

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION BUSINESS MEETING  
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON OCTOBER 17, 2024 AT 7:30 PM**

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Board Members Present: Samantha Rosenberg, Chair; Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair; Adam Grippo, Secretary; Anne Marie Cullinan; Mark Ecke; Timothy White

Board Members Absent: Anthony Perugini

Administrators Present: Jeffrey F. Solan, Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools; Vincent Masciana, Chief Operating Officer; Marlene Silano, Assistant Superintendent of Schools; Robin-Anne Carey, Director, Pupil Personnel Services

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**1. CALL TO ORDER – 7:30 P.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.

C. Student Representatives.

Malakhi Beyah and Lydia Ghaly, student representatives for the 2024/2025 school year, reported on recent events at Cheshire High School. Prior to their report, Dr. Solan introduced Malakhi Beyah, one of the two student reps who was not able to attend the previous month. He said Malakhi is the epitome of a hard-working, thoughtful, and deeply caring student. He exhibits high ethical standards and a profound work ethic. A dedicated student and leader, maintaining an impressive 4.86 grade point average, he is also a semifinalist for a National Merit Scholarship. Malakhi is often one of the first to arrive at school and among the last to leave. He is president of our Student Senate, the National Honor Society, and he is co-editor and chief of the CHS newspaper, *Rampage*. From annual fundraisers to committee participation to B1 day - you can be sure that Malakhi is, in some way, part of the planning and implementation of whatever is going on at CHS. Everything he does has a positive impact on our CHS community. His teachers comment that through his efforts, high school events become memorable experiences for his fellow classmates, and he is a role model in his classes.

The reps reported that Cheshire High School received the Michaels Cup Sportsmanship Award. They also reported on sports team standings and upcoming events such as homecoming, PSAT'S, French exchange students and the fall play, Midsummer Night's Dream.

**2. PRESENTATIONS**

**A. School Partnership Award – Highland School**

Anne Marie Cullinan, the Board of Education representative to Highland School, introduced the school's award recipients, Lauren Grenier and Beth Rock. Lauren and Beth have been the coaches for the Girls on the Run program at Highland Elementary School since 2022. Girls on the Run inspires participants of all abilities to recognize

their individual strengths while building a sense of connection in a team setting. Beth and Lauren worked closely with the GOTR organization to get certified and prepare for their first group of girls in 2022. Since they introduced GOTR to Highland, they have coached approximately 15-20 grade 3-6 girls each of the past three years. Lauren and Beth motivate the girls to do their best as they run 2 times per week for 10 weeks preparing for the annual 5K Mitten Run. In addition, Lauren and Beth inspired the girls to select and plan a Community Impact Project. Last year they conducted a bake sale for St. Jude's where they raised \$1,000. Lauren and Beth inspire the girls to always do their very best and recognize their individual strengths through lessons that blend physical activity with life skill development to enable participants to adapt to whatever comes their way.

Board members thanked Beth and Lauren for going above and beyond for the students at Highland School.

**B. Doolittle School - Best Buddies Outstanding Chapter**

Robin Anne Carey, Pupil Personnel Director, reported that Doolittle School has been named an Outstanding Chapter by Best Buddies International. The Doolittle program is led by **Kristina Veilleux** and **Brie Mangiaracina-Mathews**. This past summer, they were recognized at the annual leadership conference in Indiana. In a letter to Doolittle principal, Amy O'Brien, Best Buddies.org wrote, *"Each year, the Best Buddies International Board of Directors takes on the difficult task of selecting outstanding chapters to be recognized with this prestigious honor. Award winners were chosen based on quality of one-to-one friendships, group outings, chapter involvement, community awareness and chapter communication."* The Doolittle Elementary School Chapter went above and beyond in each of these areas, truly living the mission of Best Buddies. Board members thanked Kristina and Brie for their work making Doolittle a Best Buddies Outstanding Chapter.

Board members thanked and congratulated Kristina and Brie.

**3. AUDIENCE**

None.

**A. FINANCE**

**I. Finance Report**

Mr. Masciana reported that the budget this year is \$89,542,609. In the month of September, we completed the entry of the encumbrances for payroll and transportation. Mr. Masciana said he has no budget variance concerns to report at this time and they are still holding at the 50% of non-payroll expenditures through the end of December.

**II. Medical Benefits Update**

This month claims were \$1.21 million, slightly above the \$1.188 million expected each month. Claims are trending in the right direction. Because we received about \$150,000 in prescription rebates from Cigna, the reserve balance actually increased this month by \$126,288 bringing our reserve to \$1.947 million, about 1.64 months' worth of claims.

**B. PERSONNEL**

**I. Report on Meeting Held September 23, 2024**

Mr. Ecke reported that a meeting was held on September 23, 2024 in Executive Session to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation.

**C. POLICY**

**I. Report on Meeting Held October 7, 2024**

Mr. Ecke reported that the Committee reviewed a number of policies. Two policies will be brought forward for a first reading and another is being brought forward for a third reading.

**II. First Reading of Policies**

Mr. Ecke gave a first reading to Policies # 4000.1/4200.1/5145.44 Sexual Harassment/Title IX, and #5114 Suspension & Expulsion. Both of these policies will replace our current policies because the changes are extensive due to state legislation.

**III. Third Reading and Approval of Policies**

Mr. Ecke brought forward Policy # 3541 Transportation for a third reading and approval.

**MOTION** by Dr. Harrigan, seconded by Mr. Grippo.

***MOVED** that the Cheshire Board of Education give a third and final reading to Policy #3541 Transportation and direct the Superintendent to put said policy into immediate effect.*

**Discussion:**

Mr. White added the major changes include clarifying ages for eligibility for school transportation, updating walking distance so it is consistent, (one-mile) for all elementary students, deleting language regarding hazardous walking areas (not clear for parents-too broad), updating bus route notification (no longer mail out postcards), clarifying Available Use of Seat Petitions (a student cannot be assigned to both a bus and a daycare at the same time.)

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

**D. OTHER STANDING COMMITTEES**

None.

**4. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

**MOTION** by Mr. White, seconded by Mr. Grippo.

**MOVED** *that the Cheshire Board of Education approve the Minutes from meetings held on September 19, 2024, September 26, 2024, September 30, 2024, and October 10, 2024.*

Discussion

Board members asked for an update regarding the school naming committee and the temporary parking lot at Norton School. Dr. Solan said there have been no formal moves to set up a committee yet. Regarding the temporary parking lot, he will be meeting with Town Manager Kimball about possibly using St. Thomas Beckett Church.

**VOTE:** The Motion passed unanimously 6-0.

**5. CORRESPONDENCE**

There was no correspondence.

**6. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Solan reported the high school is now piloting what is called the Securely Digital Hall Pass System. Students sign-out, preferably through their Chromebook, and are assigned to the closest bathroom. The system knows if other students are already assigned to that bathroom and who they are. If we know the student is not supposed to be in the bathroom with another student who is assigned there, it delays their trip, or it notifies hall monitors.

Dr. Solan shared an email he received from Mr. Talbot, Town Council Chair, who was coordinating the Class of 1974 Reunion at Cheshire High School. He thanked the staff at CHS who made this a memorable event when their group of over 20 classmates were greeted at the entrance by Dr. Gadd and given a tour by Coach Lee and a group of CHS student leaders. Mr. Talbot said his classmates had a wonderful time seeing the changes, swapping stories and catching up. From there, we went down to the football field, where Athletic Director Perosino provided tickets and a coupon for food at the concession stand. The group was brought to the field for recognition before kickoff. Mr. Perosino arranged for their tri captains, Paul Bowman, Joe Hardy and Jim Lauber to be honorary captains for the game and participate in the coin toss.

We have established a relationship with Hanwha Aerospace, whose North American headquarters are in Cheshire. This past summer, we had about 20 students who have an interest in engineering and manufacturing tour Hanwha. Today our visiting teachers from

Republic of Korea, joined us and some expatriates from Hanwa who are from South Korea for lunch. We talked about possible middle school student collaboration to expose students to the opportunities that exist here in our community and hopefully enlighten them about those opportunities before they are selecting classes for high school.

On October 4, Mr. Masciana joined our Food Service Director, Erica Biagetti to give a presentation on our composting efforts. Chapman School engaged in a pilot composting program last year. All schools are required to have composting by July 2026. There is a cost to composting, but thankfully, the Town Council and Sustainability Committee have helped fund the project. This year we are also starting at Doolittle School. Discussion ensued regarding the costs of composting and the process itself.

The Superintendent recalled that last year, the CHS science team came to a Board meeting to report on the science projects they worked collaboratively with high schools in South Korea. They continue to meet regularly, virtually with their counterparts from the Republic of Korea, and it's been a great, cultural learning experience.

Dr. Solan reminded all about a community conversation around *The Anxious Generation* coming up on October 29 from 7:00 to 8:30 at Thorpe Auditorium at Cheshire High School.

Lastly, Dr. Solan said he is proud to announce to the Board Of Education that they are once again, CABA Board Recognition Award Recipients for this past school year. He congratulated all on the work that they have done as a Board of Education to earn that acknowledgement.

7. **OLD BUSINESS**

Mr. Grippo noted that at the September 5 meeting, he asked the Superintendent a question and there was some controversy because he answered it. It caused excitement in the community and he said he is happy the Superintendent did answer it.

Mr. White asked about the Energy Performance Contract. Mr. Masciana reported they have three firms who have responded. There is a meeting on October 23 with all the interested proposers.

8. **NEW BUSINESS**

A. **Chairperson's Update & Announcement of Upcoming Meetings**

Ms. Rosenberg congratulated Elementary Principal of the Year, Mr. Jeffrey who was recognized in Washington the past weekend. She also welcomed Emily Taylor who is the new Assistant COO. Chair Rosenberg read the list of upcoming meetings.

9. **ADJOURNMENT**

On a motion by Grippo, and seconded by Mr. Ecke, it was unanimously agreed to adjourn the meeting into Executive Session at 8:40 p.m. to discuss the Superintendent's evaluation and also the EAC contract, to include Dr. Solan and Mr. Masciana with no action to follow. Executive Session adjourned at approximately 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Samantha Rosenberg, Board Chair

Attest:

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Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

Filed at the Town Clerk's Office, Town Hall, Cheshire: 10/25/2024.