

**Carlisle School Committee**  
Minutes  
Wednesday, May 19, 2021  
7:00 p.m.  
Carlisle School Cafeteria  
and Zoom Remote Access

Present– School Committee: Christine Lear - Chair, Amanda Comperchio, Jack Huntress, Eva Mostoufi, Sara Wilson

Present– School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent

Present – School Administration via Zoom: Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Dennet Sidell, Elementary Principal; Matt Mehler, Middle School Principal

Present – Students via Zoom: Nafeesa Hoda, Gretchen Hedlund

In order to adhere to social distancing guidelines, members of the public were allowed access to this meeting in the cafeteria at the Carlisle School. Per Governor Baker’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, members of the public who could not access this meeting in the cafeteria were able to access it via live stream at:

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://carlisle-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/87414899767?pwd=ZWJlZnFmN2VFN0lZcEh2aCszNldQdz09>

Meeting ID: 874 1489 9767

Passcode: 286914

Public comments were posted via the chat box. Questions/Comments were read and answered by the School Committee via live stream.

### **I. Call to Order**

Ms. Lear called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

### **II. Review/Approve Minutes**

- A. Meeting of April 28, 2021. Ms. Wilson made a motion approve the minutes of April 28, 2021; Ms. Comperchio seconded the motion. There was no discussion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye.

### **III. Information/Discussion Items**

- A. Student/Faculty Presentation. Nafeesa Hoda reported from a student perspective on the changed regulations about optional outside mask wearing. She said that some students are still wearing masks and others are not. 8<sup>th</sup> grade students are slowly removing masks outside and there is no peer pressure to do so. The Drama Club will perform Our Town on May 21 and 22 via Zoom. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade has a planned trip to Kimball’s in Westford on June 14. She noted that the Carlisle School has provided 8<sup>th</sup> graders with a lot of information about transitioning to High School; there is a trip to CCHS on June 9. Gretchen Hedlund spoke next about MCAS. She said it is stressful time for students, but teachers have prepared us, so

students are less nervous. Students report that MCAS is not as bad as it's been in past years. It was noted there is only one test in ELA and Math for grades 3-8, and one test in and Science for grades 5 and 8. Dr. Mehler presented next on the Middle School Schedule. He started by thanking the faculty for being so flexible. This past year, several schedules were created and implemented including a hybrid schedule, a full in person schedule and a remote schedule. He acknowledge the hard work done by everyone in the middle school as they worked with these schedules. Dr. Mehler presented what is expected, at this point, for the 2021-2022 school year. He noted that there are 105 days from today until Sept 1, and a lot of things can change between now and then due to variables outside of our control. The goal is to create a schedule that is academic and meets social emotional needs of students. Next year there will be more movement for students. There will be a focus on providing opportunities for students to connect. Updates included that there will be a shift away from learning pods, and more customization for students, including math levels. An FCR option will not be offered. There will be expanded after-school offerings for students. Flex blocks that started in 2019 will be implemented again. Next year students will move from classroom to classroom and teachers will remain in their classrooms. We may the keep directional arrows in the hallways. Currently we have individual desks where kids keep materials, and this set up makes it difficult for students to collaborate. All tables, including science lab tables, where kids collaborate, are gone, but we will explore putting those back into classrooms. The cafeteria is a big unknown. We want our students in the cafeteria, but what will the safety protocols be? Will people wear masks? Hopefully frequent hand washing and using hand sanitizer will continue. Bus transportation is another unknown; we do not yet know if there will be distancing and seating assignments. If there are a large number of kids getting picked up and dropped off, we will look at spacing the pick-up and drop off areas. We will offer a dyad model in grade 5. We are developing a full day and a half day schedule. We will provide time for social emotional activities such as bullying prevention/Olweus, assemblies, and team building. We are also building in collaboration time for teachers and after school departmental times. Robust core academics will continue. There will be Independent and Guided Math sessions. There will be one PE, Art, and Health class for each student in middle school. Band and choir may be offered once a week too. World Language will be offered three times a week. Flex blocks and WIN blocks (What I Need) will be in the schedule. Groupings for Flex blocks will be created based on data from Aleks and Star Renaissance. If students need extra supports they will be in an enrichment class in either LA or Math or both. We are currently working with teachers to develop this programming. We want to create a block schedule where we shrink the blocks for the half days, so there is equity. Long range planning aspirations include: the Natures Classroom trip in October, exploring an outdoor trip for 7<sup>th</sup> grade next year, offering the 7<sup>th</sup> grade play in February or March, and the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip to Washington, D.C. The spaghetti supper is a question mark; it may be held in the fall or in the spring. Ms. Lear said the plan looks amazing. Mr. Huntress asked if there were key learning points, other than the issues with leveling math, from this year. Dr. Mehler answered that he will take time this summer to evaluate how the past year went. He has talked with teachers about math, and received the feedback that when there is a classroom of students with various abilities, it is hard to differentiate. Ms. Wilson asked how time in Flex Blocks was structured; are students that need interventions placed in classrooms with students with similar needs? Dr. Mehler answered that Flex Blocks are not study halls. Every student in grades 5-8 is assessed in reading and math three times a year. Other factors

considered are MCAS data, grades, and teacher experience with the student. Students with needs are identified in each grade level through this data. For a student with ELA needs, the English teacher would work with students during a Flex block to reteach or preview items. A challenge is how to service a student who needs an intervention in both ELA and math. Ms. Wilson asked how many students are in a flex block. Dr. Mehler answered that in the past class sizes ranged from 5-11. Flex blocks will be offered two times a week. Flex block allows students to take enrichments or take interventions and the use of flexible blocks is common in other middle schools. Ms. Wilson asked if a student is assigned to a Flex intervention, can they then not participate in other offerings, and can parents opt out of a flex block? Dr. Mehler said he would prioritize students that need support, then have a conversation with the family about adding support to help the child improve literacy or math skills. If a family feels strongly about not having an intervention block, Dr. Mehler will have a discussion with the family. Mr. O'Shea added that it is a challenge to provide supports for students and find the time for these supports. In this model, some students can receive supports while others receive enrichment activities. Ms. Mostoufi added that we used to offer Tier II math supports before school. Dr. Sidell added that there have been times we have had both literacy and math supports offered before school. Dr. Mehler said we haven't offered supports before school in middle school. Ms. Mostoufi asked if students are showing weaknesses in assessments, are they offered other assessments to gather more data? Dr. Mehler said that Star Renaissance is tied to the common core standards. Mr. O'Shea, Dr. Mehler, Dr. Sidell and Ms. Bruce meet to discuss and analyze the student assessment data. Ms. Bruce added that she and the principals review the data, have conversations with teachers to gather more information, and they look at MCAS data too. There are similarities between how kids performed on the different assessments, and we judge if additional assessments are needed. She noted that administrators also compare data on each student to make sure students are improving over the year. Dr. Mehler said this system built confidence with our English teachers because the data supported that certain students were struggling. Such information is used to plan and guide interventions. Ms. Bruce and Dr. Mehler confirmed that once a student is identified as struggling, more assessments are used to gather more information

B. State and Local COVID Dashboard. Mr. O'Shea reviewed the COVID related metrics that were available. There are currently no active cases in the Carlisle School. The 14 day test positivity rate in Carlisle and the State are both low. Pooled testing continues at School with all negative results this week. All teachers and staff that want to be vaccinated are vaccinated. The State and CDC guidance changed this week. Small groups of fully vaccinated people can gather inside with no masks. No masks are needed outside or in sports. No masks are required indoors for fully vaccinated people but this excludes schools. A broader discussion has to occur about fully vaccinated people. LEPC is only meeting when necessary. We are moving toward normalcy. The COVID policies were discussed because Mr. O'Shea wanted to make sure our policies were in compliance with the changed guidelines. He reviewed the policies and noted that in the Pandemic Specific Policy, it states "the superintendent may suspend or amend current policy..." Mr. Huntress said thought would have to be given to mask wearing requirements in a post-pandemic environment. This will be discussed at the next CSC meeting. Mr. O'Shea recognized School Nurse Lauren Sawyer who advocated that kids wear a mask in the fall if they come into the nurse's office.

She added that similarly, if someone came in into urgent care and had symptoms, they would put on a mask while they waited to see a doctor.

C. School/Superintendent Update. Mr. O’Shea shared that planning for the 2021-2022 school year continues. It is hoped the School returns to pre-COVID times, including having students participating in core classes, world language, electives, Tier II supports, and homework club. We are awaiting guidance around what lunch will look like, and if distancing has to be put in place. Graduation is on June 16 with a traditional graduation ceremony. Faculty and staff evaluations are occurring. We are honoring our School retirees: Bill Gale, Sue Ross, Sue Foley and Nancy Anderson. Christine Lear is also retiring from the CSC. There is a professional day on May 28. An engineer has submitted plans for a water softener to address the manganese and uranium issues to the DEP. ESSER funds may be used for water systems, and if so, this could mean savings for the Town. Our business manager is leaving; we have convened a search committee and have an interview tomorrow. A new Assistant to the Superintendent, Mary O’Regan, has been hired and will start on July 1. Ms. O’Regan has been the Assistant to the Director at EDCO.

D. Progress Report on Superintendent Goals. Mr. O’Shea reviewed progress on his goals. District Planning Goal 1 involved the school reopening plan. CPS successfully implemented a slow opening in the fall of 2020. The School came up with 3 plans: in person, hybrid and remote. The remote program is still operating and is very robust. It works well in that Middle School core teachers each teach a remote section daily. Elementary remote teachers were hired to teach remote students in elementary school, and paraprofessional support is also offered to remote elementary students. District Planning Goal 2 involved unpacking the new mission, vision, and portrait of a graduate. Mr. O’Shea shared that he has worked with the administrative team to identify strategic objectives and initiatives, and will finalize these plans over the summer. The new vision and mission is also a focus for summer faculty work. Mr. O’Shea had two Student Development goals. Student Development goal one involved being responsive to the current environment and giving children the best experience possible. Progress included: collaborating with administration, faculty, staff, families and town leaders to assess changing conditions and responding appropriately, providing weekly updates on the COVID dashboard and developing an infrastructure to ensure rapid response regarding all COVID related incidents in the District. Student Development goal 2 was to collaborate to identify 4 or 5 curricular modifications that either raise student awareness of the impact of systemic racism or enhance anti-racist and bias free education. Action steps included establishing a Social Justice Committee, and support and encouragement of curricular work on the topic. The Social Justice committee met throughout the year, there was a Carlisle College course offered called Diverse Books Matter, and there have been different lessons in the grade levels. We are identifying areas of bias in our current curriculum and have made strides in this area. Mr. O’Shea’s Professional Practice Goal has three goals. The first was to engage the staff in learning opportunities focused on the topic of inherent racism and bias with the emphasis on education and school culture, and the development of the Social Justice Committee. As mentioned earlier, the SJC has met and read a couple of books “White Fragility” and “How to Be an Anti-Racist”. There is also a monthly Social Justice newsletter sent to staff. There is a professional development program on diversity, equity, inclusion and anti-bias on May 28 for all staff. There has also been community outreach in this area. The second Professional Practice goal was to collaborate and communicate on a weekly basis with constituent groups to share and evaluate COVID related data and challenges to support a

responsive approach to managing the pandemic in School and in the community. Mr. O'Shea met regularly with the LEPC, and there has been frequent communication with the School nurses, the Public Health nurse, the Select Board and the Carlisle Neighbor Response Team. CSC meetings were held weekly at the beginning of the pandemic to facilitate information sharing and decision making. Communications with faculty and staff was frequent. The third Professional Practice goal was to work closely with new Business Manager Anne Mahan to ensure her smooth transition into the role and to ensure the development of the FY22 budget. Mr. O'Shea noted Ms. Mahan did a great job managing the level funding budget, allocating funds from the federal government, and developing the FY22 School budget. He thanked her for her hard work. Mr. O'Shea noted that additional grant funds that are received will be used to offset the budget. He noted also that the role of human resources during this time has been tremendous. He ended by saying that our success has been due to hard work and shared commitment and collaboration. Ms. Lear said it is amazing that the School made progress in the area of anti-bias awareness while dealing with a pandemic. Ms. Mostoufi added that under Mr. O'Shea's leadership, many important things were accomplished.

E. Pandemic Policy Review. Mr. O'Shea said that four pandemic policies were approved at the start of the 2020-2021 school year. One of the policies gives the Superintendent the right to oversee and edit all policies. Mr. O'Shea wants to make sure we are in compliance with policies. He noted that after the state of emergency is dropped, we will reexamine if we still need these pandemic policies.

#### **IV. Members'/Committee Reports as Needed**

CCRS: Ms. Wilson said that Andrew Nyamekye, the first director of Diversity, Equity, Inclusion at CCHS, attended the CCRSD meeting last week and introduced his vision. He will be hosting a forum next Wednesday night at 7 PM. If people want to see Mr. Nyamekye's presentation, the link is on the last CCRSD agenda. Tomorrow night from 6:00-7:30 is a forum with the candidates for the METCO director position. The Concord calendar voted to adopt Indigenous People's Day. The Region is working on evaluations. There have been conversations on how to fill out the Superintendent evaluation form in the most useful way. Ms. Mostoufi added that exchange students from Japan and Germany have been approved. The School trip conversation is on hold. There is a conversation on technology use; department chairs will meet to discuss which software subscriptions the school will keep.

Special Ed Subcommittee: Ms. Comperchio reported that the Committee met last Tuesday, discussed school services and explored the DESE dyslexia guidelines. Ms. Mostoufi said it is beneficial to meet in the subcommittee and appreciates that Ms. Bruce is very patient as she shares information. She feels it is helpful to understand what programs are in place. There will be a summary of this information at the next CSC meeting.

Town Communication: Mr. Huntress said meetings have taken place in the last 8 weeks. He will summarize what was done and will present at the next meeting. Mr. O'Shea said that people on the LEPC appreciated getting together for regular conversations in this environment. Ms. Lear added that there is great communication through such collaborative meetings.

#### **V. Communications/Correspondence**

Communications were shared.

## VI. Warrants

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant #7421; \$163,252.94
- B. Accounts Payable Warrant #7121; \$51,414.97
- C. Payroll Warrant #7721; \$398,028.00
- D. Payroll Warrant #6921; \$373,102.63

## VII. Action Items

- A. Vote Revised Homeschool Policy.  
Ms. Mostoufi made a motion to approve the revised Homeschool Policy; Ms. Comperchio seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.
- B. Vote FY22 School Fees.  
Mr. Huntress noted that the FY22 school fees information has been communicated to parents. He said the fees will increase in the 2022-2023 school year and parents will be able to plan accordingly. Mr. O'Shea added that the fees will increase over the next 3 years; it is fiscally responsible to make these adjustments. Mr. Huntress made a motion to accept the FY22 School Fees; Ms. Wilson seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.
- C. Pandemic Policies. There was no need for a vote on these policies per Mr. O'Shea.

## VIII. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

## IX. Adjourn Meeting to Executive Session pursuant to MGL Chapter 30A, Section 21(a) with no intent to return to open session for the following purpose:

**Purpose 7**, To comply with, or act under the authority of, any general or special law or federal grant-in-aid requirements. Massachusetts General Laws Ch. 30, Section 21A, consideration of release of executive session minutes from previous meetings.

Ms. Wilson made a motion to adjourn the meeting for the purpose listed above; Mr. Huntress seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion. The public meeting was adjourned at 9:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson  
Assistant to the Superintendent

### List of Documents Viewed or Reviewed:

Draft Minutes of April 28, 2021  
Middle School Schedule Presentation  
Progress Report on Superintendent Goals  
Pandemic Policies  
Warrants  
Accounts Payable Warrant #7421; \$163,252.94

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Accounts Payable Warrant #7121; \$51,414.97  
Payroll Warrant #7721; \$398,028.00  
Payroll Warrant #6921; \$373,102.63  
Revised Homeschool Policy  
Recommended FY22 School Fees