



**DISTRICT COMMITTEE
OPEN MEETING MINUTES
MEETING #1912
March 24, 2026**

Members Present

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

Members Absent

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

1. CALL TO ORDER

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

2. STUDENTS REPORT

Layla, Yeison and Ambar presented the Student Report some topics of which included: the St. Patrick’s Fundraiser held on March 10th, the ice cream social scheduled for April 18th at 2:30 pm, March Madness, MCAS, SkillsUSA, GLTS Senior Scholarship, a recent visit by author - Ruta Sepetys, Red Cross Spirit Day, the Wellness Committee, black history culture assignment, UMASS Lowell field trip, the GLTS talent show results as well as the Reggies who had an outstanding winter season.

3. MINUTES

a. Minutes of February 24, 2026.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the minutes of February 24, 2026.

2ND: Mr. Mercedes

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

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

Mr. Mercedes Yes
Mr. Hatem Yes
#19126

b. Minutes of March 5, 2026.

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to approve the minutes of March 5, 2026.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mercedes Yes
Mr. Tarbox Yes
Ms. Faris Yes
Ms. Disla Yes
Mr. Jones Yes
Mr. Mejia Yes
Mr. Hatem Yes
#19127

4. FINANCE REPORT

a. Cash Balance Report

Mr. DiStefano read the Cash Balance Report.

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

2ND: Mr. Mejia

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Mejia Yes
Mr. Mercedes Yes
Mr. Tarbox Yes
Ms. Faris Yes
Ms. Disla Yes
Mr. Jones Yes
Mr. Hatem Yes
#19128

b. Consolidated Cash Reconciliation Report

c. Revolving Fund Report

d. Budget Report

e. Budget Transfers

Ms. Martel presented the budget transfers. Mr. Mejia asked how many classrooms had received the new equipment; Assistant Superintendent Richardson responded that she did not have the exact number but noted that GLTS is purchasing 100 units. Superintendent Lavoie stated that equipment will be replaced in every classroom, and any salvageable items will be sold.

Ms. Faris asked whether the iPads were being recirculated. Superintendent Lavoie explained that new devices are being ordered for the incoming freshman class, which students will keep for four years. Devices collected from seniors—approximately 250—may be reused when necessary.

Ms. Faris also inquired about accountability for broken equipment. Superintendent Lavoie responded that repairs are typically handled in-house and added that the IT staff has reported fewer issues in this area.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve the Budget Transfers as presented.

2ND: Mr. Mercedes

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

Mr. Jones Yes

Mr. Mejia Yes

Mr. Mercedes Yes

Mr. Tarbox Yes

Ms. Faris Yes

Ms. Disla Yes

Mr. Hatem Yes

#19129

f. SY26-27 Budget

Ms. Martel presented and reviewed the budget calendar via slides, highlighting key factors driving the FY27 budget. These included budget priorities, assessment details for Andover, Lawrence, Methuen, and North Andover, a Chapter 70 summary, the FY27 operational revenue percentage breakdown, estimated revenues, the budget by function, and FY26 entitlement grants. GLTS received just over \$2,000,000 in competitive grants in FY26.

Regarding Title I grants, Mr. Mejia asked whether there had been any changes at the federal level. Ms. Martel responded that GLTS is expected to receive increased funding.

On school security, it was noted that there are currently six positions, with a request to add two more. Mr. Mejia asked about the need for eight positions. Superintendent Lavoie explained that the request came from the Safe Office and is driven by increasing enrollment and the opening of an additional cafeteria.

Discussing special education and the math instructor budget lines, Mr. Mejia observed cuts and fluctuations and asked whether these were due to staffing or materials. Superintendent Lavoie clarified that special education enrollment has declined over the past two years, resulting in reduced needs, but noted that positions could be reinstated if necessary.

Mr. Mejia also inquired about capital improvement funding, noting a \$2 million increase and asking if it related to previously approved projects. Superintendent Lavoie responded that these are non-foundational items, and the school typically requests \$1 million annually. Ms. Martel added that this \$1 million is assessed to the member cities and towns.

Mr. Mejia asked how many years remain on the 2017 bond; Ms. Martel responded that approximately one to two years remain.

When asked about potential layoffs, Superintendent Lavoie stated that there may be one position affected, though nothing has been finalized.

Chair Hatem thanked Ms. Martel and her staff for their work. Mr. Mejia requested additional context regarding foundation and external grant funding. Superintendent Lavoie shared that GLTS is currently working with Fidelity on a grant opportunity ranging from \$1 million to \$1.5 million, with the final application due Friday, and expressed confidence in the outcome. These funds would help offset costs for a planned health program

building. Additionally, the school is preparing a Skills Capital Grant application for up to \$500,000 to support the purchase of health program equipment, due in three weeks.

Finally, Mr. Mejia asked about requests made by the General Advisory Committee in recent months. Superintendent Lavoie responded that some requests are already reflected in the proposed budget, while the administration continues to explore funding options for those not yet included.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to accept the SY26-27 Budget as presented.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19130

5. COMMUNICATIONS

a. Donations

b. Articles

c. Public Participation

6. REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT-DIRECTOR

a. Early Education and Care (EEC) Presentation

Annemarie Guertin, Director of Child Care/Lead Instructor, presented an Early Education and Care update, outlining program requirements and challenges. GLTS currently operates under Option 2 but is considering Option 3, which would eliminate student fingerprinting requirements and shift oversight to the District School Committee. This change would increase student participation but eliminate eligibility for daycare vouchers, which are not currently used.

Ms. Faris raised concerns about limited student hands-on experience. Ms. Guertin explained that about 80% of students declined fingerprinting, restricting placements, though alternative experiences were arranged. Mr. Mercedes asked about on-site fingerprinting, but this was not feasible due to participation requirements.

Mr. Mejia emphasized maintaining legal compliance and the need for regular Committee oversight updates. Ms. Disla expressed hesitation about the Committee's ability to provide sufficient oversight. Superintendent Lavoie stated that Option 3, enabled by a new law, would allow students to work with infants and toddlers and place oversight with the District. He acknowledged earlier limitations in hands-on learning but stated students remained engaged.

Concerns were raised that eliminating infant/toddler programming could result in layoffs and reduced learning opportunities. Mr. Mejia expressed support for Option 3, contingent on strong communication and accountability from the Superintendent, who agreed to assume responsibility.

Ms. Guertin noted potential loss of approximately \$2,800/month in EEC funding. While some members remained concerned about communication and oversight, others voiced support for the program and staff. Implementation would be targeted for September.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to approve Option 3, appointing Superintendent John Lavoie as the District School Committee’s designee for oversight.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

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

5 yea’s, 1 nay, 1 abstained

Motion passes

#19131

b. Co-Op Presentation

Audra Durkin, Cooperative Education Coordinator, presented the Co-Op report, highlighting significant program growth. Student placements increased from 164 to 213, a 30% rise, exceeding the goal of 180. She also outlined goals to expand employer partnerships, align curriculum, and improve student readiness.

Ms. Durkin noted she assumed the role in September. Mr. Mercedes raised concerns about student retention with employers and suggested expanding opportunities for hands-on experience, offering to provide industry feedback. Ms. Durkin responded that some students participate in unpaid internships.

Mr. Tarbox asked about employer oversight and distance; Ms. Durkin confirmed she conducts site visits, with placements ranging from New Hampshire to south of Boston. She added that response time to employers is typically around two weeks.

Mr. Mejia asked about program coverage and student demand. Ms. Durkin stated all shops have at least one student placed and that efforts to expand partnerships have helped meet demand. Ms. Faris asked about eligibility requirements; Ms. Durkin explained students need approvals from guidance, nursing, administration, and must meet attendance and discipline standards, with counselor recommendations based on grades. Students must also complete 1,000 hours before participating.

Chair Hatem asked about challenges; Ms. Durkin identified transportation as the primary issue, though carpooling and employer-assisted transport have helped mitigate this.

c. Admissions/Lottery Update

Superintendent Lavoie and Assistant Superintendent Richardson updated the District Committee on Admissions and the lottery held on March 12, 2026 (video unavailable). Assistant Superintendent Richardson reported that the process went very well overall.

Director of Admissions Ms. Hebert reviewed the results for the Class of 2030: 1,316 applicants competed for 500 seats, with 816 students placed on the waitlist. She explained that lower lottery numbers increase admission chances, with initial offers made by community. Students have ten days to accept or decline, after which offers are extended to waitlisted applicants. The waitlist process is posted online and begins at the end of the week.

Mr. Mejia, who viewed the lottery live, praised the administration but criticized the process as unfair, noting the state's role. He asked about prior-year waitlist numbers; Assistant Superintendent Richardson indicated they were slightly higher. Mr. Mejia also raised concerns about over-acceptance and resulting space and financial pressures. Mr. Jones commended staff but echoed concerns about the system.

Assistant Superintendent Richardson added that over 2,000 viewers watched the live stream. In response to Chair Hatem, Ms. Hebert explained that sophomores unable to select shops will be contacted in June to rank their preferences. Chair Hatem also acknowledged Principal Jackson's attendance in support of the presenters.

d. SY26-27 School Calendar

Mr. Mejia questioned if snow days had been exceeded to which Supt. Lavoie responded no.

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to accept the SY26-27 School Calendar as presented.

2ND: Ms. Faris

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19132

e. NECC/GLTS' Partnership

Superintendent Lavoie updated the District Committee on the NECC/GLTS partnership, noting two initiatives currently in progress: one focused on a specific program and another aimed at expanding student pathways. He added that the District is working to formalize the partnership through a contract.

f. Clean Energy Grant (\$750,000)

Supt. Lavoie updated the District Committee on the Clean Energy Grant stating GLTS received \$750,000 to continue work relative to clean and sustainable energy.

g. April 1st Election of Officers Meeting

Supt. Lavoie reminded District Committee members that there will be a meeting on April 1, 2026, for the Election of the Officers: District Recorder, Assistant Clerk, Clerk, Assistant Treasurer, Vice Chair, Chairperson, Seating Chart. Chair Hatem stated it will be held at the school at 6:00PM.

7. REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE

8. OLD BUSINESS

a. District Committee Priorities

b. Policy

9. NEW BUSINESS

10. TABLED MATTERS

11. PERSONNEL CONSIDERATIONS/REPORT

a. Resignations

c. Retirements

d. Appointments

e. Job Postings

Summer IT Support, up to 40hrs/wk., \$25.00/hr., Summer 2026, (July 1-August 30, 2026), New Position. (See Attached) Asst. Supt. Richardson stated we're actually looking for up to three techs for this position. Mr. Mejia questioned if these are for the shop or the IT Department to which Asst. Supt. Richardson responded the IT department. Mr. Jones questioned if this would be open to the students to which Supt. Lavoie responded it's something that's been done before.

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to approve the Summer IT Support position as presented.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19133

Second Chance Car Summer Program Instructor, up to 40hrs/wk., \$40.00/hr., 4 teachers from Automotive Tech, split one teacher per wk., Summer 2026, (July 1-August 30, 2026) New Position. (See Attached). Chair Hatem noted that the program provides significant support through automotive work for veterans and individuals in need. Superintendent Lavoie added that GLTS has partnered with the organization on these efforts for many years.

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to approve Second Chance Car Summer Program Instructor.

2ND: Mr. Mercedes

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19134

12. FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

13. EXECUTIVE SESSION

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to enter into Executive Session at 8:35PM.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19135

MOTION: Mr. Mejia moved to accept the travel request for a student traveling to West Hartford CT.

2ND: Mr. Jones

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

- Mr. Mejia Yes

Mr. Mercedes Yes
Mr. Tarbox Yes
Ms. Faris Yes
Ms. Disla Yes
Mr. Jones Yes
Mr. Hatem Yes
#19139

MOTION: Mr. Jones moved to accept the change for the April 1st date for some time during that week for the Election of Officers.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19140

Ms. Disla feels strongly that since we're changing the date to accommodate everyone, the rescheduled date should require everyone to be in attendance. Ms. Disla voiced her objection to having it on Zoom. Chair Hatem feels it should be held in person. Supt. Lavoie indicated the District Committee can vote on whether or not to have the meeting on Zoom.

MOTION: Ms. Faris moved to approve the personnel matter concerning the Recording Secretary.

2ND: Mr. Mejia

VOTE: Roll Call by District Recorder

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

#19141

14. ADJOURNMENT

MOTION: Mr. Mercedes moved to adjourn at 9:13PM.

2ND: Mr. Tarbox

VOTE: Unanimously Approved

#19142

Respectfully Submitted



Cheryl Dennis
District Recorder

Minutes Reviewed



Supt. Lavoie N. Lavoie
Superintendent-Director