

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
January 20, 2026
Meeting Minutes**

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

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 January 6, 2026

Ms. Santos moved to approve the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of January 6, 2026. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

CHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Patrick shared that on Saturday the CHS Basketball Team held a “Shootathon” fundraiser. It was very successful and well attended. Coach Vitale of the CHS Boys Swim and Dive Team “secured his one hundredth career win in his 14th year coaching after their big win over Central Catholic”. Term two closes this Friday and this Thursday and Friday will be half days. Testing takes place on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday.

Richie added that the acappella groups, The Thursdays and The Crescendos, will complete at the “Any Voices” competition this weekend. “Congrats!” The election process for classes for 2027 has begun. Students who are running need to collect 100 signatures by January 30th. Speeches will be due on February 23rd. Tomorrow night the CHS Senior Wrestling Team will compete against North Andover.

GOOD NEWS

Dr. Hirsch shared that today is the 90th day of school! We are halfway through the school year!

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Spotlight on the Departments: English Language Learner (ELL), Reading (K - 4) & Title I Services

Ms. Kelly Rogers, Department Coordinator for Reading, English Language Learners, and Title I Services came to the table to provide updates and began with the writing framework, "ThinkSRSD a Self-Regulated Strategy Development". This has been newly adopted for grades K through 8 and accommodates all our learners and we are providing ongoing Professional Development in the upcoming years. All K to four teachers will be trained by the end of the school year. This is helping students "take ownership over their own learning" by giving them structures and exemplars. This helps them focus on thinking, self-reflection and self-regulation techniques. This framework helps students to build independence and confidence. Which is important since "writing is essential across all subject areas". ThinkSRSD supports consistency throughout schools and through grade levels and is explicit providing lots of modeling. It is aligned with grade level standards. The K through 4 Google Drive features all curriculum work and will be updated annually. ThinkSRSD has a Facebook Page and has a website. Collaboration is taking place with teachers from other school districts.

Teachers, Kiki Cote and Katie Ritter, and students: Chloe; Sam; Reachsey; Lexi and Mohamed from Harrington Elementary School joined Ms. Rogers at the table to share their stories and experiences with the ThinkSRSD writing framework. These shared presentations detailed not only the steps in the process but how students became better strategic writers using it across all content areas! This part of the presentation may be enjoyed by watching it on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube!

Ms. Rogers returned to the table to talk of the English Learner Program. Students who have tested out (exited) of the ELL program continue to be monitored for four more years. Currently there are 77 languages spoken in our district. Annual ACCESS testing will continue through January and February. Twice each school year family gathering events are held in the community.

Title 1 schools (receive federal grant funding) this year include Byam, Harrington and McCarthy. Interventionists provide support for the elementary school, while McCarthy offers after-school tutoring. Family engagement nights happen in the fall and the spring. Ms. Roger's and the Harrington school slides are included in tonight's agenda packet, but to fully appreciate this detailed presentation, please watch it in its entirety on Chelmsford Telemedia You/Tube.

2. 2026/27 School Year – Kindergarten Registration Dates

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum and brochure in tonight's agenda packet detailing information on kindergarten registration which will be held on January 27th and 28th here at Central Office. Appointments must be made (for about a 15-minute session) and all required documents must be presented. 190 appointments have already been scheduled!

3. Parker Middle School Building Project: a. Grade Level Alignment Consideration

At the last School Building Committee meeting it was decided to leave all three grade level options on the table but to go only with the Parker site. The proposal to the State will be submitted this Thursday. Between now and May the School Committee will decide on the final grade configuration for the schematic design and cost estimations. No Committee action is required tonight. Dr. Lang did include slides from the entire presentation given to the Building Committee at their last meeting. Public forums will begin again following February vacation. The next Building Committee will take place on February 19th.

4. Curriculum Review and Adoption Update

Dr. Hirsch reviewed the timeline which she presented in November of 2024. In October State Bill H.4672 was passed by with a focus on "early literacy". Since COVID students throughout Massachusetts are not meeting ELA standards and the achievement gap has widened "among racial/ethnic groups, students with disabilities, low-income students, and English learners since 2019". This bill (which has passed the house but not the senate yet) focuses on grades K – 3. Although a pilot for new ELA curriculum is not scheduled until 2027/28 school year, she and Dr. Lang are proposing an ELA pilot start in the 2026/27 school year instead. The proposal will "encompass all components of reading in one program". Dr. Hirsch added that for consistency the pilot will include K – 6. The process will start in the spring with programs being implemented in the fall and final adoption by next winter. Professional development for any new curriculum will continue for three school years. To fully appreciate this detailed presentation and the Committees discussion after please view this segment on Chelmsford Telemedia YouTube.

5. FY2026 Budget Report: 2nd Quarter Financials (October 1 – December 31, 2025)

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum and supporting data in tonight's agenda packet to update the Committee on the FY2026 2nd Quarter Financials. We continue to be "favorable" in many categories. Currently, transportation costs are unfavorable due to costs of transporting out of district students on routes which Chelmsford is unable to share with other districts and our in-district special education buses. A solution to this is in the works! We budget \$7.3 million for out-of-district tuition. We receive money from the Circuit Breaker Fund and from Valley Collaborative for our local operating budget. Ms. Johnson-Collins predicts we will be "favorable" in this category because we prepaid tuitions last year. "School Choice" income funds our 1:1 computer initiative and we anticipate a favorable balance of about \$3 million.

6. Personnel Report: December 2025

No action required.

7. Valley Collaborative Report on Quarterly Business – FY2026 (2nd Quarter)

This report is included in tonight's agenda packet.

Ms. Santos motioned to accept the presentation of the quarterly reports on Collaborative business from FY26 second quarter for the Valley Collaborative Board of Directors. Mr. Moses seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

REPORTS

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Lebeaux attended the Parker/McCarthy PTO meeting. A committee of Parker parents will hold a Science Fair on March 26th. Their "Student Giving" initiative was very successful. They are looking for someone to oversee "The Parker Pride Run" in May. McCarthy boasted high participation in Spirit Week. Project 300 is concluding. "Rock and Roll Bingo" is coming up. Both Parker and McCarthy are looking for students to apply for scholarships. "Division 10" which promotes DEI may be joined by any School Committees or School Committee members. They have valuable upcoming seminars scheduled.

Ms. Mackinnon said that Harrington will hold a "Skate Morning" at Skate 3 on February 1st. The book fair will take place from February 9th through 13th. They are seeking new PTO members for the next school year. CHIPS is hoping to have a district music ensemble group to perform this spring. An anonymous donor gave CHIPS \$800 which will allow them to bring "Ivy, the Very Determined Dog" for an enrichment program. The students are doing artwork for the "Square One" fundraiser. CHIPS is grateful to Dr. Lang for money provided to promote staff appreciation events.

Ms. Santos attended the CHS PTO meeting and they continue to work on activities for "The After Prom" which will be held at the ELKS venue. They are always looking for more volunteers.

ACTION/NEW ITEMS

The Chair shared that the budget will be presented at the next School Committee meeting. At the meeting after February break a public hearing for the budget will be offered.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Peter Malloy, of 3 Village View Road, came to the table and spoke as a "teacher, a parent and a resident". He expressed his concern over the amount of screen time students spend in academic learning. He mentioned that studies have shown this contributes to lower academic performance. In his teaching he has turned to a reduction in screen use in his classroom and returned to more use of "paper-based reading, writing and problem solving".

He believes his students have shown “immediate stronger focus, deeper engagement, clearer participation, more efficient thinking, and more collaboration between class members”. He requests the Committee remove Chrome Books from “routine classroom instruction” or create a sub-committee to review research and report back to the full School Committee with evidence regulating screen use across the Chelmsford Public Schools.

ADJOURNMENT at 8:15 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