

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
May 4, 2021
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Mr. John Moses (Vice Chair), Mr. Jeff Doherty (Secretary), Ms. Donna Newcomb 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 read those questions or comments during our second public input session at the end of the meeting.”

Good News

Mr. Doherty shared that South Row PTO had a lunch “grab and go” for staff today. At CHS the PTO set up a “chocolate bar”. Tomorrow CHS will be serving breakfast and on Thursday the Student Council will have a surprise for the staff. Yesterday the PTO from CHIPS did a staff breakfast. This week at CHIPS each day has a different “theme”. The Chair shared from Dr. Hirsch that The Thursdays and Crescendos were featured on WBZ Radio. Representatives from the science team went on virtual field trips to Rutgers University to learn about marine monitoring systems. Grade four students started earthquake simulations as a STEM project linking energy and geometry. The Chair shared that the new district website is up and running. Feedback has been quite positive! Now that spring is here new pictures of the schools will be added to the website. Ms. Newcomb acknowledged the outstanding job done by teachers and paraprofessionals and school staff over the last year plus some months! This is “Teacher Appreciation Week”.

New Business

1. Announcement of CHIPS Program Coordinator: Ms. Megan McGuirk

Amy Reese introduced Megan McGuirk, the new CHIPS coordinator. Both are in attendance at tonight's meeting. Ms. McGuirk has been the Administrative Chair for the past two years at Byam, Harrington and Parker. She was very supportive in that role and will be missed. She has a passion for early childhood education and was a former pre-school teacher and coordinator. Ms. McGuirk shared that she is excited for this new opportunity. She enjoyed teaching pre-school for eleven years, prior to becoming an administrator. She is happy to be continuing her career in Chelmsford!

Ms. Reese offered information about the CHIPS enrollment process. CHIPS offers both an integrated model (students with IEPs and general education students without IEPs who are peer models) and an intensive model for those who require such a program.

2. MA DESE Coordinated Program Review: Tiered Focused Monitoring Report

Included in tonight's agenda packet is a memorandum from Ms. Reese regarding this DESE report. A visit had been scheduled for DESE in March of 2020 but was not conducted due to Covid. This site visit took place in January of 2021 and a report was issued. All special ed requirements were found to be in compliance. One of the 17 civil rights areas was found to be in partial compliance. This required the district to change one policy regarding physical restraint which involved a change in policy concerning suicide prevention. This policy will need to be updated by January 2022. This is in process with attorney input. The proposed policy will then be put before The School Committee for a vote by September. Once approved it will be shared and disseminated. Training for staff will then be undertaken.

3. Presentation: Center Elementary School, English & Social Studies Departments

Tonight's presentation including a Power Point had been previously recorded by Principal Dianna Fulreader and Department Coordinators Abby Dick (English) and Stephanie Quinn (Social Studies). Their School Council read *How to Be an Antiracist* by Ibram X. Kendi to inspire self-reflection. Biases and understanding of race were discussed. Professional development was offered. Work on equity and culturally-responsive teaching continues. Their presentation ended with a video which included music and instruments from different cultures. The department coordinators also shared what has taken place this year in ELA and social studies. An emphasis is placed on increasing reading diversity, as reading programs are being updated. Thirty-seven teachers from all buildings participated in a book club also focused on *How to Be an Antiracist*. Civic engagement is being encouraged and a civics project is now required for students in grades 8 and 11, with student presentations being shared in June on the district's website. A financial literacy grant has also been obtained for the district. For CHS students many dual-enrollment classes are offered through Middlesex Community College which allows college credits to be earned prior to graduating high school. To fully appreciate the richness of offerings provided this year to our students and staff, please view this entire presentation on Chelmsford Telemedia You/Tube.

4. Kindergarten Entrance Age Policy Waiver

Mr. Moses motioned to approve the changes to policy JEB ENTRANCE AGE / MANDATORY ADMISSIONS to a July 31st of the calendar year. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 4-1.

5. **FY2021 Recommended One-Time Expenditures**
6. **FY2021 Recommended Budget Transfers**

Mr. Moses motioned that the School Committee vote at the regular school committee approve the FY2021 local operating budget transfers totaling \$1,682,462 for the Chelmsford Public Schools as presented. Ms. Newcomb seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

7. Return-to-School Update

a. Staff & Student Covid Data Trends

Dr. Lang shared that case numbers continue to drop.

b. Staff & Student Covid Pool Testing

Last week's pool testing revealed one positive case.

c. Middle School Return to Full In-Person Learning

Last Wednesday middle school students returned to full in-person learning. About 80% of students returned, while 20% opted to continue with remote learning.

d. High School Return to Full In-Person Learning

Yesterday CHS returned to full-in person learning with about 73% returning. Families were thankful that more busses were added for the CHS routes.

8. Public Participation at School Committee Meetings

The Committee discussed the return of public participation at future meetings. Dr. Lang has included a memorandum speaking to how this might be put in place. A schedule of speakers could be set up a day before the meeting indicating arrival times for the speakers. All safety precautions will be taken. Dr. Lang will be in touch with Sue Rosa from Public Health to determine best practice on this. This may begin as soon as the next meeting.

Liaisons

Ms. Newcomb met with the South Row PTO last night. They will be looking to plan some end-of-year activities. Ms. Santos shared that The Wellness Committee is finalizing the policy changes and will present these to DESE. Ms. Santos thanked all the PTO's for their incredible work this year. Mr. Doherty shared that the CHS PTO will be honoring the graduating seniors. CHIPs had an amazing "Space Week" recently. The Chair will be updating the liaison assignments, so people should let him know their preferences.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment (8:00 p.m.)

Mr. Moses motioned to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*