

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
January 6, 2026
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Ms. Diana Lebeaux (Secretary) is attending via Zoom tonight, Mr. John Moses, and Ms. Susan Mackinnon. Ms. Maria Santos arrived late 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 December 16, 2025.

Mr. Moses moved to approve the minutes of December 16, 2025. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 3-0 with Ms. Mackinnon abstaining.

CHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Patrick said he had a "good vacation"! Last weekend the CHS Wrestling Team and the Boosters hosted "The Bruce Rich Invitational" which was successful and raised lots of money for the CHS Wrestling Team. Thank you to all volunteers. January 13th will be a half day for students and there will be no school on January 19th which is Martin Luther King Day. Mid-term exams go from January 21st through January 23rd. Tomorrow is the home-opener wrestling meet.

Richie added that before break the CHS National English Honor Society read to students at South Row Elementary School. Two students from each CHS House received recognition as "Students of the Month". The current semester ends of Friday, January 23, 2026.

GOOD NEWS

Dr. Hirsch wished everyone a “Happy New Year”. On the January early release day, the elementary PTOs are bringing in Sam Drazin who is from a group called “Changing Perspectives” who will be conducting professional development that day but speak with families at Center Elementary School at 7:00 p.m. in the cafeteria. There is a form to fill out in order to attend. He has good messages for students with disabilities and physical deformities. Ms. Lebeaux thanked Dr. Hirsch for “stealing her thunder!”. Mr. Moses shared that it is good news that “the kids are back in school”!

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Katie Sullivan, who teaches AP History and social studies at CHS, and is also the President of the Chelmsford Federation of Teachers, joined the meeting to speak about the calendar for the 2026/27 school year. She asks that The Committee follow the language in the contract regarding the starting date for school. The suggested early start might impact staff in providing day care for the children in their families or effect already planned and paid for vacations. The first paycheck will not take place until September 4th. She supports schools being open on September 1st for the election day. She requests that the teachers’ first day back be Monday August 31st. To hear her comments fully, please watch this segment of the meeting on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Spotlight on the Schools: Parker Middle School

Parker Principal Joshua Blagg came to the table with Parker Middle School students. He began with the Parker School Improvement Plan which states that “During the 2025-2026 school year, Parker students will exceed 100% median to Typical Growth on the iReady spring 2026 Math diagnostic.” To this end they continue to monitor iReady growth and benchmark data. Those in need of support receive it through “Tier 2” interventions. The WIN (What I Need) Block provides additional time for intervention. Targets include academic, behavioral and SEL. Student, Maddie Kowalik, spoke of the importance of WIN Block for extra work and making up missed work and for group projects. Time may also be spent reading or on Chromebooks. Mr. Blagg added that the “Panorama” platform includes all student data and makes it possible to upload intervention plans and track testing and grades. It also provides tracking for them in future grades.

The second improvement goal will ensure students have strong relationships with staff and their peers, so students feel welcomed, included and safe in school. The weekly block includes ten to twelve students with a staff member to work on “Second Step” SEL curriculum. All staff and students are included in this which was started last school year and takes place on Wednesday mornings. Additionally, strong staff/student connections involve: clubs and activities; socials and service projects; and helps in the development of relationships through celebrations! Kyle Bean, a sixth-grade student, shares that this helps by connecting with staff outside of academics (i.e. Best Buddies and intramurals) and identifying “at least one person in the building you can go to”. strong Jeffrey Long added that Student Council and Drama Club helped to meet new people and make new friends. He has even made new friends riding on the school bus! Some of these students, including Indira Singam, participated in “Visioning Sessions” where they were there to discuss the possibility of a new Parker School and share core values and concerns with teachers. They were able to hear from administrators, parents and architects. Indira said that this was important for her to talk with others, including teachers about the potential new school.

She learned what to “prioritize for student growth and success”. It was fun to imagine the future in a new Parker School. She learned a lot through the sessions. Maddie especially liked a slide from the architects showing what the new school might look like.

Mr. Blagg welcomed teachers Jennifer Clark, Kristen Lyons, and Meghan Colon to the table. They are the DAIS Instructional Leadership Team (Diversity, Accessibility, Inclusion and Support) who work to “ensure that all students are supported academically, emotionally, and behaviorally while providing an inclusive learning environment”. The first twenty minutes of each morning teachers without home rooms provide specific help to students. Meghan Colon shared that this is her third year on the DAIS Committee which assists students with organization and regulation to be ready for the upcoming day. Kristen Lyons added that there are four groups in DAIS which students may be recommended for: Breakfast Club; Let’s Move; Mindful Moments and Organization Station. These are offered two times per week. Staff members volunteer as facilitators. Data from DAIS is shared through Panorama. Jennifer Clark spoke of these six-week long intervention programs with 56 students and eleven volunteer staff members. Many of the students have already signed up for another six weeks! To fully appreciate tonight’s well-received update from Parker Middle School please view the meeting on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube.

2. Proposed 2026/27 School Year Calendar: Continued Discussion & Vote

Dr. Lang included three calendar options in tonight’s agenda packet. The Committee discussed the options.

Ms. Santos moved to approve option one. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken Motion carries 4-1.

3. Parker Middle School Building Project:

Dr. Lang welcomed LeftField, the Owners Project Manager, and Ai3, the architects, to the table for an update on the Parker Middle School Building Project.

a. Education Program Endorsement

Currently, the Project is assessing three different grade configurations as part of its feasibility study associated with the Parker School Project. To date the Parker School Building Committee as studied 14 different options with varying grade configurations. By May, these options will be whittled down to the one scenario which will be advanced to the MSBA. Ms. Rivera of Ai3, presented a series of slides associated with the Project and explained the purposed of tonight’s request to obtain School Committee approval for the educational program as part of the overall MSBA PDP submission. The slides presented by Ms. Rivera explained that the educational program is a written document on the District’s existing educational program and defines proposed educational activities, serving as a foundational planning document for subsequent phases of the feasibility study. The Committee reviewed key program goals, including addressing overcrowding, improving equity across schools, expanding instructional and support programs, enhancing safety and accessibility, and creating flexible learning environments aligned with modern educational practices.

It was noted that the existing Parker Middle School facility constrains the District’s ability to fully achieve these objectives, and that approval of the Educational Program enables its submission as part of the PDP, allowing the project to advance to further evaluation and design consideration in accordance with the MSBA process.

Additionally, Ms. Rivera stated that approval of this program is a necessary step to allow the District to continue working with the designer, Owner's Project Manager, and stakeholders to evaluate and select design alternatives that align with educational objectives and provide long-term flexibility. Ms. Rivera explained that changes to this document can still be made during the next phase as this document should be considered a foundation of the educational program that will be developed into the eventual proposed Parker Middle school solution. The full PDP submission is planned to be delivered to the MSBA by January 22, 2026.

Various committee members commented on slight edits and clarifications that were made to the educational program based on the committee's initial review.

Ms. Santos moved that based on the review of the preliminary design program PDP Educational program document submitted to us on January 5, 2026, approve AI3 Architects and LeftField to submit this document to the MSBA for review and consideration as part of the PDP submission and review process associated with the MSBA Feasibility Study for the Parker Middle School Project. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

b. Grade Level Alignment Consideration

Ms. Rivera then presented a series of slides that visually outlined the 14 options that the School Building Committee are currently assessing. These options range from simple code upgrades to additions/ renovations, and new construction options on different sites and include the current three different enrollment options. Ms. Rivera commented that at the most recent public forum held on December 17th, the enrollment option of 4 to 6 received unequivocally the most support. Ms. Rivera also shared a robust chart that listed various criteria that the School Committee will utilize to assess each option. This assessment will be completed on January 15, 2026. At the January 15th meeting, the School Building Committee will narrow down the 14 options as part of the PDP submission to the MSBA. School Committee members discussed their individual opinions on the 3 different enrollment options and all members agreed that the 4 to 6 option was their preferred choice.

Ms. Santos moved to strongly support the 4 through 6 option. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

c. Review of Next Steps:

i. School Building Committee Decisions and Votes

January 15th is the date for the next Building Committee meeting, where the School Building Committee will take a formal vote on the options that will continue to be studied in the next phase of the Project. On January 20th the next regular School Committee meeting will be held and on January 22, 2026, the PDP Submission will be delivered to MSBA.

ii. MSBA PDP Review and District Returned Response

In February the MSBA will review the PDP submission. The MSBA will provide its review comments within 21 days, or sooner. After that a District response to the MSBA's review comments are required to be submitted to the MSBA within 14-days. It was noted that AI3 and LeftField will coordinate the District review submission with the District accordingly.

4. 2025/26 CPS Student and Family Handbook Section Revisions

Dr. Hirsch walked The Committee through the reasons and rationale for updates to the student handbooks. The most recent of the “every three-year review” focused on “Civil Rights” and the District met with DESE to show proof of implementation adherence to regulations. DESE recommended specific updates in language. The District’s attorneys reviewed these four: Due Process; Pride and Bullying Prevention Intervention; Section 504 Rehabilitation Act and Transgender and gender non-conforming students.

Ms. Santos motioned to approve the revised 2025/2026 student handbook as presented, inclusive of recommended language revisions resulting from the DESE Integrated Monitoring Review Group B Process effective immediately. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

5. 2026/27 School Year – Kindergarten Registration Dates

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum in tonight’s packet and a flyer articulating information on kindergarten registration for the 2026/27 school year. Registrations will be held on January 27th and January 28, 2026.

6. Public Comment: CPS Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan Update

Dr. Lang stated that every two years all school districts must update their Bullying Prevention and Intervention Plan. The revised document is included in tonight’s agenda packet. It will be updated to the website tomorrow. Dr. Lang and The Chair will respond to the email received today.

7. Valley Collaborative FY2025 Annual Report and FY2025 Audit

The Valley Collaborative FY2025 Annual Report and FY2025 Audit is included in tonight’s packet.

Ms. Santos moved to accept the FY2025 Valley Collaborative Annual Report and the FY2025 Audit as presented. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

REPORTS

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Mackinnon shared that CHIPS was able to enjoy a holiday performance by the Parker Middle School 6th grade chorus. It was greatly enjoyed! CHIPS will be hosting their annual “Sock Drive” where donations will be sent to “The Wish Project”.

Ms. Lebeaux attended the South Row PTO meeting where they shared that they had a successful drive for toiletry products/cosmetics for “The Wish Project”. They provided cookies for staff for the holiday season and they will be hosting a craft afternoon with “Tiny Tile Mosaics” and other upcoming fun activities. They will be going to Roller Kingdom in February. She also reminded all of the January 13th event at Center School on “Changing Perspectives” starting at 7:00. This was mentioned earlier tonight by Dr. Hirsch.

ACTION/NEW ITEMS

Ms. Mackinnon requested that a review of the “Literacy Curriculum” be held at an upcoming School Committee meeting. Parents and teachers have expressed concern to her about the current curriculum.

Mr. King asked about future AI trainings and Dr. Lang said this will happen but the pros and cons of in-person versus online workshops is more desirable. The Committee prefers in-person instruction. Ms. Santos recommended that the two CHS students reps be included.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT at 8:05 p.m.

Ms. Santos moved to adjourn. Mr. Moses seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary