



## Cohasset School Committee Meeting

### School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, November 6, 2019  
Cohasset Middle-High School  
Community Use Room  
143 Pond Street  
Cohasset, MA

**In Attendance:** Ellen Maher, Chairman  
Jennifer Madden  
Paul Kearney  
Craig MacLellan

**Absent:** Ashley Colleary

**Also in Attendance:** Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent  
Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent  
Michael MacMillan, Director of Finance & Operations

**Call to Order and Roll Call-** Chairman Maher called the meeting to order at 7:03 p.m. **Roll Call Vote:**  
**Paul Kearney-Present; Ellen Maher-Present, Jennifer Madden-Present, Craig MacLellan-Present.**

**Pledge-**Recited.

**Public Comment-**None.

**Superintendent's Report-School Improvement Plan for High School**—Principal Brian Scott presented his 2019-2020 School Improvement Plan which includes seven SMART goals aligned with the District plan. Principal Scott discussed his Action Plan to achieve the School Improvement Plan goals. Mrs. Madden thanked Principal Scott and stated she appreciates the very specific objectives. Mrs. Madden stated the review of the independent study process is an important part of a student's education. Principal Scott discussed some of the independent studies the students have worked on and would like to continue to expand project opportunities at the high school. Mrs. Madden asked if the data compiled will be coordinated with the data specialist brought in by the District. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated the data strategy is a collaboration with Assistant Supt. Dr. Scollins, school leadership and the data specialist. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated the data will translate into data dialogues. Mrs. Madden stated she loves the plan and Principal Scott has done a great job recognizing things that will make the school better. Mrs. Madden

stated she is concerned the wording in Expectations for Student Learning (All Students will) may not be inclusive for students with learning disabilities. Principal Scott agreed with Mrs. Madden and stated it's an antiquated model and they are in the process of redoing the core values and beliefs. Chairman Maher asked Principal Scott to describe the breadth of the communication strategy. Principal Scott discussed balancing the communication strategy by creating a series of vehicles and using the appropriate vehicle for communicating information in a timely manner. Chairman Maher asked if Principal Scott would consider partnerships with the private sector for internships. Principal Scott stated he would partner with the private sector businesses. Mr. Kearney thanked Principal Scott for putting the plan together and asked Principal Scott's what his limitations were as far as offering programs. Principal Scott stated one needs to strike the right balance of being financially responsible and offering what you can with the students. Principal Scott stated virtual classrooms are another method to combat limitations faced.

**School Improvement Plan for Middle School**-Principal John Mills presented the 2019-2020 School Improvement Plan for the Middle School which included four SMART goals. Principal Mills discussed his Action Plan and the CPS Strategic Plan to achieve the School Improvement Plan goals. Principal Mills stated he used the Middle School Action plan as the base and reviewed the action plan with the school council. Principal Mills stated they took the target areas which included curriculum, communication, staff development and culture as their organizing scheme. Principal Mills stated the Middle School has created their own logo and Student Council will be selling gear with the logo. Mrs. Madden asked Principal Mills to provide background on the action plan of an additional adjustment counselor or social worker and request an additional guidance counselor in FY20. Principal Mills stated these were steps from the Action Plan. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated these were recommendations from the NELMS report. Principal Mills stated these are accurate recommendations. Mr. MacLellan asked what is the quickest turnaround for acquiring the additional resources. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated the request for additional resources needs to go through the budget process. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated he does not want to give the indication that students are not being serviced, however there is a deeper level of service needed. Chairman Maher stated there was a deferred budget request for a guidance counselor and there was a trade off at the time to hire an Assistant Principal which was more critical at the time for launching a separate Middle School. Chairman Maher stated if the Student Opportunity Act passes and there is additional funding from state, guidance is one of the footnotes to have additional support from state funding. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated the High School is also pressed for resources. Supt. Dr. Sullivan noted how supportive the School Committee members have been in getting the Middle School up and running with Principal Mills, Assistant Principal Salas and a half-time school nurse. Chairman Maher stated she would expect the articulation of needs during the budget process from both the Middle School and High School and to provide data to support the needs. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated Mary Buchanan, Director of Student Services, would be willing to update the Committee members on the district counselors and provide her view on the district needs. Chairman Maher stated she would expect the articulation of needs for optimal classrooms/teaching space. Mr. MacMillan stated they are taking a strategic approach to set a vision of what furniture and technology is needed in the classroom. Mr. Kearney thanked Principal Mills and asked about the piloting additional lunch social groups for students. Principal Mills stated they are looking at providing a quieter space for students to eat lunch without feeling stigmatized. Principal Mills stated they are looking at ways to build incentives for students to go outside for fresh air. Chairman Maher asked if the Skipper Café could be used as a quieter space.

Principal Mills stated it could work and they were looking into using the teacher's lounge which would be easier to monitor kids. Chairman Maher asked Principal Scott if he has any thoughts on student cellphone usage and how teachers are managing cellphone usage and his thoughts on following the Middle School model of no cell phones. Principal Scott stated he thinks it becomes harder to regulate the older the students get and the variety of things the students are managing, and parents are the ones who fight the ban the most. Principal Scott feels competent teachers can manage the students and have developed strategies to effectively manage usage. Principal Scott stated he believes cellphones could have a damaging effect, but more research needs to be done and a good case could be made for the reduction of technology. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated he expects to see technology free movements in society.

**Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve the Cohasset High School Improvement Plan, seconded by Paul Kearney and the vote was unanimous (4-0)**

**Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve the Cohasset Middle School Improvement Plan, seconded by Paul Kearney and the vote was unanimous (4-0)**

**2020-2021 School Calendar**—Superintendent Dr. Patrick Sullivan reviewed the draft school calendar for the 2020-2021 school year. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated he didn't push starting before Labor Day due to the change in school start times. Mrs. Madden stated she is concerned with the possibility of going so late in the year. Mrs. Madden asked if the district could consider having school on Good Friday. Chairman Maher stated there is the opportunity to address Good Friday if the district finds themselves in the situation of needing to make up a day.

**Motion by Mrs. Madden to approve the 2020-2021 School Calendar, seconded by Mr. Kearney and the vote was unanimous (4-0).**

Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated he will be hosting parent forums for the Start School Later start times which will be held on Tuesday, November 12, 2019 at 9:30am in the Deer Hill Cafeteria as part of the PSO meeting. There will be another meeting on Wednesday, November 13, 2019 at 7pm in the Osgood Cafeteria as part of the PSO meeting. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated all are welcome to attend.

**Approval of Warrant**-Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve Warrant 20-08S, seconded by Mr. Kearney. Roll Call Vote: Paul Kearney-Aye, Ellen Maher-Aye, Jennifer Madden-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

**Finance-Monthly Update**-Mr. MacMillan reviewed the financials through October. Mr. MacMillan stated there was one more payroll than last year, so the expenses are a little above last year. Mr. MacMillan stated that the transportation percentage is up significantly because the transportation operational budget is less than last year. The operational budget is less than last year because the district is using a greater portion of the funds from the transportation revolving account. Mr. MacMillan stated there are a couple of deficits in the grant account due to spending before funds are reimbursed. The funds are requested monthly based on expenditures. Mr. MacMillan stated the Safer Schools Grant expenditures are reimbursed based on expenditure and reimbursement requests must be submitted by the end of the calendar year. Mr. MacMillan stated the School Lunch revolving account balance is down significantly due to October revenues not being posted at the time of reporting. Mr. MacMillan stated

there is an error in the High School Revolving account which was set up for high school related fees such as SATs. The error is due to an error in the account configuration and the revenues posted to the AP revolving account. Mr. MacMillan explained that the High School Revolving funds were moved out of the high school Student Activity to a revolving account. The Committee members discussed the opening balance on the AP revolving account opening balance. Mr. MacMillan explained the opening balance is due to historical activity that was transferred from the student activity account.

**Bus Maintenance** – Mr. MacMillan stated there were no major bus expenditures since September. Mr. McLellan asked if the maintenance on the buses are covered under the 2020 leases. Mr. MacMillan stated there are expenditures that are not covered under the lease warranty such as the installation of the new radios.

Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated the district's capital requests were approved. Mr. MacMillan stated the Town approved their three capital requests at Town Meeting which included the purchase of a 7D van for Special Education; upgrades to the Middle School entrance; and a new projector in the high school auditorium. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated he is very thankful to the Town for their approval of these items. Mr. Kearney asked when the upgrades to the Middle School entrance will start. Mr. MacMillan stated he needs to obtain three quotes because the work is in excess of \$10,000 and he is collecting quotes. Mr. MacMillan stated the process of ordering the lobby guard has started and Ron Menard is working on making sure the cameras can be accessed by the administration.

**School Committee Comments & Communication-School Start Time**-Chairman Maher stated she and Supt. Dr. Sullivan had a meeting with Patty Thompson, President of the Cohasset Teachers Association regarding the status of the process. Chairman Maher stated the vote in August met the conditions of the contract and a subsequent change to that would require the contract to be opened and impact bargaining. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated they could decide to do a one-time side letter to open the contract. Chairman Maher stated it was a positive meeting. Chairman Maher stated they want to look at what the change will be. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated they want a definitive plan. Chairman Maher stated Supt. Dr. Sullivan will move forward with an alternative scenario. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated he will present an alternative scenario on November 20<sup>th</sup> which has been informed further by his parent forums. Chairman Maher stated the Committee members are invited to the Superintendent Coffee.

**Reports from Sub-Committee and Liaisons**-Mr. MacLellan stated he has a School Council meeting with Osgood on November 7, 2019. Chairman Maher shared a message from Mrs. Colleary regarding the screening of "Dawnland" on November 25, 2019 at 6pm in the High School Auditorium and a free screening of 47 Meters Down sponsored by Safe Harbors. The screening will take place at the Second Congregational Church on November 22, 2019 from 6:45pm-9:15pm for students in grades 7-12. Chairman Maher also stated Glove Up Boxing and Fitness has teamed up with Safe Harbor to offer their punch fit class on November 8, 2019 at 6:30 which will be available to the first 22 students in grades 8-12 who register. Chairman Maher also informed the Committee that Safe Harbor will be hosting a presentation by Diana Clark, JD MA titled Parenting Strategies: The Risky Teenage Years at 6:30pm on November 12, 2019 in the High School auditorium. Chairman Maher stated she will need to cancel the Security subcommittee meeting with Mr. MacLellan on November 7, 2019. Chairman Maher stated other good news resulting from the Town Meeting includes the district has \$50,000 more in the Special Education reserve fund which brings the balance to ~\$364,000. Chairman Maher asked Mr. MacMillan

to have an idea of what the ceiling is on the SPED fund for their next Finance subcommittee meeting. Chairman Maher stated the MASC Conference is this week and she will not be able to make it on Thursday but is hoping to get there on Friday afternoon. Mr. Kearney stated he will be there all week and Ms. Madden stated she would be there Thursday afternoon. Chairman Maher shared information from the MASC bulletin regarding the launch of “RESPECTfully” a statewide public health awareness and prevention campaign to promote healthy relationships among middle and high school students. The campaign is being led by Lt. Governor Karyn Polito and is asking all School Committees to consider supporting this campaign with a resolution. All the School Committees supporting the campaign will be highlighted on the state website. Chairman Maher stated she doesn’t expect an answer because it’s a weighty topic and thinks input from Principal Scott and Principal Mills would be important. She also stated it’s a resolution not a call to action and thinks the district is doing a lot of things with social emotional learning and Principal Scott’s Captains and Cultures program ties into the campaign. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated the middle and high school health teachers are addressing these issues as well. Chairman Maher left some brochures for Supt. Dr. Sullivan to share with Principal Scott and Principal Mills and asked to let her know if the leadership feels it’s worthwhile for the Committee members to endorse. Chairman Maher asked if the School Committee should or could have access to Blackboard or a newsletter to send out information regarding School Committee updates and agenda. Supt. Dr. Sullivan stated he is in favor of it and could add a School Committee section to include in his monthly newsletter. Mr. MacLellan stated the School Committee needs to communicate better but is reluctant to discuss the topic in the absence of Mrs. Colleary. Mrs. Madden stated the School Committee could put the Committee goals on their next agenda. Chairman Maher stated the goals progress report is scheduled for the December 18, 2019 meeting.

**Follow up and Updates**-None

**Topic not anticipated by the Chairman 48 hours in advance of the meeting**-None.

**Motion by Mr. MacLellan to go into Executive Session for Exemption #3-Strategy related to negotiations with union personnel, seconded by Mr. Kearney.**

The School Committee went into Executive Session at 9:07p.m.

The School Committee exited Executive Session at 9:59p.m.

The School Committee adjourned the regular meeting at 10:00p.m. on a motion by Mrs. Madden, seconded by Mr. Kearney, All -Aye.

**Documents used at the Meeting**

School Improvement Plan for High School	D-1
School Improvement Plan for Middle School	D-2
2020-2021 School Calendar	D-3
Monthly Update	F-1
Bus Maintenance Update	G-1