

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION FISCAL/SPECIAL BUSINESS
MEETING HELD AT HUMISTON ON JUNE 28, 2024 AT 7:30 AM**

Board Members Present: Samantha Rosenberg, Chair; Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair; Adam Grippo, Secretary; Anthony Perugini

Board Members Absent: Anne Marie Cullinan; Mark Ecke; Timothy White

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools

[A video recording of this meeting is available at www.youtube.com/cheshirepublicschools]

1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:58 A.M.

- A. Roll for Quorum. The roll was called, and a quorum determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.
Ms. Rosenberg led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

2. AUDIENCE

None.

3. REPORTS OF STANDING COMMITTEES

A. CURRICULUM

I. Report on Meeting Held June 10, 2024

Assistant Superintendent Silano reported in Ms. Cullinan's absence. At the meeting, the Committee heard a presentation from Cheshire High School teacher, Tim Galvin regarding a new AP World History textbook. The textbook has been on public display following the Curriculum meeting. Next, the Committee discussed the Connecticut Leader and Educator Evaluation Support Plan. Approximately 13 educators attended to talk about the two-year process of researching different models as they waited for the State's model to be available. Maureen Reed attended the meeting to review a change to the CHS Program of Studies for the 2024-25 School Year. The change moves the Principles of Law course from the Business department to the Social Studies department. Lastly, the Committee discussed a change in the grade 7 and 8 math levels. The math department teacher-leaders and administration have reviewed the math pathways at the middle and high school levels for several years. Based on data trends over time, the status of the curriculum, and the performance of the incoming 7th grade students, the math pathway is being adjusted so that all students entering 7th grade in the 2024-25 school year will minimally take Algebra I as 8th grade students in the 2025-26 school year.

II. Approval of Teacher Evaluation Plan

Ms. Silano explained that the plan was presented to the Curriculum Committee of the Whole at their June 10 meeting. The shift in the plan is that it is not about evaluation in the way of judging teachers and scoring them as developing or above standard, but rather it is about professional growth. The major changes are focusing the ownership onto the teacher. The idea is about continuous learning and continuous improvement that results in high expectations for all students, and trying to transform that process so that it is about a growth model. Ms. Silano shared a PowerPoint Presentation outlining the Plan. She said they are seeking Board approval today and will submit the plan to the State Department of Education by August 1. If there is any feedback from the State, it will be reviewed, and revisions will be submitted in September.

MOTION by Dr. Harrigan and seconded by Mr. Grippo.

MOVED *That the Cheshire Board of Education approves the Cheshire Educator Growth (Evaluation) Plan as presented.*

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

B. FINANCE

I. Approval of 2023/24 Year-End Budget Transfers

Mr. Masciana shared the Final Expenditure Report with Board members. He said he is pleased to report that we are successfully ending the 2023-24 fiscal year in balance. He reviewed some of the year's challenges including energy inflation, unpaid school lunch balances and Special Education Outplaced Tuition Costs. He reported they successfully managed expenditures to allow for sufficient funding to make our required year-end school equipment, technology and replacement furniture purchases.

He reported summer projects are off to a good start. Unfortunately, the RFPs coming back on the installation of two modulars at Highland School are concerning for a few reasons. The plan was to use the capital appropriation of \$450,000 plus operating and other funds to pay for the construction. This may trigger a referendum. The Town Manager is checking with the bond counsel. There is a Plan B if they cannot get the modular installed this summer. He will be scheduling a Planning Committee meeting to discuss.

Mr. Masciana reviewed the recommended budget transfers. He answered questions from Board members on final line-item balances. Mr. Masciana shared some of the summer projects that have begun.

MOTION by Mr. Grippo and seconded by Dr. Harrigan

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education approves line item transfers for the 2023/24 fiscal year end as follows, to end the year in balance:*

	TO	FROM
SALARIES	\$ -	\$ 358,903.06
EMPLOYEE BENEFITS	\$ 59,372.91	\$ -
INSTRUCTION	\$ 162,472.85	\$ -
SUPPORT SERVICES	\$ 127,453.65	\$ -
OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE	\$ 9,603.65	\$ -
TOTAL	\$ 358,903.06	\$ 358,903.06

VOTE: The Motion passed unanimously by those present.

II. Medical Benefits Update

Mr. Masciana reviewed that medical claims for the year through May were 9.4% higher than expected at an average \$1.2M per month, versus the \$1.1 million budgeted, but these were partially offset by higher than budgeted prescription rebates and lower than budgeted administrative costs. The claims trend over the last six months has unfortunately increased. He said while they do not have the June claims report yet, they expect the reserve will end the fiscal year at \$2.2 M, marginally higher than what we expected.

III. Discussion/Approval of School Breakfast and Lunch Price Increases

Mr. Masciana explained the State just recently released their Paid Lunch Equity Tool that revealed that an increase in school lunch prices is needed. Our currently weighted average of \$3.75 for lunch meals is below the \$3.85 target price set by the CSDE.

A summary of current and recommended prices are follows:

	Current	Recommended	Increase
8 oz Milk	\$.75	\$.0	NONE
Breakfast – Elementary (with 8 oz Milk)	\$2.00	\$2.25	\$.25
Breakfast – Middle School (with 8 oz Milk)	\$2.25	\$2.50	\$.25
Breakfast – High School (with 8 oz Milk)	\$2.50	\$2.75	\$.25
Elementary Lunch (with 8 oz Milk)	\$3.50	\$3.50	NONE

Middle School Lunch (with 8 oz Milk)	\$3.75	\$4.00	\$.25
High School Lunch (with 8 oz Milk)	\$4.00/\$5.00	\$4.25/\$5.25	\$.25/\$.25
Teacher/Staff Adult Lunch (with 8 oz Milk)	\$7.00	\$7.00	\$.00

Mr. Masciana said they recognize that any increase in meal prices are impactful to the families of our students. With that in mind, the recommendation enables us to meet the CDSE target price without having to increase elementary lunch prices, which would affect the highest number of families. The recommendation strikes a balance that will minimize the financial impact on our families while ensuring the viability of our school meal program into the future. He explained the School Lunch program in Cheshire is self-sustaining and the revenue from meal sales (including reimbursements received from the USDA) is intended to cover all operating costs from year to year. The recommended increase will also help to ensure that in the future we continue to maintain a reasonable balance in the “reserve” fund. The lunch program relies on the reserve fund to pay for operating and equipment expenses including minor and major repairs and replacements of dated and failing equipment. Note that the Food Service Reserve can only be used for costs related to the program and is permitted to hold up to a maximum of three months of operating expenses in the reserve which it can carry over from one fiscal year to the next.

After much discussion, it was the consensus of the Board to delay the increase in order to inform our families that an increase will be forthcoming. The Board would also like to see participation data as there will no longer be free breakfast for all students this year.

C. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES

None.

4. CORRESPONDENCE

There was no correspondence.

5. OLD BUSINESS

Dr. Solan reported on chronic absenteeism. He said last year, our districtwide rate was 10.54%. The team worked very hard and was able to bring the number down to 7.34% this year.

In addition, he reported that in support of our pre-engineering and environmental science programs, the Cheshire Education Foundation has unanimously agreed to purchase robots through a True Robotics program. The foundation has endorsed the \$54,000 purchase for us to make this program possible.

Mr. Grippo asked if there were any updates on the Right to Read legislation. Dr. Solan said there really is no update from the State. We have been reviewing our curriculum to try to identify any areas that may need improvement.

6. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Chairperson's Update**

None.

7. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Dr. Harrigan, and seconded by Mr. Perugini, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Samantha Rosenberg, Board Chair

Attest:

Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 7/12/2024.