

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
October 18, 2022
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Ms. Donna Newcomb (Chair), Mr. Dennis King (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

“This 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 the Chelmsford School Committee Public Participation Guidelines. Anyone speaking tonight during the public input portion of the meeting has notified the superintendent’s office of their desire to speak and has been provided with these guidelines. Upon request, written comments received no later than 12:00 p.m. on the day of this meeting will also be read and made part of the record of the meeting during the second public input session.”

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of October 4, 2022

Mr. King moved to approve the minutes from October 4, 2022. Ms. Santos seconded. Motion carries 3-1 with Mr. Moses abstaining.

CHS Students Representative Announcements

None

Good News

Mr. King and Dr. Lang attended the CHS Alumni Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony on Saturday, October 15, 2022. Nine (9) individuals were inducted including Ms. Daniel Hart, current CHS Athletic Director and Mr. John Sousa, Town Finance Director. Congratulations to all honorees. Thank you to Mr. George Simonian and Mr. Terry McSheehy for all their years of service to the alumni association.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. The French exchange students arrived October 14th, there was a gathering held on Friday, October 16th at the Establishment. The students are enjoying their time at school and the event was enjoyed by all that attended. There will be a follow-up video to share at a future meeting and our CHS students are looking forward to their trip to France in February 2023.
2. Spotlight –As mentioned previously, the first meeting of the month we will a spotlight on one of our schools and the second meeting of the month we will be a spotlight one of our departments. Tonight, we are hearing from Ms. Shannon Bischoff, Coordinator of Social Emotional Learning & Counseling Services. Accompanying Ms. Bischoff are two of the three new Social Workers: Ms. Jaelithe Brodeur and Ms. Shaun Dutcher. Jaelithe works with South Row, Center, and McCarthy Schools. Shaun works with Byam, Harrington, and Parker Schools. Ms. Samantha Campbell, the third new social worker unable to be in attendance this evening works with Chelmsford High School. All three new social workers have hit the ground running, supporting, and meeting with families, and supporting staff with community resources and their mental health needs. They have been working collaboratively, going on home visits, and working with families and schools on attendance. Resources are being added to the CPS website to access at any time.

Diversity, Equity and Inclusion – a district wide group has been formed of 15 people, with representatives from every building in the district. Goal – define the DEI work that Chelmsford Public Schools will prioritizing not only this year but also in the coming years, starting with four topics:

- ❖ Partnership with stakeholders to drive our work
- ❖ Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in the classroom and curriculum
- ❖ Ongoing Professional Development
- ❖ Policies/Protocols/Handbooks/Resources/Human Resources & Hiring

Ms. Bischoff thanked Dr. Lang and Dr. Hirsch for applying for CPS to be part of the REDI statewide partnership with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education and Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents. The partnership has been in place since 2020. The REDI statewide partnership consists of four (4) full day collaborative trainings and work in-person on PD days between Chelmsford and other districts as well as

consults from the team. Attendees of these meetings are Dr. Lang, Dr. Hirsch, Ms. Bischoff and Mr. Jayson Ramalho, Assistant Principal at South Row Elementary School. Participants will bring the work back to help guide and sculpt DEI in Chelmsford moving forward.

Mental Health – 30 members of the counseling, psychology, and the social work team in the district launched a video for Chelmsford High School students on the district website. Resource packets were sent home to families and a QR code was created and is available every day in every classroom which can be accessed any time during the school day if a student feels they need the help.

STEP Program – The program is up and running. The numbers are up from last year for the need for this program.

Bryt Program – We continue to be members of the Bryt Program. This program helps students transition back to school who have been absent due to hospitalization for health or mental health reasons.

Suicide Prevention and Mental Health – Ongoing trainings being offered to colleagues, teachers, and administrators around mental health. Ongoing collaboration with SCL coordinators and directors statewide which meet monthly. PD is planned for December.

Care Solace – Guidance for students, staff, and families 365 days a year, 24 hours a day.
88 cases open
38 accessed portal anonymously

Cartwheel – New Program
Working with students in grades 5 - 12 to access licensed child psychiatrists for students with a higher immediate need.

Social Emotional Learning - Panorama – Collecting SEL and behavior data for students. Entire Panorama dashboard looking at whole child and their needs. Dashboard will be up and running early November. There will be training with leadership and school teams.

Second Step – Continues to be implemented at the elementary and middle school levels.

3. 2022/23 School Committee Bridge Goals

Establishment of an advisory committee to examine a report on school climate. Roll that into the work of the Steering Committee is going to be doing on the strategic plan. In-depth look at their academic programming that will fall under what is going to be happening with the DMGroup. These goals are to

get us through the next couple of months while we wait for the DMGroup and the Steering Committee to be able to show us how we are going to implement their suggestions.

Mr. King moved that the School Committee accept the School Committee bridge goals for the FY2022-2023 school year as presented. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 4-0.

4. FY2023 Financial Report - 1st Quarter (July – September 2023)

Ms. Johnson-Collins shared first quarter financial report with the school committee members with the following highlights:

- Favorable variances in operating budget, grants, and revolving funds.
- Student activity accounts at high school and middle schools
- COLA included for two contracts
- Lane changes are favorable \$20K
- Still need to settle the Support Staff Contract
- Employee separation costs – paid in June 2022 last fiscal year resulting in favorable variance of \$170K
- Teachers are in place – favorable variance \$140K
- Specialists are in place – favorable variance \$451K
- Special education tuition costs are favorable now but early in the year. Budgeted \$5.4M for SPED out of district tuition. Off set that with the circuit breaker funding. Going to transfer \$2.5M at end of the year over to that fund with a cap at that fund. Can only carry one year's worth of revenue.
- No School Choice off set or Valley credit
- School Choice Fund – Currently \$2.3M in fund. Used to offset our 1:1 Chromebook device expenditures. Anticipated to end FY23 with fund at 2.4M.
- Grant and Revolving Fund Summary – No deficit balances for revolving funds. Some have very good reserves - some are breaking even.
- Student Activity Accounts
 - Chelmsford High School Balance – \$203K
 - McCarthy Middle School Balance – \$21K
 - Parker Middle School Balance – \$55K
- Money not used for CHS classes of 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic was given to the alumni association and will be used for future class reunions for those classes.

Mr. King moved that the School Committee accept the report as a report of progress. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 4-0.

5. Federal CARES Act (ESSER) Grant Update

ESSER Grants – Received three grants in 2021 and 2022 from the Federal Cares Act Grant. Two grants encumbered all funds. One grant goes until September 2024 which is in FY25, still funds available.

ESSER I Grant - \$311,545 – Three categories – Spent funds over three years 2021, 2022 and 2022.
Internal hourly labor - \$34,385 extra nursing hours (contact tracing) and custodial hours.
Contracted services - \$95,909 facilities assessment and master plan work. When Dore Whittier came in to help. Piloted an analytic study of the student data study dashboard. PD for teachers in reading and writing.
Supplies - \$185,251 classroom technology such as the clear touch, touch view panel, interactive panel and the classroom monitors.

ESSER II Grant - \$645,438 – Spent funds over past two years. Majority spent. Open encumbrance balance \$6,000, invoice due next couple weeks.
Internal hourly labor - \$21,173 extra nursing hours (contact tracing) and custodial hours.

Contracted services - \$482,402 extra custodial cleaning with extra custodial contracted service provider, therapy dog visits, PD in areas of culturally proficient schools, reading and writing, analytics platform for student data, initial strategic plan with DM Group.
Supplies - \$141,863 funding cleaning supplies during the pandemic, PPE for students and staff, hand sanitizer, air purifiers, filters, sanitizer cabinets for the science class equipment and nursing privacy screens. No more funds available.

ESSER III Grant - FY2022 ends September 2024 - \$1,428,108 – Spent 311,000. Encumbered \$227,000. Funds still available in grant \$889,529

Internal hourly labor – currently small amount spent on custodial cleaning.
Contracted services - \$553,425 actual and encumbrances combined in number. Paper platform for on-line tutoring is funded from this account for last year and this year. Phase 2 of strategic plan implementation, new SPED opportunities review and more PD in areas of equity and achievement.
Supplies – no supplies purchased yet on this grant. When Dr. Hirsch wrote the grant, it was earmarked for sanitation of the schools and instruction technology for online learning. Will likely need to be amended, grant was written November 2021 different from where we are today.

Some areas we know we will be using the grant for this fiscal year into 2024 will support what we are learning in the strategic plan and implementation. School safety audit under review \$65K under contracted services. Hiring two additional custodians is also being considered \$53,900 this year and \$85,325 next year. Hiring instruction specialist in mathematics for this year and next year align with the strategic plan.

6. Request for rate increase for hearing and vision screeners in the district.

Request from Ms. Peggy Gump, Coordinator for School Nursing Services. Each year the district employes part-time technicians to help with K-12 vision and hearing screening services. Our hourly rate that we pay has not moved. Not keeping up with our neighboring communities, historically paid \$15.00/hour recommendation on the request to double that amount to \$30.00/hour. Total hours of work add up to 135 hours of work. Previous paid \$2,036, if rate is doubled, we will pay \$4,000. There is a grant that will pay for this, no impact on local budget.

Mr. King moved that the School Committee approve the rate increase for the hearing and vision screeners to \$30.00/hour. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 4-0.

7. MSBA Site Visit: Parker & McCarthy Middle Schools

MSBA Application – MSBA came out for site visit, had walk through of Parker and McCarthy Middle Schools. Reviewed the SOI and talked about why this is a viable project. Meeting went very well, will find out in December if we will be invited to the next step. Attendees of the meeting/site visit were Dr. Lang, Town Manager Paul Cohen, CPS Director of Facilities Brian Curley, DPW Kathleen Canavan, Parker Principal Jeffery Parks, and McCarthy Principal Kurt McPhee.

8. Personnel Report: September 2022 – No action required.

9. Approval of Field Trip & Travel Requests

Mr. King moved that the School Committee approve the field trip of the Parker Middle School to attend the Student Leadership Conference at Southern New Hampshire University in Manchester, New Hampshire on November 17, 2022. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos shared Saturday, October 22nd Center School will be hosting Trunk or Treat, Harrington/Parker will host the “Battle of the Boos,” and Byam will be hosting their Boo Bash. The theater group is hard at work rehearsing for the performance of Legally Blonde. Tickets will be going on sale November 15th. The tickets will be available on our website. McCarthy Middle School and Center Elementary School are holding their Electronics & Metal Recycling Fundraiser on Saturday, November 5th from 8:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. at the CPS Administration Offices.

Ms. Santos would like to thank the PTO and all involved in the Grab & Go at CHS, it is going very well.

Mr. King and Dr. Lang attended the virtual SEPAC meeting on October 6th. It was well attended, a lot of middle school parents attended. A survey will be sent out to see if people prefer live or virtual meetings and what topics they would like to discuss over the course of year. Ms. Amy Reese, Director of Student Support Services led the meeting and Dr. Lang answered questions. Parents were interested in what is going to happen with the special education students for the next year with the transition. Mr. King shared he received an e-mail from the Governor’s Office declaring November 2022 SEPAC awareness month.

Mr. Moses will be attending the Veterans Panel at Chelmsford High School on Thursday, November 10th.

Ms. Newcomb attended the South Row Pumpkin Fair on October 15th, the weather was beautiful and very well attended.

Ms. Newcomb attended the Council of Schools meeting last week and there was quite a bit of discussion around school pictures as well as transportation. What are the parameters around the PTO paying for transportation for field trips and trying to find a system that is fair and equitable to everyone in the school.

Action/New Items

Transportation for after school and extra curriculum activities

MASC Policy Review/Handbook

Public Comments

None

Adjournment (7:55 p.m.)

Mr. King moved to adjourn at 7:55 p.m. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

**Robyn Corbett
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent**