In compliance with USDA and DESE regulations, the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District will provide substitutions to the school food service program's regular school meals at no extra cost for children who are unable to eat meals served because of their disabilities or other special dietary reasons.

1. Our programs will ensure that school meals offered through the district meet the meal pattern requirements set by the USDA.
2. We will make substitutions to meals at no extra charge for students with disabilities or other special dietary reasons that restrict the student's diet on a case-by-case basis.
3. Families must complete the necessary request form that can be provided by the School Food and Nutrition Program staff, or accessed via in the link below.

LEGAL REF: USDA SP 59-2016: Policy Memorandum on Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the School Meal Programs and CACFP 14-2017, SFSP 10-2017 Modifications to Accommodate Disabilities in the Child and Adult Care, Program (SFSP) sponsors
DESE Meal Modifications I Child Nutrition Programs
[**Meal Modification Request Form**](#)

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

(Amend) IKF – Graduation Requirements

To graduate from the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, students must fulfill the credit requirements established in the Shepherd Hill Regional High School Program of Studies and meet all applicable state accountability requirements, including the Competency Determination (CD).

Competency Determination

The Competency Determination consists of the following two requirements:

1. Demonstration of mastery of academic skills in English language arts, mathematics, and science; and
2. Satisfactory completion of coursework aligned to the academic standards measured by the Massachusetts high school MCAS assessments in English language arts, mathematics, and science.

Coursework and Credit Requirements

To meet graduation and CD requirements, students must satisfactorily complete coursework in accordance with the district's grading policy and the credit structure outlined below.

Credits toward graduation are awarded based on successful completion of coursework. A full-year course constitutes one (1.0) credit toward graduation. A semester or half-year course constitutes one-half (0.5) credit toward graduation.

To be eligible for graduation from Shepherd Hill Regional High School, students must earn a minimum of twenty-two (22) total credits, inclusive of all required and elective coursework.

To meet CD requirements, students must satisfactorily complete the following coursework:

English Language Arts

Equivalent of two years of high school English language arts coursework. Courses must be completed in grades 9 through 12.

Mathematics

Equivalent of one year of Algebra I and one year of Geometry, or Integrated Mathematics I and II. Middle school coursework may be certified when aligned to high school standards.

Science

Equivalent of one year of Biology, Physics, Chemistry, or Technology/Engineering. Coursework must be completed in grades 9 through 12.

United States History (beginning with the Class of 2027)

Equivalent of one year of United States history. Coursework must be completed in grades 9 through 12.

The specific distribution of required credits by subject area, elective options, and any program-specific requirements is detailed in the Shepherd Hill Regional High School Program of Studies, which is reviewed and approved annually by the School Committee. Students and families are expected to consult the Program of Studies for comprehensive and current graduation information.

Demonstration of Mastery

To demonstrate mastery in each required subject area, a student must successfully complete, in accordance with the district's grading policy, at least one of the following:

- The final assessment for the course;
- A capstone or portfolio project; or
- Another district-approved measure aligned to the applicable academic standards.

Elective Credits and Additional Requirements

In addition to meeting CD requirements and the 22-credit graduation threshold, students must complete elective and program-specific requirements as outlined in the Program of Studies. Students are encouraged to select electives aligned with individual interests and post-secondary goals.

Students with Disabilities

Students with disabilities must meet both local graduation requirements and CD requirements. Consistent with federal and state law, the district shall provide a Free and Appropriate Public Education and ensure that IEP services support graduation planning. Students placed in out-of-district day or residential programs remain subject to the Dudley-Charlton Competency Determination policy.

English Learners

The district shall ensure that English learners have equitable access to coursework required for the Competency Determination. ESL coursework may be certified as meeting the English language arts requirement only for students at foundational English proficiency levels, defined as ACCESS Levels 1 and 2, when such coursework integrates grade-level English language arts and English language development standards with appropriate instructional supports.

Transfer and Late-Enrolling Students

Students enrolling in a Massachusetts public high school after grade 9 shall be afforded the opportunity to earn the Competency Determination. Eligibility shall be determined through one or more of the following:

- Review of the student's transcript;
- Completion of additional coursework, as needed; or
- In limited circumstances, attainment of a qualifying MCAS score or a district-certified equivalent.

Exceptions shall be reviewed by a committee consisting of the principal, a member of the Guidance Department, and the relevant Department Coordinator.

When prior coursework cannot be documented, a student may satisfy the CD requirement by either:

- Achieving a score of Meeting Expectations or Exceeding Expectations on the applicable high school MCAS assessment; or
- Demonstrating mastery through a district-certified equivalent aligned to the same academic standards.

Use of this provision shall be documented and is subject to review or audit by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Appeals and Transcript Review

A student or parent or guardian may appeal a determination regarding the awarding of a Competency Determination. Appeals shall be reviewed by the principal and a designated committee and may include transcript review or other evidence of mastery. Current or former students may also request a transcript review to verify completion of graduation and Competency Determination requirements.

Legal References

M.G.L. c. 69, § 1D

M.G.L. c. 71B

603 CMR 30.00

603 CMR 4.00

IKF - Graduation Requirements

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

POLICY - IKF

Graduation Requirements

To graduate from the Dudley-Charlton Regional School District, students must fulfill the credit requirements specified in the Shepherd Hill Regional High School Program of Studies and comply with all state accountability standards.

Competency Determination and Course Requirements

Graduation from Shepherd Hill Regional High School minimally requires students to demonstrate competency in the core subjects of mathematics, science, and English.

The specific credit requirements and course offerings will be detailed in the Shepherd Hill Regional High School Program of Studies, which shall be presented annually to the School Committee for approval.

Elective Credits and Additional Requirements

In addition to meeting the competency determination in core subjects, students must earn the required number of credits as specified in the Program of Studies. School administration may establish additional requirements related to specific programs, and students are encouraged to select electives that align with their individual interests and post-secondary goals.

Transfer Students

The ability of transfer students to complete specific departmental requirements may be influenced by the curriculum of their previous school and the timing of their enrollment at Shepherd Hill Regional High School. Exceptions to graduation requirements will be considered on an individual basis by a committee consisting of the principal, a member of the Guidance Department, and the relevant Department Coordinator.

LEGAL REFS.: [M.G.L. 69:1D](#)
[603 CMR 30.00](#)

Original Adopted Date:

March 26, 2025

DUDLEY-CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

(NEW) Policy JIH – Student Searches and Seizure

Purpose

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School District is committed to maintaining a safe and orderly learning environment while respecting the constitutional and statutory rights of students. This policy establishes standards governing searches of students, student property, and student-owned electronic devices conducted by school officials.

Legal Authority

Student searches conducted by school officials are governed by the Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution, Article 14 of the Massachusetts Declaration of Rights, applicable Massachusetts General Laws, and relevant case law. School searches must be reasonable in scope and justified at their inception.

General Standard for Student Searches

School officials may conduct a search of a student or the student's personal property only when there are reasonable grounds to suspect that the search will reveal evidence that the student has violated or is violating the law, School Committee policy, or school rules.

Searches shall be:

- Reasonable at inception; and
- Reasonably related in scope to the circumstances that justified the search.

The scope of a search shall be limited to what is necessary to address the suspected violation and shall be conducted in a manner that is respectful of the student's privacy and dignity.

Searches of Student Property

Student property subject to search may include, but is not limited to, backpacks, bags, lockers, desks, and personal effects brought onto school property or to school-sponsored activities.

Lockers and desks remain the property of the district and may be searched consistent with this policy.

Searches of Student Cell Phones and Electronic Devices

Student-owned cell phones, smart phones, tablets, laptops, smart watches, and other personal electronic devices contain highly private digital information and are subject to heightened privacy protections.

Accordingly, searches of the digital contents of a student's personal electronic device are strongly limited and shall be conducted only under the circumstances outlined below.

Seizure vs. Search

School officials may temporarily seize a student's electronic device when there is reasonable suspicion that the device has been used in violation of school rules or policy.

Seizure of a device does not authorize review of its digital contents.

Digital Content Searches

School officials shall not search the digital contents of a student's personal electronic device, including but not limited to text messages, photographs, videos, emails, social media content, call logs, or internet history, without parent or guardian consent, except as provided below.

A search of digital content may occur only when one or more of the following conditions is met:

1. Parent or Guardian Consent
The student's parent or guardian provides informed, written consent authorizing the search and defining its scope; or
2. Exigent Circumstances
School officials have a reasonable belief that an immediate search is necessary to prevent:
 - o Imminent danger to the health or safety of the student or others; or
 - o The imminent destruction of evidence related to a serious safety concern.

In exigent circumstances, the search shall be strictly limited in scope and duration to addressing the immediate concern.

Law Enforcement Involvement

If school officials believe the contents of a student's electronic device may contain evidence of criminal activity, the device shall be secured and referred to law enforcement. School officials shall not conduct a digital search on behalf of law enforcement or act as agents of law enforcement.

Scope and Documentation

Any search of a student or student property, including electronic devices, shall be limited to what is reasonably necessary and shall be documented by the administrator conducting the search. Documentation shall include:

- The reason for the search;
- The scope of the search;
- Whether parent or guardian consent was obtained; and
- The outcome of the search.

Students with Disabilities

Searches involving students with disabilities shall take into account the student's age, disability-related needs, and IEP or Section 504 plan, where applicable. Nothing in this policy alters the district's obligations under federal or state special education law.

Non-Retaliation

No student shall be disciplined or retaliated against solely for refusing to provide access to the digital contents of a personal electronic device in the absence of parent or guardian consent or exigent circumstances.

Delegation of Authority

Only building principals or their designees may authorize searches under this policy, except in emergencies requiring immediate action to protect student safety.

Legal References

Fourth Amendment to the United States Constitution

Article 14, Massachusetts Declaration of Rights

M.G.L. c. 71

M.G.L. c. 71B

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

TO: School Committee

FROM: Joseph DeSantis - Director of Finance & Operations

DATE: January 14, 2026

SUBJECT: Finance Director Update

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- 1. FY25 Fiscal Year Close Out Process Update:** FY2025 close out is in process. CBIZ, the district's Audit firm, performed their annual audit of DCRSD financial statements, with resulting FY2025 Financial Statements to be issued subsequent to Audit testing results. Excess & Deficiency certification (E&D) is in process for finalization, with finalized results expected in January 2026.
 - 2. FY27 Student Transportation Contracts Renewal:** First Student and VanPool contracts have built-in options for renewal in FY2027 and FY2028. Based on the improved performances of both vendors with regards to communication and on-road efficiency over the last year, it is the recommendation of the Director of Finance & Operations to pick up the fourth year option and renew the contracts of both First Student and VanPool for FY2027. A decision on the second year option for FY2028 will be determined next school year, and will be based on continued improved performances and vendor competition.
 - 3. FY27 Budget & Capital Impact Memo:** Preparation for FY2027 Operating and Capital Budgets has begun, with preliminary meetings between building leadership, central office and School Committee having taken place. Initial needs and requests have been identified and summarized within the attachments provided.

There are several key factors that will impact recommendations for the FY2027 Operating Budget. Anticipated larger scale expense increases are listed by category on the 'FY2027 Budget Impact Memo'. The cost increase for Medicare is high across the Commonwealth. Massachusetts Strategic Health Group (MSHG) has set a 67% premium increase in FY2027, equating an increase of \$522,000. Additionally, DCRSD is working to minimize the impact of active Healthcare premiums in FY27. Our budget request projects a 15% increase to Healthcare premiums, down from 20%, but we're actively

working to minimize this percentage increase even further. Rates are to be determined by MSHG. Out of District Tuitions are projected to increase next year due to an increase in the number of students for which DCRSD will be responsible. Contractual Obligations, inclusive of new positions approved in the current 2025-2026 school year, as well as Cost-of-Living Adjustments collectively bargained in 2025, detail a 3.5% increase in FY27, which will equal an approximate increase of \$1,970,000. Worcester Regional Retirement System recommends an increase of \$173,379 to the annual local pension appropriation. Finally, transportation costs are generally stable year over year, but will increase.

Within the 'FY2027 Budget Impact Memo', the section entitled 'October 2025 Budget Workshop Requests' details the approximate cost of the requests identified by building leadership during their October workshop with School Committee. None of these costs have been factored into the initial Operating Budget projections and will be included as they're approved by School Committee.

In 2024, DCRSD paid for Habeeb & Associates to complete a Facility Condition Assessment and Student Capacity Report. Based on the results of this report, the district created a revised '2027-2036 Capital Plan' in an attempt to address the facility needs of the district. 'Capital Request Summary Charlton' and 'Capital Request Summary Dudley' spreadsheets are included, and detail the needs of each building on a per municipality basis. All projects have been identified as either eligible for MSBA funding, or not eligible for MSBA funding. DCRSD is currently in process of submitting Statements of Interest with MSBA for both Heritage School and Shepherd Hill High School. But for projects that are not eligible for MSBA, DCRSD is making a Capital request in FY2027 to address the non-MSBA eligible projects identified for FY2027, FY2028 and FY2029. The one-time FY2027 Capital Improvement request to Dudley for years 2027-2029 will be approximately \$5,919,065. The one-time FY2027 Capital Improvement request to Charlton for years 2027-2029 will be approximately \$9,784,558.

Student enrollment has decreased in the current school year, and is summarized in the 'FY2027 Class Size Projections' document. Projections are presented without any staffing alterations. The Governor's Budget is slated to be released January 28, 2026, which will detail State Aid and Minimum Local Contributions. Based on DCRSD being a Hold Harmless district, the lack of effectiveness in the Chapter 70 funding formula, and uncertainty in relation to Federal grants, DCRSD is considering a one-time increase to the use of E&D funds of up to \$1,500,000. This can be accomplished because Chapter 70 per-pupil minimum reimbursement in Massachusetts for FY26 came in higher than original State level projections, and we are a conservative spending district. The increased use of E&D funds will assist in offsetting the increased cost in capital needs.

DCRSD will continue to monitor the status of the Governor's Budget as January progresses. We will also continue to work with MSBA in an attempt to secure funding to address the district's pressing facility and operating needs. We will work with School Committee, as well as Dudley and Charlton town officials to provide further updates as we move towards getting a final approved FY2027 budget. Detailed FY2027 budget documents will be included as the budget process continues.

Dudley Charlton Regional School District
2027-2036 Capital Improvement Plan
Town of Charlton Totals

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS	2027	2028	2029	FY2027 Municipal Request	2030 -2036
CHARLTON ELEMENTARY	\$12,990,937	\$7,154,348	\$43,250	\$4,556,425		\$1,236,914
CHARLTON HERITAGE SCHOOL	\$52,778,053	\$6,062,460	\$13,750	\$45,538,453		\$1,163,390
CHARLTON MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$13,566,841	\$7,581,138	\$5,354	\$4,663,969		\$1,316,380
SHEPHERD HILL HIGH SCHOOL @53.79%	\$15,803,317	\$5,786,245	\$3,227	\$7,867,154		\$2,146,691
TOTAL REVISED PROJECT COSTS	\$95,139,148	\$26,584,191	\$65,581	\$62,626,001		\$5,863,375

	2027	2028	2029	
ACCELERATED REPAIR S & CORE PROGRAM	\$17,015,027	\$0	\$62,476,189	
NOT ELIGIBLE FOR MSBA FUNDING	\$9,569,164	\$65,581	\$149,812	\$9,784,558

Dudley Charlton Regional School District
2027-2036 Capital Improvement Plan
Town of Dudley Totals

SCHOOL NAME	TOTAL ESTIMATED PROJECT COSTS	2027	2028	2029	FY2027 Municipal Request	2030 -2036
MASON ROAD	\$7,534,435	\$1,520,578	\$33,050	\$4,853,325		\$1,127,482
DUDLEY ELEMENTARY	\$10,422,540	\$7,277,918	\$42,800	\$2,166,435		\$935,387
DUDLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL	\$9,356,565	\$5,308,312	\$14,250	\$3,189,594		\$844,409
SHEPHERD HILL HIGH SCHOOL @46.21	\$13,576,339	\$4,970,856	\$2,773	\$6,758,528		\$1,844,182
TOTAL REVISED PROJECT COSTS	\$40,889,879	\$19,077,664	\$92,873	\$16,967,882		\$4,751,460

	2027	2028	2029	
ACCELERATED REPAIR S & CORE PROGRAM	\$13,346,789	\$0	\$16,872,564	
NOT ELIGIBLE FOR MSBA FUNDING	\$5,730,875	\$92,873	\$95,318	\$5,919,065

DCRSD STUDENT ENROLLMENT PROJECTS (FY2027)
VERSION 01.14.2026

Average Class Size Projections FY27: *Without* Staffing Changes

		Dudley Student #	Current Section #	Ave Class Size: Current			Charlton Student #	Current Section #	Ave Class Size: Current
MASON RD	Pre-K	63	2	31.50		CHARLTON ELEM	53	2	26.50
	K	90	5	18.00			127	6	21.17
	1	95	6	15.83			130	6	21.67
		248	13				310	14	
DUDLEY ELEM	2	108	6	18.00		HERITAGE	122	7	17.43
	3	112	4	28.00			164	6	27.33
	4	79	5	15.80			127	7	18.14
		299	15				413	20	
DUDLEY MIDDLE	5	128	6	21.33		CHARLTON MIDDLE	142	7	20.29
	6	127	6	21.17			148	7	21.14
	7	121	7	17.29			149	7	21.29
	8	122	7	17.43			164	7	23.43
		498	26				603	28	

Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee Goals — 2025–2026

Goal Area 1: Governance and Leadership Capacity

Goal Statement:

The Dudley-Charlton Regional School Committee will strengthen its governance practices and leadership capacity by building consistent systems, fostering effective communication, and deepening collaboration with students, families, and community partners.

Goal A: School Committee Member Handbook

By the end of the 2025–2026 school year, the School Committee will adopt a comprehensive School Committee Member Handbook to provide consistent guidance and expectations for both new and current members, promoting effective and informed governance.

Benchmarks:

- **January 2026:** Draft handbook completed and shared with the full Committee for initial review.
- **March 2026:** Committee discussion and revisions finalized based on member feedback and alignment with MASC guidance.
- **May 2026:** Formal adoption of the School Committee Member Handbook.
- **June 2026:** Implementation of the handbook as part of the New Member Orientation process following the 2026 election cycle.

Intended Outcome:

A unified governance framework that enhances institutional knowledge, continuity, and transparency across election cycles, ensuring all members are well-prepared to serve effectively.

Goal B: Community Outreach and Stakeholder Engagement

The School Committee will expand community partnerships and strengthen two-way communication with School Councils, Advisory Councils, families, and local leaders to align district goals with community needs.

Benchmarks:

- **Fall 2025:** Assign School Committee liaisons to each of the seven School Councils in the district.

- **2025–2026 School Year:** Each liaison attends at least one School Council meeting to build relationships and gather feedback.
- **Ongoing:** Committee members share key School Council discussion points during School Committee Communications.
- **January 2026:** Develop and launch a shared District Events & Engagement Calendar to track major school and community events, allowing for broader Committee participation and visibility.
- **Spring 2026:** Hold at least one Community Roundtable or Listening Session focused on district priorities and community input.

Intended Outcome:

Improved collaboration and alignment between the School Committee, school communities, and the broader public, promoting transparency, trust, and responsiveness.

Goal C: Student Advisory Council (SAC) Engagement

The School Committee will strengthen its partnership with the Student Advisory Council to ensure student perspectives inform decision-making and district priorities.

Benchmarks:

- **October 2025:** Convene the Student Advisory Council and facilitate the election of the Student Representative to the School Committee.
- **Quarterly:** Schedule and hold regular meetings between the SAC and the School Committee to discuss student-centered topics such as school climate, engagement, and wellness.
- **March 2026:** Collaborate with SAC members to identify and present a student-led initiative or report to the School Committee.
- **June 2026:** Evaluate SAC participation and identify opportunities for growth in student voice and leadership.

Intended Outcome:

Students are empowered as active partners in district governance, contributing to decisions that enhance learning environments, equity, and school culture.

Goal Area 2: Educational Excellence and Student Experience

Goal Statement:

The School Committee will ensure all students have equitable access to high-quality instruction, effective educators, and enriching experiences that promote learning, engagement, and well-being.

Committee Role / Strategic Focus:

- Review and monitor implementation of HQIM and related PD initiatives through quarterly updates from the Superintendent.
- Advocate for strategic staffing and resource allocation that supports academic excellence and student well-being.
- Support policies that guide curriculum evaluation, technology integration, and enrichment opportunities.

Benchmarks / Actions:

- **Quarterly:** Review HQIM and PD implementation reports to monitor fidelity and outcomes.
- **Annually:** Receive staffing and budget updates; provide input on restoration or creation of positions supporting instruction and student support.
- **Ongoing:** Monitor equitable access to technology and innovative learning platforms; highlight areas for strategic improvement.

Intended Outcome:

Students benefit from high-quality, equitable instruction and access to innovation, while administrative staff maintain focus on operational implementation.

Goal Area 3: Fiscal Responsibility and Resource Stewardship

Goal Statement:

The School Committee will strategically align fiscal planning and resource allocation with the District's 10-Year Capital Plan to ensure financial sustainability and equitable student outcomes.

Committee Role / Strategic Focus:

- Review and approve budgets that prioritize HQIM, PD, positions, and technology investments.
- Monitor multi-year fiscal planning and capital projects for alignment with educational goals.
- Advocate for external funding opportunities (grants, partnerships) to supplement limited resources.

Benchmarks / Actions:

- **Annually:** Review and provide feedback on fiscal reports showing alignment with capital planning and instructional priorities.
- **Quarterly/Semi-Annually:** Receive updates on positions critical to sustaining HQIM, PD, and technology initiatives.
- **Ongoing:** Discuss innovative funding strategies with administration to maximize resource efficiency.

Intended Outcome:

The District maintains financial health and equitable resource allocation, supporting instructional fidelity and student outcomes.

DUDLEY CHARLTON REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
FY27 OPERATING BUDGET MEMO

October 2025 Budget Workshop Reqeasts

Request

Charlton Schools	SRO shared	\$	30,000.00
District	SPED Assistant Director/SAC	\$	70,000.00
	Math/ELA Instructional Support	\$	30,000.00
	High Quality Instructional Materials	\$	80,000.00
	Technology Staff	\$	40,000.00
	Benefits for New Positions	\$	25,000.00
Heritage School	Assistant Principal	\$	80,000.00
Charlton Elementary	SAC	\$	70,000.00
Mason Road	Instructional Coaching-Shared	\$	15,000.00
Dudley Elementary	Instructional Coaching-Shared	\$	15,000.00
Dudley Middle	Instructional Coaching-Shared	\$	15,000.00
Shepherd Hill	Electives Facilitator	\$	40,000.00
	Tier 1/Tier 2 Support Materials	\$	20,000.00

October 2025 Budget Workshop Estimated Total \$ 530,000.00

FY2027 Projected Increases as of December 2025

Comment

<i>OOD Tuitions (Incl. State Inflation)</i>	4-5 Student Increase	\$	385,000.00
<i>Medicare</i>	67% Increase	\$	522,000.00
<i>Healthcare</i>	15% Increase Estimate: to be set by MSHG	\$	745,000.00
<i>Contractual Obligations (Incl. COLA & FY26 Positions Added)</i>	3.5% Increase per CBA	\$	1,970,000.00
<i>Pension Contribution</i>	Increase based on Total Liability	\$	173,379.00
<i>Transportation</i>	Contractual Increase	\$	133,834.00

FY2027 Estimated Increases as of December 2025 \$ 3,929,213.00

**TOTAL FY2027 OPERATING REQUESTS & PROJECTED
INCREASES (Est)**

\$ 4,459,213.00