



School Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHELSEA SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 27, 2025

APPROVED 4-9-25

The Chelsea School Committee held a meeting on March 27, 2025, in the City Council Chambers, City Hall, 500 Broadway, Chelsea.

Members Present: Mayra Balderas, Katherine Cabral, Claryangeliz Covas Caraballo, Lucia Henriquez, Ana Hernandez, Dr. Sarah Neville, and Shawn O'Regan.

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Almudena Abeyta, Chief of Staff & Equity Dr. Aaron Jennings, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Blake-Canty, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Martinello, Human Resources Director Christine Lee, Innovation, Access, & Opportunity Officer Malik Howshan, Chief Finance & Operations Officer Billie Jo Turner, Communications Manager Michael Sullivan, Student Representatives Diana Salinas Garcia & Rosalia Hernandez, and School Committee Clerk Veronica Dyer-Medina.

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call for Attendance:

Ms. Hernandez	Present
Mr. O'Regan	Present
Ms. Henriquez	Present
Ms. Cabral	Present
Mr. Gomez-Pereira	Absent
Ms. Balderas	Present
Dr. Neville	Present
Ms. Covas Caraballo	Present
Ms. Alfaro	Absent

Having 7 school committee members present and 2 members absent, the meeting proceeded.

School Committee minutes: Ms. Balderas motioned to accept the meeting minutes of the Regular Meeting on March 5, 2025 and the Public Hearing on March 13, 2025 and Ms. Henriquez seconded the motion.

Public Comment:

Cesia Flores-CHS student asked for funding to be prioritized for sex education to help promote healthy young adults.

Andrea Mendez-CHS student referenced a student panel where students voiced their concerns regarding security protocols and the principal promised to meet with students after the panel. She stated that students have not met with the principal and requested better communication and for their concerns not to be discarded.

Michael Sanabria-CHS student asked for funding to be put into security training instead of the cafeteria and bathroom project. He also mentioned teacher retention and teacher absences stating that having substitutes also extends as a safety issue.

Max Castellon-CHS student requested budgeting for violence prevention classes/programs and added that violence creates a toxic environment for students to learn.

Evelyn Febo Sanchez-CHS student asked for more supports for youth regarding gang violence in the City. She asked to prioritize security guards and funding for job readiness, and safe spaces for the youth in the community.

Presentations:

- **Women's History Month Awards:** Dr. Abeyta presented awards to female leaders in the district to honor their leadership. Awards were presented to:
 - Female principals: Blanca Restrepo, Katie Cook, Lisa Lineweaver, Margo DiBiasio, & Meg Maccini
 - Union Leadership: Kathryn Anderson & Vanesa Mendoza-Mercado
 - Leglators: Judith Garcia, Kelly Garcia, & all female School Committee members and student representatives
 - Cabinet & District leaders: Dr. Tamara Blake-Canty, Michelle Martinello, Christine Lee, Billie Jo Turner, & Kim Geraci
 - School Committee also surprised Dr. Abeyta with a recognition
- **Name, Strength, & Story Awards:** Dr. Abeyta awarded Morgan Grace-instructional coach at CHS and John Ruggiero teacher at the Wright Academy with Name-Strength-Story awards for the month of March.

At this time Dr. Neville made a motion to go out of order to discuss the budget before taking the vote. Ms. Henriquez seconded the motion.

Dr. Neville commented on the feedback received by the youth and wanted to share the budget process and timeline and mentioned that the committee would do better next year to make sure they promote the meetings to continue to offer the opportunity for the students voices to be heard. She then asked Dr. Abeyta about the

flexibility once the budget is approved and if the larger line items were flexible. Dr. Abeyta answered that yes the budget is built with flexibility in cases for example funds were needed to increase security and she explained how that would come out of the buildings & grounds budget, or if there were professional development requests such as training for security, that would fall under our PD expense lines. Dr. Neville added that there were still a lot of avenues to change at the school level.

Dr. Neville then asked if the cafeteria project funding history would be explained. Dr. Abeyta explained that the funding for the cafe project was set in motion 3 years ago when covid funds were granted. She explained that the funds had specific guidelines and restrictions and had to be put towards specific projects or they ran the risk of losing the funds. She added that the funds for this project were initiated by the former City Manager.

Dr. Neville and Dr. Abeyta mentioned that the youth should continue to advocate and Dr. Abeyta stated that each school has school site councils as a way for those to have a voice and that the district has held 5 community meetings on the budget. Ms Covas Caraballo echoed the opportunities the community has had and the district and schools utilized social media and parent square to send these communications out.

Item #: 25SC24: Consideration and action to accept and adopt the recommendation of the School Superintendent and approve the following line-item amounts from the General Fund for the 2025-2026 School Budget totaling **\$150,891,360**.

<i>2025-2026 Annual School Budget Summary</i>		
	<i>2024-2025 Updated</i>	<i>2025-2026 Proposed</i>
<i>General Fund Revenue</i>		
<i>Chapter 70 State Aid</i>	<i>\$106,988,879</i>	<i>\$113,466,540</i>
<i>Local Contribution-City of Chelsea</i>	<i><u>\$33,635,969</u></i>	<i><u>\$37,424,820</u></i>
<i>Total General Fund Revenue</i>	<i>\$140,624,848</i>	<i>\$150,891,360</i>
<i>General Fund Expenses</i>		

<i>District Administration</i>	\$3,772,217	\$3,626,784
<i>Instruction & Assessment</i>	\$3,016,128	\$3,228,998
<i>Equity & Wellness</i>	\$903,106	\$1,123,709
<i>Special Education & Pupil Personnel Services</i>	\$18,953,185	\$21,764,181
<i>Benefits, Payroll Adjustments, Insurance</i>	\$22,336,675	\$23,118,925
<i>Facilities Management & Transportation</i>	\$16,831,365	\$17,307,884
<i>Technology Services</i>	\$3,666,618	\$3,615,224
<i>The John Silber Early Learning Center</i>	\$9,094,014	\$9,868,366
<i>William A. Berkowitz Elementary School</i>	\$5,358,546	\$5,675,563
<i>Edgar F. Hooks Elementary School</i>	\$5,137,000	\$5,753,719
<i>George F. Kelly Elementary School</i>	\$5,303,055	\$5,756,602
<i>Frank M. Sokolowski Elementary School</i>	\$5,574,786	\$5,848,217
<i>Joseph A. Browne Middle School</i>	\$6,344,591	\$6,905,923
<i>Morris H. Seigal Clark Avenue Middle School</i>	\$7,429,209	\$8,117,824
<i>Eugene Wright Science & Technology Academy</i>	\$6,055,602	\$6,442,357
<i>Chelsea High School</i>	\$15,941,43	\$17,475,044

<i>Chelsea Opportunity Academy</i>	<i>\$1,260,182</i>	<i>\$1,369,774</i>
<i>Chelsea Virtual Learning Academy</i>	<i>\$936,083</i>	<i>\$1,107,024</i>
<i>Other Educational Programs</i>	<i>\$2,711,051</i>	<i>\$2,856,647</i>
<i>Total General Fund Expenses</i>	<i>\$140,624,848</i>	<i>\$150,891,360</i>

Chair Hernandez asked for a roll call vote.

Ms. Hernandez	Yes
Mr. O'Regan	Yes
Ms. Henriquez	Yes
Ms. Cabral	Yes
Mr. Gomez-Pereira	Absent
Ms. Balderas	Yes
Dr. Neville	Yes
Ms. Covas Caraballo	Yes
Ms. Alfaro	Absent

Having 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 members absent the motion passed.

Dr. Neville motioned to go back in order on the agenda and Ms. Covas Caraballo seconded the motion.

Report of the Superintendent of Schools:

Student Representative Updates: Student representatives Rosalia Hernandez and Diana Salinas Garcia shared updates from Chelsea High.

Here are some of the highlights they shared:

- Students Athletics for the spring were well on their way.
- CHS Spring Musical-Cinderella was taking place April 4-5 at CHS and funds would help support the Drama Club

- Yearbook staff were taking senior portraits
- Self Care event took place the week prior and was a big success
- Students participated in Bell of the Ball where they were able to receive donated prom dresses
- Academics: 3rd quarter ending and MCAS and AP exams were coming up

Committee Reports: Ms. Henriquez motioned to accept the committee report and Ms. Balderas seconded the motion.

Old Business: None

New Business:

Item #: 25SC23: Consideration and action to forgo School Choice for the 2025-2026 School Year.

Chair Hernandez asked for a roll call vote.

Ms. Hernandez	Yes
Mr. O'Regan	Yes
Ms. Henriquez	Yes
Ms. Cabral	Yes
Mr. Gomez-Pereira	Absent
Ms. Balderas	Yes
Dr. Neville	Yes
Ms. Covas Caraballo	Yes
Ms. Alfaro	Absent

Having 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 members absent the motion passed.

Item #: 25SC25: Chair Hernandez moves to accept the Chelsea Public Schools Calendar for School Year 2025-2026.

Chair Hernandez asked for a roll call vote.

Ms. Hernandez	Yes
Mr. O'Regan	Yes

Ms. Henriquez	Yes
Ms. Cabral	Yes
Mr. Gomez-Pereira	Absent
Ms. Balderas	Yes
Dr. Neville	Yes
Ms. Covas Caraballo	Yes
Ms. Alfaro	Absent

Having 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 members absent the motion passed.

Ms. Covas Caraballo requested the Operating Protocols be amended to remove the two bullet items that referenced the time allowed for meetings and for meeting presentations and made a motion to amend. Dr. Neville seconded the motion.

Chair Herndandez requested a roll call to accept the amendments Ms. Covas Caraballo introduced.

Ms. Hernandez	Yes
Mr. O'Regan	Yes
Ms. Henriquez	Yes
Ms. Cabral	Yes
Mr. Gomez-Pereira	Absent
Ms. Balderas	Yes
Dr. Neville	Yes
Ms. Covas Caraballo	Yes
Ms. Alfaro	Absent

Having 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 members absent the motion passed.

Item #: 25SC26: Consideration and action to accept and approve the Operating Protocols for the Chelsea School Committee with the amendments presented by Ms. Covas Caraballo.

Chair Hernandez asked for a roll call vote.

Ms. Hernandez	Yes
Mr. O'Regan	Yes
Ms. Henriquez	Yes
Ms. Cabral	Yes
Mr. Gomez-Pereira	Absent
Ms. Balderas	Yes
Dr. Neville	Yes
Ms. Covas Caraballo	Yes
Ms. Alfaro	Absent

Having 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 members absent the motion passed.

Item #: 25SC27: Consideration and action to accept the recommendation of the Superintendent to approve the following two Out-of-State field trips, and one In-State overnight field trip:

- April 9, 2025 to April 10, 2025 overnight trip to Blue Hills Reservation, MA for 10 COA students and 3 chaperones for Outdoors Experience Course.
- April 17, 2025 trip to Newport Mansions, Newport RI for 178 CHS students and 20 chaperones for Gilded Age historical research.
- June 9, 2025 out-of-state trip to Canobie Lake Park, Salem, NH for 153 Clark Ave. students and 15 chaperones for end of year school engagement experience for 8th graders.

Chair Hernandez asked for a roll call vote.

Ms. Hernandez	Yes
Mr. O'Regan	Yes
Ms. Henriquez	Yes
Ms. Cabral	Yes
Mr. Gomez-Pereira	Absent
Ms. Balderas	Yes

Dr. Neville	Yes
Ms. Covas Caraballo	Yes
Ms. Alfaro	Absent

Having 7 votes in the affirmative and 2 members absent the motion passed.

Communications: None

Announcements:

- Chair Hernandez thanked those for participating in the recent discussions that took place with students around student safety. She stated that the community and schools and the community organizations must work together for the student's future. She said that it is encouraging to hear what concerns them and hearing their voice.
- Ms. Balderas asked students not to be afraid to speak up and that safety is a priority.
- Vice-chair Henriquez shared that the meetings with students have opened her mind and she believes that more meetings should be held by the school principal and asked why the student's concerns about safety were not being addressed by the principal. She asked fellow members to take action and hold people accountable. She also thanked CHS parent Jen Hassel for speaking up and encouraging members to do more.
- Ms. Covas ended by saying that all stakeholders need to address youth violence.

Adjournment: At this time Ms. Balderas motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Cabral seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:38 pm.

Recorded by



Veronica Dyer-Medina
School Committee Clerk