



Cohasset School Committee Meeting

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, July 11, 2019
Cohasset Middle-High School
Community Use Room
143 Pond Street
Cohasset, MA

In Attendance: Ellen Maher, Chairman
Jennifer Madden, Vice-Chairman
Paul Kearney
Ashley Colleary
Craig MacLellan

Also in Attendance: Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

The meeting was called to order at 6:06 pm. Roll call= Present Ellen Maher, Present Ashley Colleary, Present Jenn Madden, Present Paul Kearney

Mrs. Maher asked for a motion to enter Executive Session for exemption #2, strategy related to negotiations with non-union personnel. The motion was made by Mrs. Madden, seconded by Mr. Kearney, Aye Paul Kearny, Aye, Ellen Maher, Aye Ashley Colleary, Aye Jenn Madden. The committee entered Executive Session at 6:07 pm.

Chairman Maher called the meeting back to order at 7:00 p.m.

Pledge-Recited.

Public Comment-None.

Superintendent's Report-School Resource Office Update- Office Taylor unable to attend.

Start School Later Committee-Maura Sharry, M.Ed., Chair Cohasset Chapter Start School Later introduced herself and Bruce S. Kristal, PhD. Cohasset Chapter Start School Later Committee members also in attendance included Sarah Williams, Rose Molony, and Lauren Chisholm. Ms. Sharry stated the

she has been advocating for starting school later for many years and has met with the past Superintendent, Board of Health, PSO, the Town Manager and has presented before the School Committee a few times. Ms. Sharry stated the Start School Later Committee has met monthly since December 2018 establishing the perimeters and the charge of the Committee's mission. Ms. Sharry stated the Committee considered the Committee's established guidelines including scientific and medical data; how surrounding schools who have adopted the change have adapted; surveyed students and parents; and noted that transportation scheduling was not factored in at this time due to a pending traffic pattern study. Ms. Sharry stated the two key logistical guidelines the Committee considered included the time change must be cost neutral and must be put in place one year before implementation due to the teacher's contract. The Committee conducted two surveys, one of 100 CMHS seniors and a second of 100 Cohasset parents pooled from Deer Hill School and the Joseph Osgood School. Dr. Kristal presented their survey findings to the Committee. Dr. Kristal stated the key take home lessons from the survey included there is a 4-fold high sleep aid use in Cohasset than in the general US adult population; 38% of the Cohasset high school seniors surveyed use caffeine to stay awake in school; 92% of the Cohasset high school seniors surveyed need assistance to get up for school; 97% of the Cohasset high school seniors surveyed do not get age-appropriate sleep; 70% of the Cohasset high school seniors surveyed require additional weekend sleep; and homework and activities due not appear to cause short sleep. Dr. Kristal presented the data from the parent survey and concluded the parent survey results also favor the change. Dr. Kristal stated the final roll call vote of the Start School Later Committee which was 13-2 in favor of the later school start. Chairman Maher thanked Dr. Kristal for the information. Chairman Maher addressed how the proposed changes may affect the Boston students and it was her understanding all the students come to Cohasset together whether they are kindergartens or high schoolers. Ms. Sharry replied that former Superintendent Louise Demas thought it would be more advantageous for the Boston students because they could share a bus with Hingham and added that transportation was not focused on by the Start School Later Committee. Chairman Maher stated transportation is a good follow up issue to get clarified. Superintendent Dr. Patrick Sullivan stated the next step would be for him to meet with the School Committee and make sure all the logistical questions that are out there be addressed. Mr. Kearney stated he doesn't need any more data to decide, he would like to see this go to vote tonight and he's in favor. Lauren Chisholm, a Start School Later Committee member and neuropsychologist commented on the cognitive effects of lack of sleep. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated the data was compelling and he sees this as a bigger part of wellness initiative and asked if any thought was given to reasons the kids are staying up later i.e. electronic devices and unless those issues were handled as well, starting school later may not help in terms of a whole wellness approach. Mrs. Madden commented that the report was very compelling but sees it as two-part thing, there is data and evidence and then there's trying to figure out the logistics of how to do it. Mrs. Madden discussed her attendance last fall at the Monomoy Regional School District presentation on starting school later and their Superintendent shared a couple of things they did to try to help make the change a success which included reconfiguring the sports leagues, looking at what teams they play to figure out how long the distance time impacts the students leaving class early. Mrs. Madden stated she hasn't received a satisfactory answer and is concerned on the loss of learning time and would like a breakdown on how much time on learning is affected by this. Mrs. Madden asked Superintendent Dr. Sullivan if he would look into the idea of a softer start to school to help ease the strain of working parents. Mrs. Madden stated she is worried about the kids left to lock up the house while parents have gone off to work and asked about the possibility of shifting intramurals to the

morning to give parents peace of mind. Chairman Maher stated she appreciated the Committee's phenomenal work; they put together significant data and the data makes common sense today compared to 5 -15 years ago but feels the Committee is not in a position to put a motion on the floor tonight to implement the later start. Chairman Maher stated the Committee has fiduciary responsibilities and would like time to discuss the data in more detail with the Central Office and look at bus routes, the impact on METCO students and Mrs. Madden's points on the time on learning loss. Chairman Maher stated it is not her intent or desire to not put this to a vote to the committee and stated it would be her intent to vote on the Start School Later proposal before September 1st. Chairman Maher also stated in fairness to the new Committee Members, Ms. Colleary and Mr. MacLellan, who have not been privy to information, they need time to absorb the data, look at research and come up with their own questions and this would allow more time for the Committee to practically look at bus routes. Chairman Maher stated the traffic study was approved and is to be done in the fall which will allow the Committee to sketch out viable, practical bus routes incorporating the traffic study and also stated the Committee needs to dollar it out and perform their fiduciary responsibility with the Central Office. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated he appreciates report, but it does require more research from his end, and he doesn't want to rush into making a decision, he would like to talk to the proper people getting input from the community. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated the importance of the community to having a voice in this. Ms. Sharry thanked the Committee and stated that the Start School Later Committee is lucky to have Dr. Kristal and Lauren Chisholm.

Faculty Hiring Update-Superintendent Dr. Sullivan advised the Committee that a 1:1 ESP position at Deer Hill has reopened. The position had been filled but the person rescinded the acceptance and the position has been reposted. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan informed the Committee they have hired a new Middle School Assistant Principal, Dr. Kathryn Salas. Dr. Salas holds a Doctorate from Northeastern University and Principal Mills has notified the staff and community. Dr. Salas was the former Assistant Principal at Mattacheese Middle School in Dennis Yarmouth for the last several years and comes with an extensive background in counseling. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan informed the Committee that Principal Brian Scott hired Tara Noyes as the High School Assistant Principal. Ms. Noyes was recently the Assistant Principal at East Bridgewater Junior-Senior High School. He stated Ms. Noyes also has a background in teaching health and physical education. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan updated the Committee on the balance of positions and feels the district is in good shape on hiring.

Discussion of .5 Nurse for Middle School and 1.0 Custodian- Superintendent Dr. Sullivan informed the Committee due to prepayment of a portion of special education tuitions, there is some funding for FY 20 available. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan advised the Committee that based on the Massachusetts Human Services and Department of Public Health's recommendations Cohasset Middle High School is understaffed in nursing and is requesting a .5 position for the Middle School. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan advocated for a 1.0 custodian and stated the position would be looked at district wide and probably appointed at the Middle School and High School as a result of the custodial study done last yet. Mr. Kearney stated the custodian position is well needed and suggested the new Committee members get a copy of the report. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan requested permission from Chairman Maher to share the report with the new Committee members. Chairman Maher agreed and stated it was a comprehensive report and great supporting document for the Committee to have with the Town when discussing maintenance and upkeep of the buildings and grounds. Mr. MacLellan asked if the money

was budgeted. Chairman Maher stated no but pursuant to the earlier conversation the available funding due to tuition prepayment is not an infinite sum and they were deferred budget list items from last year. Chairman Maher stated that since these are new positions she would like to motion to approve the positions and give Dr. Sullivan permission to post for the school nurse position since the position needs be filled quickly and is critical for the Middle School to have someone in place for the start of school. Chairman Maher stated the posting of the custodian position will be revisited at a future meeting.

Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve the creation of a .5 Nurse for Cohasset Middle School, seconded by Mr. Kearney and roll call vote Aye-Paul Kearney, Aye-Ashley Colleary, Aye-Ellen Maher, Aye-Jennifer Madden, Aye-Craig MacLellan. Chairman Maher stated Superintendent Dr. Sullivan could move forward with posting the 0.5 nurse position at the Middle School.

Motion by Mr. MacLellan to approve the creation of a 1.0 Custodial position tentatively for Cohasset Middle-High School, seconded by Mr. Kearney roll call vote Aye-Paul Kearney, Aye-Ashley Colleary, Aye-Ellen Maher, Aye-Jennifer Madden, Aye-Craig MacLellan.

Middle School Artwork – Superintendent Dr. Sullivan informed the Committee that he, Michael MacMillan and John Mills walked the Middle School building with a local architect looking at ideas to brighten and re-invigorate the Middle School. The company proposed a painting project which would use paint to create a more integrated relationship with the entry and entry foyer, identify a paint program for the wall, trim and mechanical in the halls, creating bold graphic images for end walls at major stairways, and identifying areas for wainscoting painting that would be more practically maintained by custodial staff. Superintendent Dr.-Sullivan informed the Committee there is painting going on at Deer Hill. Chairman Maher stated there should be a follow up with Facilities & Finance Committee regarding other maintenance issues not paint related such as the baseboard where sections are ripped up in the Middle School. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated he would get estimates for the repair of the baseboard.

School Committee Comments & Communications-Chairman Maher informed the Committee that Superintendent Dr. Sullivan received an email this morning regarding approval of the Safer School grant which will allow for additional cameras in the schools. Michael MacMillan applied for the grant last spring at the recommendation of Senator Patrick O'Connor. The grant was approved for \$34,000+.

Chairman Maher reminded Mr. Kearney and Mr. MacLellan to get back to Jennifer Souretis about registration for the MASC Conference in November.

The next School Committee meeting is 7/17/19 which is a workshop starting at 5:30 in the Community Use Room. Dorothy Presser, Field Director of MASC will be taking the Committee through protocols, handbook updates, social media use by Committee members and communication strategies with the Public.

Mrs. Madden asked if the School Improvement Plan has been looked at for the Middle School and High School and whether the Committee would get a copy. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan replied that it was

requested to be deferred to the Fall to give the new teams time to work with their councils and for Mr. Mills to form a council. Mrs. Madden stated that made sense for the School Improvement Plan but asked about the handbook. Superintendent Dr. Sullivan stated they could do it earlier if the Committee preferred. Chairman Maher stated the School Improvement Plan and the handbook don't need to go together so if the handbook is ready she has no problem going through the handbooks before the School Improvement Plan.

Motion by Mr. MacLellan to adjourn at 8:30 pm, seconded by Mr. Kearney and the vote was unanimous (5-0).

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Documents Used at the Meeting

Start School Later	E-1
Faculty Hiring Update	E-2