

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
December 16, 2025
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present: Mr. Dennis King (Chair), Ms. Maria Santos (Vice Chair), Ms. Diana Lebeaux (Secretary), and Mr. John Moses. Ms. Susan Mackinnon is not present 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 2, 2025

Ms. Santos moved to approve the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of December 2, 2025. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

CHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Patrick shared that “Trade Week” started yesterday at CHS with The Regional Council of Carpenters coming. Today the National Aviation Academy spoke about aviation mechanics careers. Tomorrow the Army National Guard will come to talk about programs, scholarships and what the Army offers in many different trade areas. Franklin Tech will discuss many different trades on Thursday. Next Tuesday in The Learning Commons the acappella groups The Thursdays and The Crescendos will perform a “listening lunch” for students and staff.

Richie added that on December 6th through 8th The National Honor Society held festive tree fundraisers. Raffles were held, and proceeds were donated to the CPS Holiday Fund for Families in Need. On December 11th an amazing concert took place at the PAC. The Class of 2027 representatives held their annual “Holiday Lights” event in front of CHS,

GOOD NEWS

Dr. Hirsch reminded all that schools will not be in session on December 24th and will return on January 5, 2026. Many school concerts are taking place in the next week for all to enjoy! Tomorrow night the third public forum will be held for the Parker Building Project.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Spotlight on the Departments: Science K-12

Mr. Jon Morris, K – 12 Department Coordinator for Science, came to the table to provide updates on what is happening in science in the Chelmsford Public Schools. He began by talking about “Learning Walkthroughs”, one of which just took place today for grade 5 at Parker. The team included Mr. Morris, Dr. Hirsch, special educators, Mr. Blagg and Mr. Sousa. They look for “inclusive practices” in evidence in the classroom and follow up with discussions on how is this helpful for students and what can be shared with additional staff. They also look at UDL, behavioral interventions and SEL. The inclusive practice guidelines come directly from DESE. “Learning Walkthroughs” will continue at Parker and McCarthy as well.

Next Mr. Morris spoke of “New Performance Tasks” (new MCAS tests for grade 5 and 8 will begin in SY2027). DESE has shared these proposed tasks for districts to implement this year and to review and provide feedback. These are locally developed and use science issues happening in or near Chelmsford. For example, grade five studied the milfoil infestation problem at Freeman Lake. Grade 6 studied “sound waves” and suggested ways of having band and chorus performing in the music area simultaneously without hearing one another.

For upper middle school and high school science, once again, a \$50,000 grant from the State will fund the “Innovation Pathways” programs which focus on biotechnology and environmental technology. This also helps cover dual-enrollment costs for CHS students. Additionally, CHS was awarded a \$150,000 grant from DESE to cover equipment needed to enhance STEM experiences in Life Science and Engineering Pathways. The equipment is due to arrive right at the beginning of 2026. To fully appreciate this presentation, please view it in its entirety on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube.

2. Presentation: Parker Middle School Building Project Update (Ai3 Architects)

Dr. Lang invited Hamdi from Left Field and three individuals from Ai3 Architects to come to the table to provide The School Committee with an update on The Parker Building Project. Julie advised that currently the project is in MSBA’s “Feasibility & Long-Range Study”. There are five phases to the project to be completed in 2030. A proposed project may be put in front of The Town of Chelmsford to vote on appropriation of funds. If that is successful Phase Two will begin which entails the development of a physical building including all the construction documentation. Ai3 will return to a meeting in January to ascertain that The Committee has reviewed The Educational Document and has approved a “draft” version of it. After that the full building committee will be able to submit the Package to the MSBA to complete “Step One” of the process (this is over 1,500 pages of reports and documentation).

This will include information on the different enrollment options considered. The 14 options will be shared tomorrow night at the Community forum. The single option, when it has been chosen, at the end of the next phase called "The Schematic Design Phase" will be the single design going forward. Choosing a single option may take from four to six months. The Town will only vote on one option and the scope and budget for that one option.

The Educational Visioning included input from meetings with students, educators and community members and addressed instructional practices as well as grade configuration and facility needs. Details are included in the educational document which The School Committee will review as is required by the MSBA. This includes the three grade enrollment possibilities (grades 5-6, grades 4-6 and grades 5-8). When the phase is reached where a single grade configuration is chosen the final "educational program" will be inserted into the "Preferred Schematic Report" and then become finalized. The current step is the "draft" version. The **first decision** to be made will be "grade configuration". The current draft is over 80 pages. A deep analysis of the four elementary schools revealed overcrowding that would be satisfied if the grade 4 classes were removed from each school. This data will be included in the full PDP submission to MSBA to be sent next month.

Tori spoke of development of the "Educational Program and Space Summary" which then fosters the creation of "Design Concepts" for the building, including not only classrooms but "public and shared spaces" within the school. This addresses interaction between students by creating grade-level neighborhoods and spaces for specialists (art/music/media). Health, OT, PT and PE will be found in the "wellness zone". Chelmsford will require more spaces beyond those found in the MSBA guidelines. At next month's meeting it is hoped that The School Committee will feel confident with and "endorse" the draft for submission to MSBA. By next October when The Feasibility Study has been completed and commitment has been made to the preferred option a total project budget will be revealed. This will be prior to asking The Town for funding. It is "highly unusual to come back to The Town for additional funds"! A 70 plus page draft summary of the project to date will be given to The School Committee by the end of this week so they will have time to see it before the next meeting on January 6, 2026. Changes can be made to this draft into the coming springtime. To full appreciate this detailed presentation you may view it on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube.

3. Private School Approval Process and Request for Consideration: Drake Academy

At our last meeting when Drake Academy was brought up for consideration, School Committee members had questions they wanted to be answered before deciding on this request. Along with a memorandum from Dr. Lang details of the full proposal for Drake Academy are included in tonight's agenda packet. Ms. Esther Concepcion is here tonight to answer any additional questions The Committee might have. There were no additional questions.

Ms. Santos moved to approve The Drake Academy of Excellence to operate a private school in The Town of Chelmsford consistent with the terms outlined in the Drake Academy of Excellence's application dated December 10, 2025. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

4. SC Policy Action: IKFE – Competency Determination (CD)

At the last meeting, Dr. Hirsch presented Policy IKFE – Competency Determination. This is on the agenda tonight for action by The Committee.

Ms. Santos moved to approve the Competency Determination policy as presented. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

5. Parker Middle School Building Project – Community Visioning Sessions: a. Wednesday December 17, 2025, 7:00 p.m. Chelmsford Elks, 300 Littleton Road

Dr. Lang reminded all of this meeting tomorrow night. Once again, it will be taped by Chelmsford Telemedia.

6. FY2027 Capital Plan Update

Mr. King shared that most Committee Members attended The Tri-Board Meeting where this was presented. In tonight's agenda packet a memorandum and supporting document is included sent by John Sousa, Finance Director and Treasurer for The Town of Chelmsford, stating that six capital projects for the schools totaling \$2.56 million were recommended for approval. Mr. King shared that this "serves The Town well". Committee members thanked Mr. King for his work on capital planning.

7. Proposed 2026/27 School Year Calendar

Dr. Lang's memorandum in tonight's agenda packet provides for three different options for the school calendar for 2026/27. He shared that Labor Day does not take place until September 7th, which is the latest it can be. A complication in following the tradition of staff returning the Monday prior to Labor Day and students the next day is that local elections will be taking place at McCarthy Middle School on the first day for students. Any of the three options provide for a later date in June for schools to close for summer. Dr. Lang has had preliminary conversations with the Union about how this may affect the contracts if staff were to return on August 24, 2026. If this were preferred Dr. Lang will have conversations with the Teacher's Union about this scenario which is considered "option 4". The Committee would like Dr. Lang to discuss this option with the union and report back on the January 6, 2026 meeting date.

8. Proposed FY2027 Budget Calendar

Dr. Lang's memorandum details the dates for meetings about the proposed FY2027 Budget Calendar. He will present the budget on February 3rd, with a public hearing on the budget scheduled for February 24th which will be moved to March 3rd if February 24th brings inclement weather.

9. Personnel Report: November 2025

No action required.

10. Valley Collaborative Quarterly Report – FY2026 (1st Quarter)

This report is shared in tonight's agenda packet.

Ms. Santos moved to accept the presentation of the Quarterly Report of Valley Collaborative as presented. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 4-0.

REPORTS

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Santos stated that the CHS PTO met and spoke of the wonderful “Candy Land” based staff appreciation event. They are thankful to the administration for their support for these events.

Ms. Lebeaux attended the Parker/McCarthy PTO meeting. Parker held a successful craft fair on December 7th. They are kicking off the “Be the Change Project” where students give back to the community. This Thursday a school-wide music concert will be held during the school day. McCarthy held a pep rally with volleyball games and the winning team played against the staff. They are holding “Youth Science Career” events for students considering the STEM fields. On May 16th there will be a “Showboat” talent show for Parker and McCarthy. In May Parker will hold its “Pride Run”.

The Chair added that SEPAC held a successful on-line meeting. They will be holding a second meeting in the New Year and are looking for people to serve on the board.

ACTION/NEW ITEMS

None

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

ADJOURNMENT at 7:41 p.m.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary