

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
February 25, 2025
Meeting Minutes**

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

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

Call to Order

Mr. King called the meeting to order at 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 Policy. 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 4, 2025

Ms. Santos motioned to approve the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of February 4, 2025. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS Student Representative Announcements

Patrick shared that the "College and Career Fair" for CHS students will be held on Saturday, March 8th at the Chelmsford Center for the Arts. Many teams are "staying alive" through the winter post sports season. "Congratulations and good luck in the post season". The girls track record for the one mile was recently broken by Kate Leonard who ran "an amazing 5 minute 12 second mile"! In two days 29 CHS DECA students will compete at the state finals!

Lana added that Sophia Roy placed fourth as a finisher and finalist at the Harvard National Speech and Debate Tournament! Many CHS seniors took the Seal of Biliteracy test for Spanish and French today. Next week the junior class will hold elections of class officers. The Senior Internship Program is getting closer. By next Friday seniors must submit the application and sign the Mentor Handbook. On March 20th students will be told if their internship has been approved.

Good News

Dr. Hirsch stated that the "Good News" tonight is here with the international TEA Fulbright scholars attending tonight's meeting. We will hear from them soon!

Public Comments

Shelley Epstein Bethel who teaches Spanish at McCarthy and is the Secretary of The Chelmsford Federation of Teachers as well as a McCarthy teacher representative came forward to speak and requested that the budget item for the literature support position not be cut when the current teacher retires at the end of this school year. Additionally, she requests that the copy clerk position not be cut. McCarthy definitely needs a second Supervisor of Students, but she asks that the previously mentioned positions not be cut to provide funding for this additional position. Her requests and reasons to support them may be viewed by watching tonight's meeting on Chelmsford Telemedia You/Tube.

The next comments were from Therese Keohane who teaches eight grade math at McCarthy Middle School. She spoke highly of the support provided by the copy clerk, particularly during the transition year for the two middle schools. Many of her students require "specialized instruction materials" provided by the copy clerk as well as materials for SEL instruction. She believes that data must be considered before removing the position for literature support teacher to ascertain the number of students who read below grade level. She also supports the need for McCarthy to have a second Supervisor of Students.

Kim Briand is a seventh-grade teacher at McCarthy who taught at Parker prior to the reconfiguration of middle schools. She read comments from a letter written by a teacher who was unable to attend the meeting tonight. This person supports the literacy support teacher position be maintained as do many other "concerned teachers" at McCarthy. This position supports "tier two gen ed students" who fall behind in reading. Data was shared from the letter stating the numbers of students reading behind grade level.

New Business

1. Recognition: UMASS Lowell Teaching Excellence and Achievement (TEA) Fulbright Scholars

Dr. Hirsch was pleased to announce the visit tonight of the TEA Fellows to our meeting! They are all here including the five who are partner/teaching at CHS and McCarthy Middle School. The five who are located in Chelmsford spoke tonight and shared a bit of their experiences thus far. They come from the countries of: Malawi; Argentina; Ukraine; Nigeria and Turkey. They teach: social studies; special education; ESL; economics; STEM and English. They were pleased at the flexibility and inclusiveness of education in Chelmsford with students of all abilities being involved and are grateful to the teachers with whom they are partnered and expressed gratitude for being so welcomed in the Chelmsford Public Schools and being made a "part of the team". They observed that challenges in education are global and the needs of students and educators are very similar in the countries represented and there is hope that with education the problems of our world may be solved!

2. Spotlight on the Departments: English (Grades 5 – 12)

Dr. Lang welcomed Ms. Abbey Dick, Department Coordinator for English Language Arts, to the meeting to share the ongoing work of her department. English education in grade 5 -12 is aligned with the State's ELS standards from 2017. MCAS data and, more often, iReady data are used to track student growth and determine any interventions which may be needed. Recently Fountas & Pinnell has offered the "Writing Mini-Lesson Guide" which is used for grades 5 and 6. The writing is also connected to the texts being read. The middle school reconfiguration has made it possible for all grade level teachers to meet and share. Beginning this school year there are "Common Writing Assessments" for grade 5 – 10 which focus on the standards that MCAS indicated would most help our students. The focus is on assisting students in generating and organizing their ideas for writing. Grade 7 and 8 have a new literature textbook with the pacing and standards being worked on simultaneously throughout the classrooms. For CHS the focus is on updating and documenting the curriculum as part of the NEASC process.

Also, for the high school, the IXL assessment has been introduced for more data collection which is part of the CHS School Improvement Plan and is used in conjunction with Panorama. Individual strategies for students are based on this assessment. A great amount of PD is supporting these new initiatives. Additionally, the English Department offers four dual enrollment classes through Middlesex Community College. Many English electives are also offered at CHS. The “Seal of Biliteracy” offered by the State provides certification for students who are proficient in a language in addition to English. To fully appreciate this presentation and accompanying slides, you may watch it on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube.

3. Spotlight on the Schools: Chelmsford High School

Dr. Hirsch introduced Steve Murray, Principal at CHS. He began his presentation with an update on the NEASC report which was received in October. The overall report was really good, and the school was recognized for its comprehensive programs in both academics and SEL. NEASC is looking for “a comprehensive document that describes the “Vision of the Graduate (VOG)” and creation of measurable skills for the VOG which can be embedded within the curriculum. Secondly, NEASC wants to see curriculum in a consistent format or template for all classes. The work on this is ongoing. Other recommendations being worked on include; improving school support for SEL (and making better connections with individual students); continuing to provide high-quality buildings; and establishing consistent grading practices.

Next Principal Murray spoke about the success of the “Freshman Mentor Program” at CHS based on the guidance of Ms. Rossini, her Executive Board and the numbers of student volunteers. This has proven to be a great way to welcome incoming eight graders to CHS. Three student mentors spoke to The Committee tonight sharing how important this program is to them. This helps middle schoolers to transition to high school academically (helping with daily routine) and socially (adjusting to the “culture of CHS). The mentor (a CHS senior or junior) is a buddy whose supportive relationship begins on the very first day of school. Mentors and mentees are matched by submitting a Google form so that common interests are shared. Meetings continue once monthly during “Plus Block”. Students who enroll at CHS after the school year has begun, also receive a mentor to help with their transition.

Lastly, Ms. Alex Cunningham, Director of the College and Career Readiness Center, came to the table to share information about several programs for CHS students. The “Innovation Pathways” program started in 2020, which offers coursework and experience for students “in specific high-demand industries”. This year close to eighty students will be participants. The “Senior Internship” program was launched in SY21/22 with 31 participants and has grown to over 200 interested students for this school year! Seniors in this program will finish academics in term three and get hands-on experience at their internship during term four. This year the program goes from April 7th through May 23rd and culminates with a presentation and exhibition. The “Dual Enrollment” program continues to grow and offers students the opportunity to take college courses (there are 30 in all from which to choose) with credits from Merrimack Community College. The cost for these classes is much lower than that for matriculated students in Massachusetts State Colleges and Universities. Massachusetts also offers community college classes for free to graduating seniors.

4. FY2026 Budget Hearing

The Chair stated that The Committee will go through the FY2026 budget page by page. Individual votes must be taken on each page starting on page 11. At the end a final vote will be taken for the entire budget amount.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 1110 School Committee in the amount of \$34,700 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 1210 Superintendent in the amount of \$504,857 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 1220 Assistant Superintendent the amount of \$286,244 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 1230 District Wide in the amount of \$523,700 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 1410 Business and Finance in the amount of \$501,941 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 1420 Human Resources in the amount of \$350,670 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 1430-1435 Legal Services and Settlements in the amount of \$123,000 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 1450 Districtwide Mis in the amount of \$1,674,981 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2110 Curriculum Directors in the amount of \$1,431,515 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2110 Curriculum Directors – Special Education in the amount of \$1,058,368 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2210 School Leadership in the amount of \$3,240,957 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2300-2305 Classroom Teachers – Regular Education in the amount of \$27,801,845 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2310 Teachers Specialist – Regular Education in the amount of \$2,082,496 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2310 Teacher Specialist – Special Education in the amount of \$8,668,938 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2320 Medical/Therapeutic Services in the amount of \$555,693 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2325 Substitutes in the amount of \$811,000 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2330 Paraprofessionals in the amount of \$4,782,869 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2340 Librarians/Media Center in the amount of \$840,312 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2357 Professional Development in the amount of \$218,727 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2410-2415 Textbooks & Instructional Materials in the amount of \$473,099 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2420 Instructional Equipment in the amount of \$192,900 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2430 General Supplies in the amount of \$612,333 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2440 Other Instructional Services – Special Ed in the amount of \$215,000 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2451-2455 Classroom Inst Technology & Software in the amount of \$805,000 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 2710-2800 Guidance & Psychological Services in the amount of \$3,201,024 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 3200 Medical & Health Services in the amount of \$980,041 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 3300 Transportation in the amount of \$5,042,638 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 3400 Food Services in the amount of \$25,000 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 3510 Athletic Department in the amount of \$898,939 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 3520 Other Student Activities in the amount of \$199,940 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 3600 School Security in the amount of \$275,661 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 4110-4210-4230 Custodial Services in the amount of \$2,139,637 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 4120-4130 Heating of Buildings & Utility Services in the amount of \$1,485,100 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 5150 Employees Separation Costs in the amount of \$98,606 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve item 9300 Tuitions in the amount of \$3,512,269 as presented in the FY 2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve the grand total bottom line FY2026 budget of \$75,650,000 as presented in the FY2026 budget document. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

5. Personnel Report – January 2025

No action required.

6. Approval of Field Trip & Travel Requests

Ms. Santos motioned to approve the Chelmsford High School band, chorus and orchestra students performing arts workshop and performances at Walt Disney World Resort “where all of your dreams do come true” from April 16th through April 20th, 2026 in Orlando, Florida. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

Action New Items

Ms. Mackinnon shared that The State DESE has issued to all schools a statement in support of “all students including trans and nonbinary” and those in the LGBTQ community. She states that Chelmsford Public Schools continue to support all students! The full statement may be found on the DESE website.

Public Comments

None

Adjournment: 9:23 p.m.

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

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio,
Recording Secretary*