



School Committee

MINUTES OF THE CHELSEA SCHOOL COMMITTEE MEETING

March 19, 2026

APPROVED 3-26-26

The Chelsea School Committee held a meeting on March 19, 2026 virtually.

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

Also Present: Superintendent Dr. Almudena G. Abeyta, Chief of Staff & Equity Dr. Aaron Jennings, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Tamara Blake-Canty, Assistant Superintendent Michelle Martinello, Chief Academic Officer Adam Deleidi, Innovation, Access, & Opportunity Officer Malik Howshan, Communications Director Michael Sullivan, Chief Finance & Operations Officer Billie Jo Turner, Human Resources Director Christine Lee, and School Committee Clerk Veronica Dyer-Medina.

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m.

Roll Call for Attendance:

Mr. Small	Left Early
Ms. Covas Caraballo	Present
Ms. Henriquez	Present
Mr. O'Regan	Present
Ms. Balderas	Present
Dr. Neville	Present
Ms. Cabral	Present
Ms. Hernandez	Present
Mr. Gomez-Pereira	Left Early

Having 9 school committee members present, the meeting proceeded.

Presentations: Dr. Abeyta opened the meeting by discussing additional \$2 million that the city announced that they will be adding to the school department budget. Dr. Abeyta will be connecting with the city to further discuss. The following [slideshow presentation](#) was presented.

Public Comment:

- Vilma Rojas Lopez: Stressed the importance of transparent communication for next year and involved parents and the community so that all can incorporate and advocate.
- Ana Vanegas Rivera: Spoke about barriers for parents and community to be involved, asked for more ways to meet people where they are. She asked that the absence of involvement from a parent not be taken as if they do not care. She asked for more accessible data and communications systems.
- Nadia DeVilleda: Spoke about transparent communication in the budget process and more accountability. She stated that not all schools saw enrollment declines and the formula does not work. She advocated to not pass the budget.
- Zach Ryan: Requested that the district request more funds from the city because we will need this again next year. He stated we could be in receivership, and lose more kids to charter schools. We stressed that the city needs to invest in education. He requested more transparency and organization charts, and more information on what's behind the data. He then made a comparison to administration size to Lynn schools; stating we need to do more with less.
- Kathryn Anderson: Expressed her gratitude for additional funds, but frustration that the biggest cuts were the 60 + teaching positions. She then shared a denial for data she requested for vendors like Imagine Learning, Blackprint, etc that she has not received. She requested the budget be further looked at.
- Vanesa Mendoza-Mercado: Discussed lack of transparency and asked about what changes outside of the additional funds were made. She asked to re-look at the cuts to make them proportional. She asked for SC to vote on a budget that reflects the voice of the community.
- Thomas Gordanier: Shared that the voices of students and community is not being heard.
- Caroline Ellenbird: Shared that she understands CPS is trying to do so much with so little, and asked that the district rethinks how we are running the schools, and knows it is difficult to cut at the district level. She added that school committee members are liaisons to the community and asks that moving forward they bridge communication to families.
- Meaghann Merejildo: Expressed her concerns that voices were not heard; especially students who shared their stories. She asked how other districts are handling these same issues.

At this time committee members addressed the following:

Ms. Covas Caraballo:

- Request for transparent salaries online that we had in the past.
- Request to have a budget book accessible online-noting that the website being under construction may be making it difficult to navigate.
- Request for survey data on how often information is going out to families.

- Suggested offering alternative meeting times and locations for more community and parent engagement.

Ms. Balderas:

- Request for transparent information in many languages and in different places and locations.
- Request to share student/teacher ratio information-knowing that not all classes are the same so families can see.

Dr. Neville:

- Request to have budget book online sooner for more transparency.
- Request for clearer information on the budget and how it is presented to show how things are broken up and justified. If information is made publicly on why cuts were made by schools and departments, then it may be better understood. Adding rationale-even with restored positions will help with transparency.

Ms. Cabral

- Thanked the city for their additional support and the district for the quick turnaround.

Ms. Henriquez:

- Stated we do the best we can, and we will do better with communication and transparency.
- Shared that she knows these are difficult decisions to make.

Chair Hernandez:

- Requested to have Dr. Abeyta present on what her cabinet team does for the district and what not having a cabinet team will mean to the district.

Dr. Abeyta shared how the process of cuts with members, and these next action steps:

- She shared how the budget is rolled out:
 - At each school a survey goes out to parents, school site councils are formed and meet to discuss each school's budget. Decision are made at their level, then are brought to the district level to further review and discuss.
- Her cabinet team will present at the next meeting
- She shared where to find the organizational chart that is on our website and said she would share with members
- She will prepare data on class sizes

Adjournment: At this time Ms. Covas Caraballo motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Balderas seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 8:29pm.

Recorded by



Veronica Dyer-Medina
School Committee Clerk

Recording of the meeting can be found [here](#), courtesy of the Chelsea Public Schools YouTube channel.