

COUNCIL OF CHELMSFORD SCHOOLS

Chelmsford High School - McCarthy Middle School - Parker Middle School
Byam Elementary School - Center Elementary School - Harrington Elementary School - South Row Elementary School
Chelmsford Integrated Preschool

Minutes of October 16, 2025 meeting HYBRID meeting 7:05 pm start, adjourned: 9:03 pm

Welcome – Lisa Bryant, Co-President
Introductions

Minutes – written by Secretary Melissa Brennan

- Motion to accept minutes-passed
- Amanda Collison first, Alysun Kenney seconded.
- All in favor

Treasurer’s Report - Courtney Cooper, Treasurer

- Bank account balance of \$72

Principal’s Report, Terri Gilbert (South Row)

- Next week is International Taste Week in all schools
- South Row had successful ice cream social (over 1,000 ice creams served)
- South Row will continue with Playful Engineers enrichment program across all grades
- Harrington’s walkathon raised \$3,493 and new DashPass dismissal system
- Center’s ice cream social, trunk or treat event, and new dismissal procedure
- Byam’s new basketball nets, upcoming Boo Bash, and bionic project
- Parker’s Mary Poppins auditions and clubs starting
- McCarthy’s welcome to new assistant principal Chris Cowan and student leadership conference
- Chelmsford High School’s new woodshop equipment and leadership conference

Photo VP Report - Amanda Collison, VP

- Original picture days have occurred with Parker’s retake day completed
- Noted confusion among parents about the retake process
- Quick turnaround time for proofs (2-5 days)
- Addressed issue with CHIPS not receiving LifeTouch emails
- Ashley reported issues with class photos at Center, including unprofessional photographer behavior (Amanda requested details about the photographer issue to forward to LifeTouch representative)

Community Read-In Report - Melissa McCaffrey, VP

- Confirmed the first week in March for the community read-in
- Will send out sign-ups to principals in January for teacher availability

Superintendent’s Report – Dr. Jay Lang, Superintendent
Parker Building Project

- Left Field has been hired as owner’s project manager
- AI3 architects selected as designers after reviewing five proposals
- Internal visioning sessions with teachers, students, and parents
- Outlined three options being considered for project:
 - Two-grade level school (5-6 replacement, approximately 925 students)

- Three-grade level school (4-5-6, approximately 1,300 students)
 - Combined 5-8 mega middle school (approximately 1,900 students)
- Potential sites including current Parker property, Granite Field, and McCarthy property
- Shared timeline: preliminary design program in January, schematic design by December 2026, town-wide vote winter 2027, construction starting spring/summer 2028, completion for 2030-31 school year
- Community forums scheduled for October 22, November, and December at the Elks at 7pm
- State reimbursement rate will be approximately 52% of eligible project costs
- Parent and community support will be crucial for the override vote in winter 2027

MCAS Discussion

- MCAS results were reviewed at the last School Committee meeting
- Dr.Hirsch explained challenges with comparing data due to changing standards and tests
- Dr. Lang noted that MCAS is no longer a graduation requirement but still tied to federal funding
- Dr. Lang expressed concern about high school students not taking the test seriously
- Questioned regarding the correlation between MCAS scores and student performance in classes
- District uses internal benchmarks like iReady for more timely data
- MCAS results are still reviewed to identify potential gaps in curriculum
- State is working to determine what will replace MCAS as graduation requirement

School Committee Report – Maria Santos

- Return to strategic plan meetings
- Noted importance of town meeting representatives for upcoming votes
- Discussed potential contested race for 16th Middlesex Representative
- Working on superintendent's goals for the year
- Noted upcoming policy work on AI and digital media/cell phone use
- Explained survey results on cell phone policies showed staff overwhelmingly support restrictions while parents were split 50/50
- School Committee waiting on state legislation regarding cell phone use before finalizing policy
- Current cell phone regulations in handbooks being enforced while awaiting potential legislation

McCarthy REPORT, Alysun Kenney

- New assistant principal, enrichment programs, upcoming events including black light dance and UMass Riverhawks games

Parker REPORT, Alysun Kenney

- Bionic project, pizza/paperbacks/pumpkins event, book fair, and December craft fair

South Row REPORT, Ashley Cakounes

- Highlighted upcoming Pumpkin Fair, successful ice cream social, and need for more parent involvement

Center REPORT, Ellen Ellis

- Reported on basket raffle, ice cream social, and funding for field trips

Byam REPORT, Melissa McCaffrey

- Mentioned new basketball hoops, upcoming Boo Bash, and enrichment schedule

CHIPS REPORT, Beth Dalley

- Discussed upcoming open house, fire department enrichment, and planned music enrichment with middle school chorus

High School REPORT, Courtney Cooper

- Reported on staff appreciation events, pickleball social, and upcoming Raise Right fundraiser

Microsite and communication updates - Ginger Skoog, Co-President

- Announced launch of microsite with landing pages for all PTOs on Chelmsford Public Schools website
- Noted some glitches being worked out, particularly with McCarthy's calendar
- Mentioned creation of Council of Schools Facebook page for easier sharing of information
- Announced bylaws update committee (Ginger, Amanda, Ashley)
- Lisa reported that Paper Store will not repeat its annual gift of giving program this year
- PTOs can use Council of Schools' sign-up.com and Zoom accounts
- Bylaws update will be ready for review in December and vote in January

Meeting Adjourned – 9:03pm

Lisa Bryant first, Amanda Collison seconded.

All in favor