

**MINUTES OF CHESHIRE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SHOWCASE MEETING  
HELD IN TOWN COUNCIL CHAMBERS ON MARCH 20, 2025 AT 6:30 PM**

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Board Members Present: Samantha Rosenberg, Chair; Anne Harrigan, Vice Chair; Adam Grippo, Secretary; Anne Marie Cullinan (6:35); Mark Ecke; Anthony Perugini; Timothy White (6:50)

Board Members Absent: None

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; Kevin Hanlon, Interim Principal, Cheshire High School; Kristin Pelz, Assistant Principal, Cheshire High School; Maureen Reed, Ed.D., Assistant Principal, Cheshire High School; Daniel Tartarelli, Assistant Principal, Cheshire High School; John Perosino, Athletic Director, Cheshire High School; Kelly Grippo, Principal, Dodd Middle School; Ryan Murphy, Assistant Principal, Dodd Middle School; Diana Burns, Ed.D., Principal, Chapman Elementary School; Katharine Carlucci, Assistant Principal, Chapman & Norton Elementary Schools; Kimberly Dessert, Principal, Darcey School; Amy O'Brien, Principal, Doolittle School; Kristin Lopa, Assistant Principal, Doolittle School; Jodie Roden, Principal, Norton School; Scott Jeffrey, Principal, Highland Elementary School; Christina Sherwood, Supervisor of Elementary Special Education; Marie Broadway, Supervisor of Secondary Special Education

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**1. Call to Order – 6:30 p.m.**

- A. Roll Call for Quorum. A Quorum was determined.
- B. Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America  
Dr. Harrigan led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

**2. Public Comment**

None.

**3. Elementary School Showcase**

Dr. Harrigan welcomed all to the showcase. She turned the meeting over to Assistant Superintendent Silano who said she is excited to highlight our two science teacher coaches, Stephanie Kuncas and Stephan Lopez Smith. She noted that because of approval through the Board of Education budget last year, we were able to hire the two coaches. Tonight they will be talking about the program that they are running with fourth and fifth grade students across the district. With the Board's help and the help of the Cheshire Education Foundation, they started this year off with robots our students to use and then they delved into agriscience in the second semester. She turned the meeting over to the coaches.

Ms. Kuncas and Ms. Lopez-Smith explained in the fall they implemented a robotics program with all fourth and fifth grade students across the district. They implemented the agriscience program in February and it is continuing through April. It focuses on the importance of land in agriculture. The students had 24 lessons in total, 12 for robotics and 12 for agriscience. The coaches gave a presentation to the Board (on file). The fourth and fifth graders not only learned how to program but also had to build the robots that came in boxes with many nuts and bolts. After the robots were built, the students had to engage in the block coding process. This was very task orientated, requiring a lot of patience, a lot of trial and error, with a lot of “I don't know why it's not working” requiring the students to go back to the foundation. The teachers shared a few student video with the Board highlighting the programing and the robots successfully completing a path. In one video, the students had the engineering task to figure out how to program the ultrasonic sensor, which senses objects. The students completed that task successfully.

When the robotics experience was over, the curriculum switched to agriscience, focusing on how does agriculture impact the land. They discovered the meaning of agriculture and the everyday products that come from agriculture to support their daily lives. That is this beginning question. How does agriculture affect land? Then students begin to problematize every day, seeking answers to new questions. They are using different sources to discover farming practices and the effects they can have on the environment. They did an investigation where they used soil as a system to figure out nutrients, soil health, fertilizers. Then they went on to investigate practicing using critical thinking skills to make connections to bigger farming practice concepts, using inquiry and data collection and analysis, cause and effect, with reasoning and collaboration with peers to discuss their findings. This discussed what sustainable and unsustainable farming are allowing students to dig deeper into farming practices and take a stance on whether they would prefer to use sustainable or unsustainable farming practice in their local communities.

Board members thanked the teachers for their presentation. Mr. Grippo said he was pleased the Board supported this program in last year's budget.

#### **4. Adjournment**

With a Motion by Mr. White and seconded by Ms. Cullinan, the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

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Samantha Rosenberg, Board Chair

Attest:

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Carol K. Jesensky, Board of Education Clerk

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