

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
December 5, 2023
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Ms. Donna Newcomb (Chair), Mr. Dennis King (Vice Chair), Ms. Susan Mackinnon (Secretary), Mr. John Moses and Ms. Maria Santos.

Also present: Dr. Jay Lang (Superintendent) and Dr. Linda Hirsch (Assistant Superintendent) and Ms. Joanna Johnson (Director of Business & Finance)

Call to Order

Ms. Newcomb called the meeting to order at 6:00

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 this 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 comment session.

Consent Agenda

1. **Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of November 14, 2023**

Mr. King motioned to approve the minutes for our meeting on November 14, 2023. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0 with Ms. Mackinnon abstaining.

2. **Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of November 21, 2023**

Mr. King motioned to approve the minutes of our meeting on November 21, 2023. Ms. Santos seconded. Motion carries 4-0 with Mr. Moses abstaining.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Lana shared that the Interact Club and the Class of 2024 representatives are working together to help support Wolfie, the seven-year-old son of our science teacher, Cara Bak, who has been diagnosed with leukemia. There will be a fund raiser to help the family at this time. Donations may be made online by joining “Wolfie’s Pack Fundraiser”. Senior Lonnie Petrova has been accepted into UMASS Lowell’s Third Regional Juried High School Exhibition! A zentangle-contoured drawing by CHS sophomore U. Sharmar (whose art teacher is Tim Richards at CHS) is now on the cover of the Massachusetts Music Educators Journal! Congratulations to both of them! Winter sports have all begun and all athletes are wished a successful season. This Thursday will be a half day for students.

Keya added that The Ecology Club's composting effort during CHS lunches is ongoing and each month the food waste collected has produced 2.25 tons of compost! In November Ecology Club students helped in two town-wide activities including the Hazardous Waste Day and the Zero Waste Day. Tomorrow the Ecology Club will be conducting a clean-up around CHS in partnership with National Honor Society students. More than 40 students will help with this event after school. Ecology Club membership numbers have doubled this school year.

Ms. Newcome addressed Principal Murray (present at tonight's meeting) to commend both Lana and Keya for their dedication to representing CHS at Committee Meetings.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that there has been a second visit from the Bionic Project, a group of soccer players who are amputees. While at the school they shared what it is like to be a person with disabilities and how important it is for all to be inclusive and ally themselves with those who experience "different accessibilities". They had previously visited Parker and their second visit was to McCarthy where they were present in physical education classes. The science department continues to work with Snapshot USA by sharing what is captured on the school district's trail cameras. The Science National Honor Society students are identifying the animals which appear on the cameras. In addition, trout eggs will be delivered next week which will be used to stock a local river. Reminder that the PD day has been changed to Tuesday, March 5, 2024. The Wellness Fair will now take place on March 6th.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Spotlight on the Schools: Chelmsford High School

Principal Murray from CHS came to the table with Dr. Tanini, Mr. Bartos, Ms. Cunningham and Mr. Hart to cast the spotlight on what is happening at Chelmsford High School. Mr. Murray shared that tonight's presentation will focus on "three big programs": NEASC accreditation; dual career and college readiness program and the transformed athletic program.

Dr. Tanini stated that the NEASC process is lengthy and began in 2021 with planning and data collection from all stakeholders. In April 2022, this report was shared with NEASC representatives who visited the school. CHS's "Self-Reflection" was also presented. A "School Growth Improvement Plan" was presented and work on this growth has continued since then. A summary report will be presented to NEASC in March 2024, at the "Decennial Visit". One area where CHS did not meet the NEASC standards was the lack of a "comprehensive document that describes the vision of a graduate". Work on this involved attending conferences and reaching out to the community. The second standard not met was the presence of a "written curriculum that was in a consistent format for all classes". To develop the vision of a graduate work was done with focus groups and surveyed stakeholders. This continues to be a work in progress being guided by the PRIDE acronym. The consistent curriculum format is also being worked on continuously, so it will be in place for the Decennial Visit.

Mr. Bartos discussed continuing work on the "physical, emotional and intellectual well-being of the students". The district's curriculum included anti-bias and anti-discrimination curriculum. "Panorama" is employed to get a "snapshot" of the mental and emotional health of the students. Each Wednesday an SEL block is presented in an advisory capacity with discussions of various topics. An additional priority is to ensure that "school building/facilities support the delivery of high-quality curriculum, programs and services". Reports are being gathered from maintenance, custodians and athletics.

To achieve a consistent format of curriculum: all department syllabi are now consistent; departments continue to work on an approved curriculum template; and the “Vision of the Graduate” will be tied to all curricula. The “Decennial visit from NEASC will take place from March 11th through 13th, with a culminating meeting on Wednesday, March 13. About 60 days later a final report will be delivered to Dr. Lang, The School Committee, faculty, and Town Hall.

Next, Alex Cunningham, Career and College Readiness Facilitator, spoke about updates. “Innovations Pathways” allows students to acquire experience and course work in some of the high demand industries. In Chelmsford this includes business and finance; information technology; engineering/manufacturing and life science. These programs continue to grow in enrollment annually. There are a total of 125 students in the programs this school year. New, at the end of this year students enrolled will be able to participate in an internship or a Capstone Project with a partner in industry.

“Early College Access Programing” includes courses Chelmsford provides to allow students to earn college credits while still at CHS. The first of three tiers of this program offers IDS 101 and DS 106 which are FREE online one-credit college courses. This is open to freshmen and sophomores through Middlesex Community College. The second tier provides Dual Enrollment Courses which has grown in student participation since its inception in SY 2021/22. By SY 2024/25 forty-one courses will be offered. The cost savings going through Middlesex Community College with CHS offers incredible tuition and fees savings!

Associate Degree Pathway: Liberal Arts and Sciences is a partnership between CHS and Middlesex Community College which is a brand-new program and offers courses for freshmen through seniors which students may begin in either grade 9 or 10 and can lead to completion of an associate degree by high school graduation! The total cost would be less than \$8,000!

Finally, “MassHire Partnership” offers part time jobs and internships for CHS students. This assists students in getting post-secondary employment. A guest speaker series on this program will be held in January 2024 for students. In March employers will come to CHS for a job fair for students seeking to enter the work force after high school graduation. Information on these career and college readiness programs will be presented to the families of current eighth graders on January 17, 2024.

Athletic Director, Dan Hart, spoke of the CHS athletic program which is, in fact, one of the largest in Massachusetts. CHS offers 32 different sports, with 64 teams and currently has 508 winter athletes registered, which is 36% of the school’s population! The track program, which is supported by coaches who are CHS faculty, currently has close to 200 students participating. A high number of CHS teams qualify for state tournaments. ARXEducation Training is required for all student athletes as well as all coaches. The training includes addressing hazing training; chemical health rules; positive behaviors and MIAA rules. MIAA is providing Leadership training and offered a “Hate in Sports Conference/Positive and Inclusive Sports Environment” this year at the TD Garden in Boston. MVC held a Leadership Summit at the Tsongas Arena late last school year and ten CHS students were invited to attend. Three of those spoke at the Summit and were inspirational! CHS athletes also provide community service in The Town. The presentation concluded with a slide highlighting this fall’s athletic teams, including three “Athletes of the Year” out of ten awarded! The Unified Basketball Program is a real highlight of the athletic year. The Thanksgiving Football Game this year against Billerica was played at Fenway Park!!!

To fully appreciate tonight’s Spotlight on CHS, please view it on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube!

2. 2023/24 School Improvement Plans

In tonight's agenda packet, Dr. Hirsch included a memorandum and supporting documents for the School Improvement Plans (SIPs) for the coming year which are aligned with the five-year Strategic Plan. The plans include the goals and action steps to assure ongoing improvement. Each school has a School Improvement Committee, made up of stakeholders, which meets up to four times a year. School principals provide a mid-year and end-of-year status update. The SIPs may be found online at each school's web site.

3. October 1, 2023 Student Enrollment Report

Dr. Lang included the official October 1, 2023, Student Enrollment Report and supporting data in tonight's agenda packet. This helps The State to determine how much Chapter 70 funds will be sent to the district for the following school year. Additionally, the annual NESDEC enrollment projection is included which is usually very close to the actual enrollment on October 1st. Dr. Lang's data for each school shows the class sizes in each home room and sections.

4. Tri-Board Budgetary Meeting: Monday December 11, 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Public Comments

None

Reports

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos shared that The Wellness Committee will be holding The Wellness Fair on March 6, 2024.

Mr. King added that the Capital Committee met last Thursday where potential projects were presented. Next Thursday a meeting will be held to decide which projects will move forward to Town Meeting. Tomorrow night The Alumni Association will meet.

Ms. Mackinnon attended The Winter Store at Harrington on Saturday and about 30 CHS students were there to provide community service. The following day Parker brought vendors together for holiday shopping and was also assisted by CHS students according to Ms. Santos.

2. Action/ New Items

None

Adjournment (7:37 p.m.)

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

***Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio,
Recording Secretary***