

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
March 12, 2024
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-Collins (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 February 27, 2024

Mr. King motioned to approve the minutes of our meeting on February 27, 2024. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Keya shared that the Y2K Cultural Event hosted by The Black Student Union took place on March 9th and was a huge hit for CHS students! CHS is in the midst of its reaccreditation process through NEASC (The New England Association of Schools and Colleges). NEASC has toured the school and stopped in classrooms and met with students to learn more about CHS. On March 6th, the CHS Wellness Fair was held for students in grades nine through 12 who visited numerous stations during the school day to: visit stations for blood pressure checks; learn CPR; sample food and tea; try the impaired driver simulator and hang out with therapy dogs.

Lana added that the junior class had a Career Exploration Breakfast offered by Ms. Cunningham on March 6th. Students met two professionals from careers which interested them and enjoyed a complimentary breakfast. Lana enjoyed speaking with engineers and learning more about that career. This week House Olympics will take place where the three houses will compete in spirit days and other events.

The winning house will receive a trophy and “bragging rights”. Yesterday students were able to participate in House Colors Day where students could submit logos and slogans to represent CHS. The winner will be able to design a wall at the school. A dodge ball competition was held after school and the Class of 2025 (Lana’s class) won. Today a Luau was held, and ECO cleanup took place with a disc golf tournament after. Tomorrow will be “Cultural Day” with a robot race competition and a hockey tournament between students and staff. Pajama Day will be held Thursday with Karaoke during lunch and an after-school basketball tournament with grades competing against each other. “Gold Spirit Day” will be held Friday with students performing during lunches. Class elections will take place next Wednesday. The Student Council will hold its annual “Leadership Conference” on April 2nd with adults attending who represent the law, medical, financial literacy, college and business in panel discussions. On this half-day students may attend a catered breakfast and three panel discussions.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch shared that NEASC was spending time at CHS meeting with teachers, groups of administrators and visiting classrooms. NEASC is enjoying all the student “spirit” during their visit! This past weekend Dr. Hirsch and Dr. Lang saw *Annie* performed by Parker Middle School. Well-attended and a great job!

Ms. Mackinnon participated this week in “Community Read-In” and enjoyed reading to classes at both Center and Harrington Schools. She spoke with children about her role on the Chelmsford School Committee. The children were “well-behaved”. One third grader asked if they could have after school programs at the elementary schools.

Mr. Moses shared that a sidewalk project extension for Maple Road has been approved which will bring sidewalks all the way to Byam Elementary School. He feels this may enable students who now ride the bus to become “walkers”.

Ms. Santos also enjoyed the “Community Read-In” at Center and Harrington Schools and felt “rejuvenated”! She added that planning this year’s wellness fair was challenging in that it was hard to get people from the community to participate. She appreciated all the hard work done by members of the Wellness Committee, especially Hana Barker who was the greeter for the whole time. Hana would like to have more parents on the Committee. Katie Sims and Stephanie Quinn were amazing as the Committee’s Leaders and thanks also to Peggy Gump! Nancy Antonelli provided awesome food for the participating community members.

Public Comments

None

New Business

1. Spotlight on the Schools: Byam Elementary School

Dr. Lang invited principal, Jason Fredette, and assistant principal Betsy Dolan to join the meeting to talk about what is happening at Byam this school year. Mr. Fredette chose to highlight the Reveal Math program and how that is being implemented in the classrooms. This program is tied directly to The Strategic Plan. Reveal Math was piloted last year which was chosen as the preferred pilot for the strong foundation in mathematics and conceptual skills as well as providing differentiation and opportunities for each student to succeed and master critical standards. It brings all students to build a “mathematician mindset”.

Ms. Dolan added that the Reveal Math lessons focus on: be curious; number routines; and ignite. “Be curious” allows students to have meaningful discussions with their teacher speaking of their curiosities. “Number routines” allow students to: estimate; decompose numbers; find pattern(s); use clues to find mystery numbers; estimating and rounding and using mental math. “Ignite” allows students to: ask questions; accept challenges; employ trial and error; freedom to make mistakes and learn from them; work with other students and, finally, play and enjoy problem solving as a fun activity.

The presenters next shared videos of Revel Math with teachers and students from grades K, 2, 3 and 4. To fully appreciate this part of the presentation be sure to go to Chelmsford Telemedia and view tonight’s meeting. Close attention should be paid to: the math dialogue; commonalities between grades and see student engagement. Teachers are able to “customize” the lessons which is a positive. Building-based professional development days are offered monthly.

2. Presentation: CPS Strategic Plan Implementation Update - DMGroup

Tess Nicholson Powers from the DMGroup joined the meeting tonight to provide a mid-year check-in on the progress of The Strategic Plan. This summer a yearly update will take place. She shared that The Plan is “living” each day in the school district as tonight’s presentation on “Reveal Math” demonstrated. She thanked all who were involved in the creation and implementation of The Strategic Plan throughout the district. This fall the data from last year was examined to see which goals were or were not met and determine what initiatives should be implemented to achieve the unmet goals and to further refine needed “action steps”. Tracking of this has been taking place since October. The Steering Committee meets every six weeks to evaluate what work has taken place since the previous meeting, which aligns to each priority area. At this point the work is in the implementation phase of making the five-year Strategic Plan come to life! This leads to district priorities and budget choices. “IF... District leaders provide direction, rigorous curriculum, appropriate resources, and ongoing development, and • Principals create the conditions, the culture and build buy-in to ensure initiatives are implemented faithfully in a welcoming environment, and • Teachers foster an inclusive learning environment, ensure curriculum is accessible to each and every student, and build strong relationships with students and families... THEN... We will realize our vision that every student will reach their full academic potential, feel confident in themselves and their abilities, and grow into strong community members and citizens”. All stakeholders in the Chelmsford Public Schools are helping the vision come to life. Ms. Nicholson Powers’ slide show is included in tonight’s agenda packet and presentation shows the metrics and initiatives for the five priority areas in detail. More information on clarifying the roles of the district paraprofessionals will be included in the next presentation.

3. Vote on School Choice Program: 2024/25 School Year

Dr. Lang has included a memorandum in tonight’s packet which provides background on the School Choice Program where some students from neighboring communities are allowed to attend the Chelmsford Public Schools. The State provides \$5,000 for each student through Chapter 70 funding. He proposes adding eight spots for incoming ninth graders at CHS and one spot for a fifth grader at Parker. This will bring the total number for the next school year to 40 students.

Mr. King motioned to accept eight additional students at Chelmsford High School in grade nine and one additional student at Parker Middle School in grade five under The Commonwealth of Massachusetts School Choice Program bringing the total School Choice participation in the Chelmsford Public Schools to 40 students during the 2024/25 school year. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

4. Approval of Field Trip Requests

Mr. King motioned to approve the field trip of McCarthy Middle School students enrolled in French to Quebec City, Canada from May 19th to the 24th, 2024. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve the field trip for the Chelmsford High School Theatre Guild to Boston, Massachusetts from March 21st to March 23, 2024. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Mr. King motioned to approve the field trip for Chelmsford High School students enrolled in French to LaRochelle, France from April 16th to April 27, 2025. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Public Comments

None

Reports

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos shared that the CHS PTO did a staff appreciation event after February break with two more planned for this school year. They are busy with planning for after the prom. The Middle Schools PTO met last night with good attendance. They are planning to hold a STEAM Fair for the next school year. Parent volunteers to lead this endeavor are needed. There was a successful 7th grade Black Light Dance with over 250 students in attendance! Parker's play *Annie* was very successful. Their talent show will take place on May 18th.

Ms. Mackinnon attended CHIPS PTO last week and they were pleased at the success of their "Sock Drive". They have exciting theme weeks with an upcoming "Under the Sea" week. The PTO gave money to the teachers who bought fun items for their classrooms. Their next fund raiser will be "Square One Art". She attended Harrington's PTO and discussed the Strategic Plan.

Mr. King added that SEPAC will hold workshops on the new IEP process on March 21st and March 26th. He attended the Center School Science Fair as a judge. Ms. Newcomb was excited about a LEGO vacuum that was very powerful! Last night Mr. King and Ms. Newcomb were able to meet with the NEASC Team.

Ms. Newcomb congratulated John Moses on the Town Hall he held last week with post 9/11 veterans speaking of service to The Town. It was well attended. Applications for the 2024/25 school year for funding from the Arts and Technology fund are available and need to be submitted by March 31st. This year applications from school clubs will be accepted. Applications may be found on The Town website.

Action/New Items

Mr. King would like a firm date for the public forum on the building proposal for Parker, to take place prior to Town Meeting in April. Dr. Lang will announce the date at the next Committee meeting.

Ms. Newcomb added that Sam Poulton from the Nashoba Valley School Committee stated there would be a debate on March 20th to be sponsored by The Town's Republican and Democratic Committees.

Adjournment (7:34 p.m.)

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

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