

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
October 19, 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. In-person public participation will be taking place tonight in accordance with social distancing and safety protocols established by the Chelmsford School Committee Public Participation Guidelines. Anyone interested in speaking during the public input portion of the meeting would have notified the superintendent’s office by yesterday afternoon and would have been provided with the guidelines and assigned a time to attend the meeting to speak. 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 their comments or questions during our second public input session at the end of the meeting.”

Consent Agenda

- 1. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of October 5, 2021**

Ms. Newcomb motioned for the School Committee to approve the minutes of the regular School Committee meeting of October 5, 2021. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 4-0 with Mr. Moses abstaining.

- 2. Approval of the minutes of the school committee workshop meeting on October 14, 2021**

Mr. Moses motioned to approve the minutes of the School Committee workshop meeting on October 14, 2021. Ms. Newcomb seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Sarah Evans shared that the first academic term will be concluding on November 5th. Students and teachers are hard at work closing out the term. A lot of college representatives have come to speak to students at the College and Career Readiness Center. Guidance counselors continue to meet with the Class of 2022 to discuss future plans. At CHS this is “Spirit Week” with an outside “pep rally” to be held on Friday. A student walk is being held on Saturday to support Nick Sperounis, who is a junior and member of the football and wrestling teams, in his battle against cancer. A large turnout is expected and all wish Nick the best. That evening is the senior Halloween dance at the Elks. On October 31st a drive through “trick or treat” will take place at CHS. Proceeds from this event will go to The Paul Center.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that Parker Middle School is in a competition for "Boston 25 My School Rules". A \$5,000 grant will be the prize if they win. People have until October 21st at 11:59 to vote for the school. Go to channel 25 to vote, please! Boo Bash at Byam was a good time. More events are upcoming for Center, Parker and Harrington PTO's. Today was a professional development day with many good things happening. The Chair shared that Don Ayer, who is a school committee member from Nashoba Technical School, was honored by MASC with a "Lifetime Achievement Award". He also congratulated Donna Newcomb for winning Chelmsford's Unified Basketball game.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Introduction of World Language Visiting Teachers

Ms. Jessica Nolett joined the meeting to introduce two visiting teachers from Spain, Carlos Martin Carracedo and Leire Perez Quiroz. They are experienced teachers from Spain where they teach English. They are here through the Ministry of Education in Spain and the Massachusetts Department of Education. They have been hired to teach Spanish at CHS this year and may stay up to three years. They both introduced themselves and expressed their pleasure for teaching at CHS.

2. Update on COVID-19 Pool Testing, Test & Stay Initiative, and Student Vaccination Status

Dr. Lang provided slides with data updated as of this past Thursday. The information updates on town-wide student vaccinations; pool testing/Test and Stay; school level vaccinations (self-reported by students); and the CPS Weekly COVID-19 Dashboard were included.

The Chair proposes having these updates just once a month instead of every two weeks, unless a big change occurs. Dr. Lang suggested he report on updates during the second meeting of each month. The Committee is fine with that.

3. Update on Student Transportation Services

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum in tonight's agenda packet providing data on transportation services. There is still a bus driver shortage which has been challenging and disruptive with a result in longer bus rides for the students and later starting times for athletic events. In the long term, field trips may have to be curtailed.

4. Discussion and Follow-Up on Districtwide Facilities Master Plan Visioning Session

Dr. Lang will meet with Dore & Whittier on Thursday to discuss the first session. He believes the discussion at the session was relevant and good. The video from the meeting is on the district's website. It may be decided to ask those who view the video respond to a survey which will help gather more information. The second public input session will be in November. It is hoped to have more parents, students (middle and CHS) and school staff attend the next session.

5. Academic Update: Fall 2021

Dr. Hirsch included her slide show on academic data and spoke to each slide topic. She stated that our students are doing much better after the pandemic than was feared and that the district will be able to remedy any losses and get our students back where they should be to succeed academically. This is a tribute to the hard work put in during remote, hybrid and in-person learning from March of 2020 through the end of school in June of 2021. iReady consultants stated that the CPS fared better during the pandemic than many of their counterparts. There is still a lot of work to be done and her presentation tonight addresses that. She shared iReady benchmark data from the beginning of the year (BOY) and MCAS data from spring of 2021. She also compared BOY ELA data for 2019 and 2020 to that of 2021. The changes were not alarming. In math the fluctuations were a bit greater. To fully understand Dr. Hirsch's update, it would be wise to watch her full presentation on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube. The percentage of students who need further investigation for dyslexia declined this year. The benchmark dates for assessment this year are included in tonight's packet as well.

Concerning MCAS Dr. Hirsch shared that all students grade three to eight have been taking "next Generations MCAS" since 2018. The rating scale goes from 440 to 560. The numbers cannot be compared to the old MCAS proficiency ratings! In 2020 no MCAS was given in either math or ELA and the 2021 MCAS was smaller sessions. Overall ELA scores changed less than math scores at all schools. The scores shared tonight can be found on the district's website. Again, it is important to watch the meeting to fully appreciate the data shared by Dr. Hirsch. MCAS science is only given in grades five, eight and 10. All of the assessments have been helpful in implementing plans going forward for our students.

6. On Demand Tutoring Service: Paper

Dr. Hirsch shared a slide show and presentation about the new tutoring program called "Paper". The service is available 24/7 in English, French and Spanish and is accessible from any device. It is available for students in grades five through 12. The interactions are recorded for the district. This is being funded by an ESSER Grant. There is ongoing professional development. It also allows students to annotate their papers, lab reports, etc. to receive feedback before submission. Socratic teaching methods are used. Answers are **not given** to the students. The sessions can last as long as student need requires. All employees are fully vetted. "Paper" may also be used by students working in the classroom during the school day. There are webinars available to parents. Dr. Hirsch will provide updates for this program which was launched yesterday.

7. FY22 Financial Report – 1st Quarter (July – September 2021)

Ms. Johnson-Collins provided a memorandum and detailed report on this first quarter which she discussed with The Committee. Overall the report is favorable.

8. Discussion on FY23 Capital Planning

Dr. Lang has included information in tonight's packet detailing potential capital planning projects for FY23. He discussed these with The Committee to begin to determine prioritization of the projects proposed. He also reviewed capital projects recently completed. His presentation includes photos of the renovated McCarthy auditorium. The reopening of the auditorium is scheduled for mid-November for district use and rentals. The Parker Middle School kitchen remodeling (photos shown) was successfully completed for the opening of this school year. It is named "The Hungry Lion Café" and includes a state-of-the-art equipment and a pizza oven! This design will be a model for other school kitchen renovations. At CHS the science

pond area was renovated during the spring and summer and, in addition to cleaning, an observation deck was installed to facilitate students obtaining samples and an outdoor classroom was created. The CHS gym floor was completely overhauled and now includes an indoor track. The list of projects he proposes tonight includes deferred projects which are indicated in red ink. At the next meeting in November this list will be updated, and The Committee may get to work on the prioritization of projects. Prior to the next meeting Dr. Lang is asking committee members to familiarize themselves with the proposed projects.

9. Personnel Report: September 2021

No action required

Liaison Reports

Ms. Newcomb shared that South Row had their Pumpkin Fair on Saturday with many families attending. Mr. Moses shared that the Byam "Boo Bash" was also great and well-attended. Many more events are happening soon and show increased collaboration for the schools and their PTOs. Ms. Santos thanked "The Friends of Music" for accepting all of her cans! Mr. Doherty shared that the Alumni Hall of Fame has posted all this year's speeches on their website. The Booster's Club on November 11th at The Establishment restaurant will provide a veteran's appreciation dinner. The veteran's need to register online by November 4th. Dinners will be served by the CHS athletes. SEPAC held their first meeting of the year, according to Mr. King. The meeting was followed by a workshop on "anxiety", which had 30 virtual attendees.

Action/New Items

Following last week's workshop, The Chair, would like committee members to begin to brainstorm about goals for the upcoming year. Dr. Lang suggests this be included at the next meeting.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment (8:31 P.M.)

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

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*