

# Cheshire Public Schools



## Board of Education Curriculum Committee

**Monday, December 8, 2025 – 7:00 p.m.**

**Humiston Board Room**

### Minutes

Committee Members Present: Ms. Anne Marie Cullinan (Chair), Dr. Anne Harrigan, Tim White, and Heather Fitzgerald

Cheshire Public Schools Staff Present: Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent; Azra Redzic, Curriculum Coordinator; Dr. Maureen Reed, Assistant Principal, CHS; Kevin Hanlon, Principal, CHS

Community Members Present: None

7:10 call to order

#### **1. Public Comment**

No public comment in-person or via email.

#### **2. Review [Minutes of October 20, 2025 Meeting](#)**

*Dr. Harrigan made a motion to accept the minutes of the October 20, 2025, Board of Education Curriculum Committee meeting. Ms. Cullinan seconded the motion. Ms. Cullinan, Mr. White, Ms. Fitzgerald and Dr. Harrigan voted to approve the October 20, 2025 minutes. The motion passed.*

#### **3. Informational Items**

##### **a. [2026-2027 Program of Study Changes - Cheshire High School](#)**

Dr. Reed shared that an elective course for seniors, **Project Adventure**, did not run last year due to lack of enrollment. This year, 18 students expressed interest; however, due to staffing capacity, which includes more frequent meetings of the wellness courses this year within the new schedule, this course is unable to be offered next year. The Project Adventure site is located in the wooded area behind the high school and the maintenance facility. A safety analysis of the course is

conducted on a regular basis. The district is invested in this course and although it will not be offered next year the hope is to offer it in the future.

Dr. Reed reported that the *Essentials in Biology* course, historically offered as a 1.5-credit course consisting of a full class period plus additional lab time, is being removed from the Program of Studies. This year, Biology shifted to a 1-credit model, with the lab period incorporated into the main course. As a result, the *Essentials* course is no longer necessary. AP Biology remains a 1.5-credit course in alignment with College Board expectations, and all AP science courses follow this model. Principal Hanlon added that students now participate in lab experiences either within the classroom or in the science lab, which allows them to take additional science courses throughout their educational career. This shift has created expanded opportunities for students to enroll in more courses. Credit requirements for graduation are outlined in the 2026–2027 Program of Studies available on the CHS website.

Dr. Reed shared that the lowest level of *Geometry* is no longer needed due to programmatic shifts in grades 6–8. All current 8th graders are taking Algebra I, and the high school will now offer only two levels of Geometry. Support is in place within the math department, including co-teaching and push-in services, to assist with these shifts. Data from Dodd Middle School shows strong success with this approach. Removing the lowest course level will increase student access to grade-level content.

#### b. Update CHS Schedule

Kevin Hanlon, CHS Principal, shared the *Rampage* CHS newspaper and directed the committee to review page 7. He explained that CHS historically operated on a block schedule with eight total classes, four on one day and four the next, with each class lasting an hour and a half. Research on class length and meeting frequency is mixed, so the CHS team selected a model that reflects best practice and strikes an effective balance. The current schedule consists of five periods per day. The rotation spans eight days, and students meet with each teacher five times within that cycle.

Principal Hanlon walked the committee through the 2025–2026 regular schedule using the provided visual. A key benefit is that students now spend more total time in class with 64 minute periods compared to last year's 84 minute class model. Students are responding positively to the pacing. The CHS team is monitoring the impact closely and does not anticipate major changes to the current schedule. Students are remaining in class more consistently, and the team is tracking the effect on student learning outcomes. Parent feedback has come predominantly from families of juniors. Early adjustments included modifications to assessment timing. Parent feedback was gathered primarily through the PTO.

#### c. Out-of-State Overnight Field Trip **Cancelled**

- CHS - Orlando, Florida - Social Studies/Pop Culture - April 2026

Dr. Reed shared that the trip to Universal was cancelled due to lack of interest.

d. District Literacy Plan

Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent, shared Cheshire's participation in the SOR Master Class.

Azra Redzic shared the district literacy plan, which prioritizes the implementation of Tier 1 as well as building capacity for accurate and sustained implementation of K-3 intervention practices and systems. The goal is to provide ongoing professional development in literacy instruction to build capacity, confidence, and competence for the consistent and sustainable implementation of both Tier I and intervention practices among all staff members, while measuring the impact on student reading outcomes. Several SOR training sessions have been scheduled to bring together K-3 classroom teachers, RAMS, special education educators, and administrators to learn, collaborate, and calibrate around the phonics.

Azra Redzic also shared that parents and guardians will receive a ParentSquare message prior to the winter break. The message will highlight healthy reading habits at home, offer winter-themed book recommendations, and include a video lesson demonstrating how to use questioning as a strategy to support literacy, provided by Anne Marie Wintenburg, the district elementary literacy specialist.

The team shared that the elementary curriculum team values teacher feedback and uses these insights to determine professional development that is personalized and tailored to meet teachers' needs.

e. Assistant Superintendent's Update

Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent, reported that a team of CHS educators, including principal Kevin Hanlon and Algebra II teachers, participated in the **High School Networked Improvement Collective (HS NIC)** focused on discussions of best instructional practices. The team explored the support needed to help staff develop new mental models for instruction that shift from teachers delivering content to students thinking deeply to understanding math, not just memorizing formulas.

Marlene Silano shared that a team including Dr. Reed, Julie Trifone, and Sara McGrimley is participating in this week's **Student Voice Workshop**, which centers on eliciting input from students who may not typically share their perspectives. She also noted that Dr. Tracey, Open Choice Liaison, and Kristen Pelz took students on a field trip to the Museum of Illusions in Boston, an example of ensuring opportunities are accessible to all students.

Marlene Silano reported that the **CAPPS Innovation Committee** will meet on Monday to focus on innovative solutions to prepare students for post high school opportunities. This work aligns well with the growing momentum of the Career Technology Education CCC group.

Marlene Silano informed the team that Friday, 12/12, is a half day for students, allowing teachers to engage in professional learning at the building level. Principals are planning sessions on making thinking visible using BTC strategies, and schools will continue their analysis of the Safe School Climate and PASS Survey data. A full report will be presented next month.

Marlene Silano also noted that redistricting surveys were released and responses are already coming in. Staffing work is underway behind the scenes. Related to the need to align staffing to the newly redistricted areas, the committee was reminded that over the past year, the team engaged union representatives and teachers to gather feedback related to redistricting. Two surveys have been distributed to staff asking for their interest in transitioning to a new building. Principals also held individual meetings with each and every teacher to better understand and leverage their strengths and needs as we create new teaching teams across the district. Leadership is considering balanced staffing across buildings, including a mix of new and veteran teachers and those with specialized expertise such as math and special education. This work will continue as additional redistricting information becomes available.

**4. Adjourn**

*Dr. Harrigan made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mr. White seconded the motion. Ms. Cullinan, Dr. Harrigan, Mr. White and Ms. Fitzgerald voted to adjourn the meeting at 8:48 p.m. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, January 12, 2026, at 7:00 pm.*

Respectfully submitted,

*Azra Redzic*

Azra Redzic  
PK-8 Curriculum Coordinator

*Next Meeting: Monday, January 12, 2026 at 7:00 pm*