



Cohasset Public Schools
143 Pond Street
Cohasset, MA 02025
Continuing the Commitment to Excellence
Cohasset School Committee Meeting

School Committee Minutes

Wednesday, 7/14/2021

Zoom Video Call

Virtual Meeting – 143TV/Zoom/Facebook

In Attendance: Craig MacLellan, Chairman
Ashley Colleary
Lydia St. Onge
Lance Dial
Paul Kearney

Also in Attendance: Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent
Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent
Susan Owen, Director of Finance & Operations

Call to Order and Roll Call - Chairman MacLellan called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He stated the meeting is being held remotely in accordance with the extension of some of Governor Baker's Covid-19 emergency procedures. It is our intention to return to an in-person format in the relatively near future, but we will be trying to do that in a hybrid format to allow for virtual participation. All votes will be taken by roll call vote. This meeting is being live streamed on Cohasset 143TV and Facebook. **Roll Call: Ashley Colleary-Present, Lance Dial-Present, Paul Kearney-Present, Lydia St. Onge-Present, Craig MacLellan-Present.**

Public Comment- None

Superintendent's Report- Strategic Plan Content Overview - Dr. Patrick Sullivan welcomed members to a mid-Summer meeting. Schools started the ESY (Extended School Year) program and the Summer Learning Program that are both going very well. It is exciting to see students learning and working. He welcomed Kathy Bock, the new school committee transcriber. The school is gearing up for a leadership retreat. It is split this year. Leadership will meet on July 20, 2021 and then on August 19, 2021, closer to the start of school. Dr. Scollins and Dr. Sullivan attended the MASS (Massachusetts Association for School Superintendents) Conference at Falmouth High School over the last couple of days. They will attend one more day on July 15. The conference has been great with some exceptional speakers. There is a lot to digest after a tough year and there is a lot to look forward to.

Dr. Patrick Sullivan has one agenda item this evening and it is something he's very excited about. Dr. Sullivan and his team have been working within this pandemic and this tough situation to create the new Strategic Plan which will be a 3-year Strategic Plan, as opposed to a traditional 5-year plan. A comprehensive process was carried out in order to involve all stakeholders. Surveys were sent to families and to staff. Focus groups of families, of our staff, and of students were hosted. An internal and external scan of all of the data was done. An amazing steering team that included leaders, students, and community members worked throughout the year to try to digest everything and to put it into an ordered format that will help guide us for the next three (3) years. All along, the steering team worked with Teaching Learning Alliance, TLA, a nonprofit consulting group. TLA met with the School Committee during this process as well. The product is one about which Dr. Patrick Sullivan feels really proud. A dashboard summary of the Strategic Plan was shared that outlines the mission, vision, core values and strategic objectives of the Plan.



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Dr. Sullivan is exceptionally proud of Our Mission: *Cohasset Public Schools places students first. We provide an optimal teaching and learning environment by cultivating empathy, global citizenship, agency, inclusivity, and community engagement to empower students to realize continuous personal growth and achievement.*

The mission is what we do; it's how we operate. If you think about any organization, a vision is usually something that's catchy and that is short, and it captures the spirit of what you want your organization to do in terms of a vision. The vision here is to *empower students to improve communities*. That word empower, for our team, had a lot to do with empowering reflection, empowering self-discovery, empowering students to understand their weaknesses and their strengths, to understand their place in the community and that idea of improving communities with a generation that is really primed for change and to make things better in our world.

The plan includes five core values: placing students first; continuous personal growth and achievement; creating an optimum teaching & learning environment; strong school – community engagement; utilization of resources to support the teaching, learning & leading.

Superintendent, Patrick Sullivan stated that this broke down into four (4) strategic objectives, our four (4) of our compass points, and under each of these compass points, are strategic initiatives and there are several strategic initiatives under every compass point which will be presented on July 20, 2021. Each initiative has a timeline which shows how over the years 2021-2024 the initiatives has been broken down for completion. Each initiative has an initiative leader, one person who's going to drive that with all stakeholders in our school community. This is exciting and a vibrant plan. It also looks wonderful and the plan captures the way we want our schools to feel which is great. It is going to allow the schools to really build capacity to bring our school district to the next level.

Superintendent, Dr. Patrick Sullivan would like to thank Assistant Superintendent, Leslie Scollins. Dr. Scollins noted how excited she is about the Plan. This will guide us in a really strategic and powerful way. Dr. Sullivan stated that this dashboard isn't a document that gets put in a book and pushed away. This is something we're going to be unpacking throughout this year with our staff, with our community, at the individual schools. It's something that we're going to constantly revisit to see how we're doing and to see how we're progressing with those strategic initiatives and to look and see if we need to add things as we go. It's very much a dynamic document that sets the tone for the entire district.

Ashley Colleary thanked everyone for all their hard work on this. She loves that the first sentence of the mission places students first. She shared her thoughts about when she came to Cohasset, there was a lot going on in the schools. She remembers, and this is not to imply that this was the intention of anyone there, being struck by the feeling that the appearance of the experience was more important than the actual experience and this troubled her. It feels like this dashboard says exactly the opposite over and over and she is grateful that the group put together such a student-centered plan to move forward and would also say that this is a lovely presentation. She looks forward to hearing a lot more detail on July 20, 2021 meeting.

Lance Dial commented that this is a representation of a lot of work on the part of everyone involved and would like to thank all for doing this. Having a mission and vision that's articulated really grounds a complex organization like our schools and so this gives people a path forward when they're looking at complicated decision making. Placing students first as the first sentence of our mission is core. That is what we should do. From a marketing perspective, those are our consumers. They're also our growth. He loves



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that we are putting that front and center. The other thing that Mr. Dial stated was how very much he appreciates that it is broken down into the objectives and that the first objective is teaching and learning. It seems obvious that a school's first objective should be teaching and learning but to have it in the strategic plan is phenomenal. It grounds what we're doing and where we're going. Mr. Dial is eager to learn more about where we're going with the plan and very much appreciates the work that has gone into this and thinks the group has done a fantastic job!

Paul Kearney loves it, a great presentation. He loves the vision, especially the vision to empower students to improve the communities. Well done! Just like his colleagues, he is very appreciative and grateful to the group.

Lydia St. Onge agrees with all of the positive comments. She also liked hearing that each strategic initiative is going to have a leader who will steer it. This is such an important piece to make sure that all of the thought and care and time that went into this plan gets carried out in the district. Mrs. St. Onge looks forward to not only the presentation, but just to see how it comes to life and into practice here. Next week at the July 20th meeting it will be excellent to hear the full plan. Thanks to the group and to everyone who worked on this. It's a group effort!

Chairman MacLellan stated, just to reiterate, this is just the dashboard that Dr. Sullivan presented today. There's a lot more to this. The full Plan will be presented at the July 20th special meeting, which is why we're having a special meeting for this. This will be the sole agenda item. This is the direction that leadership in the School Committee wants to take the schools in the next few years, and so this is the future of the school district. It really will dictate the direction the district goes and it's so important that everyone is aware of this, understands it, and is working in their own way towards this common goal and that people continue to participate in this process as we implement the strategic initiatives within the strategic plan.

Chairman MacLellan loves being part of this process as we emerge from the fog of COVID, and as some people are wavering in their views of public education right now. This is not something that Dr. Sullivan or Dr. Scollins had to do or something that one always has to do as an administrator. This is something they elected to do. They decided to engage this vendor, to go through the process and it was so critical that we did this at this point in time. It acted as a team building exercise, a unification and alignment exercise at a time where we so dearly need that, coming out of this very difficult time in our school district. Thank you, Thank you to Dr. Sullivan, Dr. Scollins for doing this for our district. This is a giant leap, as Neil Armstrong would put it, in creating an absolute premier school district here is Cohasset. Thank you for that initial introduction to that. We'll be looking forward to the full presentation by Dr. Sullivan on July 20th at 6:00 p.m.

Dr. Sullivan agreed that it was a real team effort and it continues to be a team effort. Dr. Sullivan is also asking the TLA representative to be there just in the beginning of the special meeting on the 20th to talk about the process and then we'll go into the presentation, so everyone realizes the comprehensive nature of everything that was done. He thanked the school committee for their support and participation.

Dr. Scollins gave a brief update that ESY and the Summer Learning Program are going well. It really has been great to see the students and teachers in the building. We have about 50% of our own staff and then 50% of staff that are from outside of our district, but some of them taught in the summer learning program last year that Jumpstart program. Some of the groups are so small, so students are really getting some solid individual attention, especially in the middle and high schools which has been really nice. Dr. Scollins also shared that, for the first time, our METCO students are participating in our Summer Program. Dr. Scollins



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coordinated with Ted Carol at the Rec Department so that students can do Summer Learning in the morning and Rec Camp in the afternoon and transportation is provided.

From an infrastructure standpoint, we've been hiring. We now have a very comprehensive hiring process that involves teams. A staffing update will be shared at a meeting later this summer.

School Committee Comments and Communication- Rental of Inside Facility Space by Outside Organizations (Vote) - We are discussing opening up our facility rentals to inside rentals by outside groups. We had not done this during COVID. In the Spring we voted to allow outside groups to use our outside facilities but we do have some requests for our internal facilities and, in sticking with past practice, we wanted to get a vote of yes or no on our ability to open it up to outside groups. Now, we did open it to Rec Department. They're obviously in there, but we consider them an internal opening, but this is for any outside groups that might want to use it.

Mr. Dial asked about potential renters and how we ensure that we're covered to make sure our facilities are not damaged or are left the way they need to be. Mrs. Owen explained that we might have a group rent the gym out for basketball or some of the inside sports, our auditorium or the gym for dance recitals, boy scouts or things like that, but they have to fill out a form. It goes through a process. They have to have a certificate of liability. So that they are covered with insurance. This goes through an approval process. Depending on the building it touches several hands. If it's athletics, it touches obviously the business office, but it will touch the director of athletics. If it's not athletics, it touches the principles of the building. So we're all on board with who's in the building and when we also have a custodian onsite. Whoever the renter is, has to pay the cost of the custodian to be on site during the period that they're in the building to make sure things don't get damaged and things get locked up when they're done and there's a fee structure that is set by the school committee and we have that in place.

Some of our facilities have been rented a year in advance. There are some groups that come back every year or so. It would be sad to have to turn them away, but if we have some type of termination clause that states, based on COVID, that we may have to terminate. We could easily work on that with legal to include it in our current contract.

Meaghan Barry of 11 Tad Lane submitted a question. She asked, is there any rental fee for organizations like the CEF or the PSO?

Yes, we have typically our internal groups. We have not charged our rental fees. There are different tiers. Full fee and then there's one for non-profits. It's a different fee, or a waiver fee, and then there's something about you direct if something different, so that there is leniency. Charge CEF for use of our buildings. Chairman MacLellan suggested to look into it and if that's the way this is addressed, then we can put on the agenda and deal with it, but let's look into it instead of just you know. I think we're sort of speculating a little bit as to what exactly. Mrs. Barry was thanked and encourage to stay in touch with Dr. Sullivan so that she can get more specific information to answer her question.

It is proposed that a motion is made that allows for renting out our facilities to outside groups once a provision has been added to the rental agreement that states or notifies the potential organization or renter that the authority or authorization is subject to any changes in the health crisis or anything similar or if circumstances arise that may require us to rescind their permission to do so.



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Motion to rent inside facilities to outside groups Paul Kearney, seconded by Lydia St. Onge. Roll call vote: Ashley Colleary-Aye, Lance Dial-Aye, Lydia St. Onge-Aye, Paul Kearney-Aye, Craig MacLellan-Aye.

Superintendent's Summative Evaluation – Chairman MacLellan welcomed former School Committee member Ellen Maher to the panel for this portion for the meeting. He shared the End-of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report that represents the input of all five committee members.

Step 1 of the evaluation assessed Dr. Sullivan’s progress toward his 5 goals.

Goal Category	Performance Rating
Professional Practice Goals	Exceeded
Student Learning Goals	Met
District Improvement Goals	Exceeded

Step 2 assessed performance on standards.

Standard	Performance Rating
Standard I: Instructional Leadership	Proficient
Standard II: Management and Operations	Exemplary
Standard III: Family and Community Engagement	Exemplary
Standard IV: Professional Culture	Exemplary

Step 3 rates overall summative performance based on steps 1 and 2.

Performance Rating	Exemplary
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Step 4 is a compilation of comment from the school committee that support the overall rating of Exemplary. The following comments were included:

It is the collective position of the Cohasset School Committee that the Superintendent of Cohasset Public Schools, Dr. Patrick Sullivan, has performed in an outstanding and commendable fashion throughout an academic year that was replete with obstacles, challenges, fear, anxiety, and adversity. Dr. Sullivan is, without a doubt, “exemplary” and we are extremely grateful for, and proud of, him and his team. We look forward to the great number of ways in which he will undoubtedly continue to positively impact the Cohasset school community. Amidst unprecedented circumstances during the 2020-2021 school year, Dr. Sullivan held himself and the district to the highest standards. Not only did he manage the COVID related issues faced by the district and the community, but he set goals that kept the growth and improvement of the district in mind. Dr. Sullivan collaborated with the leadership team, including three newly hired members, and kept in close contact with district staff, families, and students as to seek out voice and feedback that informed his decision-making processes. Superintendent Sullivan has over performed in almost every single way throughout this difficult past year. He led Cohasset Public Schools through a traumatic pandemic with grace, calm, transparency, eagerness, accessibility, respectfulness, selflessness, and ceaseless energy. Unprecedented focus was placed on staff and student safety and wellbeing. Adjustments to support that focus were made continuously throughout the school year, including scheduling, professional development, staffing, transportation, with many of those adjustments requiring bargaining. Collaboration and communication continue to be central features of Dr. Sullivan’s student-centric leadership style. Operational decisions were impacted by Federal, State, DESE and local guidance, which at times did not serve public school districts, their staff and students well. Staff had to prepare for in person and remote instruction, synchronous and asynchronous learning and students had to adapt. Data



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drove decisions for pauses in in person learning and data drove decisions to return kids back to school, methodically, carefully and safely.

Professional Practice: Dr. Sullivan's two 2020-2021 professional practice goals related to: (1) the formation of a unified and cohesive leadership team which focused on the evaluation and improvement of building practices regarding teaching and learning; and (2) working with the newly established (by Dr. Sullivan) Director of Instructional Technology to harness IT resources as to improve in-person and remote learning. PP Goal 1 endeavors to continue efforts from Dr. Sullivan's first year and, his continuous collaboration with and oversight of his leadership team is readily apparent in his very hands-on, professional, and mutually respectful approach. Relevant building and department leaders are always involved in pertinent decisions and presentations and this has fostered an environment of open communication, constructive decision-making, and trust. In the words of one committee member: "I don't think I can express adequately in words how much gratitude I have for this leadership team, assembled by Dr. Sullivan, being in place at exactly this time." And another committee member: "Dr. Sullivan's leadership team worked together and stood as a united, cohesive group, communicating clearly throughout the year and working with staff in order to roll our programming including a new elementary math curriculum, deliver professional development and to tackle the day to day goings on of the Cohasset school district." PP Goal 2 has been evidenced by direct collaboration between the Director of Technology and Digital Learning ("DTDL") and multiple district departments, town entities, families, faculty (active in-class participation in lessons), and the school committee. The DTDL has identified areas of improvement, has created new systems, and has lent themselves to an increased budget for IT-related resources. This position was critical during remote instruction and will continue to be critical as the district prepares to evaluate the long-term suitability of its current physical plant. The work with DTDL to improve in person and remote instruction and assessment is significant but the best work is yet to come with the revitalization of the Digital Learning Committee and the Technology Pilot program next year. Student Learning: Dr. Sullivan's 2020-2021 student learning goal focuses on closing learning gaps arising out of the pandemic and is ongoing as of the date of this evaluation. In conjunction with his Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Leslie Scollins, Dr. Sullivan continues to compile data from various sources and gather input from various building and department leaders as to identify gaps. Further, Dr. Sullivan appropriately empowers the Director Student Services, Barbara Cerwonka, to independently gather data relative to student learning gaps and engage families, and continuously collaborates and communicates with her in an unprecedented fashion (a bi-product of his success with regard to PP Goal 1) as to ensure student needs are optimally addressed.

District Improvement: Dr. Sullivan's 2020-2021 district improvement goals related to: (1) pandemic re-entry; and (2) development of a strategic plan. As noted, Dr. Sullivan guided his district through re-entry in an exemplary fashion. The process involved incessant communication amongst stakeholders and town officials, data collection, plan development and drafting, numerous public presentations, education relative to safety and health protocols, constant monitoring of state and federal guidance, responsiveness to family, student, and staff needs, concerns, and anxieties, physical building space assessment, and union negotiations. Dr. Sullivan's work in this arena was nothing short of staggering and it is unlikely that his school community will ever know or appreciate the full extent of his efforts. In terms of the strategic plan, Dr. Sullivan retained an outside vendor to guide members of the strategic plan steering committee through that process, which is nearly complete as of the date of this report. As an added benefit (as is in line with PP Goal 1), the strategic planning process created by Dr. Sullivan, in conjunction with the outside vendor, had the tangential effect of strengthening the bond amongst/between members of the leadership team at the end of an extremely trying year. The leadership team is now emerging from that process, and this year, in



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an energized, empowered, and ambitious state of mind, committed to the betterment of our district in what we hope will be an extremely productive 2021-2022 academic year. Dr. Sullivan appropriately aligns all goals with the newly developed strategic plan.

Superintendent Performance Goals: Superintendents must identify at least one student learning goal, one professional practice goal, and two to four district improvement goals. Goals should be SMART and aligned to at least one focus Indicator from the Standards for Effective Administrative Leadership.

Goals	Description	Performance Rating
Student Learning Goal	Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, I will focus the District on identifying and closing student learning gaps that have resulted from the impact of the pandemic.	Met
Professional Practice Goal 1	Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, I will collaborate with District and building leaders to create a cohesive instructional leadership team that continues to focus on building structures and practices regarding teaching and learning.	Exceeded
Professional Practice Goal 2	Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, I will work with the new Director of Technology and Digital Learning to improve in person and remote instruction and assessment	Met
District Improvement Goal 1	Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, I will work with stakeholders to create a Road Map to Re-Entry document. I will implement the details of the Road Map, making needed data-based adjustments throughout the school year	Exceeded
District Improvement Goal 2	Throughout the 2020-2021 school year, I will collaborate with stakeholders to develop and present a three-year strategic plan for Cohasset Public Schools.	Met

Committee members shared comments to elaborate on the comments and analysis included in the evaluation.

School Facilities Committee – The three School Committee appointees have already been selected. The chair of the select board, Keri Thompson, indicated that the select board will choose their three appointees by the end of the month. The Town Moderator will select the final three appointees. He has indicated that he is ready to select one of the nominees and is resolved to selecting the other two in the near future.

Reports from Subcommittees and Liaisons - Ashley Colleary emailed a revision of non-discrimination clause for all committee members to review so that it may be discussed at the next meeting. Policy subcommittee is working with council so that the harassment policy is aligned with the MASC policy.



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Lydia St. Onge attended the AEC presentation on electric school busses in Concord It is something to keep on our radar as Bus leases run out. Other committee reps, including select board and capital budget, attended the meeting to learn how electric busses might work in Cohasset.

Paul Kearney asked for a facilities and project update. Superintendent Patrick Sullivan stated a lot happening with the buildings. There will be a report of the full scope in August.

**Motion to adjourn by Paul Kearney, seconded by Lydia St. Onge. Roll call vote: Ashley Colleary - Aye, Lance Dial – Aye, Lydia St. Onge - Aye, Paul Kearney - Aye, Craig MacLellan - Aye.
The meeting adjourned at 7:47 p.m.**

Documents used virtually at the meeting:

Charting The Course - Dashboard

End-Of-Cycle Summative Evaluation Report - Superintendent