

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

**MINUTES OF THE
REGULAR MEETING OF THE COHASSET SCHOOL COMMITTEE
December 17, 2025
6:00PM**

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

Attendance

Committee Members in Attendance	Jennifer Lesky, Chair Craig MacLellan, Vice Chair Lance Dial, Secretary Corey Evans, School Committee Member Jacob Squatrito, Interim School Committee Member
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Others in Attendance	Dr. Sarah Shannon, Superintendent Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations
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Call to Order

Chair Jennifer Lesky called the regular meeting of the Cohasset School Committee to order at 6:00 PM.

**Roll Call: Mr. Dial-Present; Mr. Evans-Present; Mr. MacLellan-Present; Mr. Squatrito-Present;
Ms. Lesky-Present.**

Opening Remarks

Chair Lesky welcomed attendees and noted that this was the final meeting of the calendar year.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Invited Guests

Dylan Jewell, Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Representative

Dylan Jewell, a Cohasset High School junior and SSAC representative, presented updates on student life and school activities. He described a productive but busy year for students, particularly upperclassmen balancing academics and extracurricular commitments.

Committee members thanked Dylan for providing student perspective and expressed appreciation for the SSAC initiative of connecting with principals across grade levels to provide a broader district view.

Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Update

Dr. Shannon congratulated the Cohasset football team on its recent championship and thanked students, coaches, and the community for their support. She also highlighted recent music performances and student engagement across the district.

Dr. Shannon reminded families that December 19 is the final day before Winter break, with school resuming January 5, 2026. She shared that, in alignment with the district's strategic plan focus on wellness, staff will be encouraged to fully disconnect over break. Dr. Shannon will remain available for urgent matters.

Director of Finance & Operations Search Update

Dr. Shannon reported that five candidates were interviewed for the Director of Finance & Operations position. Three finalists have been identified. A recommendation is expected at the January 7, 2026 meeting.

MSBA (Massachusetts School Building Authority) Update

Dr. Shannon announced that Cohasset's Statement of Interest for the Middle/High School was accepted into the MSBA eligibility phase. The 270-day eligibility period will run from April 1 through December 28, 2026.

During this phase, the district must complete compliance documentation, form a School Building Committee, complete enrollment projections, and seek local authorization to enter feasibility and schematic design phases.

Dr. Shannon emphasized that this is the beginning of a multi-year process and does not guarantee construction. The Committee expressed excitement and acknowledged the significant community engagement and work required ahead.

FY27 Budget Calendar Update (D-1)

Dr. Shannon presented proposed revisions to the FY27 Budget Calendar to align with Town scheduling and allow earlier joint discussions with the Select Board.

After discussion regarding timing of the public hearing and vote:

A motion was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. Dial to approve the amended FY27 Budget Calendar as discussed, excluding the March 25, 2026 meeting date and incorporating the updated Town Meeting date.

Roll Call Vote: Dial – Aye; Evans – Aye; Squatrito – Aye; MacLellan – Aye; Lesky – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Teaching and Learning

Graduation Requirements Policy IKF – Final Read (E-1)

Dr. Scollins presented the final read of the updated Graduation Requirements Policy reflecting removal of MCAS as a graduation requirement and memorializing existing district standards. Dr. Scollins noted that this represented the final read of the policy updates previously discussed by the Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. Evans and seconded by Mr. MacLellan to approve Graduation Requirements Policy IKF.

Roll Call Vote: Dial – Aye; Evans – Aye; Squatrito – Aye; MacLellan – Aye; Lesky – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Cohasset Competency Determination Policy IKFE – Final Read (E-2)

Dr. Scollins presented the final read of the Competency Determination Policy. Dr. Scollins noted this represented the final read of the policy update previously discussed by the Committee.

A motion was made by Mr. MacLellan and seconded by Mr. Evans to approve Cohasset Competency Determination Policy IKFE.

Roll Call Vote: Dial – Aye; Evans – Aye; Squatrito – Aye; MacLellan – Aye; Lesky – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

MCAS 2025 Spring Data Presentation (E-3)

Dr. Scollins presented Spring 2025 MCAS results for Cohasset Public Schools. She highlighted that Cohasset was one of only 13 districts statewide to meet or exceed 2019 pre-pandemic performance levels in both ELA and Math for grades 3–8. Eighty-three percent of students in grades 3–8 met or exceeded expectations in ELA. Cohasset High School was also ranked #4 in the state by Boston Magazine and #1 on the South Shore.

Dr. Scollins reviewed multi-year trend data, noting steady growth in several grade levels and subject areas. She emphasized that while overall proficiency rates are strong and outperform state averages, achievement gaps remain and require continued focus. She described efforts to strengthen math performance, including the implementation of the Bridges curriculum at the elementary level, aligned instructional practices across middle school, and ongoing professional development for teachers. The district's approach emphasizes conceptual understanding and inquiry-based instruction to promote deeper retention of mathematical skills.

Committee members praised the progress reflected in the data while underscoring the importance of continued attention to students not yet meeting expectations. Mr. Dial asked about subgroup performance trends and whether growth among historically lower-performing groups is continuing. Dr. Scollins noted that while gaps persist, there has been upward movement and that she would return with additional subgroup data in collaboration with the Director of Student Services to provide further context.

Mr. Evans noted the district's strong performance relative to statewide trends and asked about the persistent difference between ELA and Math performance. Dr. Scollins explained that math gains reflect recent instructional shifts and that continued alignment and professional development are expected to support further improvement.

Mr. MacLellan emphasized that while overall performance is strong, approximately 17% of students are not yet meeting expectations, and the district remains committed to supporting those learners through MTSS, IEPs, and targeted interventions. Members agreed that the data reflects both significant achievement and areas for continued growth.

Budget, Resources and Governance

Budget and Finance – Monthly Update (F-1)

Director of Finance & Operations Susan Owen presented the monthly financial update, including current expenditure trends, encumbrances, and projections for FY26.

Ms. Owen reported on early financial impacts of the newly added 77-passenger bus. Initial data suggests potential savings compared to prior transportation arrangements. Mr. Dial noted that the Committee has consistently emphasized investments that generate long-term operating efficiencies and requested that the district continue tracking realized savings so the Committee can evaluate whether the bus represents a net positive return over time. Ms. Owen indicated that a fuller picture will be available later in the fiscal year once more data is accumulated.

Discussion also focused on utility costs and encumbrances. Ms. Owen reported that year-to-date utility expenditures are trending higher than originally budgeted, with approximately \$991,000 expended to date. Mr. Evans sought clarification regarding projected overages and whether current estimates reflect additional encumbered amounts. The administration noted that projections continue to be monitored closely and that cost containment efforts are underway.

Under revolving accounts, Mr. Dial asked for clarification regarding the kindergarten account balance, which shows a significant figure. Ms. Owen explained that the balance reflects funds designated for kindergarten-related expenses, including future salary obligations, and that the account is expected to spend down over the remainder of the year. The projected year-end balance is anticipated to approach zero as planned expenditures are realized.

Mr. Evans asked whether athletic expenses continue to be paid from the general fund and referenced prior discussions regarding establishing or utilizing a revolving account for athletics beginning in FY27. The administration confirmed that current monitoring remains in place and adjustments are being evaluated for future budgeting cycles.

Ms. Owen described the implementation of a “soft freeze” on discretionary spending. Dr. Shannon clarified that departments are being asked to limit purchases to essential needs only. Necessary instructional materials or time-sensitive items will continue to be approved, but non-essential supply purchases are being deferred where possible.

Ms. Owen also reported cost-saving measures related to vendor changes for custodial supplies, noting that the district is receiving approximately a 40% discount under a new purchasing arrangement. Additionally, the new head custodian is working to consolidate inventory across buildings to reduce redundant ordering and improve oversight.

Committee members acknowledged the proactive management of expenditures and ongoing efforts to absorb cost pressures within the existing budget framework.

Community Relations / Communication

Reports from School Committee Subcommittees and Liaisons

Mr. Squatrito reported on a recent Wellness Committee meeting, including discussion of a potential system at the high school to build community and mentorship opportunities.

School Committee Governance

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair

Chair Lesky stated that there were no topics not reasonably anticipated by the Chair.

Approval of Minutes

October 1, 2025

Motion made by Mr. MacLellan, seconded by Mr. Evans to approve minutes from the October 1, 2025 meeting, with one immaterial correction.

Roll Call Vote: Dial – Aye; Evans – Aye; MacLellan – Aye; Squatrito – Abstain; Lesky – Aye. Motion passed.

November 5, 2025

Motion made by Mr. MacLellan, seconded by Mr. Evans to approve minutes from the November 5, 2025 meeting.

Roll Call Vote: Dial – Abstain; Evans – Aye; Squatrito – Aye; MacLellan – Aye; Lesky – Aye. Motion passed.

November 19, 2025

Motion made by Mr. MacLellan, seconded by Mr. Evans to approve minutes from the November 19, 2025 meeting

Roll Call Vote: Dial – Aye; Evans – Aye; Squatrito – Aye; MacLellan – Aye; Lesky – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session and Adjournment

Chair Lesky noted that there was a reason to enter Executive Session for reason #2 to conduct collective bargaining strategy regarding teachers.

A motion was made by Mr. MacLellan and seconded by Mr. Dial to adjourn Public Session and enter Executive Session for reason #2, to conduct collective bargaining strategy regarding teachers, with no return to Public Session and to adjourn from Executive Session.

Roll Call Vote: Dial – Aye; Evans – Aye; Squatrito – Aye; MacLellan – Aye; Lesky – Aye. Motion passed unanimously.

The meeting of the Cohasset School Committee was adjourned at 7:49 PM.

Documents/materials used by school committee members for the December 17, 2025 meeting.

- Superintendent Report – FY27 Budget Calendar Update
- Graduation Requirements Policy IKF – Final Read
- Cohasset Competency Determination Policy IKFE – Final Read

- MCAS 2025 Spring Data Presentation
- Budget and Finance – Monthly Update
- Draft Minutes – 10/1/2025
- Draft Minutes – 11/5/2025
- Draft Minutes – 11/19/2025

Respectfully submitted,

Lance C. Dial
3.4.26