

Cohasset Public Schools
143 Pond Street
Cohasset, MA 02025
Empower Students to Improve Communities
Cohasset School Committee Meeting

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, 5/3/2023

6:00 p.m.

In-Person: Learning Commons

Cohasset Middle/High School

Virtual Meeting-143TV/Zoom/Facebook

In Attendance:

Ted Carr, Secretary
Lance Dial, Chairman
Paul Kearney
Lydia St. Onge

Also, In Attendance:

Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services
Charlie Lankow, CHS Student Liaison
Ms. Carolyn Crimmins, Teacher CHS
Ms. Karina Nelson, Teacher, CHS
Ms. Natalie Hambor, CEO School the World
Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations
Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent
Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

AGENDA

Chairman Dial called the regular meeting of the Cohasset school committee for Wednesday May 3, 2023 to order at 6:00 p.m. All votes will be taken by roll call vote. This meeting is being live streamed on Cohasset 143TV and Facebook (watch / listen only). **Roll Call: Mr. Kearney -Present; Mr. Carr-Present; Mrs. St. Onge -Present; Chairman Dial -Present. Vice Chairman MacLellan is absent.**

Pledge of Allegiance

Open remarks from the chair, this school committee has some good news to share from our town meeting earlier this week. The town approved our ability to have free kindergarten, hopefully that will become self-sufficient in the future. We have caught up with our neighboring towns and communities to extend the appeal of the Cohasset Public Schools all the way down to kindergarten in the district. This is a great thing, and Chairman Dial thanks everyone in the Town for doing this.

Public Comment - None

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Invited Guests

School Committee Student Liaison Report (Charlie Lankow) – From a previous school committee meeting when Charlie Lankow was here, he addressed problems with the lighting fixtures in the classrooms. Charlie says to be honest he hadn't noticed the lighting at all since he mentioned it, which is a good thing, this means that this was fixed, thank you.

AP exams are upon students at CHS and this is a big time for juniors and seniors in the school and a few sophomores. It's a stressful, yet exciting time, but everyone is excited to push through it. Charlie reminds everyone that there's 30 more days left of this school year! The senior countdown is only 23 days left, and it's a very exciting time for them!

Today, NEASC, The New England Association of Schools and Colleges came to CHS and came around into different classrooms to observe. Charlie can actually speak from experience in his AP class today, a kind gentleman came in and observed what we were doing and asked us how we were prepping ourselves for AP exams. Seniors will have recognitions night on May 17th for all the hard work they've done.

Dr. Sullivan would like to add to May 17th to which it's a school committee meeting, we're doing a spotlight on learning that evening, and we're going to walk around and see all the art that's up and we'll have Ms. Moriarty and some students guide us on that. Then, we'll come back here to the Learning Commons to continue with the May 17th school committee meeting which is an exciting addition.

The week of May 15th, the National Honors Society will be holding officers' elections for the next school year, and Charlie is proud to say he'll be running for president. On March 26th Deer Hill School held a Health Rec Fair and students raised \$300 for the school sports equipment drive, that turned out to be a major success! The Spring Arts is coming up, which includes both our Arts and Music.

Last week, the PSO Color Run and Pep Rally were a big success! Charlie was not able to participate in the Color Run because he was helping out with Freshman Boot Camp along with some teachers, Coach A, Ms. Norton, and Mr. Ford. We were organizing this to help the freshman class transition to sophomore year. Charlie enjoyed working with the freshman class showing them the ropes a little about what sophomore year will be like and giving some advice.

The Learning Commons at CMS and CHS will stay open every Tuesday and Thursday with consistent hours, having these consistent times will be super helpful for all students.

Questions and comments from the school committee - Mr. Kearney says it's always a pleasure to see Charlie here, keep up with all the great work. Thank you.

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School Committee Student Liaison Report (Charlie Lankow)

Questions and comments from the school committee - Mr. Carr says Charlie always shows up here well prepared and thanks him for all the great school updates.

Mrs. St. Onge thanks Charlie and wishes him good luck with the end of the 30 days left for this school year, she's sure Charlie will finish strong.

Chairman Dial says Charlie is the eyes and ears on the school grounds for students with direct feedback. This school committee values Charlie's input and his updates very much. The school committee thanks Charlie for doing this and congratulates him on the end of this school year that is coming up.

School the World – Service Trip Program for 2023-2024 (Ms. Carolyn Crimmins, Ms. Karina Nelson, Ms. Natalie Hambor)**- The vision for Cohasset Public Schools is to *empower students to improve communities* and this trip will be a very exciting opportunity for our students. The Service Trip Program is being brought to Cohasset to have students go in April 2024. The mission for School the World is a Boston based non-profit organization, not a school sponsored service trip, committed to solving extreme poverty through the power of education. Their strategy is to collaborate with mayors and entire communities to transform local school systems into drivers of positive social change. Holistic educational programming begins with early childhood, ensuring children start school and are ready to learn. This continues into primary school, emphasizing literacy and social-emotional learning; and extends through lower secondary school, equipping young people with the digital and life skills needed to chart a path out of poverty. School the World envisions a world where all children complete 10 years of education with the foundational literacy, digital and life skills needed to escape extreme poverty. They believe all children love to learn, want to learn and are capable of learning. They believe all parents want a better life for their children and all teachers prefer motivation and achievement to apathy and failure. Nevertheless, they recognize that the complexity behind generational poverty requires them to be innovative and often disruptive to change the status quo.

Ms. Natalie Hambor who is the Chief Officer of School the World, has been with the organization for 9 years. School the World has been working in Central America since 2009, they work in Guatemala, Honduras, and Panama. They're really involved in rural indigenous communities there, so access to quality education is very scarce in those regions. Especially post-pandemic which is what School the World is focused on right now in terms of the learning loss programming.

School the World has developed a public private partnership on how they structure what they do on a day-to-day basis. It's also important to note they have four (4) School the World organizations here in the United States.

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School the World – Service Trip Program for 2023-2024 (Ms. Carolyn Crimmins, Ms. Karina Nelson, Ms. Natalie Hambor)**- The majority of their staff is from Central America and Central America is working day-to-day in all of their communities. School the World partners with local governments and Ministries of Education in every country and every region where they work. They actually pay for 50% of the construction of the school and the Ministries of Education supports teachers and support the programming. The local community dedicates the land to build the school. School the World donors are the students who are funding the other 50% of the construction of the school. From there, they have a long-term programming that goes into place.

School the World has 10 years of quality education everywhere from infancy through 9th grade. Once the school building is built, they focus on their staff every day. They do parent training, teacher training, and provide learning resources. They focus on digital skills and career path entrepreneurship. The Service Trip Program fits into School the World overall mission that is a transformative experience. Since 2015, many students have become Ambassadors with School the World in leadership roles with 1,020 world changers, many from the Boston area. Since students fund 50% of the construction of the school, they're fundraising as a group to help build the school and create a long-lasting impact in that community. They're also learning about global citizenship, learning about service learning, learning about international challenges on international education throughout the world. They immerse themselves in that community, it's not just a one-day trip to visit a school or orphanage, it's a whole service week. The way School the World structures it this way is because they are funding 50% of the project and want students to see the final result and be part of the delegation ceremony, which is the ribbon cutting of the school. When students arrive there, maybe the walls of the school will be up, but students will do concrete work such as floors, sidewalks, painting of the school inside and outside, and painting murals in the classrooms. The Service Trip Program is great for students particularly for this age group, a great turning point in terms of learning about not only global citizenship, but they also develop skills outside their comfort zone and empathy.

Ms. Crimmins explains that she and Ms. Nelson would establish a club and help the kids with the fundraising, and they travel with them as chaperones in April, 2024 during the April break, no school days missed. The club would be a sustained piece of their learning, exploring, and working with the school community for fundraising education and awareness on a continuing basis until the trip, as well as post trip. Afterwards, we have many school clubs that are formed so students can share their experiences. \$3,750 encompasses not only their travel cost, but this also funds the project. They ask for a \$750 deposit from families and the majority of students to some capacity fundraise the other \$3,000.

Ms. Nelson says they take care of the logistics of the travel and the components that go with that. The groups would travel with their staff, both here from the United States and all their local staff on the ground. Students will be working alongside engineers, architects, and staff on what they'll build with that process.

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School the World – Service Trip Program for 2023-2024 (Ms. Carolyn Crimmins, Ms. Karina Nelson, Ms. Natalie Hambor)** - Students stay outside of the village in the city and travel each day to the work site with members of School the World and their work crew to the same destination each day and spend the week there on site working on the building of the school and interacting cultural exchange with others.

Mrs. St. Onge loves this trip, this has a very soft spot in her heart! It's so important for kids to leave and do hard work both physically and emotionally. They'll appreciate how lucky they are to be here, and they'll use that luck and go spread it and they'll also be grateful for what they have. There's a sustainable element to it in the club because with any trip and any travel, it's really important to prepare and educate oneself. Also, to reflect, learn and to continue on that trajectory and the club will help do that and will make it so kids can perhaps teach other kids about it. Having multiple grade levels working together is also really nice and having this kind of experience is pivotal for many kids. This is an important thing to start and bring here to Cohasset and she appreciates the ton of time School the World does for this. Mrs. St. Onge loves the idea that this Service Trip was brought up by a former Cohasset student, *Nina Scotia* who did an internship with School the World, it shows that this is student driven and that makes it even more powerful.

Mr. Carr asks do students stay with the families there. Do they stay in the same hotels? Are there other school districts that participate in the same project as our students? How is security handled? What is the number of an ideal group for this Service Trip? Also, it would be a good idea to have our School Resource Officer review specifics of this trip with their predecessor.

Ms. Crimmins says they don't do home stays, they stay in hotels. They have vendors they have worked with for the past 7 years plus. There will be other groups traveling that same week, they might stay in the same hotel and have dinners together, span interactions with other students and peers and do some activities outside of the community and build together as well. We have a full risk assessment that was done for our program with our chief security officer for Latin America and they built our policies and procedures, and they update every single day with them. They register every student with the local embassies and have GPS tracking on all the vans to watch their whereabouts, which is an extra layer of security. Their team is fully trained in the medical aspects of it, as well as natural disasters, and political unrest. The chaperone ratio in their policy is 1 to 6, but typically when they add all their staff locally, it's more of a ratio of 1 to 5. Ms. Crimmins says first and foremost in terms of just health and safety, they bring nurses from the United States with them, and they sponsor them too. They'll have student's medical records, and they accommodate any allergies in terms of any food allergies or any diet restrictions. An ideal group would be 20 students that would not only fund classrooms but could possibly also fund a playground, which is really special as well.

Mr. Kearney asks what kind of foods are offered to students. Would they have cultural foods and are meals included with the costs?

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School the World – Service Trip Program for 2023-2024 (Ms. Carolyn Crimmins, Ms. Karina Nelson, Ms. Natalie Hambor)** - The meals would be local from that region that includes rice, beans, meat, tortillas, because they want students to have local foods that are grown and nutritious. Students make their own breakfast in terms of a continental style breakfast with cereals, and they make their own lunches, e.g., sandwiches, chips, and snacks every day to bring to the work site.

Chairman Dial says this is a tremendous opportunity for our students and he thanks invited guests from School the World for building it and bringing it to this school committee tonight, this Service Trip sounds phenomenal. To Mrs. St. Onge point earlier, this just reaffirms students giving back is #1, also we live in a privileged area, and we should not take our focus of education for granted,

Motion made by Mrs. St. Onge pursuing a School the World Service Trip so that the fundraising and socializing can begin; pending School the World comes back to another school committee meeting for approval with number of students, number of student/chaperone ratio, locations where students will be lodging, and working with specific dates/details for this trip as this school committee does with any trip, seconded by Mr. Carr.

Aye – All

School Updates - School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan) – It's Teacher Appreciation week, and Dr. Sullivan extends a sincere thank you to all the teachers. The most important relationship is with teachers in all our buildings, with our educational staff and our students, they drive everything every day, it's wonderful to be amongst such amazing teachers here.

As part of Teacher Appreciation week, we were also able to appreciate our Principals on Monday for Principal Appreciation Day with Principal Mills, Principal Farrell, Principal Scott, and Principal Sullivan. Their leadership that these four (4) Principals have provided in the years that Dr. Sullivan has been here, he's extremely proud of all the school buildings. They're the backbone of everything that happens in our buildings, it's nice to see the collaboration on a daily basis.

The Art show at Deer Hill was tastefully put together, a lovely event. Dr. Sullivan would like to extend a thank you to Ms. Berman, Principal Sullivan, and the entire Deer Hill team. We had our first Color Run by the PSO at CMS & CHS this week, and we used this as a half day as a social, emotional awareness day for the students, it was great! Dr. Sullivan would like to thank Tara Volungis, Tracy Kearney, and the entire Middle and High School team and the PSO who sponsored the Color Run for a memorable event.

Dr. Sullivan would like to give a shout out to the many contributing folks, especially to Chris Kennedy and his efforts with Kennedy Country Gardens who help beautify the grounds on all our schools.

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School Updates - School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan) – Ms. Owen, our Financial & Operations Director and staff received a nice email last night, a nice job encapsulating everything that we were able to get from the town. Dr. Sullivan would like to thank the town, it was nice to be at that event to really feel as he always does that the town is very much behind the schools. Thank you to the Town Manager, *Chris Senior* and everyone who did a lot of work on those committees, the Capital Committee, the Advisory Committee, the Select Board, and this School Committee. This is going to help our schools improve and continue working on that to become the best schools in the state with the effort we’re invested in. Superintendent Patrick Sullivan thanks this school committee for approval, support, and constantly pushing the school administration to advocate for these positions and changes. The administration certainly wouldn’t be where they are. The FY24 School Budget was unanimously approved with the following new positions which will be added to our existing staff, beginning the 2023-2024.

New Positions Added:

- Grade 3 Teacher Deer Hill
- .50 Math Specialist Osgood
- 1.0 Preschool Teacher Osgood
- 1.0 Preschool ESP Osgood
- .50 Math Specialist Deer Hill
- 1.0 Math Teacher Middle School
- 1.0 Math Teacher/Specialist High School
- .50 Athletic Trainer High School
- 1.0 Library ESP Middle/High School
- 1.0 Custodian Middle/High School

Capital Items Approved:

Bus Lease (8 Diesel Buses)	\$ 90,000
Replacement of Aging Chromebooks (540)	\$ 52,000
Furniture at Deer Hill (Grade 3)	\$ 35,000
Smart Projectors/Panels (28) Middle School	\$155,161
I-PADS Deer Hill & Osgood (253 w/cases & chargers)	\$ 93,960

Additional Approved Items: 1 Time Funding

*Cohasset Public Schools now offers Free Full Day Kindergarten	\$300,000
*Increase to Supplies/Materials & Curriculum (Music/Arts K-12) (MS/HS Math 6-12)	\$272,188

All this is exciting news, and it’s great to see the Town supporting the schools in our mission to place students first. We can continue to move forward with our vision of “*Empowering Students to Improve Communities.*”

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School Updates - School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan) We had anticipatory postings and Superintendent Patrick Sullivan has been meeting with people this whole week and he's been hiring folks for these positions, they're all fabulous people. Dr. Sullivan looks to update the school committee on where they are next Spring at a school committee meeting to give a sense of how far they've come with this already.

Chairman Dial says its wonderful when approved, and terrible when not, this was a good, good going for next year! Hopefully, we'll get the school bus parking lot squared away.

Teaching and Learning - Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins) Spring Assessments, lots & lots of assessments happening. MCAS dates for Spring 2023 at CHS, CMS and Deer Hill Elementary. ELA is done for grades 3-5, grades 6-8 & grade 10. Halfway through Math & Science in the month of May. They'll be finishing Physics at CHS on June 26th-27th, everyone else will be done in May. The dates for grade 10 are set by the state, the school has windows for everything else.

We have a lot of students that participate in our Advanced Placement Classes with some, more than others. Dr. Sullivan says next year we'll do a more comprehensive report on how our students did. One of the unique and really wonderful things about Cohasset is we're involved as a role model in our AP classes and our students also do very well. This is something that we should absolutely promote a little more in terms of our success. The i-Ready Spring Benchmark Assessment with a diagnostic window for our Elementary on May 22nd and Middle School begins May 30th.

The Arts Curriculum Review Committee met on April 27th, the final stages of Phase 1 self-study. The Math Curriculum Review Committee will meet on May 24th. The New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) is visiting CHS May 3rd & 4th as part of the accreditation progress.

Our Professional Development Committee meeting is May 10th, Volunteer Committee meeting is May 24th, and Wellness Committee meeting is May 31st. At the previous school committee meeting held, Dr. Leslie Scollins talked about how the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) had a Literacy Guide for Families and Communities, they took that down from the DESE website. They heard what Dr. Scollins and her group were talking about and they're going to collaborate as a group with DESE to fit something in that will be really helpful for everybody, this really shows that DESE listens.

One of the transitions that will happen will be our 5th grade students transitioning to Middle School. Principal Mills and Principal Sullivan worked together on letters to send to families in March, and in April sent out a student survey to identify students' concerns and hopes. School visits will occur, some will be virtual, and some will be in-person. This Friday, Principal Mills and Ms. Pearson will be meeting with individuals in individual classrooms, they don't meet together as a grade 5. They do individual meetings which they find to be really successful.

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Teaching and Learning - Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins) - Today, Principal Farrell, Principal Sullivan and our 4th grade teacher, Erica Parrell from Deer Hill were awarded a grant to attend a Writing Retreat sponsored by TLA, Teaching and Learning Alliance.

Mr. Dial says this is great, this was one of the things we talked about as a school committee focusing on writing, these points on the issues, turning them into action.

Mrs. St. Onge says this district deals with transitional times and education very nicely, via popsicles with principals before entering Kindergarten. The gradual step-by-step, letting the kids and the parents in on it, to what's going to happen? What's going to be expected? It really eases the transition and makes the kids feel better. It's a nice shift in education, it's not just to show up, and figure it out. Mrs. St. Onge really appreciates this as a parent, but also appreciates this at the district level. This is so well thought out for the kids who are being shepherded through each step.

Director of Student Services Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)

APRIL 2023				
Meeting Type	Elementary	Secondary	Out of District	Total Meetings
Annual Review		9	2	11
Re-Evaluation	2	4	2	8
Initial Evaluation	5	4		9
Initial Evaluation	<i>MTSS:</i> 3 (All Eligible)	<i>MTSS:</i> 2 (Eligible)		
<i>Referral Source</i>	<i>Parent:</i> 2	<i>Parent:</i> 2 (Not Eligible)		
	<i>CPS:</i> 1 (Not Eligible)	<i>CPS:</i>		
	<i>Non-CPS:</i> 1 (Eligible)	<i>Non-CPS:</i>		
Independent Evaluations			1	1

Chairman Dial notes as we draw near to the year end, it would be interesting to see an aggregate summary of the data. The Chair would be interested at the end of the year in how many referrals came in, and how many were eligible, and how many were not eligible. The fourth row to the monthly Student Services chart showing some aggregate numbers would be really helpful.

Data Sharing, SEPAC Updates, Future Goals of Student Services –Some initiatives have been put into place, with higher initiatives continuing through this year as opposed to the past 3 years. Student Services partners with Seaside Consulting for co-teaching that is really elevating to another level.

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Director of Student Services Update - Data Sharing, SEPAC Updates, Future Goals of Student Services (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka) Student Services added a school social worker for Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition to help students with their transitions back to school from whatever difficulty they might be having, as well as contact with families and outside agencies. Student Services continues with the William James interface referral service for families who are really finding a need to avail themselves of some clinical support.

At the secondary school level, Student Services offers evaluations for social emotional development and at the elementary level reading services. Also offered by Student Services is the monthly clinical consultation that Mrs. Cerwonka talked about for a child psychiatrist, or a child psychologist, which is just really helpful for our entire district.

The programming initiatives Student Services have put into place is they've started the development of therapeutic programming at the secondary level. Teachers are at both the high school and at the middle school whose caseload focus is really on social, emotional, and therapeutic needs for students. They have co-teaching at the Osgood that totally connects to Seaside Consulting partnership. Student Services has been providing formal co-teaching training at the secondary level for a number of years. A lot of elementary staff are nicely experienced in psych teaching models and do a little bit more sometimes than just simply push-in services, but really partner with some general teachers to co-teach. Student Services brings in formal training at the Osgood School and will move up from there to the Deer Hill School, so they have a K-12 co-teaching training and experience in the district. The elementary intensive multi-sensory reading support was put into place and had a very good year with that at the Deer Hill School. Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) expanded to a core membership, so Student Services has monthly contact with them and avail themselves much more of their resources and supports.

We have some ESP Psychotherapist support in the program that helps students who have been out for an injury, concussed, or individualized recovery who are having difficulty accessing everything they need to do. Our social worker is able to provide the atmosphere of the classroom if that student can't be in the general education classroom all the time to come back to studying and do work. In addition to bridging that from the medical personnel, the families, teachers, and letting everybody know what that student needs and keeping track of that work in that progress for the student. That can take place through medical conditions or hospitalizations due to any kind of social, emotional, or mental health. School avoidance issues for students can often come out of some struggles they may be facing. Creating that bridge with those families, with those students, provides a safe space for students to return in a gradual way to build back into their classes.

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Director of Student Services Update - Data Sharing, SEPAC Updates, Future Goals of Student Services (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka) – Students Services has added more staffing at the secondary school, Psychologists, Social Worker, and SEL based teachers. Student Services has expanded with a Pre-K teacher, an ESP at the elementary level, and a special education reading teacher at Deer Hill.

Looking ahead at integral areas for developing and continuing to build out Bridge for Resilient Youth in Transition (BRYT) partnership to expand more into that and taking advantage of those resources, not just continuing it, but go deeper into that and keeping an eye on how they need to continue that development. Families are very much taking advantage of the program that the William James interface referral service has. Student Services had a bump in terms of the number of families and the amount of funding they are going to set aside, look at the projections and budget accordingly to provide that. It's gratifying to see that people are taking advantage of it and the service that Student Services partners with families.

Dr. Sullivan says it's not surprising to him because of the mental health crisis and also, it's just hard to get appointments. This is a great service that connects folks with their health insurance, whatever it might be to make sure that they do get an appointment to get connected to the right person, it just cuts through a lot. This is a great resource from the schools to help folks in that way, it's also on our navigator. This came initially from a collaboration with Safe Harbors, the town should really be proud of this, it's good and it connects people with services.

Chairman Dial asks is this broadly known? How is this communicated to parents that this is a resource for them?

Mrs. Cerwonka says yes, this is broadly known, and all our guidance counselors, school counselors, school psychologists, and our school social workers are aware of this who have literature that connects with families around this.

As Student Services develop particularly around the Preschool program, Mrs. Cerwonka would like the school committee and the school administration to look at a program evaluation for that. Keeping a very close eye on early intervention students in areas in which they need support and what does that mean for what Pre-K is going to look like moving forward. It might be specialized focused classrooms, depending upon what student needs will be through early intervention, being very mindful, proactive, and responsive to that.

Mrs. St. Onge asks with the co-teaching model to be expanded, is there a goal towards co-teaching in certain subject areas, or are certain classrooms co-taught? What is the vision for this district?

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Teaching and Learning

Director of Student Services Update - Data Sharing, SEPAC Updates, Future Goals of Student Services (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)-Student Services would like to focus heavily on literacy on the younger grades. We want our general education teachers to do co-teaching and use them initially as our models and grow out from there, that's how we move forward with it.

Chairman Dial would like to see how to make the onboarding process more user friendly. It's a very complicated area, but if there's an area to look at as we move forward, seeing some of that feedback from parents, seeing if they were heard, if they weren't, that's an area that the school committee would continue to look at as we move forward. That would be the next step and to keep the radar on this as well.

Mrs. St. Onge would like to make a brief suggestion. Create a one page with bullet points on what to expect! What to expect when your child might be tested. What to expect when something's going wrong, (e.g., parents will be contacted; here are some things to think about; these are things that might come their way; make sure to check spam folder).

The last thing the chair would like to suggest, moving forward in the day-to-day, is to think big! Think about what we need to make this the best Student Services program that we can have anywhere. Even if the ideas are crazy, huge, sometimes those create actionable items that this school committee can help because the mission of Student Services, Special Education this committee can fully support to make sure we build resources for our kids, our neediest kid's.

Budget, Resources and Governance

Cohasset Parent School Organization (PSO) Gifts**- We have one gift for two things from our PSO for \$606.42. This is time sensitive for these two (2) ideas, and Ms. Owen is asking the school committee to put forth a vote on this tonight. This is for materials for Snapper Sneaker Day, and food necessities.

Motion made by Mr. Carr to accept the gifts as presented to the school committee in the amount of \$606.42 from our PSO, seconded by Mrs. St. Onge.

Aye-All

Food Services – We have an upcoming sub-committee on Monday. A newsletter from Food Services was sent out about menus and specials to highlight all of those innovative measures that we had talked about that are happening! It's early, but we have to realize we really need to be communicating that thoroughly.

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Budget, Resources and Governance

Food Services- At a sub-committee meeting this coming Monday, we're going to look at the ingredients that are in the foods, that way we can stiffen to have less ingredients, which is better. If we can't pronounce what we're buying as a school district, we shouldn't be buying those foods. We're going to ask for more vegetables, fruits, and local produce to see where we're spending the money. We have some new tables coming, we're getting away from those traditional long, narrow tables to roundtables. They seat the same number of children, it's for social, emotional reasons. High top tables will be coming to CHS for our Senior Café.

Mr. Kearney says we're really trying to focus on our elementary schools because they have so many challenges when it comes to what more could be offered to students with food. We've seen a big increase in customer service, hearing a lot of good stuff from the Middle and High School, except for the elementary schools that still need a few logistical items that need to be addressed. On May 8th we have a Wellness Committee meeting to wrap that up, and a Wellness Committee meeting on May 31st try to influence that as well.

Transportation – There's still no resolution to the GPS tracker on two (2) school buses. We're grateful to First Student for helping us out, hopefully we'll have our own. The town funded to help us with replacing those buses. We'll be turning over our old school buses for new buses. We're also bringing in new drivers, hopefully our fleet will be complete with several extra school bus drivers. The goal is to never go back to doubling up the buses, it's just not acceptable, and we realize that.

Chairman Dial recommends that Mr. Kearney and Mr. Carr to keep an eye on this at our facilities committee meeting and Sub-Committee meeting from a committee perspective, so we can help as much as we can. Transportation is one of those things that goes unawed, until it's not there.

Report from School Facilities Committee – We're trying to schedule a tour of Scituate High School, on the renovation to their high school and the building of a new middle school. That would be something we could entertain here because we're looking at a \$200 million dollar knockdown of a high school, and this would be an alternative to maybe renovate and expand. The School Facilities also want to help with the air conditioning in the schools. As a committee we want to make sure we're looking forward, but also want to look in the present, and we haven't done that. We made the recommendations to do the funding and to apply for grants, if that doesn't happen, it doesn't happen! We still need to do what we do in the present and we're working on that.

Ms. Owen would like to mention to families who are watching or listening tonight at this meeting. The town voted to allot us \$300,000 to allow us to have free full day kindergarten. Most families made a deposit, in the next two (2) weeks these families will be refunded for their deposit.

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Budget, Resources and Governance

Report from School Facilities Committee – Dr. Sullivan would like to thank this school committee for advocating for this free full day kindergarten.

The chair states it's been a priority of this school committee, so we can have a seamless entry into our schools, we don't want any barriers for coming into our schools.

Mr. Carr would like to mention that we've learned from the town meeting here, we do have to consider all options. If the town failed because there was only one option, this is a great discussion to figure out what's the phased approach. What are we actually, and able to do!

Mr. Kearney says it was great that we all went to the town meeting, and we learned that people really want to know about our schools and public safety. It was echoed that the fact we need to have some kind of a 5-year plan. What's the school maintenance plan for the next 5 years? As a committee, Mr. Kearney would like to come up with something that we can work on with the school facilities committee, more so next year. Mr. Kearney is looking forward to working with the health clinics more, that will align with the school facilities committee on the town level. We'll be able to identify what we really need from the AI3 report.

Community Relations / Communication

Reports from School Committee Sub-Committees and Liaisons – The fitness center is going to be painted by May 15th. The paint has been ordered, and we're excited that the floor is down. The equipment is supposed to be here by the end of May. We're hoping to get this into the school by the end of this school year.

Chairman Dial would like to note to Mr. Kearney's comment, we didn't get the funding for the new equipment in our budget. We didn't want to get into a situation where we're committed to a lease, we're paying for every corner of it. We thought the purchase was contingent on getting this on the capital budget. We should go back to see if we've approved the minutes from that meeting.

Mr. Kearney says they're still working with the Athletics revolving account for the 1st year on the leasing of the equipment, but we still have some fundraising to do. Next year we'll really have to push for this, it's ridiculous that the fitness center that we had there was absolutely embarrassing. It was unsafe, and the fact that we were stuck in a bubble where we couldn't even do anything, was ridiculous!

Ms. Owen says the capital budget officers denied it. The 1st year of the lease is from the Athletic revolving account. This was put in the capital budget, didn't realize this was only going to be funded if we got it through the capital budget.

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Community Relations / Communication

Reports from School Committee Sub-Committees and Liaisons – Looking to update the website for more contributions from people who want to donate to the school. We can do some fundraising for donations, still looking at those options. We've talking about pickleball, and Mr. Rotondi is really working hard on this, it's something he has a lot of passion on doing. This goes with the social, emotional for our kids. Not only are we going to have a fitness center that's going to have equipment that is safe, but it's also going to be open on Tuesdays and Thursdays along with the Learning Commons that was mentioned earlier by Charlie Lankow.

School Committee Governance

School Choice Vote** - At our last school committee meeting held on April 12th, we had a Public Hearing for whether we want to participate in the school choice program. We had no public comment, we had some discussion and deliberation at the committee level, we will now bring that to a vote. The question at hand is whether or not we open our schools to school choice which would allow people from other districts to attend our schools.

Mr. Kearney says he's going to vote for school choice, has always been an advocate for this. He believes we should open up our schools in our district, this also allows us to go to other schools. If a Cohasset student doesn't feel comfortable in a Cohasset school, this gives them the opportunity to go to a school somewhere else. He knows there are guidelines to this and a certain percentage that can go. Mr. Kearney says it's been a rubber stamp of NO for the last 4-5 years that he's been on this school committee. He always stood strong for the fact it's been in the best interest of our students. Just for the record, we do get reimbursed a certain percentage.

Mrs. St. Onge says she hears what Mr. Kearney is saying about choice. However, this cost benefit analysis pushes her in the direction of not going for school choice for our district. Also, in the interest of keeping class sizes as small as possible. There are some great alternatives for choice in terms of local charter schools which she has worked, and those are opening up to surrounding districts and do provide a public-school alternative to kids who feel like their account, or their district is not the right fit. As a committee member thinking about those classroom sizes and also the budget of our school pushes her towards saying no, even though she does appreciate everything Mr. Kearney is saying.

Chairman Dial says from his perspective, he agrees with Mrs. St. Onge, and intrigued by the idea of school choice, there's something there. At this point when our district is ready from a resource perspective to handle what could be specifically with other regional districts in the region, perhaps having other towns with their schools to handle a significant influx of students. He doesn't understand yet the impact that it would have on the community culture.

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School Committee Governance

School Choice Vote** - One of the key points for Chairman Dial is that school choice, that community culture ties within our community. For those reasons at this point, don't think we're there yet when he can support school choice, although he totally hears Mr. Kearney's advocacy.

Chairman Dial entertains a motion to members of the Cohasset school committee to approve the Cohasset Public Schools participating in a school choice program. A Yea vote on this motion would approve this and we would become a school choice school. A Nay vote would not approve this, and we would not become a school choice school. Motion made by Mr. Carr, seconded by Mr. Kearney. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Kearney-Yea; Mr. Carr-Nay; Mrs. St. Onge-Nay; Mr. Dial-Nay. The motion to become a school choice is defeated with 1 Yea from Mr. Kearney, and 3 Nay's from the balance of the Cohasset School Committee.

The chair states we will not be a school choice school for the upcoming year. This will be back on the agenda item for next year as required under Massachusetts law, and we will continue discussions then.

Policy Binder Updates** - Our policy sub-committee has done some hard work for the consideration of this school committee. This year with the policies that have phased is part of some meetings with Mrs. St. Onge, Mr. Lance Dial and Dr. Leslie Scollins. The goal is continued updating of the policy binder, but as a baseline in order to update, we need to date our policies and work that with what Ms. Colleary and Mrs. St. Onge did in the past and in the two (2) years prior, every update that we approved as a committee, we dated the policy in the way that the binder has been digitized to a more user friendly on our district website. As a part of that process with hyperlink, everything that's been updated and approved has been dated. This year, they benefited from Chairman Dial's access to software that could compare our district policy binder to the MASC policy binder so that we could run a comparison to say what we already knew which policies MASC had which were overlapping and were different. Now we can compare verbiage and make sure that our policies aligned. We were able pull out this list which is 107 policies that we determined as a sub-committee warranted no change. The language that exists in our policy binder aligns with the updated MASC policies which are all run by their legal counsel. These policies have not been dated in our binder. There are other policies that did not need a change, they had been dated in the past 5 years, so the policy sub-committee left them off this list because they've reviewed them.

It's their hope today, the school committee will vote to approve the listed policies will have no change and with the school committee's approval, they will not change them. However, the policy sub-committee will put the date being May 3, 2023 on all of these policies.

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Policy Binder Updates**- A large chunk of these policies in the binder will then be dated and going forward there are different tiers they triaged and took it in the reverse order of what they would usually do with triaging. The policy sub-committee is seeking approval to not change a single policy on this list. To date that decision the committee will continue to monitor MASC policy updates, changing any needs for change.

Chairman Dial states we're looking for a full committee to approve these policies as they currently exist now with no change as of today's date. The policy sub-committee will work with Dr. Scollins to confirm these policies align 100% with the Massachusetts Association of School Committee's recommendations in compliance with these policies as of today.

Motion made by Mrs. St. Onge to approve the policies as presented on agenda item H1 in their current form as of today's date so they can be appropriately dated and reflected in our policy binder as current policies, seconded by Mr. Carr.

Aye-All

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair - None

Approval of Minutes** - We have some minutes to approve and we're going to go through these minutes in three (3) tranches because they reflect who can vote on these minutes. The first tranche of minutes is for March 17th, March 24th, April 13th, and May 18th of 2021. These minutes do not reflect the times that Mr. Dial or Mr. Carr were present on this school committee. Both Mr. Dial and Mr. Carr will be excused from voting.

Motion made by Mr. Kearney to approve the first tranche of minutes for March 17, 2021 March 24, 2021, April 13, 2021, and May 18, 2021, seconded by Mrs. St. Onge. Roll Call Vote: Mr. Kearney-Aye; Mr. Carr-Abstained; Mrs. St. Onge-Aye; Chairman Dial-Abstained.

Mr. Carr can sit this one out, but Mr. Dial cannot on the second tranche of minutes. These are minutes from June 15th, 2021; June 28th, 2021, and August 16th, 2021 where three (3) of us were on the school committee at the time.

Motion made by Mrs. St. Onge to approve the 2nd tranche of minutes as presented to the school committee for June 15, 2021; June 28, 2021; and August 16, 2021, seconded by Mr. Kearney.

Aye-All

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Approval of Minutes** - Chairman Dial states that Mr. Carr is back in session for the minutes for February 15, 2022, March 15, 2022, and April 12, 2022. These minutes are here and may reflect the discussion we had earlier in this meeting.

Motion made by Mr. Carr to approve the 3rd tranche of minutes as presented to the school committee for February 15, 2022, March 15, 2022, and April 12, 2022, seconded by Mrs. St. Onge.

Aye-All

Mr. Carr would like to thank Kathy who continues to do these minutes with this school committee, keeping us straight and narrow, and appreciates it very much.

Future Agenda Items

- Chairman Dial would like to see if we're missing any minutes from prior school committee meetings.
- An Expo, or session of what the state requires for a vote and discuss what that looks like?
- Capital budget is not going to approve maintenance, how does that get done? How does that get incorporated?
- We need to have serious discussions on how our students behave at sporting events. We've seen that escalate to something over the years.
- Follow up on SATs at schools.
- Food Service Presentation.
- School bus parking and talking with the school facilities committee around that.

Acknowledgement of Ms. Lydia St. Onge - As we all know, this is Mrs. St. Onge's last meeting at the school committee. She has been an incredible resource for us, and Chairman Dial is personally sad to see her go. Mrs. St. Onge brings levity to the meetings. It's been a great relationship and really enjoyed her input, it's been incredibly valuable for us as a committee. Thank you very much.

Chairman Dial has a written letter from Vice Chair, Craig MacLellan that he asked Mr. Dial to read into the record. Greetings from Disney everyone, Mickey says hello, and congratulations on the free full-day kindergarten. Donald wanted me to convey the ongoing disappointment with the lack of on-site school bus parking. He's extremely disappointed that he could not be there for Mrs. St. Onge's last meeting, so he's asked the Chair to read this brief eight (8) page statement.

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Acknowledgement of Ms. Lydia St. Onge - In order to communicate Mr. MacLellan's appreciation for Mrs. St. Onge and her many contributions to our school district, Vice Chair MacLellan is just plain glad to know Lydia. She has a rare intelligence and wit, which in his opinion is uniquely suited for public service. Mrs. St. Onge has always placed students first, and our students and their families first, and has always approached her task with humanity, empathy, and respect. She frequently served as the voice of reason to this school committee, ensuring that whatever approach we took was measured and delivered. Her communication skills are remarkable, and Mr. MacLellan was always, and will remain eager to hear her articulate her position on any given issue, and to follow her engaging logic. Despite all these truly wonderful characteristics and gifts, Mr. MacLellan doesn't think any of them represent her singularly most valuable contribution to this committee. To Mr. MacLellan, that accolade rests with her selfless desire to hold us and our district administrators accountable to our constituency. Accountability is such an integral part of government at any level and while that basic element of leadership seems to elude many elected officials and boards, Mr. MacLellan does think that this board has always held itself and the district administrators accountable, thanks to her large part to her service. Her sense of accountability led to a heightened level of candid transparency on issues of great importance to our families and her absence in his opinion will be most pronounced within that realm. In conclusion, Mr. MacLellan is honored to have served with her and will always be grateful for their friendship and for the many experiences they've shared while on the school committee. They've argued, they've laughed, and as Jenna Giglio knows, they've cried. While we have a wonderful person coming on to fill her seat, there will never be another voice quite like hers. On behalf of himself, Lauren, Tommy, and Harper, thank you for all that she has done for our schools, he will miss having her on the team. Keep the joy, Craig MacLellan from Orlando.

Mr. Kearney thanks Craig, his note to Lydia was fantastic! He echoes onto what Craig said and we're going to be at lost without her. We've been through so much together with COVID, this committee, and this school district. Mr. Kearney says he's a better person having served with Mrs. St. Onge and this school committee is going to sadly miss her.

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan says on behalf of the administration and himself, he wants to thank Lydia St. Onge as well. It was an honor to have her as part of this team advising us, and absolutely helping us. There were a few qualities that she brought to the team that were really deeply appreciated. One is her absolute passion for the kids and she's the type of person that just wants the best for our kids, and that was present in everything she did. Secondly, Mrs. St. Onge is a teacher and she's grounded in good teaching practice and clearly an excellent teacher. Lastly, this is something that goes unstated, but Mrs. St. Onge is from Cohasset, and she has a really good sense of where Cohasset came from, where we are now, and most importantly to Dr. Sullivan is the potential for where we can be, and where we can go. Those factors created a really wonderful school committee member.

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Acknowledgement of Mrs. Lydia St. Onge – Dr. Leslie Scollins says it’s been so nice to have worked with Mrs. St. Onge and have her next to her at the meetings. Just all the conversations that they’ve had around education and literacy in particular, she was very passionate about it. Lydia’s views were always holistic, that was so important to Dr. Leslie Scollins, and she’ll really miss her, and appreciates all that she supported, and all her questions were really, really helpful.

Honoring Mrs. St. Onge - Chairman Dial states as part of their token, members of the school committee and administration express their appreciation for Lydia St. Onge and present to her a plaque of recognition for her distinguished service for the Cohasset Public Schools. As a capacitor for Cohasset Public Schools alumni, dedicated parent, and skilled educator, her candor wit, knowledge, and commitment coupled with informed and deliberate approach she applied in identifying areas for improvement in our district. Mrs. St. Onge delivered unparalleled value to our students, this committee, our schools, and this community.

Mrs. St. Onge would like to say one, brief last thing to this school committee. She had been thinking about this day for a long time. In January, 2020 when she was collecting papers, we were all in school and all at work, and then, the world shut down! That January in 2020, Lydia St. Onge was elected as a member for the Cohasset school committee and all the work that they have done in the past three (3) years is some of the most important work they’ve ever done! Working with Ellen Maher, Ashley Colleary, and all the members of this school committee, we’re an incredible team. We’re a unique committee, because she’s not on other committees in the town, she doesn’t know if other committees actively talk about loving each other like we do. She doesn’t know if other committees argue, disagree, and really get a kick out of each other, chat with each other, and don’t want to leave. Mrs. St. Onge wishes we didn’t have a quorum when we were all together just so we could hang out. We, as a school committee, are so fiercely protective of our kids in our town, and we work so hard to make it the best we can, and she knows they’ll continue, and the school committee will not stop hearing from her. Lydia St. Onge is so proud of what they’ve done, and she thanks all the members of the school committee and administration.

The chair states we have no reason to go into Executive Session.

Motion made by Mrs. St. Onge to adjourn the May 3, 2023 school committee meeting at 8:34 p.m., seconded by Mr. Carr.

Aye-All

Meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

All School Committee Meetings Are Recorded.