

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING  
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON FEBRUARY 16, 2023 AT 7:30 PM**

---

Board Members Present: Anthony Perugini-Chair; Adam Grippo-Vice Chair; Anne Harrigan-Secretary; Andrew Martelli, Timothy White

Board Members Absent: Faith Ham, Samantha Rosenberg

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer, Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Mary Jocelyn-Gadd, Principal-Cheshire High School; Kristin Pelz, Assistant Principal-Cheshire High School; Mike Woods, Principal-Dodd Middle School; John Perosino, Assistant Principal-Dodd Middle School; Kimberly Dessert, Principal-Darcey School; Kevin Hanlon, K-8 Curriculum Coordinator; Ryan Murphy, Community Engagement Coordinator.

Public access made available through live streaming the Cheshire Public School's YouTube Channel at [www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools](http://www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools). Public comments were accepted at [CheshireBOEContact@cheshire.k12.ct.us](mailto:CheshireBOEContact@cheshire.k12.ct.us).

**1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:30 P.M.**

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.  
Mr. Perugini led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.
- C. Student Representatives. Monica Ghaly and Michael DeJoseph, student representatives for the 2022/2023 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School including sports, chorus, and a prom for special needs students. Rehearsals are underway for the musical The Addams Family. It will be held on March 23, 24 and 25<sup>th</sup>. They reported on student fundraisers that have been held this month. The Future Business Leaders of America, Mock Trial and DECA, all business clubs, will attend their respective State competitions in March. Also, Michael gave an update on Operation Clean Bathroom, including the Boys Bathroom Improvement Squad (BBIS).

Mr. Grippo announced that he asked the Planning Committee to look into a hardened security for the bathrooms to add RFID technology so students can check in and check out of the bathrooms.

**2. PRESENTATIONS**

- A. School Partnership Award – Darcey School  
Mr. Grippo, the Board of Education representative to Darcey School, introduced the Darcey School's recipient, Nicole Potter, recommended by Principal Kim Dessert. Nicole Potter became part of the Darcey Community several years ago attending the Parent Center, shortly after that her daughter Addison became a student in the preschool. Addison is now in first grade at Norton School, and

Grayson followed in her footsteps, attending Darcey preschool last year and this year he is participating in our Smart Start program. In a few years, Darcey is excited to be getting her third child, Preston. Instantly, Nicole became part of the Darcey Community by becoming a PTA member and helping wherever and whenever possible. Nicole always has a smile on her face and a “can do” attitude, whether it be organizing Teacher Appreciation Week or selling Darcey spirit wear. With other obligations presenting themselves to our current PTA President, Nicole has stepped up and jumped in since September, picking up the PTA mail, fulfilling t-shirt and sweatshirt orders, and making sure PTA news gets out to parents. This past December at our Book Fair, the coordinator had a sick child at home, when Nicole heard this, she came to Darcey with baby in tow, unpacked, set up, broke down and packed up the Book Fair. In the midst of the Book Fair, hundreds of poinsettias were delivered to Darcey School and again, Nicole jumped right in unloading and sorting the plants. Nicole reaches out for the benefit of Darcey students, families and staff, never expecting recognition. The Board of Education thanked Nicole for going above and beyond for the students at Darcey School. Nicole was presented with a certificate and small gift.

**B. CABE Award of Excellence**

Chairman Perugini, an Associate Director at CABE presented an award to Dodd Middle School teacher, Matt Planeta, the recipient of the CABE, Bonnie B. Carney Award of Excellence for Educational Communications. Mr. Planeta submitted the following project, “How To” Videos, under the category of Computer Generated Project. Students created YouTube-like “How to” videos to teach others about skills/hobbies they enjoy.

**C. COVID-19 Update**

Dr. Solan provided a brief update on COVID-19. He reminded all that there is a COVID Information page on our website that is updated weekly. He reported that there are very few cases and feels we are in a good place.

**3. AUDIENCE**

None.

**4. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES**

**A. CURRICULUM**

**I. Report on Meeting Held February 13, 2023.**

In Ms. Ham’s absence, Ms. Harrigan gave the report on the meeting held February 13, 2023. At the meeting, the committee heard from Dr. Mary Gadd who gave an overview of the PSAT result for the fall 2023 administration. Highlights of the results include, improvement from 8th grade Smarter Balanced Assessments to PSAT 9 scores (class of 2026), as well as, sustained improvement on the PSAT from one year to the next for the (class of 2025). CHS is providing instructional support for grade 11

students who did not meet the benchmark. CHS continues to engage in curriculum revisions, as well as, strong collaborative practices regarding instruction, and data collection and analysis to support continued student growth and achievement.

The Committee heard recommendations for two textbooks, Calculus: Early Transcendentals 8th Edition, by James Stewart and Comparative Government: Stories of the World, by Karen Waples. The Committee agreed to bring both textbooks to the full board for approval after the required public review.

Dr. Gadd gave an update on the work of the Scheduling Committee. Students and Staff surveys were administered and reviewed. The themes of the results include seeing the benefit of block scheduling while also seeking ways to slightly increase the frequency of classes. The committee anticipates making a recommendation by late February or early March.

Kevin Hanlon gave an update on the work of the grades 6-8 Math Textbook ad hoc committee. The committee has met several times since the fall. The goal of the group is to get the most accurate understanding of how a text would actually support learning with the students in the district before making any recommendations. The committee will continue to meet, and bring possible recommendations to the Curriculum Committee in March or April.

Ms. Silano and Mr. Hanlon gave an update on the district's work to submit a waiver to the State to continue to use Cheshire's current curriculum for K-3 reading. This waiver is part of the state Right to Read legislation. As part of that legislation, districts must make one of three decisions. The first is to adopt one of the state approved reading programs for the 2023-24 school year. The second is to state the district's intention to adopt a state approved reading program but delay until the 2024-25 school year. The third, which Cheshire has chosen, is to submit a waiver to the state showing evidence that the current district curriculum has all of the components expressed through Science of Reading legislation. The waiver is due to the state by February 28. Lastly, the committee reviewed upcoming field trips.

**B. FINANCE**

**I. Finance Report**

Mr. Masciana reported there have been no significant changes from last month's report. He reported that he included an in-depth explanation of our electricity price locks in the Board materials. The price lock that expired was 7.8 cents per kilowatt-hour. He was able to lock the remaining accounts that we have, our larger accounts, at 7.9 cents per kilowatt-hour

through November, blended from February, March through November; we are at about 9.16 cents per kilowatt-hour. This gives us time to continue to shop for better long-term rates. The long-term rates are still relatively high, at over 10 cents per kilowatt-hour, down from 15 cents in December & January. He said they are still working with the consultant and hopefully, between now and early summer, we can find an electricity lock that will take us for the next two to three years. He reported we are still keeping a 50% cap on non-payroll expenditures through the month of February, but based on where we are right now, we will probably be able to lift that to 70% and start getting ready for some of the summer projects and purchases we need to make.

**II. Medical Benefits Update**

Mr. Masciana reported January claims were \$795,139. As expected, January begins the new HSA plan year so employees are paying for their medical expenses through their deductibles first. We are budgeted for \$1 million per month so we were able to increase the reserve balance by \$204,941. As of January 31, 2023, the reserve balance is \$1,089,066 or 1.09 months of reserves.

**C. PERSONNEL**

**I. Appointment of Athletic Director.**

Superintendent Solan said tonight is a special night for him professionally and personally. Steve Trifone, who is a very competent and dedicated professional, is retiring. The person they are bringing forward for appointment can step-in and be the next generation of leadership for athletics at Cheshire High School. He asked Dr. Gadd to introduce the candidate.

Dr. Gadd said it is her honor to speak on behalf of John Perosino, the hiring committee's recommendation to fill the Athletic Director position. John has served as a physical education teacher at the secondary level, a coach throughout his career in Cheshire, and has spent the last six years serving as Dodd Middle School's Assistant Principal where he has distinguished himself as a trusted, level-headed and deeply committed leader. She said the committee was impressed by John's deep regard for Cheshire Public Schools and the Cheshire community. John approached the interview process in the same thorough and comprehensive manner he has used in approaching his work in the Cheshire schools over the past 17 years. He connects everything he does to further our district goals of developing our students as complex thinkers, and developing students who are ethical, poised, and socially and emotionally skilled. Not only is he a professional in our district, but he is a product of our school system graduating in the class of 2000. John is a school person, and his philosophy is student centered and guided by creating strong and

supportive connections with the community. The committee and I unanimously support John Perosino, and believe he is the very best candidate to continue the impressive work of our Cheshire athletics program.

**MOTION** by Mr. White and seconded by Mr. Martelli.

**MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education appoint John Perosino to the position of Athletic Director, effective July 1 2023. Further, that John Perosino is compensated in accordance with the collective bargaining agreement between the Board of Education and the Cheshire Administrative Personnel.

Discussion

Mr. Martelli, who was on the interview Committee said he has known Mr. Perosino for many years. He said there were many great candidates and John was the best. Mr. Perugini added that Mr. Perosino is spoken of very highly throughout the community and throughout the school district.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

**D. PLANNING**

**I. Report on Meeting Held February 13, 2023.**

Mr. Martelli reported that the Committee met and reviewed the Five-Year Capital Plan.

**II. Approval of Five-Year Capital Plan**

Mr. Martelli reviewed the funded projects in year-one of the Five-Year Capital Expenditure Plan, totaling \$3,790,000. Two of the projects would go to referendum – the \$600,000 Park Place Boiler Replacement at Dodd and \$750,000 Window Replacements at Cheshire High School.

**MOTION** by Mr. Martelli and seconded by Mr. White.

**MOVED** that Cheshire Board of Education approve the Five Year Capital Expenditure Plan and Budget for Improvements to current buildings, in the total amount of \$52,320,000 with \$3,790,000 to be funded in Year 1 and with annual allocations as follows:

2023-24 - \$ 3,790,000

2024-25 - \$14,595,000

2025-26 - \$16,700,000

2026-27 - \$ 9,310,000

2027-28 - \$7,925,000

Discussion:

Mr. White said he will support the motion, and based on feedback from our Facilities Director, it makes sense to do these projects. He said he agrees with Mr. Martelli that we need to start looking at Phase II of the School Modernization Plan because we do not want to spend money until we have a better plan. Mr. Grippo asked if there is potential for any grant funding for any of these projects. Mr. Masciana answered, yes, possibly for HVAC projects.

Chairman Perugini said it is up to the Planning Committee to move forward with the next phase. Right now, the School Building Committee, Dr. Solan and Mr. Masciana are heavily engaged in the current projects, but we should start discussions in April or May.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

**E. POLICY**

**I. Report on Meeting Held February 14, 2023.**

Mr. Grippo reported that at the meeting, the Committee discussed policies for both first and third readings.

**II. First Reading of Policies**

Mr. Grippo gave a first reading to policies #6140 Curriculum and #6142 – Basic Instruction. Both policies are being updated due to legislative changes to add official language for Asian American and Pacific Islander studies, African American and black studies, and Puerto Rican Latino studies. We did have a question on start dates for AAPI Asian American and Pacific Islander studies and have learned it would begin in 2025.

**III. Third Reading and Approval of Policies**

Mr. Grippo, brought forward policies #0025 Strategic Goals – Performance standards and #4112.8/4212.8 Nepotism: Employment of Relatives, for a third reading and approval. There have been no changes since the first reading of these policies.

**MOTION** by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Mr. White

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to policies #0025 Strategic Goals – Performance standards and #4112.8/4212.8 Nepotism: Employment of Relatives, and direct the Superintendent to put said policies into immediate effect.*

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

**F. CALENDAR COMMITTEE****I. Report on Meeting Held February 1, 2023**

Dr. Solan reported that the Calendar Committee met and reviewed both the proposed 2023-2024 School Calendar and the proposed draft 2024-2025 School Calendar and voted they bring them forward to the full Board of Education for approval.

**II. Approval of 2023/24 School Calendar**

Dr. Solan reviewed the notable dates. The first day of school for students is August 29, 2023. Convocation is scheduled for August 24, 2023 and Professional Development (PD) days will be held on August 25, August 28, November 7, 2023 and March 14, 2024. Cheshire Public Schools will be closed on the following days:

- Labor Day (September 1-4, 2023)
- Yom Kippur (September 25, 2023)
- Columbus Day (October 9, 2023)
- Thanksgiving Break (November 23 - 24, 2023)
- Winter Recess (December 25, 2023 – January 1, 2024)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 15, 2024)
- February Recess (February 19 - 20, 2024)
- Good Friday (March 29, 2024)
- April Break (April 8 - 12, 2024)
- Memorial Day (May 27, 2024)

With no snow days, the last day of school for students is projected to be June 7, 2024 and the last day for teachers would be June 8, 2024. Snow days will be made up June 10 – June 30, 2024. Additional snow days needed beyond these 15 days will begin with April 12, 2024 and move backward.

Dr. Solan said one question that arose after the committee met was about potentially extending the February break to a full week. He said we would like to get feedback from staff and parents about that and also about the changes they made to professional development days.

**MOTION** by Ms. Harrigan and seconded by Mr. White.

**MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education adopt the 2023/24 School Calendar as presented.

**Discussion:**

Mr. Martelli questioned starting school before Labor Day. Dr. Solan responded that after the year with the large storms, we ended the year close to July so adjustments were made starting earlier and reducing the

February break. It is very difficult for seniors going away to college because some colleges start very early. He said this year we are going to survey parents and get feedback and we can include calendar questions. Mr. White asked why we moved the March Professional Development to the middle of the week as parents like it on a Friday for a three-day weekend. Dr. Solan said that is another issue the committee debated and thought we would try it this year, mostly because of staff attendance. Mr. Grippo asked about Juneteenth. Dr. Solan said there has been no decision made on that issue yet. There are collective bargaining implications. He said if we were in school on that day, we would handle it the same way we do Veterans Day and recognize the day in the schools.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

**III. Approval of Proposed Draft 2024/25 School Calendar**

Dr. Solan reviewed the Proposed Draft 2024-2025 School Calendar. Notable dates for the Proposed Draft 2024/2025 Calendar include the first day of school as August 29, 2024. Convocation is scheduled for August 26, 2024, and Professional Development (PD) days will be held on August 27, August 28, November 5, 2024 and March 21, 2025. Cheshire Public Schools will be closed on the following days:

- Labor Day (September 2, 2024)
- Rosh Hashanah (October 3, 2024)
- Columbus Day (October 14, 2024)
- Thanksgiving Break (November 28 - 29, 2024)
- Winter Recess (December 23, 2024 – January 1, 2025)
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Day (January 20, 2025)
- February Recess (February 17 - 18, 2025)
- Good Friday (April 18, 2025)
- April Break (April 14 - 17, 2025)
- Memorial Day (May 26, 2025)

With no snow days, the last day of school for students is scheduled for June 9, 2025 and the last day for teachers is June 10, 2025. Snow days will be made up June 10 – June 30, 2025. Additional snow days needed beyond these 15 days will begin with April 17, 2025 and move backward.

**MOTION** by Ms. Harrigan and seconded by Mr. Perugini.

**MOVED** *that the Cheshire Board of Education adopts the 2024/25 Proposed Draft School Calendar recommended by the Calendar Committee.*

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.



**G. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES**

None.

**5. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Mr. Martelli

**MOVED** *that the Cheshire Board of Education approves the minutes from the meetings held on January 19 and January 30, 2023.*

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 5-0.

**6. CORRESPONDENCE**

Ms. Harrigan read correspondence from Mr. Hap Jordan, Broadview Drive, Cheshire urging all school communities to address the potential for tragic accidents when children have access to guns in their homes. Correspondence is attached.

Correspondence was received from a grandparent regarding behavior of a student at Darcey School. Correspondence is attached.

**7. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

**Aces Open Choice**

Dr. Solan noted that there is a strain on our school system right now by new enrollment, especially at the elementary level. Because of this, there are limited vacancies for Open Choice this year. They have identified two potential vacancies in Grade 4 at Chapman, three potential vacancies in Grade 5 at Chapman, four potential vacancies in Grade 4 at Norton, eight potential vacancies in Grade 9 and one in Grade 10 at Cheshire High School. Dr. Solan said they have worked to increase the high school Open Choice seat availability for two reasons; there is more flexibility as our enrollment has dropped at the high school over the last several years. Also, our students from New Haven have to get up at a very early hour to make the long trip to Cheshire High School. We added additional students to make multiple runs, which gave students an additional 25 minutes. This is really powerful when you are a 14 year-old trying to get the required sleep.

**Middle School Showcase Date Change**

Dr. Solan noted that because of a conflict with the Chamber's Annual Dinner where our Teacher of the Year is being recognized, the Middle School Showcase is being moved to 6:30 pm, before our business meeting on March 16, 2023.

**NGSBC Update**

Dr. Solan said the projects are moving along very quickly. They are in the process of interviewing four architectural firms. The Council will approve their contract in mid-March. At the same time, they are soliciting RFQs for Owner's Reps. Lastly, they will be moving forward to select a Construction Manager.

He said he has shared with the Board CABC's Board recognition awards. He is proud that this past year, the Board was recognized for the first time. He passed along the criteria if the Board is interested in qualifying for another recognition.

Dr. Solan thanked Mr. Martelli for having him at the Economic Development meeting recently. He said they shared some good information regarding trades in our school system. They will be holding a round table on March 29 for CHS students where we will have trade schools, as well as, Richard Chevrolet, and Marion Manufacturing. We are looking to not only support our local business but also find multiple pathways for our students who may want to pursue a trade.

**8. OLD BUSINESS**

None.

**9. NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Chairperson's Update**

Mr. Perugini reported that he had the opportunity to speak on behalf of CABC at the state where the appropriations committee was this having public comment on the Education Cost Sharing (ECS) cost sharing formula and making it fully fundable. He said there were a lot of people, including board members, superintendents, top managers, every representation you can imagine from Connecticut, supporting fully funding the cost sharing formula.

**10. ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Mr. White, and seconded by Mr. Grippo, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

---

Anthony Perugini, Board Chair

Attest:

---

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: \_\_\_\_\_.