

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
July 22, 2025
Meeting Minutes**

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

Also present: Dr. Jay Lang (Superintendent), 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 6:00 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 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 June 17, 2025**
2. **Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of June 27, 2025**

Ms. Santos motioned to approve the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of June 17, 2025. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of June 27, 2025. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

GOOD NEWS

Dr. Hirsch described the Fourth of July Parade as "amazing"! The bubble machine was a huge success!

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. 2024/25 End-of-Year Academic Update

Dr. Hirsch shared data from iReady for both math and reading with comparisons to national and state benchmarks as well as student goals and placements for the new school year. In math the overall Chelmsford scores are higher than the state and national scores. This is true also of Chelmsford's MCAS scores. Comparing the data from spring-to-spring shows stability over the past three years with most grades, especially 2 and 3, showing upward trends with the new math curriculum. We seek more improvement in the transition from grades 7 to 8. From fall to spring data shows strong progress in grades 1 and 3. Grades 5 and 6 show significant improvement moving into grade level placement. More improvement is needed in grade 8.

Again, in reading Chelmsford students perform higher than the state and national levels. Larger gaps are seen in grades 7 and 8 but scores are still higher than the national and state scores. Spring to spring data has been positive for the past three years. K, 1, 2 and 3 show large gains. More focus on reading will be directed at 7 and 8 to keep them reading as they prepare to enter CHS. Fall to spring for reading the gains are great for the younger grades with improvements in 6 and 7.

Next, she presented data to show what growth is happening. 100% of growth represents one school year. From fall to spring all Chelmsford elementary and middle schools scored in the high quadrant of growth and performance...over 100% in math! District wide the typical growth is 117%! The Strategic Plan focuses on three groups for students: special education students; ELL students and economically disadvantaged students. Any groups whose growth is less than 100% are not achieving one full year of growth and are thus falling behind. This past year special education students (those on IEPs) grew 96%. ELL growth reached 117% while economically disadvantaged made 100% growth. This is the second year of tracking growth so after next year we will have three years of data and be able to see "trends".

In reading the elementary and middle schools also showed high growth and performance. There was 135% typical growth in reading! As with math grade 8 lags behind the other grades. This is being assessed to plan on addressing it. Special education growth was at 113%. ELL students showed growth at 131% while economically disadvantaged students showed growth of 121%.

To fully appreciate this detailed presentation with the many accompanying slides and Committee discussions please watch it on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube.

2. 2024/25 CPS Year-in-Review

Dr. Lang included a memorandum in tonight's agenda packet and spoke of the many highlights of this past school year. The summary of these are included in The Town Meeting Booklet yearly. This was a strong financial year. Food services sales are increasing providing more revenue to help with the costs of capital projects. The School Choice funding provides money for the 1:1 initiative and continues to have a robust balance of around \$3.2 million! Town Meeting supported our budget of \$75.5 million for the coming school year. All four contracts were ratified overwhelmingly before the close of the school year!

The Parker Building project is moving along with our being included in The Feasibility Study by MSBA. "Left Field" has been hired as our OPM and the designer/architectural will be hired by mid-September. The configuration of the new school should be decided by the Town by the end of 2025 with community forums to be held throughout the fall. Based on recommendations for safety and security made by the Ed Davis Group, secure entrances to the schools as well as the district-wide radio systems are in place. DMGroup continues to guide us through our Strategic Plan meeting with working groups every six weeks. Refinement of the paraprofessional roles and responsibilities continues to be a priority. The chair added that this information will be valuable to The Committee while working on the Superintendent's Evaluation which should be submitted to Mr. King by the end of July.

3. FY2025 End-of-Year Budget Report – Preliminary

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum and supporting data in tonight's packet providing a preliminary fourth quarterly update. The final numbers will be presented in August. We have spent about \$73 million and have about \$800,000 in open encumbrances with \$256 available.

4. Update on Federal Grants

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum in the packet tonight providing up-to-date information on federal grants as well as USDA reimbursement for food service. The memorandum clearly details what is known as of this date regarding federal grants, some of which are "uncertain, delayed or under review". Some of these grants **may not be funded** for the upcoming school year. Dr. Lang spoke to how this lack of funding will be handled and will continue to update The Committee as updates and alerts are received.

5. Cell Phone & Social Media Use Survey Results: Teacher Responses

Tonight's packet includes the preliminary results of teacher responses to the survey given near the end of the school year. The data will be used for conversations regarding cell phone and social media use beginning with tonight's meeting and continuing during the upcoming school year. 240 teachers responded! Going forward we may be able to compare our responses to regional and national responses thanks to Professor Walsh at Boston University. Narrative responses were summarized by elementary, middle and high school teachers' responses and are included in tonight's packet. As he shared the responses tonight, Dr. Lang welcomed comments and discussion from The Committee. Questions included: social media platforms; problems with cell phone usage at school; banning cell phones during the school day; knowledge of student handbook guidelines; as well as possible social media "addictions".

6. Cell Phone & Social Media Use Survey Results: Family/Parent Responses

It is important to note that legislation on these issues is being discussed by The State which may be enacted in the coming school year.

To fully appreciate the results of both surveys and The Committee's discussions, please view this segment of tonight's meeting on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube. Dr. Lang then moved to the family/parent survey results to which there were almost 2,000 responses! The questions were similar to those in the teacher survey as mentioned above in item #5.

Again, narrative responses were summarized and included. Recommendations from the two surveys were fairly consistent. After tonight, Dr. Lang will be sharing the survey results with staff and administrators as well as the broader community. Dr. Lang would like to see consistent approaches in enforcement of handbook guidance. Discussion on both surveys took place for quite some time during tonight's meeting. Future discussions will take place during the new school year including working again with Professor Walsh from BU.

7. Approval of 2025/26 Student Handbook & Addendum Updates

In tonight's agenda packet Dr. Hirsch has included the 2025/26 Student Handbook and the CHS Addendum with proposed changes in red or blue print. Some of the changes were made due to changes in law but most were just language "clean up". Most of the CHS Addendum changes involved: "Duel Enrollment"; "Innovation Pathways"; clarifications on "Blocks"; field trips; conduct and discipline; gender identity and anti-discrimination updates; athletic eligibility; safety/security; and communication. On page 5 of the Student Handbook language changes are requested. On page 20 of the Student Handbook a change is recommended to read "cell phone/communication device". Dr. Hirsch will make the requested changes in the handbook update. She will email the changes to The Committee.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve the 2025/26 Student Handbook as presented with the amendments/suggested changes. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve the Chelmsford High School Addendum with the recommended changes. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

8. Approval of 2025/26 Employee Handbook Updates

Dr. Lang indicated there were few changes made to this handbook. The hyperlinks will redirect to the recently approved contracts.

Ms. Santos moved to approve the updated Employee Handbook as presented. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

9. Private School Approval Process and Request for Consideration

An application for Private School Approval for the Drake Academy of Excellence has been submitted to The Committee for consideration this evening. Dr. Lang stated that DESE has a checklist for districts to use when approving new schools. He has included this information and indicated and discussed with The Committee which items have been met for the proposed school and which have not. He noted that four criteria of 13 have not been met at this time. When these are all met, they may submit their final application packet for approval. Dr. Lang encourages members of The Committee to visit the site. Dr. Lang will advise Drake Academy of additional criteria to be met as well as information to be provided before their application will be ready for approval prior to The Committee's next meeting on August 5, 2025.

10. Personnel Report: June 2025

No action required. Hiring is going well!

REPORTS

1. Liaison Reports

The Chair shared that the Building Committee has received proposals from six designers which are currently being reviewed. The end of August a meeting will be held with MSBA where two or three will be selected for interviews to be held in September. Also, the South Row project is “good to go” and will be done next summer and includes solar panels. Elevator projects are being worked on. Other summer projects are underway.

ACTION/NEW ITEMS

Dr. Lang will provide an update on enrollment numbers at the next meeting. An AI policy is in the working stage.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT at 8:47 p.m.

Ms. Santos motioned to adjourn. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary