

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

REGULAR MEETING OF THE COHASSET SCHOOL COMMITTEE

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, October 18, 2023

6:00 PM

Learning Commons

Cohasset Middle/High School

Virtual Meeting - Cohasset 143TV/Zoom/Facebook

In Attendance:

Lance Dial, Chair

Paul Kearney

Jennifer Lesky

Craig MacLellan, Vice Chair

Also, In Attendance:

Charlie Lankow, Liaison SSAC

Meghan Greaney, Cross-Country Coach

CMS Cross-Country Team Athletes/Students

Bob Erlandsen, School Trip Advisor

John Mills, CMS Principal

Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations (virtual)

Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

All school committee meetings are recorded.

AGENDA

Call to Order – The Chair welcomes one and all to the Regular Meeting of the Cohasset School Committee for Wednesday, October 18, 2023 at 6:01 PM. This meeting is being held in-person at the Cohasset Middle High School in the Learning Commons, and also virtual for those who want to attend via Facebook or Zoom. There is a new feature on Zoom for closed captioning thanks to some community input. For those who virtually attend, this feature can be found in the upper right hand of the toolbar to access, click where it shows closed captions to activate. Zoom allows live chats for comments, and Facebook is watch and listen only. All members of the school committee who are present indicate so in **Roll Call**: Mr. Kearney-Present; Ms. Lesky- Present; Chairman Dial-Present. The Chair notes they have two absentees, Mr. Carr is absent on travel, and Mr. MacLellan will be showing up a little later for the meeting. Three out of five make a quorum so that we can conduct school committee business.

Opening Remarks – We have some invited guests here so Chairman Dial doesn't want to belabor with any opening remarks or comments so that our invited guests can give some real insight into the schools received from students, a nice Spotlight on Learning.

Public Comment - None

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Invited Guests

- Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Liaison Report (Charlie Lankow)

Charlie Lankow is a Senior who attends Cohasset High School and is very happy to be back as a Liaison with SSAC. This week at CHS is Spirit Week, today they celebrated USA day with lots of red, white, and blue which was really great.

Charlie says the high school senior's kind of set the tone for Spirit week with the underclassman who saw how much the seniors were really getting into it. The Homecoming dance will be at the end of Spirit week which should be exciting. November 9th marks the end of quarter one for high school which is an important time, with students submitting their last tests/quizzes before the quarter ends. Something else of note for seniors is the October 15th deadline for college applications. Those went off this past weekend and we'll be making early decision around November 1st, so there's lots of buzz, certainly for the senior class with plans they have, that's very exciting.

The Fall season for our school athletics is slowly coming to an end. They've been having many Senior days with Cross-Country Senior day being held yesterday against Carver, a loss for Cohasset, but they had fun along with a good ceremony. All the other sports teams are having their Senior days with Boys Soccer next Tuesday, and Volleyball is coming up.

In the Arts, Charlie received an email from Mr. Moriarty who would like to report out the Cartoon Club, and the Art Magazine Publication Club, new clubs at the high school are up and running which offers a good opportunity for those who may be interested to get together and meet. The school musical "Rent" is about halfway through the staging process and the curtain will go up on Charlie's birthday! Acapella and the Jazz Band are in full swing, and another part of the Arts department "Mindful Mornings" a club on Wednesday mornings for just the seniors. They meet with Ms. Berkowitz to kind of take a moment before school starts every Wednesday to decompress and take mind off of things which Charlie says has been a great experience, and he hopes more people will come to this that would make this even more awesome.

Last spring, Charlie Lankow was elected President of the National Honors Society, and has been waiting to say that he has some experience with the rules of a quorum order. We voted to approve new bylaws which had some new additions that need tightening of the screw especially after Covid. Another important thing for the NHS is there were 57 applications from juniors and seniors, and those decisions will be coming out next week, so we'll see who gets in, which is very exciting!

To end Charlie's report, he says overall it's been positive with the underclassman participation especially in clubs and after school activities have been tremendous like our debate team. Charlie has seen tons of freshmen coming to the beginning of these season meetings and it's really encouraging to see that enthusiasm. Just to follow up from last year, Charlie is happy to say the lights in the classrooms are working good with no complaints there.

The Chair notes for the record that Vice Chair, Mr. MacLellan joined the meeting at 6:08 p.m.

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• Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Liaison Report (Charlie Lankow)

Mr. Kearney loves the idea of the Mindful Mornings Club, it's a good way to collect thoughts for the day, this is great to hear. Is this offered to other grades at the high school other than the senior class.

Charlie says Mindful Mornings Club is open to all students at the high school and they meet at 8:00 AM for 15 minutes with Mrs. Berkowitz for a guided meditation.

Ms. Lesky says Charlie mentioned that the participation overall in Clubs was strong, and asks what does he attribute that to as a senior? She hopes this will be passed down to future generations as well, it's greatly accepted.

As a senior along with Charlie's peers are interested in helping the underclassman. Principal Scott said in the beginning of the year to the senior class, "Seniors can make it about themselves and have fun, or can make it about everyone else," to which Charlie says they've successfully done that so far.

Mr. Dial is glad that things are going well for Charlie and asks him to keep this school committee informed if there's any lights, water fountains, or anything else that needs to be fixed, please let us know.

Dr. Sullivan says it's a nice senior class leading the way! Also, Charlie is our Liaison on the Superintendent Student Advisory Council to which that group is selected by the Principals at the Middle and High School.

In addition to Charlie Lankow, we have Noah McDowell who is also a senior that attends CHS. Grace Shaughnessy–11th grade; Ella Lynch–11th grade; Nathan Ashar–11th grade; John Kearney–10th grade; Jack Sparrow Wilson–9th grade; Graham Simmons–9th grade; Dylan Jewell–9th grade; Stephanie Williams–8th grade; Luke Hurley–8th grade; Dominique Vechioli -8th grade; and Finn Carr–8th grade.

Dr. Sullivan says we're really focusing this year on gathering student voices when we move into our next strategic plan. It's a great group, and the senior and junior members of that team get to serve as Liaison as Charlie is now and as he did last year to the school committee updating and often being able to be a voice for the students for the school committee. Dr. Sullivan is very proud of Charlie Lankow for his leadership and also should note that Charlie is humble about how fantastic he is as an athlete and does wonderfully in Cross-Country and Tennis in Spring, multitalented.

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Invited Guests

**• Cohasset Middle School Spotlight on Learning – Cross-Country Team
(Ms. Meghan Greaney and Students)**

Dr. Sullivan notes this is a point of pride at the Middle School this group has done, and Ms. Greaney has done great work with the students. Cross Country was really the really the first, big club in Middle School that has now expanded to a lot more clubs.

This is Ms. Greaney's 4th year in the Cohasset Public Schools and her 2nd year coaching Cross-Country and it's a huge collaboration between the students who run, to really practice their running skills. Ms. Greaney has 2 other assistant coaches, Maeve Bergan, and Nicole Henry, along with 2 parents who help her out with coaching. It's really the team themselves, the community and we have a lot of fun. Ms. Greaney says, usually the number of participants equals 40, but today we have 20 runners. Cross Country is open to everyone in grades 6-8 and our mentality is very much "come when you can, do what you can," so that doesn't preclude students from participating in other activities.

Ms. Greaney brought some of her runners here today who are willing to share their experiences who are members of Student Council, Robotics, and the Pond Street Press. We encourage them to push themselves, to set goals, make friends, make friends with other grades that they wouldn't speak to otherwise, just have a good time.

Paige McQuinn really enjoys Cross Country, it's her 1st year doing it. She started with her friends because they also signed up. Paige says it's just a fun way to get exercise, it's also just fun to do the process with the meets that are really fun. You can go at your own pace where you don't actually have to put too much effort into it, but Paige likes to. Practices are also really fun, where we do games and rerun the courses sometimes.

Zoe Evans started Cross Country last year and really liked it. It's low key and Zoe started because she plays Soccer and Lacrosse and likes to stay in shape. Zoe also likes how you can go at your own pace, it's not a total commitment that you have to commit to.

Tarrin Bergan has been on the Cross-Country team for 3 years now and likes the fact you're only racing yourself and setting goals for yourself, and you don't have to work as hard as Paige and Zoe just said. It's a really fun sport, it's a good community for everybody to cheer on for each other.

Isaac Stevenson has been doing Cross Country for 2 years. Isaac says he's a big fan of Cross Country because of how flexible the schedule is. They have meets on Wednesdays, and normal practices every other day, except Wednesday's. Isaac is also a fan of getting to run in different places, like forests, even open road ones.

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Andrew Astrue is in his 2nd year on the Cross-Country team. He really likes it because it helps him with his other sports and also meets new friends from different grades and talks with them where he says he usually wouldn't when he's in school. Andrew also likes that he can set his own individual goals which is really good for his improvement in running. Andrew likes to run every race and tries to get to a better place every time he runs past a certain person that has passed him. It's a very competitive sport, but it's also a team sport cheering your team on and it's really fun and a good environment.

Teddy Cunningham says this is her 1st year on the Cross-Country team. She likes how you can set goals and likes it every time you can see how much you've improved in that. It's really a team sport, but also, you're working for yourself.

Another Cross-Country Team member sitting next to Teddy doesn't state her name, but says she really likes Cross Country because you can set goals for yourself and you don't have to run against other people to get first, second, or third place. If you accomplished a goal last time you can get faster than you did the last time. You don't have to go to every meet, which is kind of nice because you have other sports activities, and it's a lot of fun.

Principal Mills notes that the upcoming schedule will be in Ms. Greaney's presentation, and our next meet is a home meet for next Wednesday, against Marshfield. The team begins and ends just outside the gates to the football stadium. Principal Mills invites anyone who may have time in the afternoon and just wants to pop in, it's a lot of fun, where it's beautiful outside. Principal Mills wishes Charlie Lankow was still here because he deserves a lot of credit. He and his teammates are on the High School Cross Country Team, they come out and monitor the course so that kids from out of town don't get lost, or if anybody stumbled, or got hurt, there's somebody there to help. We really appreciate the High School team, Charlie, and his teammates as well.

Principal Mills states that Meghan isn't just our Cross-Country Coach, she's also our Psychologist and Adjustment Counselor. Throughout the day, she just gives so much to the school and the students, in and after school, for this, often times a huge group. They have a lot of fun and Meghan, Maeve, and Nicole have really done a great job with the program.

Mr. Kearney thought the video was awesome and thanks the students for cheering for Cohasset.

Ms. Lesky thanks the Cross-Country team for speaking and for being brave enough to speak after a really long day. All of you were in school today, and you've all been on a bus, and you've all ran a race, and you've all come back, and you all probably haven't had any dinner yet! Ms. Lesky also thanks Coach Greaney for doing this.

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- **Cohasset Middle School Spotlight on Learning – Cross-Country Team
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Ms. Lesky's daughter is also a member of the team, and it has been such a win, win across the board in terms of being everything you would want in a team which is welcoming, encouraging, positive and taking the intensity out of sports and doing sports requirements is one of the biggest gifts we can give our kids in this day of age. Ms. Lesky is so happy that our CMS kids have that opportunity. Thank you.

Vice Chair, MacLellan thanks the Cross-Country team, they all did a great presentation, and is glad that the kids are having so much fun with it. Thank you, Ms. Greaney, for everything you do for them. Mr. MacLellan asks Ms. Greaney if she thinks it would be useful or beneficial at all to have team shorts made for all of them. Mr. MacLellan asks Ms. Greaney to put some thought into it and let us know. That is probably an attainable goal and a show of pride to have some team shorts.

Mr. Dial comments the kids did a great job and he's really impressed they came here after a meet. He really loved hearing that all are committed, but at the same time, doing this for fun and so important, as Ms. Lesky said, that we remember that sports are for fun, they're for making friends, and building relationships, and that's fantastic. Thank you for putting this presentation together and for being part of it.

Invited Guests

- **Cohasset Middle School Puerto Rico Trip (Mr. John Mills and Mr. Bob Erlandsen)****

Dr. Sullivan recognizes Mr. Erlandsen for all the work that he has done with these school trips over the years. He's been the real driving force behind some wonderful opportunities for the kids, and he deserves a lot of kudos for it.

Bob Erlandsen is here tonight to seek the school committee's approval to run a trip for the 8th grade. In years past, we've run a trip to Arizona over the April break, all the years, except during Covid time, but it's been fantastic. The kids were amazing and last year we had 39 kids who attended this trip. Initially, we looked at 24 as a max, but they just kept coming in. Principal Mills was grateful enough to join in and had probably the best trip ever, it was just fantastic.

Mr. Kearney asks will students need passports. What would students have for identification for that.

Bob Erlandsen says they have their list on a tier itinerary then the green pasture gives this to the airline. The airline then books all those tickets and we have our list literally of the roster and it's all they need. We do ask the students to bring their school ID with a picture on it.

Ms. Lesky asks what has been done regarding the equity issues in the past around a family or a student, saying they would love to go on this trip, but their family can't afford it.

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• Cohasset Middle School Puerto Rico Trip (Mr. John Mills and Mr. Bob Erlandsen)**

Vice Chair MacLellan says he always supports any sort of field trips or experiences like this. This particular trip gives him a little bit of pause. If this Puerto Rico trip adventure wasn't approved today, could Mr. Erlandsen pivot this to some kind of school trip, like Washington, D.C. We're still out far enough in advance where that could happen, switching to another destination. There are a lot of wonderful locations within the Continental United States which would be more educational. This is a great experience for the kids to see a lot of culture there, different environments, different biospheres they wouldn't get to see. Mr. MacLellan is worried about this age group outside the Continental United States, in the Caribbean. He is also worried about the cost, it would be cheaper regardless of the amount to go somewhere like Washington, D.C. where there is some educational value to that trip. Mr. MacLellan is worried about the destination to Puerto Rico with this age group. We're making decisions for the entire 8th grade class and being entrusted with other people's kids. Certain concerns might be irrational, but deliberate decisions for other people's children.

The Chair expresses his appreciation for the work Mr. Erlandsen does here. Also doesn't know how transparent this is to the community and it is certainly transparent to him now learning about this stuff. The Chair asks Mr. Erlandsen if there is anything magical about today's date for approval? It's not a result from his perspective that the students don't have a trip. The question is could we, if today does not matter as far as approval, could we ask Mr. Erlandsen to just look at what the feasibility is, a little bit of a sharper pencil on what the other options are. We want to be responsive to the community's concerns about cost, and any concerns about the destination, just to get a little bit more information. As it stands, if we were to vote today, the Chair would be supportive of this. There's a lot of reasons to support this, but the Chair just wants to make sure that we've explored all potential options.

Mr. Erlandsen says he has a parent meeting on the Puerto Rico trip tomorrow night at 7:00 p.m. He can postpone this meeting for a week or two if that's what this school committee requests. They do have a National Park aspect which is fantastic and those elements in June in Wyoming there works. Mr. Erlandsen can put this on the table for parent's tomorrow night as well as possible options if the Puerto Rico trip isn't doable.

Chairman Dial would like to have the school administration approve of these trips too. One of the elements for this would be legitimate fundraising activities that the kids could do to finance this trip. The Chair asks Mr. Erlandsen if he could indulge on this and gather information and bring this back to the school committee, for CMS 8th grade trip, that would be very appreciative.

Motion made by Vice Chair, MacLellan for the school committee to table this vote for CMS 8th grade trip until we receive additional information from Mr. Erlandsen as requested by the Chair, seconded by Mr. Kearney.

Aye - All

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School Updates

- School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)

Once again, Charlie Lankow did a wonderful job updating on everything that's been happening the last couple of weeks. We had fantastic fun runs today, both at the Osgood School and Deer Hill. Dr. Sullivan would like to thank the PSO, the PSO leadership, the DJ, and everyone who volunteered. Also, Dr. Sullivan would like to thank *Mr. Dykes* and *Mr. Yeomans* and all the staff for putting on that fabulous event. Thank you to the Cohasset community for all their support as well. All the money raised goes directly to the Cohasset Public Schools PSO that was such a wonderful event.

On October 24th, we have Safe Harbors coming and working at the high school on a presentation on alcohol awareness to all high school students. All students in high school will have the opportunity to listen to their speaker, Jeff McCullough who is 29 years of age, a former high school student who came from a financially stable family, a normal high school life who struggled with alcohol misuse. Mr. McCullough is now sober and has some important experiences and lessons learned to share with the students. After the presentation they'll be a whole community of volunteers with Mr. MacLellan who will be very much a representative for the town. Students from that speech will have a breakout session and talk about reactions and reflections to that. Also, go through some scenarios and conversations on how to handle situations that involve alcohol where that student will face. Dr. Sullivan would like to thank Safe Harbors for continuing to be a tremendous partner and looking forward to having them at one of our school committee meetings for a spotlight on our ambassadors. Safe Harbors will come to the next school committee meeting scheduled for November 1st. It's also important to let the community know that this will be handled with proper sensitivity, supportive, and communicative way. Principal Scott will be communicating exactly what's happening so families know what kind of conversations will take place with their student. We'll also have our Counselors on hand to deal with students who could be in distress. This is a very important topic and Dr. Sullivan thanks Mr. Kearney for addressing this.

Mr. Kearney is so appreciative for Safe Harbors and is so grateful that we're addressing this. It's okay to say no, it's not that cool to drink alcohol and that's the change we have to make in this community because there is lot of teenage drinking, and if we don't think there is, then folks don't know that's happening. For us to be on top of it and to discuss it, just makes us a mature community to let us know that's it out there and where are they getting it from. If the alcohol is coming from an older sibling, then that older sibling should know there's ramifications for their actions because they put everybody at risk. Mr. Kearney says we really need to express that within the community it's not okay to drink, especially on school property.

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143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

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Teaching and Learning

- Superintendent's Goals

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan notes that cycle steps 1 and 2 are really what's happening within this document. Self-assessment is for the superintendent to identify some goals to propose to the committee about professional practice improving student learning. Looking at some of the things we did last year on how we're building this into the current year. The goals that Superintendent Patrick Sullivan is presenting to the school committee are very much a continuation of the goals that have happened in the last two years. This will be 3 years with the strategic plan and remember everything stems from the strategic plan. The strategic plan sets goals for the committee which sets the goals for the superintendent, the superintendent sets leadership goals, and the leadership sets the teacher's goals. All of these items should be within the action for the school community.

During a public meeting, the school committee and superintendent review the proposed goals, key strategies, and benchmarks of progress' which means these are timelines essentially, see a goal tied to our strategy initiatives, then a list of key actions to which the superintendent will take the key actions throughout the year, working with people, with key staff. Then see the benchmarks which are basically the artifacts of actual products of those actions which have associated timelines. In conclusion with the superintendent and with the objective of achieving mutual agreement, the committee revises, as needed, and at least one professional practice and one student learning goal.

In addition, the superintendent needs a certain number of goals to develop two to four district improvement goals with key strategies and benchmarks. Once adopted, the professional practice, student learning, and district improvement goals with their key strategies and benchmarks of progress, because the superintendent's annual plan. The plan serves as a basis for answering the superintendent's performance.

Cycle step 3 is what the superintendent implements from collected evidence. Cycle step 4 is the superintendent's mid-cycle goal review to report progress and get input from the school committee on how the superintendent should change or adapt goals.

Cycle step 5 in the final end of cycle and summative evaluation reports which are written by the school committee driven by the sub-committees. Then that is presented in a public forum when it's deemed appropriate to do so by the committee chair.

Superintendent Patrick Sullivan shared fiscal indicators, safety indicators, and cultural indicators and also added more foundational documents such as our strategic plan, a statement of interest plan to the Massachusetts School Building Authority. We should be hearing fairly soon from the MSBA which we were told would be the beginning of November, and Dr. Sullivan is still very hopeful in that. Our vision of a graduate, and our continual curriculum review cycle. This will all be available to the public to look at. All these indicators show where we are and where we're going as a district. Superintendent Patrick Sullivan also put the letter to welcome families he sends out at beginning of the school year.

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143 Pond Street

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Teaching and Learning

- Superintendent's Goals

This document goes into 5 goals that show what the goal is along with key actions. Student Learning, Professional Practices, and District Improvement that articulates into our four compass points in our strategic plan. Each compass point is covered within these goals.

We're in the 3rd year of the strategic plan and you'll see a very intentional focus on teaching and learning. Someone watching from the outside might say we should always focus on teaching and learning, and of course we do, that's what we do. There has been some foundational work in culture, school culture and district culture that sets the tone for all of these. This year we'll be looking really hard at some academic initiatives that we were doing. Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, Superintendent Patrick Sullivan will continue to focus the district on the implementation of the elementary comprehensive literacy approach (K-5), the middle school science Open Sci Ed program, the middle school math Illustrative Math program, the Investigating History program in grades 5,6, and 7, the curriculum review process (phase #1) for Health and Wellness (PreK-12), and (phase #2) for Math and Arts, the development of a computer science pathway (K-12) and on being responsive to data that indicates need for action. In the key actions there are components about how we communicate with families and how we share this information with families. We also partner with various professional development for health groups to help further our staff's knowledge in these areas.

Goal 2 is the professional practice goal, and this also has to do with compass 1 in teaching and learning. Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, Superintendent Patrick Sullivan will work with schools and departments to create curriculum guides and benchmark assessments which vertically align to the teaching and learning (PreK-12). Superintendent Patrick Sullivan will also begin to analyze data through data dialogues with all stakeholders. We'll get more of a real indication of exactly what we're doing when Rock Roberts speaks at the next school committee meeting on November 1st. Also, to note that we're calling the title of Rock Roberts to *D.E.C. Director of Evaluation Curriculum*, he is the *DEC* for everything from now on. The key actions tie right into the work Mr. Rock Roberts is doing.

Our next strategic plan and the work we're doing now are tied into authentic learning, a problem and project-based learning program. Until we have a real set front based curriculum, and benchmark assessments, we're not going to be as successful as we could be. It's taking the work we're doing, and we haven't done this coming out of Covid. Putting down on paper the important elements of our curriculum and our skills that were set to do for the state.

Goal 3 is the district improvement goal, and this has to do with social and emotional wellness. We're sliding a little bit, but we're continuing our cultural responsiveness with teaching. What this means is that you're explicitly building relationships with students. That's what culture responsive teaching really is, making sure everyone in that classroom feels comfortable if you're a teacher.

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143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

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Teaching and Learning

- Superintendent's Goals

Goal 3: Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, Superintendent Patrick Sullivan will empower staff and students to embody equity, cultural responsiveness, inclusivity, empathy, and global citizenship, through providing professional development and timely feedback concerning culturally responsive teaching, through increasing students' knowledge regarding diverse cultures, and through creating structures and systems to expand student voice to enhance the inclusivity of the school culture and environment.

Goal 4 goes into teaching and learning and the social emotional wellness of the first 2 compass points. Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, Superintendent Patrick Sullivan collaborate with district and building leaders to continue our development in our MTSS teams in the areas of data analysis and tiered interventions. The big key here is we have a lot of our systems started and moving in a very contiguous way throughout the district. We've improved our communication and we've improved our communication with families about what MTSS is. What we need to do now is find out what the goals are for our students' needs and we really need to be able to timeline and attract those effectively. Look at what that data tells us about what the district needs, that is huge. That's something that not only Rock Roberts will help with Mrs. Cerwonka that is really centered in her goal. This is not a special education issue, it's a regular education issue.

Goal 5, the final goal, is about resources. This goal is very similar to last year's with the inclusion of two elements that were one that we're going through right now, which is our Food Service. We've always talked about improving Food Service and as mentioned, right now we're in the process of hiring a new Food Service Director or an outside company that would help manage all of that. We're viewing this tremendous opportunity to improve Food Service for our students. Really get a sense for what the community needs in that. Dr. Sullivan states he's very thankful and lucky to have Vice Chair, MacLellan, and Mr. Kearney helping with that.

Also, the idea of working to help with the School Stabilization Fund to advertise the meetings around that and try to work with Capital and the Town to advocate for what is needed and to try to make sure we get that if we are indeed fortunate enough to receive the School Stabilization Fund from the Town.

Mr. Kearney thanks Dr. Sullivan, this covers a lot of things to look at, but overall Mr. Kearney says this school committee has done a wonderful job. The thing Mr. Kearney would like to see more is participation. What are the kids participating in and put in an analysis to student participation. Also, to see exactly if a student is being engaged in some of these clubs. Looking at ways we can uplift those kids who aren't participating. It's simple in itself, if you see a kid by himself, encourage other kids to include that kid who might be struggling and ask why. We want all our kids to shine. As a community we should look and try to identify that, if that could be a goal.

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143 Pond Street

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Teaching and Learning

• Superintendent's Goals

Ms. Lesky would like to thank Superintendent Patrick Sullivan for the work he does that involves writing these goals and setting them, and figuring out what that will look like. She is most interested in the fact that there's a level of communication in every single goal that Dr. Sullivan has with the community. Getting those curriculum guides forward facing is going to be amazing for everyone involved. That is going to be a huge step forward for the district when that's accomplished. Working with the MTSS system and making sure that parents, the school, and the teacher are all really working together when we're supporting kids who are who have disabilities early, often and we're really sharing our expertise about those kids is really important too. We're creating more dialogues through Dr. Sullivan's goals, which is important.

Vice Chair MacLellan takes this opportunity to state how lucky the district is just to have Dr. Sullivan as our Superintendent of schools. The first two goals are robust, and substantive goals. Mr. MacLellan notes that on the superintendent's goal 2 is quite a task for Dr. Sullivan, it's going to be great. He asks Dr. Sullivan if his vision for the curriculum guide will be something that will be accessible and passable for users, or is it really just an instructional tool for Dr. Sullivan?

Dr. Scollins chimes in to say there's different levels of those guides and there is going to be a user's manual that is a friendly users guide for families and the community that will be posted on the school website. That will be the overview of what's happening, and it won't be so overwhelming. There will be other guides that teachers will use that are more in depth and will have lots more pieces. There'll be resources built in, there'll be links to all sorts of assessments and those will be used in-house internally only with our staff. We want to make sure that our curriculums align and we're assessing students the way it's asked. They are completely connected and just a little simpler for everyone to understand. We'll review every year as we make changes, and we'll have to update those curriculum guides.

Mr. MacLellan wants to make sure that we're going to continuously endeavor to find any instances where families can be notified of anything like this that involves their student interest, in terms of support. Mr. MacLellan wants to make sure that the superintendent's goals - goal 4 incorporates a continuous review of that where we can improve on the notification process. Goal 4 obviously ties in with goal 1 because they go hand in hand together. In goal 5, continuation of long-term, Dr. Sullivan mentioned a couple of slight changes to it. That slight change being the first bullet point Mr. MacLellan asks if that can incorporate the feasibility study or results along with the School Stabilization Fund as well. That is going to provide us with a lot of very useful information as Dr. Sullivan considers what the future direction is for the district in terms of physical plans and hard resources.

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- Superintendent's Goals

Dr. Sullivan says that is interesting, he hadn't thought of putting it in there only because he didn't know what his role would be in that. He is the recipient of the information, they work with him for the information whereas the School Stabilization Fund Dr. Sullivan has been working with facilities to drive actually what we're meeting, Dr. Sullivan will put it in there though.

Mr. MacLellan's opinion is Dr. Sullivan is not fairly directly involved with the feasibility study process, then we're doing something wrong. Mr. MacLellan has taken on issues with some of the processes surrounding all of this, where Superintendent Patrick Sullivan has not necessarily been included in certain conversations because of schedule/time, and Mr. MacLellan doesn't agree with that. That makes very little sense not to have a superintendent of schools involved in discussions related to large scale future issues for the district.

The Chair notes that Ms. Lesky and himself had the opportunity to work with Dr. Sullivan as part of the subcommittee under school governance and Dr. Sullivan offered his comments to be incorporated after his comments which were reflected in the draft with Vice Chair MacLellan suggestions to the superintendent's goals. Chairman Dial looks forward to achieving the superintendent's goals.

The superintendent's goals are posted to the school website and published in his school newsletter.

Teaching and Learning

- Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)

We've been working in the schools along with Rock Roberts leading those MCAS analysis with the schools just to see where we're at. We worked at Deer Hill last week with grades 3, 4, and 5 to go over their MCAS scores, some basic analysis with them like we do. We'll continue to dive into it with all the other data as we move forward. We continue to look at what happened and then look for those trends and patterns and what we want to do to add to our action plan. They'll be working with the middle school this coming week and then working with the high school during their department meetings, and department chairs, so we'll continue that network over the next couple of months, including the Osgood School. There are close to a dozen students not participating in MCAS at the Osgood, this is a PreK-12 assessment and it's important for them to know what our scores are and where all their needs and strengths are so we can work with them. We've done this in the past and we'll continue to do that.

We're really excited that we're able to put student's MCAS reports in ASPEN. We've already done this with i-Ready, and we're hoping to do this with DIBELS8 for families, but there's a glitch in that system where we couldn't upload them the way that we wanted to so families received hard copies of that. MCAS reports for families can be found in ASPEN which is a really nice way for families to know where everything is. Dr. Scollins is really thrilled about this, and she can't thank *Elise* enough for all her work.

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

Teaching and Learning

- Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)

At the next school committee meeting on November 1st Dr. Scollins and Rock Roberts will come back to share with the school committee the MTSS analysis information on how they did. There's lots of things in play already and will be able to give an overview of what's happening.

December 6th is when we'll display our action plan and working the action plan. It's just a matter of refining certain things, there's a lot of analysis that goes into the data that we have. We go through dialogues around the data and then we have collaborative conversations which move in different directions. Some people offer suggestions for practice that will improve student performance, it takes time. We did this last year and it paid off, so we'll continue that.

Dr. Scollins met with the Reading Specialist to review the data from the i-Ready and DIBELS8 assessments on early literacy. We looked at our dyslexia screener to see where students fall and we're creating those plans with families that have students that are at risk with dyslexia. We'll be notifying families early November. We'll be doing other assessments too with a follow-up with them. Also, anyone who's shown there's a reading and/or math issue those families are being notified that their student will be working with a reading specialist and/or math specialist. The dyslexia committee is going to reconvene this year to look at all the new guidelines, our process, to make sure that it's working the way we want it to work. We meet with them throughout the year.

Our Reading Specialists are going to attend a workshop next week on the MTSS system. We are continuing our work on early literacy with professional development. We had our full day of Professional Development on October 6th and the elementary will continue their work with the Teaching Learning Alliance team. The Middle School had some Professional Development from Imagine Learning, which is a company that has lustered math which is their new program. The Middle School, History and Science we're able to work together. Mr. Roberts met with Department Chairs and other people on the curriculum committee for the first time at the secondary level at the Middle High School on October 6th. The High School really worked on all their curriculum, guide work. The big undertaking is for everyone to come together and look at their work and put into a template that we've created around that curriculum, and we had that opportunity to do that on October 6th. TLA is continuing to work at Deer Hill, and the Osgood and this year we added additional coaching for our Reading Specialist in their role with Reader's Workshop and also Special Education Specialists. They have someone who is a special educator and he's going to work with our Special Education teachers around that.

We had training with our curriculum associates who are a parent company for our i-Ready Diagnostic to train all our new staff. We also had a Train the Trainer model for our personalized learning with My Path for Math and Reading, and families will be getting more information about that.

We added another Preschool and connected with TLA to look at our curriculum with PreK. We are going to collaborate with Plymouth Public Schools and work with them all year long.

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

Teaching and Learning

- Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)

We've created a series of workshops that we'll be doing between Cohasset and Plymouth, and we invite anyone else that would like to participate in creating those. A brochure was created for South Shore Preschool Consortium, hosted by Cohasset Public Schools and Plymouth Public Schools. It's a partnership to design a special preschool program with TLA who has done a lot of work. TLA worked in Texas and has a connection with Boston on a PreK II program, and we're really excited about that. There's a series in the Fall, Winter, and Spring and we will be hosting this here in Cohasset on October 20th. It will be our first one, and we'll have one in November in Plymouth and also meet in the office in Marshfield, and we're really excited about this collaboration. We have our teachers meet with other teachers outside of Cohasset that will build for a better curriculum and strategies for teaching.

Mr. MacLellan has a question relating to the assessment result overview and asks if there is any mechanism through which we are able to on a student-to-student basis identify either regression or just a general lack of progress. Does that trigger to reach out to the parents? If a parent is not seeing progress, especially if they have a special education student or student on any sort of plan like tier II in MTSS, parents would like to see something. Is there anything that we're able to do about that?

Dr. Scollins reiterates for special education progress reports that go out every trimester along with their general progress report which talks about where they're at with their curriculum goals. Dr. Scollins asks if Mr. MacLellan is talking about from where they were last year to where they are this year, or along the path?

Mr. MacLellan says yes, that's exactly what he's talking about and something that would be contemporaneous with parents receiving those results or at least with reasons. His concern is about the product and if that is being delivered to the student in the classroom. It would be nice if the district could identify that within a reasonable amount of time after the assessment results come out. That would make families feel more supported and might also avoid unnecessary levels of concern. That would mean a great deal to some of the families out there.

Dr. Scollins states if a child needs support, they're absolutely going to get information because the child has a Reading and/or Math Specialist giving the assessment for an intervention. Dr. Scollins does like the idea of what we're going to do with that feedback and how we'll talk to families and give them that information, it makes sense, and she'll look into that.

Ms. Lesky says Mr. MacLellan comments were exactly what she had on her mind to say. Proactive communication, even as small as we looked at a student's report, and we're keeping an eye on things, something like that along those lines. Asking parents if they have any questions, or we saw the growth percentile of your student was really low, so families won't be so surprised. This could be from the classroom teacher, the principal, a special educator, general education, or special education.

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

Teaching and Learning

- Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins)

Ms. Lesky says that kind of level of communication indicates we see your child. It would be nice for families having the people who care for their children, educate their children to reach out proactively.

Budget, Resources and Governance

- Budget and Finance

➤ **Monthly Update (Ms. Susan Owen)** - Dr. Sullivan notes Ms. Owen has been feeling under the weather and asked permission from the Chair for Ms. Owen to attend virtually via Zoom. As of September 30, 2023 the School Department has expended \$3,182,162 out of the \$22,905,421 budget awarded (24.26%) and we are 25% through the year. A significant increase from the August reporting as school year staff have returned and their payroll has begun. We have encumbered supplies and materials on purchase orders in the amount of \$2,375,180. There is a remaining balance of \$17,348,078 which will be expended by salary accounts and any other school department needs that cannot be anticipated or have not yet been entered as a purchase order.

SPED Tuitions were budgeted at \$940,275 and are currently encumbered on purchase orders. There is a shortfall in tuition in the amount of **-\$502,291**. Since the final vote of the budget the district has had 5 unanticipated out-placements and one new student whose tuition was over \$200k. We have \$299,800 in our Special Education Stabilization Fund which we can tap into if need be. Ms. Owen will watch that deficit to see if it goes up or goes down at that point if we commit to a decision on this, or whether we need to reach out on our SPED Stabilization Fund. We also have Circuit Breaker Funding in the case that we do run short.

<u>School</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Expended</u>	<u>Encumbrances</u>	<u>Balance</u>	<u>% Used</u>	<u>FTE</u>
Osgood	\$3,993,308	\$480,190	\$183,980	\$3,329,139	16.63%	53.10
Deer Hill	\$4,071,421	\$449,887	\$140,815	\$3,480,718	14.50%	44.30
Middle	\$4,138,874	\$402,129	\$ 39,770	\$3,696,979	10.67%	46.50
High School	\$7,097,617	\$866,237	\$428,907	\$5,802,473	18.24%	66.30

The FTEs are up at the Osgood because basically we are now counting full day Kindergarten students and staff as full-time equivalents.

Circuit Breaker Funding received in FY23 was \$1,170,609. This amount was carried over in its entirety into FY24 as part of the budget. This amount was based on a 75% reimbursement rate. Circuit Breaker Funding expected to be received in FY24 has been posted at \$1,034,108, a decrease \$136,501, which will be rolled over in its entirety into FY25 as part of the budget. The reimbursement rate has remained at 75% for several years. Circuit Breaker is a state program providing school districts with reimbursement for some of the costs incurred for providing “free and appropriate education” to students with special needs.

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street
Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

Budget, Resources and Governance

- Budget and Finance

- **Monthly Update (Ms. Susan Owen)**

Circuit Breaker

<u>Year</u>	<u># of Students</u>	<u>% Reimbursement</u>	<u>Reimbursement Amount</u>
FY24	14	75%	\$1,034,108
FY23	18	75%	\$1,170,609
FY22	18	75%	\$ 701,856
FY21	14	75%	\$ 648,533
FY20	19	75%	\$ 726,908
FY19	14	75%	\$ 592,920
FY18	13	75%	\$ 534,554
FY17	14	75%	\$ 446,704

Ms. Owen says they've been very lucky that their reimbursement has been at 75% for quite a few years. She recalls in her history they were once down as low as 42% at one point. It's nice to see 75%.

FY24 Voted Capital List

	<u>APPROVED</u>
1) Bus Lease (2024-2027) (District) 8 Diesel	\$ 90,000
2) Replacement of Aging Chromebooks (540- 3 Yr. Lease)	\$ 52,000
3) Replace Smart Projectors/Panels in All Rooms (CMS)	\$ 155,161
4) Replace iPads at Deer Hill and Osgood School to include (253 iPads & cases, charging station)	\$ 93,960
5) Continue to replace furniture-Teacher/Students Deer Hill* adding a new grade 3 class.	\$ <u>35,000</u>
Grand Total	\$ 426,121

Projects are all in the process. The projectors are coming into the Middle School and starting to be replaced. We have eight new diesel school buses and waiting for one electric school bus, the timeline is still December. We're working with getting the charging station system set up with the utility company, the e-bus company, and the landlord, and that is proceeding as planned. The vestibule at the Osgood is 99% complete, only thing left is touch up painting, and it looks phenomenal.

Grants

We have several new grants highlighted in yellow that Dr. Leslie Scollins has applied for. One is Expanded High Quality Instruction Math materials. Another one is Open Science Implementation at CMS, and the other grant is Investigating History Implementation.

Expanded High Quality Instruction Math: \$23,000.

Open Science Implementation at CMS: \$62,600.

Investigating History Implementation: \$26,900.

We received \$18,343 for our School Improvement grant this year. Last year we received \$19,492. Those grants typically decline each year. Our special education grants usually increase each year. Our METCO grant at this point has increased slightly, but it's pretty close to what we had this past year.

Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street
Cohasset, MA 02025

Empower Students to Improve Communities

Budget, Resources and Governance

- Budget and Finance

- **Monthly Update (Ms. Susan Owen) Revolving Accounts**

We have three revolving accounts that Ms. Owen gives the opening balance, and receipts that have been brought into date. Obviously, it's still very early on in the school year, so there hasn't been a lot of revenue coming in. Ms. Owen says they'll see a negative in our school kindergarten, but it's not a negative, it's basically logistics. Just to recall, we have a \$300,000 line item outside of our school budget to fund full-day kindergarten. This was the cleanest way to record it, as we're going to continue to spend it out of the revolving account and the Town Accountant and Director of Finance will make a transfer of \$300,000 towards the end of the school year.

We're hoping to cap our school facilities' use this year. Now that the Fall sports have begun, our use of facility rentals has happened. Hopefully we'll see the use of facilities revolving account come out of the deficit and be at a more balanced number.

Ms. Owen sees no areas of concern at this point in time, without the usual concerns about utility costs, and unforeseen tuition expenses which we are seeing coming right out of the gate this year. The budget is proceeding based on projections. We'll watch the special education tuition very closely and she'll keep the school committee apprised of any concerns or changes that need to be discussed.

Mr. Kearney thanks Sue and hopes she feels better.

The Chair would like Ms. Owen to recap that negative **\$500,000** for SPED tuitions. The Chair understands some things are fluid and move around, but does this give her cause for concern, respect to our budget. It does look like we're running under our budget with a number of matters as well. From a non-labor perspective, it seems like we are. We have flexible room in our budget a little bit, but the Chair wants to pressure test that with Ms. Owen.

Ms. Owen says no, Mr. Dial is correct. She has no concern at this point. They had one student who moved to the district whose tuition was over \$200k. We could have one student whose tuition is over \$200k move out of district, or out of state, so it could change by just one student coming or going.

Budget, Resources and Governance

- **Budget Priorities, Calendar, and Planning (Ms. Susan Owen)****

We worked together as a team on the budget calendar, very similar to last year that just gives you the dates. Some of this on this document we've obviously already begun.

Dr. Sullivan addresses Ms. Owen that this was approved and discussed with the Finance Facility Committee.

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

Budget, Resources and Governance

➤ **Budget Priorities, Calendar, and Planning (Ms. Susan Owen)****

Ms. Owen says they've met with the subcommittee already, and already talking about our budget for next year with the Administration and Leadership team. They've already gone over a draft of our Capital list. They just have not submitted it to the Town yet. The budget information is being worked on by the principals. The calendar is pretty consistent with each year, just pushing dates off based on school committee dates. We'll have the Capital walk through, we'll have the budget workshop, we'll have our state representatives come in. This calendar is just something that we look at every year and have the school committee vote on and we follow as best we can.

The Chair says this is great and thanks Ms. Owen. One thing the Chair would like to do and maybe it's built in here. The one thing he wants to make sure we do a better job of is the past couple of budget cycles we have had some, whether it's because of timing or difficulties focusing, but we've had some speed bumps in our cooperation with the Town Capital Committee, and the Town Advisory Committee. What the Chair would like to build somewhere on the calendar is, instead of having multiple meetings with each of those committees, if we could proactively reach out to them. We do have potential joint meetings of school committee Selectman, and Advisory Committee, but the Chair would like to see if we could get a joint working meeting at some point earlier into the budget so that they have the opportunity to answer questions or ask questions if we have the opportunity to answer them in one single forum as opposed to an unintentional debt by a thousand cuts in the budget process that we've had in prior years. If there's a way to think through where that would work out well in this budget calendar. There are two periods of time that the Chair would like to recommend putting this and that is between November 15th through November 29th after the school committee finalizes the budget priorities; and as discussed, the FY25 budget with the principals and directors, which maybe too soon, but that was an area that jumped out. The other one is the end of year period between December 20th and January 10th after we received the preliminary offering operating budget, and before we get it presented at a school committee meeting.

Dr. Sullivan asks Ms. Owen if she could put up a pin on December 6th and talk to our Finance and Facility subcommittee for potentially having what the Chair recommends.

Our budget priorities for FY25 are very similar to last year. We're still following our strategic plan. In Teaching and Learning: Compass point #1 we did add a little bit of language in there regarding Social Studies. This document should be fairly self-evidence.

Motion made by Vice Chair MacLellan to approve the Cohasset Public School Budget Priorities FY25, seconded by Mr. Kearney.

Aye – All

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

Budget, Resources and Governance

➤ **Budget Priorities, Calendar, and Planning (Ms. Susan Owen)****

Motion made by Vice Chair MacLellan to approve the Cohasset Public School Budget Calendar for FY25 as presented at the 10-18-23 meeting, seconded by Ms. Lesky.

Aye – All

- Food Service – We're in the midst of searching for a new Food Service Director/Company. We're looking at all our options, we started the interviewing process today. We have more interviews again tomorrow. We're moving very aggressively to try to get someone in place in time for our former Food Service Director, so she'll be able to move onto her new district. We have some great candidates and some great companies.

- Transportation – We just had a school bus driver in training and passed the test. We have now added another school bus driver to our staff, which is great. We have multiple bus drivers on standby, so that our Sports and school field trips are covered. We do have one bus driver retiring in December. The electric school bus will be coming in December, which we're looking forward to as well.

- [School Facilities Committee Update] – The Chair states we don't have any School Facilities Committee to update. However, the Chair would like to reach out to Mr. Earls, Chair of the School Facilities Committee, to find better ways to incorporate our two committees and have Mr. Earls potentially come on a periodic basis. We used to have this as a standing agenda item when it was very convenient as we had a member of the School Facilities Committee as a member of the school committee. For good reasons of good governance, we have our school committee members are now exclusive at the School Facilities Committee announced.

Community Relations / Communication

- Reports from School Committee Sub-Committees and Liaisons

We had our Governance Sub-Committee that Ms. Lesky and the Chair talked earlier with Dr. Sullivan on the review of the goals in advance of the superintendent's goals presentation here tonight.

Ms. Lesky says the Deer Hill School Council is now complete. They are off to a good start and especially with so many faculty. We talked a lot about the Deer teams to bring children together.

School Committee Governance

- Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair – N/A
- Approval of Minutes – N/A

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

School Committee Governance

- Future Agenda Items – Mr. MacLellan has been given recent experiences that there’s a need for the district to consider seriously offering or incorporating digital citizenship topics into the elementary curriculum specifically to fit possibly the 4th grade, or at least the 5th grade. The reason for this is that at the very least our 5th graders are in this ever-changing environment and that our 5th graders are becoming more exposed to technology. Kids are being exposed to technology earlier in their time and they’re then confronting issues that they’re not equipped to confront yet, specifically with messaging one another and things of that nature. In other words, Mr. MacLellan analogized this to our anatomical maturity discussion that we have with 5th graders. We do that at the precipice of adolescence so that we equip them to understand what’s happening before it happens. If this was offered in 6th grade, it’s very important for digital citizenship topics to be explored in middle school because that’s when we start seeing some really serious issues. We need to start considering whether or not that’s too late for some students. We need to equip our students to be able to navigate those uncharted waters so that they understand the perils of reckless use of technology and how permanent certain things can be and how damaging certain things can be to others without really realizing it. Mr. MacLellan would ask that we put on the agenda at a future meeting, a discussion of incorporating digital citizenship topics into the ELA curriculum.

Mr. Dial thinks that’s a great idea. Dr. Sullivan and himself talked a little bit about what offerings would be and whether we can enhance that. It’s a very important topic and the Chair completely agrees.

School Committee Governance

- Executive Session¹: The Chair states there is no reason to move into Executive Session.

Motion made by Vice Chair MacLellan to adjourn the meeting at 8:33 PM, seconded by Mr. Kearney.

Aye – All

Documents used for the Regular Meeting of the CSC.....Wednesday, October 18, 2023

Video Cheering on CMS Cross-Country Team.....Ms. Meghan Greaney & Students
C-1 Invited Guests - CMS Puerto Rico Trip.....Mr. John Mills and Bob Erlandsen
Teaching and Learning - Superintendent’s Goals..... Superintendent Patrick Sullivan
Teaching and Learning – South Shore Preschool Consortium Flyer..... Dr. Leslie Scollins
F-1 Budget, Resources and Governance -School Budget Monthly Update.....Ms. Susan Owen
F-2 Budget, Resources and Governance - Priorities, Calendar, and Planning.....Ms. Susan Owen

Requires Committee Vote / Action**

Respectfully Submitted,
Kathy Bock 10-22-23