

**REGULAR MEETING
OF THE
COHASSET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
Wednesday, December 4, 2024
6:00 PM**

All School Committee Meetings Are Recorded

In Person Participation

Learning Commons
Cohasset Middle and High School
143 Pond Street
Cohasset, MA 02025

Virtual

Zoom (*chat enabled*)
<https://zoom.us/j/93210720844>
ID: 932 1072 0844 / Passcode: 461964
Dial In: +1 929 205 6099

Televised

Streamed Live on Cohasset 143tv

Facebook (*watch/listen only*)

Cohasset Live Streaming

In Attendance:

Craig MacLellan, Chair
Ted Carr, Secretary
Jennifer Lesky
Tori Hanna
Michael Stapleton, Director of Student Services
Susan Owen, Director of Finance and Operations
Mrs. Sarah Shannon, Superintendent

AGENDA

Call to Order

Chairman Craig MacLellan called to order the Wednesday, December 4, 2024 meeting for the Cohasset School Committee at 6:01 PM. All members of the Cohasset School Committee who are present are asked by the Chair to please indicate so in **Roll Call**: **Mr. Carr–Present; Mrs. Hanna–Present; Mrs. Lesky–Present; Chairman MacLellan–Present; Mr. Dial–Not Present.** Four of the five members of the Cohasset School Committee are present, which forms a quorum to proceed with this evening’s meeting.

Opening Remarks

Tonight’s meeting is being broadcast live on Cohasset 143tv as well as being streamed live on Facebook. Folks can participate virtually by logging onto Zoom using the Meeting ID and passcode on the agenda by utilizing the Q&A feature on Zoom.

Public Comment

No public comments.

Invited Guests

• **Cohasset Middle School - Spotlight on Learning – 8th Grade Civics Field Trip**
(Mr. John Mills, Mrs. Ashley Hannon, Ms. Katie Holden with the Cohasset Historical Society, and Students)
Mrs. Ashley Hannon, an 8th grade Civics teacher at Cohasset Middle School and 8th grade students who study Civics recently collaborated with the Cohasset Historical Society, as well with Ms. Susan Spofford and Rick Towle from the Central Cemetery Association. Mrs. Hannon’s 8th grade Civics class embarked on a Civics field trip, November 15, 2024 to the Boston Tea Party Museum and visited the Central Cemetery to enhance students to study & learn about the American Revolution. This was the perfect time for students to learn about the local history and how Cohasset was involved in the Revolutionary War.

Invited Guests

• Cohasset Middle School - Spotlight on Learning – 8th Grade Civics Field Trip

(Mr. John Mills, Mrs. Ashley Hannon, Ms. Katie Holden with the Cohasset Historical Society, and Students)

In 2018, Governor Charlie Baker signed “An Act to Promote and Enhance Civic Engagement,” requiring public school districts to support students in developing the Civic skills, knowledge, and dispositions necessary to be informed that will shape students to become engaged citizens of the Commonwealth. Part of this was to have all 8th grade students do a Civics project in their Civics Study. This was based on the belief that when students are exposed to high quality Civic education, they are more likely to be informed voters and lifelong participants in political and civic life. In 2023, Mrs. Hannon collaborated with Ms. Katie Holden and members of the Cohasset Historical Society to create a learning opportunity for Cohasset Middle School Civics students. In the Summer of 2024, they finalized great planning and resource with the creation by the Cohasset Historical Society. On November 15, 2024, 8th grade students from Cohasset Middle School took a field trip that successfully combined talents and volunteers from the Cohasset Historical Society, First Parish Church, Boston Tea Party Museum, and the Central Cemetery Association. Prior to the field trip, students participated in a town meeting reenactment with each student assumed the role of real Cohasset resident from the 1770’s engaging in debates and casting votes on historical issues. This gives students a deeper appreciation for the democratic traditions that shaped this nation.

Claire Ross, an 8th grade student liked the role plays at the Boston Tea Party because it brought the Tea Party to Cohasset that connected them to this huge historical moment. Students had a nice tour of the Central Cemetery to see some of the old tombstones and it was cool to see the names of two people who are buried at this cemetery who lived in Cohasset and were involved in the Boston Tea Party.

Theo Johnson, an 8th grade student learned a lot of the experiences that felt like he was in the moment while role playing at the courthouse. Upon entering the courthouse students were given cards that described how folks lived during colonial times and what their role was in their community that showed they were either a farmer, a blacksmith, voter, or non-voter.

Lynne DeGiacomo from the Cohasset Historical Society says they were thrilled to do something like this for students, particularly the 8th graders at Cohasset Middle School. The Cohasset Historical Society is glad to hear students’ experiences, and a sense of how important Civics is. Not too many people in Cohasset back in the seventeenth century had horses, and had to walk in the freezing cold to the courthouse and Mrs. DeGiacomo is glad that some of those experiences came through to students. They hope to improve on this field trip for students next year, so they’ll have time to learn more about how people lived in Cohasset during the seventeenth century.

Katie Holden, Community Outreach Coordinator and one of the Board of Directors from the Central Cemetery Association are working on redoing a brochure that will intrigue Cohasset residents of where these people are buried from the seventeenth century. Ms. Holden was able to gather this information with the help of the Cohasset Historical Society.

A slide presentation of images and descriptions of the 8th grade Civics field trip on November 15, 2024 are shown by Principal Mills, Cohasset Middle School with Mrs. Hannon and her 8th grade students. Principal Mills would like to give special thanks on final credits to the presentation. Thanks to the Cohasset Historical Society, Lynne DeGiacomo, Curator; Katie Holden, Community Outreach Coordinator, as well to the First Parish Unitarian Universalist Church, Reverend Dan Harper and Congregation members who dressed and appeared as actors from Colonial History in Mrs. Hannon’s presentation.

Invited Guests

• Cohasset Middle School - Spotlight on Learning – 8th Grade Civics Field Trip

(Mr. John Mills, Mrs. Ashley Hannon, Ms. Katie Holden with the Cohasset Historical Society, and Students)

Dan Larry captured pictures as he does with the grace and beauty of the day with his photography, which is absolutely wonderful, who accompanied Mrs. Hannon and students for part of the day. Principal Mills appreciates Mr. Larry for sharing the pictures with the Cohasset Middle School. Thanks to the Boston Tea Party Museum docents who volunteered to dress up in character and join 8th grade students to make history come alive and the South Shore Vocational Technical School for their graphic designs and print help, this was really a cast of thousands to really make it a great day for 8th grade students at Cohasset Middle School.

Mrs. Hanna loves the fact the Cohasset Historical Society is bringing this history to life and allowing students to role play in debates.

Mr. Carr says the government hasn't changed much here in Cohasset, folks still get elected by everybody here in Town and still have Town meetings. They have a Town meeting on Monday on a non-voting section asking residents of Cohasset to make investments in the Cohasset Middle High School building to make it better for the future. Those things are so important and still important for the history here in Cohasset.

Mrs. Lesky appreciates the community connections that makes Cohasset a special place about the history, and how the special people that live here now are dedicated to the community and dedicated to the children and the innovation that occurs in teaching and learning where people all get together about their passions is really inspiring, thank you for all that and letting folks utilize all the wonderful resources about the people that lived here in the community.

Mr. MacLellan says the Town is very thankful for the folks that represent the Town of Cohasset Historical Society and to have one of the Board of Directors from the Central Cemetery Association here to share that experience with Cohasset Middle School students to provide and deliver that opportunity for them. Thank you very much.

Superintendent Updates

• Feasibility Study Update (Mrs. Sarah Shannon)

Mrs. Shannon would like to congratulate all of the Cohasset Middle School students and staff who participated in "High School Musical, Junior." Extend a thank you to Laura Reynolds, Ellie Collins and Kaitlin McCormick for the work they did with the students and grateful for the talents they bring to the show. Also, congratulations to Coach Willis and the Boys' Soccer team where the team did something no other Boys Soccer team in the history of Cohasset High School has done, winning the Division 4 State Championship. This team and Coach Willis have been very close many times to that achievement that just didn't quite make it. It was really wonderful to see them win this year, an exciting game!

A community forum was held last night to update families and faculty staff on the Cohasset Middle School and High School Feasibility Study. This meeting was in-person, a series of 3 meetings to update families on the site studies that have been done and, on the work, done to create an educational vision and identify goals and priorities that will drive the building design. A PowerPoint presentation from last night will be shared to the community and this will be posted on the school website as well. People will be able to see where they are and what progress has been made. In the next two meetings AI3 Architects is going to be sharing out conceptual designs. Mrs. Shannon says that might encourage people even though they know that the site studies are not that exciting but hopeful the conceptual designs will get more people in to see where they are and what is happening with the Feasibility Study.

Superintendent Updates

• Feasibility Study Update (Mrs. Sarah Shannon)

Those meetings with the first meeting being held on January 28th, 2025 and then on February 25th, 2025 they'll have another community forum where they'll be sharing some of the approximate costs that go along with the conceptual designs. A lot of information will be sent out to get people interested in coming and hope many families will be able to join in on those two meeting nights.

Schools are entering a fast and furious three weeks leading to the Winter break.

December 5th Cohasset Middle School Winter Concert.

December 11th Cohasset High School Winter Concert.

December 15th Deer Hill School 5th Grade Circus.

December 18th Final School Committee meeting for calendar year 2024.

December 19th Cohasset High School – Induction of new members into the National Honor's Society.

December 20th Full day of school that will lead them into the Winter break. Look forward to seeing all the students and families back on Thursday, January 2nd to kick off the New Year, 2025!

The Chair would like to mention that the MSBA will be convening to consider all the core applications this month and hopeful Cohasset will be notified in the next ten business days whether or not they were accepted into the Core Program this year. If so, that would be wonderful. They're already hitting the ground running with the Feasibility Study. If not, then that's okay, they'll simply reapply and keep trying! This time, they'll be outfitted with a complete Feasible Study should they need to reapply, that will help with their application.

Teaching and Learning

• Academic Initiatives

➤ Curriculum Benchmarks / Maps and Writing Focus (Mr. Rock Roberts)

The Curriculum Mapping started last year, and the Benchmark Assessments were worked on this year. The goal coming into this year is that they would have completed the Curriculum Mapping and by the end of this year they would be vertically and horizontally aligned and that every department would have created or implemented at least one benchmark assessment. This year, they've been updating those curriculum maps and revising them where they see gaps or any holes. The idea is making sure that their curriculum is aligned to the standards and the state's frameworks to have alignment that makes sense going from one grade into the other in each subject area. Once those maps were in place they could really create quality benchmark assessments.

Mr. Rock Roberts says they're working on creating a community facing curriculum map document and hope to get that out next year. This will give people a sense of what they teach in the course of the year in each course and what students should expect when they enter into a certain grade.

A curriculum map presentation slide is shown on Grade 6 English Language Arts with a unit summary and all the Massachusetts frameworks that are covered in that unit and a list of the skills and concepts that are covered. Essential/Guiding questions for that unit and what are the objectives, resources being used to teach ELA that would include short stories being read and any assessments that are done in that unit. Once they have those maps done, they'll move on really looking at benchmark assessments. They made sure the maps were connected to the standards and to identify power standards. The most important thing they need to teach to a certain grade and certain subject area are the skills in order to meet those standards. Looking at the data where they need to work on some of their weaknesses and address those initiatives and it's also a perfect opportunity to look at what's going on in the grade before and the grade after. Craft benchmark assessments with rubrics are to ensure students are on track. Adjust instructional decisions based on what assessments tell them.

Teaching and Learning

• Academic Initiatives

➤ Curriculum Benchmarks / Maps and Writing Focus (Mr. Rock Roberts)

Benchmark assessments are tools that measure student progress at specific points in the academic year in order to ensure that students are on the right trajectory to meet a goal. These assessments allow them to track the student on their journey toward meeting the standards that are assessed with summative assessment. Benchmark assessments move into where they are in terms of a larger summative purpose so that students are on track to do well or to meet the standards or the goals in the summative to give an overall view of how the assessment systems work. The purpose of benchmark assessments is to inform instruction and evaluate effectiveness of instruction so that students are understanding what they're supposed to understand based on what they've done. Measure student growth that will help to ensure alignment that the programs are tight and they're moving in the right direction. Benchmark assessments help identify learning gaps and if they see gaps, it allows them to change their instructional practices or inform their instructional decisions.

Departments will be working on maps and benchmarks during department meeting time. Mr. Roberts will be doing some work on these in January, 2025 on Professional Development Day. In March, 2025 a presentation of what the teachers are going to share from its feedback. By the end of the year, they'll be able to revise the first run, implement the pilot, and revise as they move into the following year. The goal is to publish community facing curriculum maps by Fall, 2025.

Mrs. Lesky would like Mr. Roberts to describe the system for when this is all implemented and the data is starting to be generated, what is the system then for evaluating the student data and making those changes in a timely way that is helpful to the students. Will that be a procedure documented for all grade level teams. How can they make sure the right people are looking at the data at the right time during the school year. Will this be something that's put on the calendar. This is such important work for the final piece making sure they're actually utilizing the data that is being generated.

Mr. Roberts says the benchmarks are in place, they're giving benchmarks and they're receiving the data from the benchmarks that should be fairly immediate, and it should be done on one level by the individual teacher. As their pulling a lot of different data points the benchmark assessments become another data point. They're building in regular times where they have data discussions.

Mr. MacLellan would like to add onto Mrs. Lesky point that this goes to the heart of what they're supposed to be doing here making sure their curriculum is as effective and as impactful as possible so they're delivering an optimal educational experience. It's important to monitor this as a school committee and obviously the administration, Superintendent Mrs. Shannon, Mr. Roberts and the whole central office and building teams to continue to monitor this. Looking at the timeline of what the benchmark assessments are within the various disciplines and grade levels where they've seen opportunities for growth might be helpful. This will help the school committee be aware of the work that has been done. The timing seems to be appropriate for this because of the recent vote with the MCAS. This is going to give them some additional data to help measure themselves internally because that data may not be meaningful now that won't be a requirement for graduation. Mr. MacLellan would like to keep this in front of the school committee to Mrs. Lesky's point where it drives to the heart of what they do. They just need to make sure they're completing this process as effectively as possible.

Mrs. Shannon says sometime in April, 2025 they'll give updates on their goals and the whole completion of what this will look like to share out some of the benchmark assessments from every grade and in every subject area. Seeing a sample of those is definitely something they can do.

Teaching and Learning

• Student Services Update (Mr. Michael Stapleton)

[Exhibit E-1]

➤ Data Sharing

November 2024				
Meeting Type	Elementary (JOS, DHS)	Secondary (CMS & CHS)	Out of District	Total Meetings
Annual Review	9	8	3	20
Re-Evaluation	3	1	0	4
	2 Eligible	1 Eligible		
	1 Not Eligible			
Initial Evaluation	4	0	0	4
	MTSS:	MTSS:		
Initial Evaluation -	Eligible			
	Not Eligible			
Referral Source/	Family: 4	Family:		
Eligibility	Eligible			
	Not Eligible 4			
Cohasset Resident	0	0		
Evaluation				
(Private School)				
Independent Evaluations	1			1
				Total: 29 Meetings

The IEP return process is a revolving process with meetings held: 8.1% IEP writing in progress; 67.7% Accepted IEP's; 22.6% IEP Responses Pending; 1.6% Rejected IEP's. The majority of IEP's have been signed and accepted by families. The Student Services Department has started to develop student success plans for students to highlight and document a student's profile whether best practice accommodations or students needing specialized instruction will now be available for teachers to view on ASPEN.

➤ Special Education Basic Rights Presentation

The Basic Rights in Special Education has been updated by Mr. Michael Stapleton, Director of Student Services, which can be found on the Student Services website. Families understanding of their rights regarding special education. Families and school personnel to collaborate and participate as knowledgeable partners. Contact information has been updated as well: Michael Stapleton-Director of Student Services-mstapleton@cohassetk12.org; Theresa Miller-Administrative Assistant for the Office of Student Services-tmiller@cohassetk12.org; Colleen Farrow-Elementary Team Chairperson-cfarrow@cohassetk12.org; Catherine Breen-Secondary Team Chairperson-cbreen@cohassetk12.org.

➤ SEPAC Parent Survey

Through the Apple partnership Student Services worked with SEPAC and the School Committee representation a google form survey to send out to families before the Winter/Holiday break in hope for more participation and to promote more engagement within SEPAC.

Teaching and Learning

• Student Services Update (Mr. Michael Stapleton)

[Exhibit E-1]

➤ SEPAC Parent Survey

Before the Thanksgiving break, Mr. Stapleton sent out correspondence to create a task force to really work on the proficiency gap that was raised from the 2023 accountability data to and received very positive feedback from the community with over twenty-five (25) volunteers of parents to be part of this. The first meeting will be held at the Deer Hill School Learning Common on Tuesday, December 10th at 3:30 PM. This will be a parent/ community forum to review some of the data on why this data was indicated through MCAS, breaking into small groups to really talk about parent's perspectives on this proficiency gap to take some input and close some of that and move things forward.

Alison Bryant and Sarah Davis who sit on the SEPAC Committee note that a lot of parents/families are very happy, their Apple team has been awesome, having open conversations and working together. Mr. MacLellan and Mr. Stapleton are also both on the SEPAC committee.

Mrs. Hanna says SEPAC has done a lot of work getting families involved, getting them to a place that doesn't feel like an island, and giving them the direction to where they need to go.

Mrs. Lesky would like to give a special thank you to Mr. Stapleton for letting her see the evolution of the IEP process. It was really helpful for her to understand and hopes it's working for the families.

Mr. MacLellan has received unsolicited positive feedback from some special education families here in the district. He feels relieved, like Mrs. Lesky, really appreciates how the IEP evolved in this arena. This is a very important area for this school district. Thank you to all of you for allowing him to see SEPAC grow in size and the engagement as well. There's more of a constructive tenor to the discourse that goes on. Both Alison Bryant and Sarah Davis should be commended for the direction they've taken that group. It's encouraging to hear positive feedback and have this same type of exchange, we'll keep moving forward, onward, and upward and not resting on laurels. Mr. MacLellan looks forward to the parent/community forum on December 10, 2024.

Budget, Resources and Governance

• Budget and Finance Update (Mrs. Susan Owen)

As of today, the budget line items which show shortfalls are as follows:

SPED Tuitions	\$263,140
Utilities	\$189,149
SPED Transportation	\$119,401
Custodial Supplies/Materials	\$ 25,688
Salaries	<u>\$192,819</u>
School Budget (general fund) – Current Shortfall Total	\$790,197

Mrs. Owen, Director of Finance and Operations, shows some of the steps taken to address their shortfall in which they froze the budget, a full freeze as of 11.01.24. Contacted Open Architect for them to provide a financial risk analysis report and this report will be completed after the holiday break. Resignation of a custodian at the Middle School/High School with that position not being filled, savings of (\$12k). Recent hiring of .50 Reading Specialist at the Osgood School, savings of (\$5k). Currently they have a bus driver who was loaned out to South Shore Vocational Tech, savings of (\$15k). Mrs. Owen and her team have been looking in every area, to save. Mrs. Owen says the two elementary schools asked for paper, they were out, and she can't deny them paper, there will be small things like that that will need to go through Mrs. Owen and Mrs. Shannon.

Budget, Resources and Governance

• Budget and Finance Update (Mrs. Susan Owen)

Mr. Carr says they have a sub-committee meeting on this matter, and he'll have some recommendations from that committee to report on at the next scheduled school committee meeting.

Mrs. Hanna seconds to what Mr. Carr just said, she's on the same committee, please circle back on that comment.

Mrs. Lesky says upon hearing that the Osgood School has run out of paper as of November 1st. It seems very short into the year and what is the long-term plan because she would imagine the Middle School and High School are using digital pieces. Is there a proactive plan versus a reactive plan.

Mrs. Shannon says there are a couple of things they can look at, like different systems on copy machines that track how much paper is used and that gives information when things may be running out. Getting a better sense of how much paper is used so in the years ahead they can budget appropriately to move forward.

The Chair would like to note and make it abundantly clear, so that everyone understands that document Mrs. Owen just showed with those shortfall numbers are all theoretically negative and is money needed and don't anticipate any more to add to that. It's just a little bit more than three quarters of a million dollars, it's a problem! We'll keep an eye on this and report on this at every school committee meeting.

Community Relations / Communication

• Reports from School Committee Subcommittees and Liaisons

Mrs. Lesky would like to announce that the CEF is hosting their "Gingerbread Fundraiser" on December 15th and tickets are available now! That will be held at the Lightkeeper's House. It's always a fun event and a great organization to support. They'll also be voting on what to support on the Fall grants on December 12th.

Mr. Carr would like to comment on the communication on a very important Town meeting and for folks watching from home they need parents to come and vote on important items here and help invest in their schools.

Mr. MacLellan expects some policy changes in early 2025 from the Policy Committee. The Superintendent's Evaluation is set for a January meeting for a check in that the school committee has prior to the year end, a summative evaluation of the performance of their Superintendent based on her ability to complete her goals.

School Committee Governance

• Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated in 48 hours by the Chair

There are no topics not reasonably anticipated in 48 hours by the Chair.

• Approval of Minutes**

All members from the Cohasset School Committee here at this meeting were all present at the October 2, 2024 school committee meeting and can vote.

Motion made by Mr. Carr to approve the October 2, 2024 Cohasset School Committee Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mrs. Lesky.

Aye – All

School Committee Governance

• Approval of Minutes**

Motion made by Mrs. Lesky to approve the October 16, 2024 Cohasset School Committee Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mrs. Hanna.

Mr. Carr was not present at the October 16, 2024 School Committee Meeting and must abstain from voting on this particular set of Minutes.

Aye – All

That motion is carried out by a vote of three members; Mr. Carr - Abstain.

All members from the Cohasset School Committee here at this meeting were all present at the November 6, 2024 school committee meeting and can vote.

Motion made by Mr. Carr to approve the November 6, 2024 Cohasset School Committee Regular Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mrs. Hanna.

Aye – All

A motion was made by Mrs. Lesky to approve the December 3, 2024 Cohasset School Committee Special Meeting Minutes, seconded by Mr. Carr.

Mrs. Hanna was not present at the December 3, 2024 Cohasset School Committee Special Meeting and must abstain from voting on this particular set of Minutes.

Aye – All

That motion is carried out by a vote of three members; Mrs. Hanna - Abstain.

Mrs. Hanna would like to note correction to transcriber of her last name being typed incorrectly, which is “Hanna,” not “Hannah.”

• Future Agenda Items

Mrs. Lesky would like to hear more about the new Student Success Plan and how that’s working once that program is more fully underway.

Mr. MacLellan would like to discuss communication fatigue, he feels they can do better in the ways that they communicate, like critical things to stakeholders. He would like to put this as an agenda item to start finding ways to efficiently and effectively communicate with stakeholders.

• Executive Session^{1**}

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

• Adjourn**

A motion was made by Mr. Carr to adjourn the regular meeting for Wednesday, December 4, 2024 Cohasset School Committee at 7:32 PM, seconded by Mrs. Hanna.

Aye - All

Materials used at the December 4, 2024 Cohasset School Committee Meeting

Spotlight on Learning-Cohasset Middle School 8th Grade Civics Field Trip Presentation..... (Mrs. Ashley Hannon)
Curriculum Mapping - Grade 6 English Language Arts..... (Mr. Rock Roberts)
Teaching and Learning- Special Education Basic Rights – (Mr. Michael Stapleton)..... (Exhibit E-1)
Budget, Resources and Governance - Budget and Finance Update..... (Mrs. Susan Owen)