



## **Cohasset Public Schools**

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

*Empower Students to Improve Communities*

### **Cohasset School Committee Meeting**

#### **School Committee Meeting Minutes**

Wednesday, August 18, 2021

Willcutt Commons

91 Sohier Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Virtual Access via Zoom and Facebook

6:00 P.M.

#### **In Attendance:**

Craig MacLellan, Chairman

Ashley Colleary

Lance Dial

Paul Kearney

Lydia St. Onge

#### **Also, in Attendance:**

Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent

Susan Owen, Director of Finance and Operations

Principal Brian Scott, CHS

Principal John Mills, CMS

Principal Alex Sullivan, Deer Hill

Principal Lisa Farrell, Osgood

**Call to Order and Roll Call** - Chairman Craig MacLellan called the meeting to order at 6:19 p.m.

This School Committee Meeting is return to in-person meeting. It's just new and it's going to be good. It will get smoother and smoother as time goes on, but we didn't want to just shift to in-person and loose everyone that was watching from home. Having our meetings in a virtual setting is a great tool for educators and we are lucky at having this. This meeting is also being live streamed on Cohasset 143TV and Facebook.

**Roll Call: Ashley Colleary-Present, Lance Dial-Present, Paul Kearney-Present, Lydia St. Onge-Present, Chairman Craig MacLellan-Present.**

**Public Comment** - Rob Jeffers from 18 Spring Street comments, surprised to hear a lot of signatures were on the Parents Choice Petition. Therefore, should a survey be sent out with regards to polling from Monday's Special School Committee Meeting held on August 16, 2021.

Chairman MacLellan pointed we had the Special School Committee Meeting. It was an open forum. We will consider polling, signatures from petition, the fact that petition was taken in. The spouse signatures, however, was not accepted. Lance Dial wants to invite parents, wants to hear community concerns, happy to see comments come in. Paul Kearney comments that the petition was clearly on masking. Chairman MacLellan states that this meeting today is on the Superintendent's Report. Potential factors to The Board of Public Health will be amended. Pertaining to Mr. Jeffers comment, we will certainly be viewing everything and vote for on our October 6, 2021 School Committee Meeting which will be the revisit to Superintendent's revised masks/guidance. The School Committee will hope



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to return to in-person at different locations in the district. As always, we consider safety and the education for the community.

**Superintendent's Report Proper**- Superintendent Patrick Sullivan would like to thank the Principals and pleased they are here with us today. They are really the heart of so much work we do here. Because of our Strategic Plan, we waited to go over a few things to get them settled in their handbooks. Our Principals had sent over handbooks in full to the School Committee. We had a chance to review that and they have memos attached to each of their handbooks. What they're going to do today is review those changes.

**Cohasset High School Handbook** - Principal Brian Scott of Cohasset High School states there are no real major changes for two reasons. One, you have mentioned, and two, we didn't really think that we need any. What we did a lot in the district is streamline a lot of our handbooks so that they align with each other. A lot will be a little bit redundant for those in and around legal updates. There were redundancies, so things cut and paste that where needed. As we do every year, we amend our language for clarity. We had some language that was in an older section that we changed it to the gender neutral. We had two links to the district calendar and we of course replaced our Core Values with the District Mission, Core Beliefs from the the Strategic Plan Vision that were put in place. The biggest change we did is, that we amended our schedule to include daily utility, what's called an, "Advisory Period." We were going to tackle this before the pandemic started. We always run it once a week. We've got a lot of feedback from the students. We put a faculty meeting together to investigate, whether this would be better served, taking our 88-minute blocks, cutting them down to 80, and taking what ends up being about 35-38 minutes, and putting that into a daily week. Number one, push it to where we need to be. Number two, allow for student's, a little bit of a mental break, because we don't have study periods. We don't have downtime. Our students are fully scheduled, but just to kind of collect themselves, organize themselves, work on that executive function. What we found out with the pandemic, was we did this, and we're able to set up a couple of specific executive function groups for some of the students who needed the most help, and it was a life saver for a lot of the students. Their attendance was better, their output was better. The communication with their teachers were better and stronger.

**Cohasset Middle School Handbook** - Principal John Mills explains his revised changes to Cohasset Middle School Handbook with a memo of their changes. We're going into a third year as a distinct middle school all by itself, and different with the high school. As we enter this year, some of the work we did was similar to Principal Scott's comments about making sure that our language format is consistent to the schools, to reflect what the policy is of the district student handbook. Beyond that, the middle school is a little bit unique, and we also make sure that our handbook reflects what we do. We want to make sure that operationally and culturally it represents who we are. Lastly, we want to make sure it's usable and useful for our parents. As you can imagine, things like telephone numbers and names need updates. We included the districts core mission, more general school district information. We included a section with our entire faculty and their emails. It's easier to click on the link and be able to communicate with the teacher, just like Principal Scott said, we've had to update our schedules. On page 2 of our memo, we have a section that's dedicated to the academic standards and procedures. Once again, this was about updating and making sure we reflected who we are as a school. A lot of those changes were just a matter of including that language that hadn't previously been in our handbook. We included a statement about the importance of attendance that as well as some definitions around



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excusable absences along with the high school. We revisited our makeup work policy to make sure that it was flexible, that we apply it in unique situations, and promote shared responsibility among faculty, by including school administrators, school counselors to collaborate with families and students when students are out, they have to make up their work. On page 4 of our memo, we updated the school counseling section. At this time, in middle schools, we don't really use guidance counselors. Guidance counselor's help kids choose a path beyond high school and it doesn't necessarily reflect the job of a middle school counselor. On our last page of our memo, page 5. Our health clinic didn't really represent who we are. So, we updated all of that language and the pronouns. Our allergy section had some changes to that making us consistent with the handbook. The changes were about making sure we were consistent and to provide the parents and the students with a document that reflects who we are.

**Deer Hill School Handbook** - Principal Alexandra Sullivan exhibits the changes with a memo on Deer Hill School Handbook. The Deer Hill School handbook had a significant revamping during the 2018-2019 school year. Changes also made for alignment consistency, streamlining, things like that. Updating legal disclosures and such. The new Strategic Plan Vision provides, core values and we made sure our hyperlinks are accurate. One area that was added was expectations around fidgets and gum. A conversation that just supplements our previously established expectations around the electronic devices. Our last handbook just focused on that and our daily policy in our expectation of students who do not have cell phones in school. They do not have cell phones in school, or apple watches in schools. We did supplement that to add language around fidgets and gum. Toys follow along the lines to be put away from the day policy to see where they really don't have a place in school for some reason, there's a play date after school, or some reason a toy needs to come into our building, that it stays in the backpack, and doesn't come out. Fidgets and gum are a little more nuanced. It's actually to have some learning uses, and so what the language that we wanted to articulate in the handbook is that idea that's driven by the school and the teacher. The teacher might say or identify that the student maybe benefits from chewing gum during a test, or at another time. We wanted to have that latitude. It's not for a classmate six times a day to chew and sharing it every recess in the hall. We also added a brief statement just around curriculum in our handbook that wasn't directly addressed. DESE does have a beautiful family friendly guide to the standards, and we wanted to link there as well. That really just underscores that the handbook would articulate our curricular programs such as empowering writers and reading and things like that speaks as a tool, not a curriculum, and by linking to the standards it reiterates that we are standards based.

**Joseph Osgood School Handbook** - Principal Lisa Farrell shares memo with revisions in content of The Joseph Osgood School Handbook. To alleviate any stress, we look at more clarity in the code of conduct. One of the items that was really important for us this time was a streamline to line everything. As mentioned earlier by Principal Sullivan is the personal items and the toys and the items being brought in. So, when it does come to personal items with that as you mentioned mainly because it's not necessarily, it's always a distraction, but it causes heartbreak when kids lose their things. It makes things so much easier if everybody now has the same type of snack, it's a big change for The Osgood School from years past. The nurse would go to check all the snacks every morning and obviously our nurses don't ever have time for that, and in the last year and a half, they haven't had that time at all. We have maintained that snacks will not be checked because their snacks will be the snacks, that was a huge piece. The other was for the Osgood School was that we included the motto of the safe, respectful and



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responsible, but putting that into our handbook. We also mindset that we've had probably for the last 3 year', it's who we are and what we do. That is throughout the handbook. I did want to mention I'd like to thank Dr. Scollins, Principal Mills, Principal Scott and Principal Sullivan and Superintendent Patrick Sullivan for leading us during the revision. We've met several times for a lot of discussions. You have us all on the same page. It's something that I haven't seen in years and would like to thank you for that and my colleagues who shared very freely. It makes things a lot easier.

The committee has a lengthy discussion, asks clarifying questions and thanks the principals.

Dr. Leslie Scollins shares that next Thursday, August 26, 2021 and the following Monday and Tuesday, August 30th and August 31st we have our new teacher induction program. We have 10 new teachers that will come and join us, and their mentors will also meet with us at some point. It's our introduction to the new staff and it's really exciting, it's joyful.

**Finance Operations** - Monthly Update from Susan Owen exhibits monthly update in memo format. First snapshot is the FY22 July Finance Report.

**Circuit Breaker is a state program that provides school districts with reimbursement for some of the costs incurred for providing free and appropriate education to students with special needs. There's a form that goes along with it.**

Capital Outlay Funds for FY22. We're in a good place. FY22 Grant Funding has not yet been allocated except for METCO. Grant funds are used to employ approximately 14.7 additional staff. ESSER Grant - 20% must to go lost instruction. ESSER II Grant, ESSER III Grant.

Susan Owen concluded her presentation on concerns of unanticipated tuition expenses change day to day or utility costs. It may spike during the Winter months, but just pursuing based on projections. What we place are no concerns right now. We'll know when school gets up and running and then can see what we're looking like.

The ESSER III report shows \$390,000, about 20% of that along with much of this going into instruction. Based on as an administrative team in some communities have met and discussed what our needs are. What each school will need, things they need to get the instruction back and close the gaps.

Kudos to our custodians, the whole team. Through the whole pandemic, the custodians put out a lot. They put out a lot of projects. We did the middle upgrade. We have own entrance with security and bulletproof glass, new fobs. We completed sidewalk by the gym. They did several major painting projects in all three schools last Summer. We did floor projects during the Summer which include replacing all flooring in the hallways. We installed AC units in the Music Hall. Fixed all the clock parts at The Deer Hill School that had not been working for years.

**Policy Review** - Because of what just happened in the last Special School Committee Meeting on Monday, August 16<sup>th</sup>, our standard mask policy needs to express reference to the new policy that we just voted on until October 6, 2021. We have already had this discussion and debate. Trying to figure out here, is how we incorporate that into the integrated policy. By way of suggestion was incorporating it by reference at the bottom of the policy and had the language effect incorporated by reference in The Mask Policy and that is the Mask policy approved by the School Committee at its August 16, 2021



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Special School Committee Meeting said policy should be reevaluated regularly supersede. Please see attached which is the policy we expect to mask and face coverings and then that way it's clear and that we don't have to worry about the wording but will defer to our policy sub-committee. Ashley Colleary wants to take a vote to approve the revised *EBCFA*, but put a reference in there to this, stating that it will be reviewed on October 6, 2021 and may change if the Board of Public Health changes their guidance. This will be in effect until rescinded by a vote of the School Committee or superseded by The Board of Public Health. It will be reviewed at our October 6, 2021 School Committee Meeting. Chairman MacLellan would like this to be locked in for review on October 6, 2021 because then it won't be effective on October 7, 2021. Ashley Colleary comments, then we'll just go back to the *EBCFA* without the asterisk and we'll vote for that, or to keep it. On October 6, 2021 will either vote to amend the policy if this is, we would have to amend the reference in the policy

**Ashley Colleary would like copy of Board of Public Health Order. [All Persons over the age of 2, who are not vaccinated, including visitors and employees must wear a facial mask covering, his or her nose and mouth inside all municipal building in the Town of Cohasset except those who cannot do so due to medical conditions.]**

**Motion to approve The Cohasset Schools Policy *EBCFA* as revised with the addition of an express reference to the policy we approved at our August 16, 2021, Special School Committee Meeting, noting that policy will be in effect until October 6, 2021 or until otherwise modified by a majority vote of the School Committee or superseded by order of The Cohasset Board of Public Health made by Lydia St. Onge, seconded by Ashley Colleary.**

**Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Lance Dial - Aye, Paul Kearney - Nay, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Chairman Craig MacLellan - Aye.**

**School Facilities Committee** - Chairman MacLellan states the School Facilities Committee is completely filled. There are 9 nominations that have been approved. There are 9 members. We are currently working on scheduling a meeting in the month of August. One order of business for the School Committee related to the School Facilities Committee was perhaps to get our nominees. Did not realize that we need to specifically articulate which members have which terms. We have nominated 3 approved members. One is Kathleen Burns who is an elementary parent in the district and an attorney, and she was one of the very first people to volunteer. Nominated Kathleen Burns, Paul Kearney and myself for the other 2 because we were trying to get a forum as soon as possible. The question before us is there are 3 nominees, one needs to be a 1-year term and one needs to be a 3-year term. Kathleen Burns has volunteered for a 3-year term. Chairman Craig MacLellan will volunteer for a 2-year term. Paul Kearney will volunteer for a 1-year term.

**Motion that Kathleen Burns has a 3-year term, Craig MacLellan has a 2-year term, Paul Kearney has a 1-year term on the School Facilities Sub-Committee, made by Lydia St. Onge, seconded by Lance Dial.**

**Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Lance Dial - Aye, Paul Kearney - Abstain, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Chairman Craig MacLellan - Abstain.**



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**Reports from Sub-Committee and Liaisons (Policy & Standards), Budget Finance, Special Ed., PAC, Legislative Liaison-Facilities/Capital Projects/Technology/AEC, Collective Bargaining, Security, Superintendent's Evaluation-**

Lydia St. Onge asks Dr. Patrick Sullivan on any update on The Farmer's Market. Superintendent Patrick Sullivan stated that on Thursday, August 26, 2021 from 2-4 p.m. and on Thursday, September 2, 2021 from 2-4 p.m. Superintendent Patrick Sullivan will be present at The Farmer's Market. We won't be deliberating. Dr. Sullivan states he would like to hear thoughts and important issues from the community. Paul Kearney reiterates confirmed meeting tomorrow August 19, 2021. Lance Dial has suggestions on some good service options on the calendar and for the projects we'll have an update for the next meeting. Ashley Colleary would like to remind that Safe Harbor will have a vigil on Tuesday evening, August 31, 2021 on The Common from 6:45 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. and she was asked to share that the Youth Ambassador Program registration is open and so anyone who is interested in registering as a Youth Ambassador, we have lots of fabulous folks who have done that in the past. They can go to [safeharborcohasset.org](http://safeharborcohasset.org) for more information.

**Motion by Lance Dial to adjourn meeting, seconded by Lydia St. Onge.**

**Roll Call Vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Lance Dial - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Chairman Craig MacLellan - Aye.**

**The meeting adjourned at 8:22 p.m.**

**Documents Used at the Meeting:**

Cohasset High School Handbook Memo	08/05/21	C-1
Cohasset Middle School Handbook Memo	07/13/21	C-2
Deer Hill School Handbook Memo	08/09/21	C-3
Joseph Osgood School Handbook Memo	08/12/21	C-4
Finance Monthly Update	08/18/21	D-1
Masks/Face Coverings (Policy)		