

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
December 20, 2022
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Ms. Donna Newcomb (Chair), Mr. Jeff Doherty (Vice 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

6:03 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 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 comment session.”

Consent Agenda

1. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of December 6, 2022

Mr. Doherty moved that the School Committee approve the minutes from the regular School Committee meeting of December 6, 2022. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS Students Representative Announcements

Lana shared that Brendan Conley filmed a video “capturing and sharing all the fun there is at CHS and what the school has to offer for its students”. The video was shown to eighth graders and their parents. Keya is not at tonight’s meeting she is performing in the Chelmsford All Town Wind Ensemble concert. Congratulations to the Speech and Debate Team for winning a sweepstakes award. Many individuals also won awards at the tournament this past weekend.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that wonderful concerts have been taking place in The District. There is a lot of activity going well in the schools, currently! Mr. King added that winter sports have begun. Ms. Santos mentioned that theatre students are beginning to work on the competitive play. The middle school plays will also be forthcoming.

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School Committee Approved:
January 3, 2023

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Spotlight on the Departments: English

Ms. Abbey Dick, Department Coordinator for English Language Arts, joined the meeting to provide an update on what is happening in grades five through 12. She began by sharing data on staffing at CHS and both middle schools. Her presentation was augmented by her accompanying slide show. The standards addressed meet the DESE 2017 expanded frameworks and far exceed reading literature and discussing books. Reading informational texts occurs in English classes in addition to content area classes like social studies. Three modes of writing are also taught: narrative writing; informational writing; as well as argument writing. Speaking and listening is also taught to encourage self-expression and comprehending what others are saying. The language standard includes vocabulary and grammar usage.

Data is reviewed often for grades 5-8 to insure progress and meets the needs of individual students. I-Ready is used for diagnostic purposes and personalized instruction. MCAS data is reviewed each autumn. Grades 5 and 6 use the Fountas and Pinnell curriculum, as do the elementary grades. Professional development for teachers takes place in a partnership with Lesley University. The curriculum for grades 7 and 8 is "HMH Into Literature" There is a textbook as well as supplemental units paired with novels. PD for this has been online and offers great differentiation. District teachers also collaborate to enhance this curriculum.

At CHS an online pilot is being conducted for grades nine through 12 called IXL. This is accessed by students during "Plus Block". The diagnostics assist teachers with planning lessons. Additionally, focus has been on the NEASC recommendations for curriculum and syllabi. Dual enrollment offerings through Middlesex Community College have been expanded. A new club called "CHS Book Talk" began this year. The "Paper" tutoring program is in its second year with increasing student use. This program is available 24/7. Dr. Hirsch added that students and parents have been surveyed on "Paper" and the results have been used to encourage more students to utilize the program. The Committee thanked Ms. Dick for her presentation.

2. Spotlight on the Departments: ELL, Reading and Title I Services

Ms. Kelly Rogers, Department Coordinator for Reading, English Language Learners, and Title I Services, joined the meeting to provide updates on programs for ELL, Reading and Title 1 services. Her detailed slide show for tonight's presentation can be found in tonight's agenda packet. She began by saying that there are 78 languages spoken in the Chelmsford Public Schools with Spanish being language spoken in 181 student households. The extended school year program for ELL was attended by students from grades 1-11 from 30 families and ran for four weeks. For ELL students in middle school there are after school homework and tutoring programs. At CHS there is an academic ELL tutor who attends classes with some of the students during the school day. CHS also has an ELL mentor program with each student being assigned a mentor when they newly arrive at the school. Additionally, there are many supports for ELL families including: 24/7 interpretation on demand; the "ELL Smores Newsletter"; and support for Afghan refugees/immigrants from the International Institute of New England in Lowell. There are also different events for families during the year and ELPAC (English Learner Parent Advisory Committee) which meets regularly and is supported by The Chelmsford Public Library. Every six years the program is reviewed by The State and recommendations are made where applicable. Access testing will be done in January and will help determine the intensity of student needs. Many students will test out of ELL if this assessment indicates they no longer need the support and will exit the program but are monitored for the next four years. Monitored students can be readmitted to the ELL program if they need more support.

Regarding reading and literacy, elementary grades K-3 use Foundations as a coaching model. The coach from Wilson Learning spends time in classrooms (grades 2 and 3) and provides feedback to teachers individually and also meets with teachers by grade level to provide professional development. For K-4 the focus is on writing using the Fountas and Pinnell writing curriculum. PD for this was provided in October and will take place in January and March of 2023. Reading staff at the middle schools are doing a grade 7 collaborative reading project with Parker and McCarthy students in anticipation of the reconfiguration of the middle schools next year. Currently they use technology to work together but plan to meet all together when they finish the book. At CHS "Language Live" is used by small groups or with individual students and it also entails an interactive technology program.

In Chelmsford three elementary schools and both middle schools qualify for Title 1 support. Interventionists are used to support both reading and math. Family engagement opportunities are provided at the Title 1 schools including: family information nights; the "Building Readers" newsletter (in English and Spanish); and partnership with the Chelmsford Public Library, which has included a visit from the Bookmobile! The Committee thanked Ms. Rogers for her presentation.

3. Addressing Hate in School Sports Conference

Dr. Lang spoke of a Conference he attended with Principal Murray and Athletic Director Hart earlier this month which was sponsored by the Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, DESE, MIAA and MASS (Massachusetts Association of School Superintendents), which addressed the presence of "hate" in school sports. The conference encompassed protocols, best practices and how to create a positive and inclusive sports environment. The packet from the conference is shared in tonight's agenda packet. He is hopeful future events will be able to include student athletes. "ArxED" is the training module used for the Chelmsford Public Schools regarding athletics.

4. FY2024 Capital Plan Update

Dr. Lang thanked Mr. Doherty for doing a "wonderful job representing the school department's interests". He is pleased that six of the major projects were funded. Last year The Town purchased boilers for CHS but did not have the funds to install them. The funding has now been approved and the boilers will be installed in the summer. Elevator projects were approved for Westlands and CHS. The kitchen revamp for CHS was also funded. Some of the projects which were not approved may be funded in the coming year by the schools. Tonight's agenda packet contains Dr. Lang's memorandum and details of the projects which total around \$2.2 million. The projects will still need to be approved in April during Town Meeting.

5. October 1, 2022 Student Enrollment Report

The figures were submitted to DESE on October 1, 2022. These figures help determine Chapter 70 funding for next year. Details of the report including class sizes are in tonight's agenda packet. Future enrollment predictions will be coming from NESDEC next year and Dr. Lang will share the figures at a future meeting.

6. Recommended Revision to 2022/23 School Calendar

Mr. Doherty moved that The Committee approve moving a half-day professional development day from April 13, 2023 to Tuesday, April 4, 2023. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

7. Proposed 2023/24 School Calendar

Mr. Doherty moved that The Committee approve the Chelmsford Public Schools 2023/2024 academic calendar as presented. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

8. Personnel Report: November 2022

No action required.

9. Approval of Field Trip Requests

Mr. Doherty moved that The Committee approve the Chelmsford High School Varsity Wrestling Team's travel to the tournament in Middletown, Connecticut on January 21, 2023. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Liaison Reports

None

Action/New Items

The Chair would like to receive the updated NEASC report. Mr. King would like an update on the ongoing Special Education review which will be concluded by April. Dr. Lang stated the review is going well. Mr. Moses would like an "open space" update. Ms. Santos would like an update on The Strategic Plan. The security audit report will be ready early in 2023.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment (7:25 p.m.)

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

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*