

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
January 4, 2022
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Mr. Jeff Doherty (Secretary), Ms. Donna Newcomb and Ms. Maria Santos. Mr. John Moses is not present tonight.

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 December 7, 2021**
- 2. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of December 21, 2021**

Ms. Newcomb motioned to approve the minutes from December 7th and December 21st. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Katrina shared that on January 27th the information night for eighth grade parents will be held. A tour of the school will be included. Final exams for semester-long classes will be held from January 18th through the 21st. There will not be mid-term exams for full-year classes. CHS will welcome back the “therapy dogs” on January 6th in the Career Center thanks to the “Mindfulness Matters Club”. Also, “Reverse College Day” will be held on January 6th. Current college students will share their experiences with CHS students.

Sarah announced that The Theatre Guild is hard at work and on January 28th they will put up a tribute on "The Black Box Theater" to *Mama Mia* and *Grease*. In March they will present their festival competition play *Faith and Despondency* which focuses on the Bronte sisters. January 17th is the deadline for applications for the Alumni Association scholarships and the deadline for the Town scholarships will be February 11, 2022.

Guidance counselors have been sending weekly newsletters to seniors to guide them through the process. Today all CHS students took the "Youth Risk Behavior Survey". Data gathered will be useful in updating health education and social emotional curriculum and programming. On January 14th at 7:00 p.m. the "In Tune" concert will feature student musicians. Proceeds will go toward the Spring 24-hour Relay and The Clean River Foundation.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch welcomed everyone back to the buildings and wished all a Happy New Year! Mr. King congratulated Thomas Brown, a freshman at CHS, who was the winner of the Lowell Holiday Tournament in wrestling, and also Jack Walsh who placed fourth. The wrestling team placed 15 out of 73 teams!

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. District Management Group: Strategic Planning Process Presentation

John Kim, from District Management Group (DMG), joined the meeting virtually and shared his slides throughout his presentation. The slides are included in tonight's agenda packet. Dr. Lang explained that the strategic plan was moving forward until March of 2020 when COVID intervened and the focus for the rest of that year and the 2020-2021 school year was on keeping schools functioning. DMG has been hired by the district to assist in moving the plan forward over the next six months. Their mission is to support school districts in "sustained performance improvement". This combines student outcomes with what is sustainable operationally and enabling educational staff to do their jobs well and, in a cost-effective way. DMG's approach is three pronged and includes learning, solutions and consulting. Most districts have a strategic plan or are working on one. DMG helps them to prioritize their measurable goals and succeed in meeting them in a timely manner. They assist in identifying the five (or fewer) priorities that will lead the district to success during the upcoming three to five years, which will highlight the actions to be taken. The process will begin with forming a steering committee that will represent all parts of the district. Next is the needs assessment and the addition of stakeholder focus groups. Feedback is then gathered from the community and analyzed. A draft of the strategic plan will be created followed by more community feedback. The district will then set yearly targets, initiatives, projects and activities to move the plan forward. The strategic plan will then be shared with the whole community. Dr. Kim's entire presentation may be viewed on Chelmsford Telemedia.

2. Dore & Whittier Architects: Districtwide Facilities Master Plan Options Discussion

Dr. Lang shared that at the December 19th meeting a detailed presentation was provided by Dore & Whittier. The meeting was informative with no action required that night. The Committee was given time to familiarize themselves with all the project options presented. The MSBA window for applications will open in late January and close in late April. Dore & Whittier would like to see a decision made on which grade level the submission will target and within the next few meetings prioritize which specific school for the Statement of Interest (SOI) submission. Next the process will move to the “feasibility study”. In discussion The Committee agreed that the middle school level should be the project submitted. Dore & Whittier feel that Parker Middle School is the better plan to submit, although McCarthy is older. The Committee agrees about Parker, but Dr. Lang suggested that a formal decision with a vote take place at the next meeting on January 18, 2022.

3. DEI Work Update

Dr. Hirsch included a memorandum in tonight’s agenda packet articulating the professional development the district is doing to support Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). She shared “We have been working with Initiatives for Developing Equity and Achievement (IDEAS) through the Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents (MASS) to provide professional learning opportunities that support equity and success for all. A small sub-committee was created this past summer of 2021, made up of administration and union leadership, to meet with the director of IDEAS and establish dates for the school committee, administration, and staff to receive professional development on DEI in our district.” Her presentation includes PD which is ongoing during this school year, including PD for administrators next summer, as well as a graduate level course through Framingham State University. Additional PD will be scheduled for the next school year which will include staff who may not have had DEI opportunities during this school year. Next steps for The District in this process will be pursued. To kick off the 2022-2023 school year, Dr. Adolph Brown, who is the Founder, President, and CEO of The Leadership & Learning Institute, will be the key note speaker for all staff early in the first staff day and will provide PD for the remainder of the day and another PD day during the school year. DEI works in tandem with Social and Emotional Learning programs for students and staff and is interwoven in curriculum.

4. Chelmsford INTERFACE Activity Report: June – November 2021

Dr. Lang shared the INTERFACE report in tonight’s agenda packet and included slides to demonstrate the usage for June through November 2021 of this valued resource and referral agency hired by The Town of Chelmsford, Board of Health and The Chelmsford School District. This resource continues to help our students and families as well as townspeople who are experiencing mental health issues (i.e. depression, anxiety, suicidal thoughts), family issues, COVID issues, etc. Use of this referral service is promoted by school staff. Since the pandemic INTERFACE use has increased.

5. COVID-19 Protocols

Dr. Lang thanked Peggy Gump, Coordinator for School Nursing Services, for joining tonight’s meeting to provide protocol updates and to answer questions. The CDC recently changed some of their guidelines from those that existed prior to the recent school vacation. Changes have also come from the Mass. Dept. of Public Health and DESE in response to the CDC’s updated guidelines. The first major change is that a person who tests positive for COVID will need to self-isolate for a **minimum** of five days. Antigen tests are now acceptable along with PCR tests. Masks will be required for days six through ten. Testing to return to school is no longer required, although a laboratory test is preferred according to Ms. Gump. For those without symptoms who had close contact with a person who tested positive (in school) “test and stay” is allowed and negative test results need to be for five days in a row, no longer ten.

“Test and stay” parental permission is required in advance. Pool testing is a PCR test. Vaccinated students cannot be tested in “test and stay”, per DESE. The State had provided test kits to be distributed before the return to school on January 3rd. Staff were able to pick up the tests on January 2nd. Hundreds of kits were given out. That depleted the total supply. Dr. Lang is waiting to hear if The State will be supplying additional test kits for staff or students. The Committee expressed thanks to Ms. Gump for attending the meeting and enlightening all.

Liaison Reports

None tonight

New Items

The Committee does have a workshop on Tuesday at 5:00.

Public Comments

None.

Adjournment (8:37 p.m.)

Ms. Newcomb motioned to adjourn. Mr. Doherty seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*