

**CHELMSFORD SCHOOL COMMITTEE
REGULAR MEETING
May 19, 2026
Meeting Minutes**

Members Present:

Ms. Maria Santos (Chair), Ms. Susan Mackinnon (Vice-Chair), Ms. Diana Lebeaux (Secretary), Mr. Dennis King 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

Ms. Santos 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 April 28, 2026

Ms. Mackinnon moved to accept the meeting minutes from the April 28, 2026, school committee meeting. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

2. Approval of the minutes of the regular school committee meeting of May 5, 2026

Ms. Mackinnon moved to accept the minutes from the May 5, 2026, school committee meeting. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 4-0 with Mr. Moses abstaining.

CHS STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ANNOUNCEMENTS

Patrick shared that this is "Senior Week" with yesterday being "Hawaiian Day" and today "School Spirit Day". Tomorrow is "Throwback Day" to the year 2016 with Thursday a day to celebrate college and future plans day. Friday the senior's bar-b-que will take place. The Class 2028 will hold a Pickle Ball Tournament on May 29th. The Lion 24-Hour Relay will take place on May 30th to 31st. Junior Job Shadow Day was today.

Richie added that The CHS Dance Team hosted a fantastic “Spring Showcase” on May 15th. Prom will be held on June 3rd with graduation taking place on June 6th. The Junior Cotillion was a huge success with lots of music and food! Congratulations to the CHS Boys Volleyball Team and the CHS Girls Lacrosse Team for winning “The MVCs”! Also, congratulations to senior, Gable Gray for being featured in *The Lowell Sun* for “ranking among the top javelin throwers in the entire nation”!

GOOD NEWS

Dr. Hirsch shared that The Parker Middle School had their “Parker Pride Run” last Sunday which was well attended and fun. Parker Middle School will be singing and playing instruments for *The National Anthem* at the WOO SOX game this Thursday!

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

None

NEW BUSINESS

1. Parker Middle School Building Project Status Update

Mr. King shared that last Wednesday our project manager architect with Superintendent Lang met with the MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee to present our project. Dr. Lang stated that we did a 20-minute presentation of the project followed by a 20-minute Q & A by MSBA. “It could not have gone better!” said Dr. Lang. MSBA made a few recommendations for moving into The Schematic Design Phase. That group has recommended us to The Full MSBA Board Meeting last week in June. Once the full MSBA Board gives full approval we head to “schematic design and formal cost estimating” which lasts through October. We will go back to the full MSBA Board in October with our actual project to get that approved. We will spend October through January educating and informing our community about the project and why we would like their support. The Parker Building Committee meets this Thursday, and a public forum will take place on Wednesday, June 10th at 7:00 p.m. at The Elks.

2. Spotlight on the Departments: Special Education & CHIPs Program

Ms. Amy Reese, Director of Student Support Services, Ms. Megan McGuirk, CHIPs Integrated Pre-School Coordinator, Ms. Shannon Bischoff, Coordinator of School Counseling and Social Emotional Learning, and Ms. Amy Matson, Assistant Director of Student Support Services, came to the table to provide updates on all of the services provided by their department. Ms. Reese began by highlighting the growth of the number of special education students in the past five years (district wide enrollment has also been on the increase). Chelmsford mirrors the increase in special education numbers throughout The Commonwealth. Ms. McGuirk spoke about the role of The CHIPs program which works with the littlest students and introduces them to public school. There is a total of eight classrooms, five of which are inclusive with 15 students, seven students are on IEPs while the other eight are general education students. There are two intensive classrooms which are separate ABA classrooms for students who need more support with most being on the Autism Spectrum (although due to their young age not yet diagnosed). There is one inclusive/intensive classroom which remains separate for half the day and then the community general education peers join them for the rest of the day.

Total enrollment is about 200 with half the students on IEPs. The number of days students attend is “determined by their IEP and based on level of need and services they require”. The PTs, OTs and speech therapists are in the classrooms much of the day. The slides included in tonight’s agenda packet allowed Ms. McGuirk to highlight her students, staff and special enrichment events in CHIPs, sponsored by their dedicated PTO!

Ms. Reese spoke of special education programming the focus of which is on “teaching skills based on students’ disabilities: academic, communication, executive functioning, motor, social and behavior regulation”. Along with special education teachers, services are provided by: SLPs; OTs; PTs; psychologists; counselors; social workers and BCBAs. Inclusion keeps the students mostly in general education classes. Some small group pullouts are also provided. The special education programs include SAIL (Students’ Achieving Independent Learning from Pre-K through age 22); PAVE (functional life skills program K-22); STRIVE (Therapeutic social emotional program); and The Language Based Program (students with SLD reading disabilities such as dyslexia).

Ms. Bischoff began with thanking the district team for providing support in social emotional learning for students and families! “Cartwheel Care” has been a partner of the district for three years with 25 referrals included each school year. Immediate psychiatric access is provided to our students and families. They also offer “school avoidance” assistance. “Care Solace” provides unlimited bilingual referrals to community-based therapy services 365 days per year for 24 hours a day. Searches by families can be done anonymously. We are in the third year of a partnership with “College Affordable” which includes working with the CHS counselors. This non-profit group helps families through applying for college and finding financial aid. Work begins when students are in their sophomore year. This includes a “Bridge to Equity” program which helps families of first-generation college students, assists with language barriers and financial hardships. Regarding professional development this has been provided through “MyCAP (My Career and Academic Plan)” for grades 6 to 12 which is a state-wide initiative and has been used at CHS for a while and started in grade 6 this year. Middle school students can begin to understand why they are learning the skills they are being taught and how does this apply to future careers. The program includes three core domains to help to plan for post-secondary success: personal & social; career development and education; and academic college and career planning. STEP (Student Transitional Education Program) has been available to CHS students for several years and is finishing its second year at McCarthy. This classroom provides support for students returning to school after being hospitalized. This helps students to catch up on missed schoolwork and helps slowly integrate students back to the classroom when they are ready. Our partnership with “Restorative Practices” continues into its third year. A two-year training has just been completed with “Riverside Trauma Center” on suicide prevention with our counselors, social workers and psychologists including staff from CHIPs through CHS. She reminds families and students in need of any of these services to reach out to their teacher or school counselor.

Ms. Reese shared information from Ms. Peggy Gump, School Nursing Coordinator, who began by stating that Fenway Park holds 37,755 seats and this year alone visits to school nurses topped that with 38,102 so far this year! 95.6% of those students were able to return to class. School nurses also conduct State mandated screenings.

Ms. Reese continued to speak about the DESE Compliance Review which are conducted every two or three years for “special education” and “civil rights”. The reviews are conducted on site in our schools. They visited in January of this year and submitted their final report in March. “All Civil Rights Standards were found to be fully implemented”! Regarding special education all was fine, except for a new licensure issue for one employee which will be resolved by the end of this school year! Also, DESE has begun monitoring our fiscal grants. Thanks to Ms. Johnson-Collins and her team, all documents were submitted, and we are “fully in compliance”!

Ms. Matson spoke about the “Equity Area” of “The Strategic Plan” and the development for paraeducators: a new “initial onboarding”; “initial paraeducator training” and “ongoing paraeducator training”. These are supported by “a new paraeducator guidebook and development of the paraeducator peer mentoring program to kick off in advance of hiring for the 2026-2027 school year”. Additionally, a program review is being conducted with “Case Collaborative” to evaluate special education services at the elementary level. This will lead to special ed students being included more in the general education setting.

Ms. Reese concluded the presentation by providing an update on Chelmsford’s SEPAC. Last year the board members had moved on so SEPAC was not active, but an interim board is now in place and planning for the 2026/27 school year is moving forward! A virtual meeting will take place on May 26th. Mr. King will continue as the liaison for this group. Ms. Matson expressed “kudos” to all special ed staff members and Ms. Reese added that their hard work enables many of our students to remain in the Chelmsford Public Schools instead of being placed out of district!

This detailed and informative presentation was well received by all attending tonight’s meeting. To fully appreciate it, please watch it on Chelmsford Telemedia You/Tube.

3. FY2026 Recommended One-Time Budget Purchases

Dr. Lang spoke of one-time purchases recommended for fiscal year 2026. Renovating the South Row Library along with other work at South Row is included. Also included: will be furniture for the CHS School Store; electrical work at CHS; renovating the CHS nurse’s suite and other less costly items. These come to a total of \$250,213.

Ms. Mackinnon moved to approve the fiscal year 2026 one-time purchase recommendations totaling \$250,213 as presented today. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

4. FY2026 Recommended Budget Transfers

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum in tonight’s packet making budget transfers to cover the one-time purchases approved this evening.

Ms. Mackinnon moved to approve the fiscal year 2026 local operating budget transfers totaling \$250,213 for the Chelmsford Public Schools as presented. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Mackinnon moved to approve the fiscal year 2026 local operating budget transfer totaling up to \$1,870,705 to fund prepaid out-of-district tuitions for the Chelmsford Public Schools. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

Ms. Mackinnon moved to approve the fiscal year 2026 local operating budget transfer for \$51,380 from the accounts noted to the employee separation cost account as presented. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

5. Literacy & Mathematics Intervention and Supports

Dr. Hirsch included a lengthy report in tonight's agenda packet and summarized the contents in her presentation. In ELA the district is focusing on "literacy skills" and recommending interventions for students in need. Right now, we have "12 DESE Certified Reading Specialists" in our district. These services are available to **all students**. Instruction comes from the regular education teacher and additional instruction from the reading specialist. This year the reading specialists see 366 students and monitor their progress. As the students' gaps are remediated students are returned to regular education with some additional support. Additionally, we provide "reading interventionists" (8.5 across the district) who assist 153 students and tutors at all Title One schools.

We also have "Math Interventionists" (10.5 total) who assist students in need until their gaps are remediated. They provide targeted math intervention to 232 students where needed and work closely with our "math specialists". They also collaborate with the ELA support staff and discuss students who require support in both math and ELA. Criteria to determine which students require intervention/support is based on grade level. Math looks at iReady data as well as Tier 2 and Tier 3 students who are at risk. MCAS scores are also considered along with what teachers observe as needs. 23 grade eight students receive services after school. Many Tier 2 interventions are offered by teachers in the general education classes. In 2017 the MCAS test was revamped, and ELA and math standards were also changed. Within in a short time COVID happened, and testing was stopped or taken at home or in school. The testing company for MCAS changed and the graduation requirement was removed. The ELA test is in process of being revised currently. All of these changes created an absence of "trend data". The district continues to refine our literacy and math interventions. Dr. Hirsch's detailed presentation was well-received and may be viewed in full on Chelmsford Telemedia You/Tube.

6. K – 6 Literacy Curriculum Pilot Update

Dr. Hirsch included a memorandum in tonight's packet to provide an update on a K – 6 literacy curriculum pilot. A group of 15 met on March 25th to look at curriculum offered by 5 vendors (found on the DESE CURATE List) to determine which to adopt for K – 6 literacy. This summer PD will be offered for three products: Arts & Letters; EL Education and Wonders. Eight teachers will pilot each of these three with further PD taking place on half days. A decision will be made by February 2027 for which product will be purchased for the district.

7. CPS Enrollment and Demographic Analysis Report (2015–2025)

Dr. Lang shared a ten-year overview of enrollment which continuously changes. To meet the needs of our changing populations we have invested in more products for ELL students and special education students in conjunction with The Strategic Plan. Demographic changes include more linguistic diversity with increases in racial and ethnic students and overall growth in enrollment numbers. Socioeconomic changes are taking place as well as an increase in "High Needs" populations with a doubling of students who are "low-income". Almost one in five of our students now have IEPs. By offering special programs to meet needs we have decreased by one-half those students who require out-of-district placements!

8. 2026/27 Student Enrollment Update: Kindergarten and 1st Grade Registrations

Dr. Lang shared an update as of now for next year's kindergarten and first grade registrations. As of today, it appears that all elementary schools will need four K classrooms for the new school year, but he will monitor this during the summer in case there may be a need for a fifth in any of the schools.

9. 2026/27 Student Transportation Program Registration Dates and Fees

Ms. Johnson-Collins included a memorandum tonight with an update on transportation. This school year we have 3,642 riders on our "big yellow school busses". The 29 buses make three runs: CHS; middle schools and elementary. The fees for buses will not be increasing this year and have not for the past eleven years! Families pay a small portion of the transportation costs; the Chelmsford Public Schools covers the rest. Discounts are available for those who register early. All who will ride the bus **must register even if no fee is required**. Bus passes will be mailed in mid-August.

Ms. Mackinnon moved to adopt the transportation fee structure including the regular early, late and half-year registration rates for the 2026-2027 school year as presented here in the memo dated May 15, 2026. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. A roll call vote was taken. Motion carries 5-0.

10. FY2027 School Committee Warrant Signing Schedule

No action required.

11. Personnel Report: April 2026

No action required. Dr. Lang shared that as of yesterday all positions have been filled, just awaiting a response from one person who was offered a position!

REPORTS

1. Liaison Reports

Ms. Lebeaux met with the Parker and McCarthy PTOs last week. They awarded scholarships. Parker's Pride Run was "great"! Transitions are being planned for fourth graders and sixth graders and eighth graders. Next week Parker will celebrate "We Are Parker". McCarthy eight graders have been busy with MCAS. They have an upcoming dance. Both middle schools held a talent show last weekend. This week was staff appreciation at the middle schools.

Ms. Mackinnon shared that CHIPs have Field Day this Thursday and Friday along with goats visiting from a farm. "Touch a Truck" will take place on June 3rd. Their PTO has a slate of officers ready for the next school year. The Harrington PTO is all set for next year. They presented two \$500 scholarships to former students. The Council of Chelmsford Schools held a meeting last night and they have a new slate of officers.

Mr. King will attend the SEPAC meeting next week. The Building Committee meets on Thursday. He has volunteered to be on "The Town Manager Screening Committee". They will meet again on May 28th.

Ms. Santos thanked those who are leaving The Chelmsford Council of Schools for all their hard work! The CHS PTO has a drop-off location set for donations for “The After Prom”.

ACTION/NEW ITEMS

Ms. Santos would like to hear if there will be any upcoming changes in graduation requirements.

Mr. King looks forward to an update on the new communications platform. Dr. Lang responded that Bill Silver will share that information at a June meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

None

ADJOURNMENT at 8:30 p.m.

Ms. Mackinnon moved to adjourn. Ms. Lebeaux seconded. Motion carries 5-0.

*Respectfully submitted,
Sharon Giglio, Recording Secretary*