

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
**September 1, 2020**  
**Meeting Minutes**

**Members Present:** Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Ms. Donna Newcomb (Vice Chair), Mr. Jeff Doherty (Secretary), Mr. John Moses and Ms. Maria Santos

**Also present:** Dr. Jay Lang (Superintendent), Dr. Linda Hirsch (Assistant Superintendent) and Ms. Joanna Johnson-Collins (Director of Business and Finance).

**Call to Order**

6:00 p.m.

**Pledge of Allegiance**

**Chair Opening Statement**

“Tonight’s meeting is being live-streamed by Chelmsford Telemedia and posted to the CPS website for interested community members to access and watch. Although we are not allowing for in-person public participation, interested community members are encouraged to submit their names and addresses to Superintendent Lang if they would like to participate remotely under the public input portion of our meeting. During our public input session anyone who has joined us through the *gotomeeting* platform and expressed interest in making a comment will be recognized by the Superintendent and allowed to speak with The Committee. If anyone watching this meeting live has questions or comments to share they are encouraged to email one of us during the meeting. We will try to read those questions or comments during our second public input session at the end of the meeting.”

The Chair welcomed all. Tonight’s meeting will involve the reopening of schools and answering questions.

**Consent Agenda**

- 1. Approval of the minutes of the school committee meeting of August 10, 2020.**

The Chair wanted a correction made for Mr. Doherty’s name.

**Ms. Newcomb motioned to approve the minutes, with the necessary correction, of the regular school committee meeting of August 10, 2020. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

- 2. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of August 18, 2020.**

**Ms. Newcomb motioned to approve the minutes of the regular school committee meeting on August 18, 2020. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

**Good News**

Dr. Hirsch shared the excellent news that the teachers are back! Professional development has already begun.

Ms. Santos shared that *Boston Magazine* did its high school listing and CHS is number 30 of the top 50. She shared that her two children are very excited and a bit scared about returning to school this year.

## **Public Comments**

None.

## **New Business**

### **1. Ratification of Reopening of School MOU with the Chelmsford Federation of Teachers**

Negotiations are ongoing, so no action will be taken tonight.

### **2. Return-to-School Planning Update**

#### **a. Student Enrollment: Learning Model Selection**

Dr. Lang shared a brief slide show displaying data of the non-binding survey taken on selection of the Hybrid or Remote Learning Model. The split was roughly 70% in favor of Hybrid and 30% of Remote. Both CHS and McCarthy reflected this. At Parker the split was 65% Hybrid and 35% Remote. Byam and Center Schools chose 65% Hybrid with 35% Remote. South Row was 67% Hybrid with 33% Remote, while Harrington chose 63% Hybrid and 37% Remote. About 100 students did not participate in the survey, so their families will be contacted. This complete slide show will be on the District's web site later tonight. Schedules and cohorts will be in place soon. Families who do not choose a model will be placed in the Remote Learning for the beginning of the school year. Sometime in November it may be possible for students to switch their current learning model to the other. As of today, 55 students opted out of CPS.

Ms. Newcomb asked what the specialists (who are meeting with students remotely after they have returned home each day) will be doing in the mornings. Dr. Lang replied that they will be in a classroom with the same teacher each day and assist as co-teachers both for the students in the classroom and those who are remote. Also, they could substitute for the teacher when the teacher cannot come to school. When it is possible to have students in school for the full day, changes for the specialists may occur. This is the plan for elementary and middle schools. At the high school, they will be doing a rotating schedule and will see the specialists in-person when the students are in school.

Concerning sports, the MIAA and other sports groups have issued plans looking at sports within a certain season. Football practices might be happening, but there will not be teams playing other schools. Football may happen in late winter to early spring instead. Dr. Lang is for meeting with the MVC athletic directors and coaches before putting a plan together for Chelmsford. He should have additional information by the next time The Committee meets. Staff availability will also determine what sports and student activities will take place. Special education staff will be encouraged to meet with their students in the classrooms, rather than pulling them out, to keep the cohort safe.

#### **b. Community/Parent Information Sessions**

The parent session for Thursday night had too many people at the session and the software was not able to support it. Telemedia was able to televise the Friday session. Both sessions were recorded and posted on the web site. The feedback was positive, and many parents were satisfied that their questions were addressed. Weekly newsletters from the District and the individual schools will keep parents and the community informed going forward.

**c. Approval of 2020/21 School Calendar – Amended**

Dr. Lang shared the amended calendar which designates Wednesday, September 16, 2020, as the starting date for students in both the hybrid and remote plans. Since every Wednesday is the remote day for all that means every student will attend remotely on the first day of school. Over the next two weeks the schools will be reaching out to families with teacher and cohort assignments. Students will be given the link to attend class meetings. The first day will encompass meet and greet so students will meet their classmates and teachers.

**Ms. Newcomb motioned that the School Committee adopt the amended 2020/2021 school calendar. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

\* **g. Review of Health and Safety Protocols**

(This item is being discussed out of order as the two people presenting joined the meeting at 7:00 p.m. remotely.)

Peggy Gump, who is the Head School Nurse for Chelmsford Public Schools, and Sue Rosa from the Chelmsford Board of Health joined the meeting remotely at this time to address health and safety protocols. Ms. Gump presented a slide show. She shared that the amounts of PPE based on DESE Guidelines are in place. The supplies are stored in a secure place in each building and usage will be tracked to order more PPE as needed. The staff and administration have already been trained on the protocols, including how to use the PPE, what to do if someone becomes ill at school, and best practices for health and hygiene. COVID-19 training was presented on August 31<sup>st</sup>. Signage for each building has arrived according to Brian Curley. Ms. Gump stressed the importance of family and staff doing wellness checks before leaving home each day. A checklist of COVID-19 symptoms will be shared with staff and families. She discussed the transmission of the disease. Additional hand-washing stations have been ordered for all schools and will arrive Friday and be installed. Parents are asked to contact their school nurse about children who are absent and exhibit COVID-19 symptoms. New protocols are in place for cleaning and disinfecting all schools. Testing and contact tracing will be reported to the DPH and BOH. She also shared the protocols for those who have been exposed to the virus and those who are sick with it. The role of school nurses was articulated. Both Ms. Gump and Ms. Rosa responded to questions from The Committee. The entire presentation may be viewed by watching tonight's meeting on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube.

\*\* **3. Approval of Amendments to the 2020/21 Student Handbooks**

(This item is being discussed out of order.)

Dr. Hirsch shared changes that were made, mostly due to COVID-19, adding new schedules to be followed during the pandemic including busing schedules and student times. These small changes have an impact on K through 12. Additional changes are being proposed for the CHS Handbook. The approved changes will be posted on the district's web site with translation for Spanish. The changes are detailed in tonight's agenda packet.

**Ms. Newcomb motioned for the School Committee approve the recommended changes to *The Student/Parent Handbook* for the 2020/2021 school year. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

Steve Murray, CHS Principal, and Matthew Beyranevand, Coordinator for Mathematics, virtually joined the meeting to discuss the changes being made specifically to the *CHS Student Handbook*. The first change involves GPA which has been based on a 4.7 scale. Based on research of college admissions officers and local high schools, a change to a 5.0 scale is recommended. This system would become effective starting with the current school year. Mr. Murray said other changes included calendar changes and the COVID-19 Addendum. Information on freshman orientation and meeting with their mentors will be sent to parents by Thursday. Additional information will be sent to families this weekend concerning the hybrid model and remote model schedule, new walking routes through the building, and drop-off and pick-up procedures.

**Ms. Newcomb motioned to approve the recommended changes to the Chelmsford High School Student Handbook Addendum for the 2020/2021 school year. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

### **3. (resumed)**

#### **d. Student Transportation Registration Update**

Ms. Johnson-Collins shared that 754 students had registered by August 28, 2020. Transportation is provided for K-6 over two miles, K-6 under two miles who are eligible for free and reduced lunch and 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade siblings of 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders who attend the same middle school (who will share a seat with their younger sibling). Refund checks to those who prepaid, but no longer qualify for bus transportation were mailed on August 28<sup>th</sup>. Some families who qualify have not yet registered. Bus passes will be mailed out very soon. After school has started additional riders may be considered.

#### **e. Fall Reopening Professional Development & Training**

DESE allowed up to ten days at the beginning of the school year for PD and training. Dr. Hirsch shared that priority has been given to safety protocols and school protocols. Safety was covered on Monday by Steven Cerven, Town of Chelmsford Safety Officer, and Peggy Gump (CPS Coordinator of Nursing) with the assistance of the school nurses. Today the focus was on protocols within the individual schools. The Technology Department has published a calendar of which departments and grade levels will receive direct PD and follow-up support, from now until the beginning of school. Technology PD will be ongoing during the school year as well. The color-coded Google Calendar also provides PLC time and staff time to process and implement what they have learned as well as meet with colleagues and time to get their classrooms set up. Additionally, time is provided for the annual staff sign-offs which are mandatory. Additional PD days are scheduled throughout the year on Wednesdays. Technology Integration Specialists will be available in each building to provide extra support as requested.

### **4. School Committee Self Evaluation Process**

Included in tonight's agenda packet is the evaluation form from MASC which each member of The Committee will fill out. The Chair asked that it be filled out and returned to him next week, so he can compile the responses for the next meeting.

### **5. School Committee Policy Updates**

Dr. Lang reviewed information sent from MASC which is a supplemental policy for the interim during the pandemic. This policy will be in effect only until the governor declares the state of emergency ended. Dr. Lang has included this recommended supplemental policy in tonight's agenda packet.

**Ms. Newcomb motioned for The School Committee to adopt the supplemental policy EBC from the Massachusetts Association for School Committees effective to the end of the emergency as declared by the governor. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

### **Liaisons**

The Chair shared that PTO meetings would be starting soon so Committee members should reach out to their schools.

### **Action/New Items**

A Tri-board meeting will be held on Monday, September 21, 2020.

In response to a question from Mr. Moses, Dr. Lang said that any problems with technology or the internet should be reported to the student's teacher directly.

### **Public Comments**

Ms. Newcomb received a question about whether students who use their own devices would need to load any software in order to participate both from home and when they bring their devices to school. The answer is no, they will just be using Google Classroom.

### **Adjournment (9:01 p.m.)**

**Ms. Newcomb motioned to adjourn at 9:01 p.m. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.**

*Respectfully submitted,  
Sharon Giglio*