

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
November 1, 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 18, 2022

Mr. King moved to approve the minutes from October 18, 2022. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-1 with Mr. Doherty abstaining.

CHS Students Representative Announcements

Keya shared Scout Troop 81 is having their Thanksgiving food drive in conjunction with the Merrimack Valley Food Bank in Lowell. Donations can be dropped off at the main office at CHS. First term grades close Friday, November 4th. SATs are Saturday, November 5th.

Lana added Tuesday, November 8th there is no school for students but a full day for staff. Several colleges have visited CHS over the past several weeks including Middlesex, Columbia, Tufts, Vanderbilt, Bryant and Salem State. A couple of upcoming college visits are Iowa State, Bay Path, Westfield State, Franklin Pierce and UConn.

Good News

Ms. Santos shared that she visited Harrington Elementary School and Parker Middle School for their Halloween events. CHS student representatives volunteered at the Trick or Treating at the high school. All clubs dressed in Halloween costumes. It was a community event and very fun!

Mr. Moses shared Parker held their annual Pizza, Pumpkins and Paperbacks event. Great event. Parker PTO did a great job.

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Ms. Newcomb commented that we had a very active school community the month of October, Halloween events, MVC Cross County hosted by Chelmsford this year, Trick or Treating events at CHS on Saturday and the play “Legally Blond” will be taking place the month of November with opening day on November 15th.

Mr. Moses had an opportunity to tour Nashoba Valley Technical High School. He found the tour very interesting and how different and fulfilling the education is at a technical high school. A lot of people think of the regional technical schools as competition, but it is not. The kids in this town have two amazing options. Nashoba has some great programs. How fortunate we are in Chelmsford to have access to that school system as well.

Ms. Newcomb added the technical high school is not competitive, it is becoming more collaborative. Nashoba is looking at postgraduate and after school programming.

Mr. Moses thanked Dr. Lang and Superintendent Pigeon for graciously allowing him to tour the school. He appreciated the opportunity.

At this point in the meeting Dr. Lang shared a video of the French exchange students visiting with us last week. Dr. Lang thanked the host families and staff who put a lot of time and effort into taking the kids and staff members into their homes and showing them around not only Chelmsford but around New England. It was a great experience for the students coming over and for our students to make connections. Our students who will be traveling to France and Spain are very excited for these opportunities.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Schools and Departments Presentation

Spotlight – Byam Elementary School with Principal Jason Fredette and Assistant Principal Betsy Dolan.

Jason and Betsy showed a video “A Day in the Life at Byam Elementary School”. The video showed the following:

- ❖ Kindergarten Foundations (board wheel)
- ❖ Grade 4 Mathematics (chrome books, math expressions and math goal activities)
- ❖ Music - Ukulele (cords and instruments)
- ❖ Grade 2 Writing (informative writing piece)
- ❖ Grade 4 Social Studies (comparing civilizations from the Americas)
- ❖ Physical Education – Scooter Bowling (practice important physical skills)
- ❖ Grade 3 FPC (interactive read aloud)
- ❖ Grade 4 Science (collecting soil samples)

This video gives a snapshot of kids collaborating so much more than we have been seeing.

Dr. Lang appreciated the video and commented that as Principal Fredette eluded, the last couple years have been very different than a typical school year. This school year has been more “normal”. We still have issues, but they are more traditional issues you would find during a school year with students and behaviors and things like that. The schools are doing a really nice job trying to bring back more normal schooling. Dr. Lang liked how the video showed all the different programs we are utilizing. Kindergarten with Foundations, FCP Classroom, etc. The collaborative work that was taking place with the math lesson, the focus on the SEL in the schools which is a large part in the day of the curriculum. It was nice to see the students outside working on the science lesson. It is nice to see some of the investments we made in the curriculum areas highlighted in the video.

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Ms. Santos shared she enjoyed the video and saw curious minds who want to learn and staff who want to help them learn. She saw a wonderful environment, a place where you want to go and learn. She thought the video was great.

Principal Fredette explained that day in and day out he sees a genuine love to learn and a genuine love of teaching. SEL is not just all you do; it is how you do it.

Ms. Newcomb added she thinks it is great that we can show what schools look like over the course of the day. She saw a blend of technology use, traditional paper and pencil, kids working independently and collaboratively and hands on when collecting soil samples. She saw teacher led activities when working on the writing assignments and kids working in small groups. This is what education looks like. It was great to see what teachers must do over the course of the day taking all those things over the course of a day or week and using those skills to be able to help educate our kids in the district. It was nice to see it in action. Thank you.

2. MCAS Results Spring 2021

Dr. Hirsch presented an overview of District and School Data

School Accountability Data Rating

<u>School</u>	<u>School Accountability Percentile</u>
Chelmsford High School	83
Parker Middle School	81
McCarthy Middle School	80
Byam Elementary School	67
Center Elementary School	81
Harrington Elementary School	70
South Row Elementary School	84

We have not received an accountability rating since 2019 prior to the pandemic. The percentile is not a percentage. It is looking at some attributes of that school. They are looking for performance and SGP. When you get to the high school level, they are looking for drop-out rates, dissipation rates and comparing those schools to similar school and how those schools are performing. Example: CHS, we are performing 83% higher than most schools in the same category of CHS.

District Overview of Performance – ELA

You want to be at 50% that is at least a year's growth. A typical span for districts is 60 highest – 40 lowest. Overall, as a district 58.8% is our proficiency rating. 58.8% is 5% lower than how we performed the previous year, however, compared to the state, we are 18% higher than the state.

SGP (Student Growth Percentile)

You want to be at 50% that is at least a year's growth. For the district overall performance ELA we are at 53.5% which means we have at least a years growth. Which is up by 11 points through the previous school year. In the year 2021 you will see a lot of differences that is where we started to see some of the discrepancies. You will see we were going up then we were going down as a district. It is not a big swing. It is 4 points higher than the state average. Will also look at the schools individually and we are at 50%.

District Overview of Performance – Mathematics

Mathematics has gone up district wide. We are at 53.7% which is 7% higher than last year which is 15% higher than the state.

SGP (Student Growth Percentile)

We are at 51.1% which is 18 points higher than where we were from the 2020-2021 school year and 1% higher than the state.

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District Overview of Performance - Science

Science we are at 65.7% which is 12% higher than previous year and 24% higher than the state. 2019 and 2021 school years students were not taking the next generation science standards, this data is only for grades 5 & 8 students. 2022 has the high school students in grade 9 taking the biology as an honor student or in grade 10 taking it in the college preparatory class. Science is in decent shape but there are some nuances with this data.

SGP (Student Growth Percentile)

Science does not have SGP

School Level Overview Performance – ELA

Data shows how they have been performing from 2017-2022. CHS 2017 & 2018 no data for proficiency because that is when we transitioned into the next generation ELA Test. The same for mathematics as well. Performance starting to go up. We are looking at actual grade levels at schools and by students. We are looking at the work that is done at the school level with teachers during the data meetings.

School Level Overview of Performance – Science

CHS no data for 2019, 2020 & 2021. There was the Legacy Test and the Competent Determination Waiver for our students with the seniors. The class graduating now is the last class with that waiver. Their performance was very well 2022 which was the first time they took the next generation science standards along with grades 5 & 8. They performed very well. SGP over the 5 years for ELA has held pretty strong. You will not see SGP for the elementary level because you need 2 years of data and they did not have that 2020 data. Will not have data for SGP for elementary schools in 2021.

School Level Overview of Performance – Mathematics

Starting to see upswing in performance. Dip in 2021 – Recovering back. Hit hardest in middle school grades and high school level. Conscious effort from all schools to look at certain domains that going forward will make a difference. Math always looking at number and operations and algebraic thinking. We noticed in the beginning year data an uptick for students because there were a lot of lessons put in because those are the 2 foundational domains for math and in English it is phonemic phonics and vocabulary. Conscious efforts put in to be sure if we have a gap, if we only have so much time which standards are going to be the standards we really have to focus in on for the students.

Ms. Santos asked Dr. Hirsch in summary how would she evaluate where we are as a district from last year into this year. Dr. Hirsch feels we are in a much better place. In 2021 even though we came back in person with masks, the attendance was hard. It was hard for everyone. If you were sick, we were still under the old guidelines, you had to stay out for 14 days: students, teachers and staff. There was a lot of frustration more so than when we were in the hybrid/remote year because of the attendance, keeping kids on track and the remembering who was out for so many days was really taxing on the staff. Plus, if the staff go sick, who were we going to put in those classes. We are in much better shape and anticipate going back to where we were prior to pandemic times. This district did an amazing job keeping those academics at the forefront when it easily could have been like we can't do this, we are in a pandemic what do we do. We had our beginning of year data meeting with IReady to see how our students are doing at the beginning of the year, that's how we benchmark them throughout the school year, and they are not seeing these types of numbers in other districts. These numbers are compared nationally, they are surprised how well Chelmsford did compared to other districts. We are pretty pleased how we have done as a district.

Dr. Lang commented he was pleased to see the rebound which a lot of districts did not see the rebound coming back this year. The impact of the pandemic on our most struggling students, our special education population, and our economic disadvantaged students, they really took the biggest hit in the pandemic. We haven't seen their rebound be as significant. They certainly had a rebound but not rebounding to the level of the general education students. We are working with the DMGroup and the strategic plan to see where we need to put our resources, that is definitely a population that we need to work on to be sure they are fully supported.

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3. FY 2024 Capital Planning

Town wide capital funding projects between 3-4M dollars. We propose projects annually for the town capital.

Dr. Lang presented an updated list of projects for FY24 – FY28

- ❖ Center School corridors and classroom refresher – recommended to remove
- ❖ McCarthy and Parker elevator projects – recommended to defer

Recommended projects for this year

- ❖ Renovation of Art wing and Art classrooms at CHS
- ❖ Complete remodel of kitchen at CHS
- ❖ Floor tile work at Parker
- ❖ Replacement of stairwell treads at McCarthy
- ❖ Replace elevator at Westlands
- ❖ Handling units and duct work repair and replacement in building
- ❖ Recommend prioritizing elevator work at CHS and Westlands
- ❖ Defer McCarthy and Parker elevator work for one year

Dr. Lang will submit these projects and request to the Capital Planning Committee in the initial packet for review.

4. Rate Increase: School Nutrition Services Driver

Requesting rate increase for food nutrition service driver. Recommendation for \$1.00 per hour rate increase for FY23 then .75 for FY24 and .75 for FY25. This is a non-affiliated singular position.

Mr. Doherty moved for the School Committee to approve the rate increase for the part-time school nutrition service driver to \$18.90/hour retroactive to July 1, 2022. Mr. King seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

5. 2023/24 Middle School Realignment Working Timeline

Dr. Lang presented a timeline with some dates and ideas for meeting with staff and parents on the middle school realignment plan

6. Fall Student Transportation Update

Dr. Lang gave update on student transportation. Day-to-Day morning and afternoon runs to the school for the most part going fairly well. We are back to 29 buses. On a good day and everyone is healthy we are running 29 buses. If bus drivers are out with sicknesses, we do have to double up runs not typical to other years. After school runs are not going great. There are not enough buses in North Reading to take care of our afterschool runs. There are not enough buses at 2:00pm to be able to do some of the early runs. They have been able to free up buses at the end of the day at 4:00pm to pick up kids and bring them back to the high school but not always optimal getting there. Dan Hart and others have been using the two (2) minibuses to shuttle run students to where they need to go. It has been a challenge. Dan has contracted with Bedford Charter; they had more availability. He has locked in with them to take our teams to and from for a little bit for the winter season, he is looking to see if he can outsource to Bedford to lock them in. North Reading has been communicative that they are not able to do these runs. Dan receives an email every morning from North Reading telling us what they can and cannot do so it does give us time for planning. Weekends have been ok getting buses. The other challenge he does foresee is the winter and spring track. Track requires a lot of buses. The number of track kids poses a challenge.

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Students that can drive have been super. Parents drive and carpool when they can. The bus driver shortage is still real. It is hard to plan for, but no sporting events are being missed.

7. Approval of Field Trip & Travel Requests

Mr. Doherty moved that the School Committee approve the field trip of the Parker Middle School Grade 7 field trip to see the “Christmas Carol” at the Palace Theatre in Manchester, New Hampshire on December 16, 2022. Mr. King seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos shared the Wellness Committee is back in session and there will be at least three more meetings this year. We have new student members and community members which includes parents. Good number of folks in the committee. Focus this year is staff wellness and nutrition education at the elementary level. McCarthy PTO - McCarthy grades 5 & 6 social was held in October. They had a teacher appreciation event with donuts, apple cider, pumpkins, gifts and a lot of donations from the community. They did a dining to donate and Project 300 will be November 7 – 14 to support “Don’t Run It”. Sneaker recycling is currently running and on November 5th was their recycling day event. Reserve the night of March 24, 2023, for Rock and Roll Bingo. Their best book fair will be held December 7 -14. They are currently working on a toner and cartridge collection and the PTO is working on the Parker outreach program and plans on reaching out to the Parker PTO.

Mr. Doherty shared the CHS PTO sponsored a Grab & Go at the high school on October 27th, it was a great success. They had over 25 raffle prizes given out. The families who contributed were numerous and very generous. The Chelmsford All Sports Booster Club will be hosting their annual Veteran’s Dinner at the Establishment in North Chelmsford on Friday, November 11th to honor the Veterans. Reservations can be made on their website.

Mr. King shared that CHIPS has several enrichment activities coming up in the months of November and December. Open House and Basket Raffle – November 17
Received positive review of the social workers that have visited their classrooms.

Ms. Newcomb added there are incredible activities happening throughout the district. PTO sponsored with parent volunteers. It really shows how vested our parents are in the district in providing fun activities for their school communities. Thank you to all the PTOs for their hard work and the parent volunteers for making it happen.

Mr. Moses shared that he will be attending the Veterans Panel being held at CHS in the Career Center on Thursday, November 10th. Veterans and former service members from around the district are meeting with students who are interested in joining the military to speak with them about this potential option.

Action/New Items

- ❖ Safety Audit Update - Dr. Lang met with firms and picked a group to work with, will put on Agenda for next meeting.
- ❖ McCarthy Tennis Court Project – item listed for FY25.
- ❖ Policy Sub Committee Update – policy review first meeting in December.
- ❖ School Committee Handbook Update – first of year
- ❖ Short Term Goals – first of year
- ❖ Interest serving on the contract negotiation team for the superintendent, contact Ms. Newcomb

Public Comments

None

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Adjournment (8:04 p.m.)

Mr. Doherty moved to adjourn at 8:04p.m. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

**Robyn Corbett
Executive Assistant to the Superintendent**

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