MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOWCASE MEETING HELD AT NORTON SCHOOL ON NOVEMBER 5, 2026

Board Members Present: Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair; Timothy White, Secretary; Heather Fitzgerald; Matthew Colehour; Anne Marie Cullinan; Mark Ecke

Board Members Absent: Samantha Rosenberg, Chair;

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Emily Taylor, Chief Operating Officer; Christina Sherwood, Director, Pupil Personnel Services; Kevin Hanlon, Principal, Cheshire High School; Kristin Pelz, Assistant Principal, Cheshire High School; Maureen Reed, Ed.D., Assistant Principal, Cheshire High School; Daniel Tartarelli, Assistant Principal, Cheshire High School; Kelly Grillo, Principal, Dodd Middle School; Ryan Murphy, Assistant Principal, Dodd Middle School; Diana Burns, Ed.D., Principal, Barnum Elementary School; Katharine Carlucci, Assistant Principal, Barnum Elementary Schools; Kristin Lopa, Principal, Doolittle School; Jillian Romann, Assistant Principal, Doolittle School; Jodie Roden, Principal, Norton School; Jessica Zanghi, Assistant Principal, Norton School; Scott Jeffrey, Principal, Highland Elementary School; Erica Labickas, Assistant Principal, Highland Elementary School; Azra Redzic, PK-8 Curriculum Coordinator; Beata Celejewski, Supervisor of Elementary Special Education; Marie Broadway, Supervisor of Secondary Special Education

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1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:00 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*.
In Ms. Rosenberg's absence, Dr. Harrigan led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. AUDIENCE

Doolittle Grade 5 student, Kenna Colehour read a letter to the Board regarding food waste at the school. Kenna said through her research she learned many schools throughout the country have special programs to help save food. She proposed a local food donation program where uneaten whole foods go back into the community. Board members thanked Kenna for addressing them and sharing her ideas.

3. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOWCASE

The Cheshire Board of Education met on November 5, 2026, at 7:00 p.m. at the Norton School Library for an Elementary School Showcase focused on the district's elementary literacy plan. Assistant Superintendent Marlene Silano introduced Azra Redzic, PK-8 Curriculum Coordinator who introduced the district instructional coaches. They

presented "Small Shifts, Big Impact: Cheshire's Literacy Progress," highlighting how Cheshire Public Schools aligned its early reading instruction with the Science of Reading (SOR). Presenters detailed the district's participation in a six-day CAPSS/CSDE Science of Reading Master Class, which grounded their curriculum revisions in Cheshire's High Quality Instruction framework, emphasizing complex thinking, systematic decoding, and responsive teaching tailored to student needs. The presentation outlined key structural updates to reading instruction, including a newly refined K–3 Phonics Scope & Sequence that groups explicit phonics skills into clear timing cycles, eliminating guesswork and curriculum overlaps across classrooms. In response to direct teacher feedback, the curriculum team also developed a matching Phonics Survey to replace legacy assessments, giving teachers real-time data on decoding real words, nonsense words, and encoding skills to form flexible instructional groups. Instructional coaches emphasized the role of ongoing professional learning, shoulder-to-shoulder lesson planning, modeling, and standardized language across grade levels and tiers of support, including dedicated summer training for Multilingual Learner (ML) instruction. Demonstrations and classroom videos showcased students applying these skills through whiteboard encoding, magnetic tile work, and morphology lessons. These intentional shifts yielded measurable academic progress, as Grade 3 ELA Smarter Balanced Assessment scores rose from 69.1% to 72.6% (+3.5%), surpassing the state average of 66.6%.

During the Board discussion, members commended the staff for their work and engaged in dialogue regarding the practical application of these programs. Discussions covered balancing professional development scheduling with consistent calendar structures for working families, alignment with state literacy mandates, expanding parent outreach as the curriculum matures, and onboarding new teaching staff through coaching and video models. District leadership also highlighted targeted supports for special education, including significant investments in Orton-Gillingham training to support students with dyslexia.

4. ADJOURNMENT

On a motion by Mr. Colehour, and seconded by Ms. Fitzgerald, the meeting was adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair

Attest:

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Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

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