

**Carlisle School Committee**  
Minutes  
Wednesday, April 28, 2021  
7:00 p.m.  
Carlisle School Cafeteria  
and Zoom Remote Access

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

Present-School Committee via Zoom: 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; Anne Mahan, Business Manager; Rob Fortado, Supervisor of Buildings and Grounds

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:

<https://carlisle-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/82545865579?pwd=cU9XdFI1NGxuV0RldXVnTnExZEtzZz09>

Meeting ID: 825 4586 5579

Passcode: 249685

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 7:02 p.m. and stated that the meeting was being recorded.

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

- A. Meeting of April 7, 2021. Ms. Wilson made a motion to approve the minutes of April 7, 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 Part 1. Mr. O’Shea introduced the CPS Literacy Specialist Dr. Kathi Macklis who presented about Title I Literacy and Tier II supports. She will be joined by Tier II tutor Lucy O’Connor later in the presentation. Dr. Macklis explained that Title I services are provided to students who need a little extra support in small groups outside of class. Kindergarten through Grade 4 students are identified through an array of assessments including beginning of the year assessments, prerequisite skills assessments, grade level assessments and through teacher recommendations. Reading is

a multi-faceted process involving word recognition, comprehension, fluency and motivation. Interventions include instruction in phonics, fluency, vocabulary, reading comprehension, oral language skills and writing. Assessment and progress monitoring of skills occurs through DIBELS, Heggerty, and Benchmark Assessment System (BAS). Small groups focus on skills that are being learned in class or previewing what is to come. In class supports focus on literacy skills and strategies. Parent and guardian support includes nightly reading, modeling reading, communicating with the child's teacher and stressing the importance of literacy. Ms. Macklis said her role is to promote teacher and student growth in literacy while researching and modeling current assessment tools. She works with all teachers to implement a quality literacy program designed to meet the needs of all students. She cited the Foundations program, implemented in grades K-3, and teaches phonics and promotes a love of literacy. Ms. Macklis shares support with the special education staff. She was grateful to have received a grant to attend a conference on language learning and diversity, and will continue to work with teachers, the PTO and CEF to explore worthwhile opportunities for learning. She was also grateful for the continued support of the PTO for Read Across America and thanked teachers, parents and the CSC for their support of literacy. Lucy O'Connor, Tier II Tutor, presented next. Ms. O'Connor works with Dr. Sidell to identify students who need math support. In class math support is provided during a math block and includes reviewing or previewing current math concepts, exploring different strategies, and using manipulatives. Small group instruction includes a reviewed of previously learned content so students get exposure to a topic more than once, direct and individualized instruction and use of games. Parent support is also important, and includes cooking, measuring and counting with children, building something together, and mixing in math during reading time. Ways to help conquer a child's math anxiety include being positive about math, making math relevant to real life, and allowing mistakes while learning the basics. Mr. Huntress voiced appreciation for all of the work that is done to support children. Mr. O'Shea noted that all of these support systems for students were in place this year. Dr. Macklis added that teachers have a lot of flexibility in what they do for reading in their classrooms, but research supports teaching phonics in the early grades. Ms. Mostoufi questioned how we are identifying students with reading disabilities. Dr. Sidell said Ms. Bruce will address that in her presentation. Ms. Mostoufi said Leveled Literacy Instruction (LLI) has been criticized as a teaching method for students with a language based learning disability or dyslexia, and advocated for a system to teach kids phonics before age 9. Dr. Macklis concurred that there is a lot of research on LLI, it was thought that some books used were racist. The makers of that system have been looking at its material. Dr. Macklis has not used LLI in 3 years. She added that we have a dedicated staff, that will use a blended approach based on the research to teach reading. Ms. Mostoufi advocated teaching so students will not have setbacks in their education. Dr. Sidell added that even if students are dyslexic, not one method works for all students. We make sure we are covering things early; putting things in place for all students and catch those who are struggling. Ms. Macklis added that the team will make it work for all students individually.

Student/Faculty Presentation Part 2. Mr. O'Shea introduced Ms. Bruce who will present on the DESE audit, the trajectory and cost of special education, and wrapping up work that has been done in Special Education in the last two years. Ms. Bruce shared a

PowerPoint that reviewed Special Education enrollment numbers for the last three years. It was noted that the high need out-of-district placement number has declined (8 in September 2019, 7 in September 2020 and projected 6 in September 2021). It was noted that Out of District tuition is between \$57,500 and \$114,097 per year. High needs in-district students that are out of class more than 21% of the time are increasing (4 in 2019, 5 in 2020 and projected 10 in 2021). The total number of students on IEPs has remained consistent (108 in 2019, 109 in 2020 and 108 projected in 2021). She shared the types of disabilities with which students present. The highest number of students presented with a Specific Learning Disability having the highest number (33, 31, 34). Other disabilities included Autism, Health, Neurological, Developmental Delay, Communication, Emotional and Deaf/Hard of Hearing. There are currently no students with intellectual or physical disabilities. Changes in the Special Education Department included: addressing the individualized needs of all students within the IEP, thoughtful scheduling, increased days in Summer School and increased communication and collaboration. There is also a plan for the development of an elementary sub-separate program for the 2021-2022 school year. There is currently a middle school program but no program in elementary. This program would service the need of students on the autism spectrum to provide them with the least restrictive environment and allow them to stay with their grade level peers. Ms. Bruce shared some feedback from the DESE Tiered Monitoring Review. The DESE cited adherence to timelines with IEPs was excellent, progress reports were detailed, and parent survey results were notable for having a high response rate and 100% acknowledgment for creating a welcoming environment where parent input is encouraged and respected. The overall results were positive and complimentary for all teams. Ms. Bruce noted that the following areas were in 100% compliance: Special Education and Civil Rights. There were 3 partial compliance areas in English Language Learning that included the need for all general education teachers to become SEI (Sheltered English Immersion) endorsed. The DESE was impressed by Carlisle's in-person learning and handling of COVID. She added that it was rewarding to hear positive feedback. She feels fortunate and thankful to work with an incredible faculty and noted the collaboration and leadership that makes the school successful. She ended with saying that as we learn, we get better at what we do and the children benefit. Ms. Lear commented that Ms. Bruce set a tone, has a spirit, put kids first and deserved the positive feedback. Mr. Huntress asked how Carlisle performed relative to other schools. Ms. Bruce answered that she did not look up the data, but said it would be challenging in large districts. Ms. Mostoufi complimented the dedication of teachers and administrators serving our students and families. She said that families are grateful to receive services in a school where students learn so well. She said the work done in the Special Education subcommittee has been rewarding, and noted Ms. Bruce taking the time to meet with families provides an opportunity to stay connected and hear concerns.

B. State and Local COVID Dashboard. Mr. O'Shea reported there were no COVID cases in the school, and all classes are in person. In Carlisle, the 14 day test positivity rate is 3.2% (as of April 22). In Massachusetts, the 14 day test positivity rate is 2.3% (as of April 22). Pooled testing at the School has yielded all negative results. Every staff member who wants to be vaccinated will be fully vaccinated in a couple of weeks. Mr. O'Shea noted changes to State and CDC guidance include that small groups can gather with no masks if people are fully vaccinated. The School is moving toward normalcy. The need for students to stay in pods at

recess has been recently eliminated but students still wear masks. After school activities are running. The School is planning for 2021-2022 where there will be no FCR and a return to pre-COVID operations. Lunch protocols are still to be determined. There will increased capacity on the bus. Mr. O'Shea appreciate the families that have been driving and picking up their children this year.

C. School/Superintendent Update. Mr. O'Shea introduced the student representatives. Nafeesa Hoda shared that the new recess protocol has worked great; people like to mix, and students are still wearing masks and distancing. She also liked the painting of the plaza that was done. She said 8<sup>th</sup> graders are looking forward to graduation and end of the year activities. Gretchen Hedlund added that she enjoys how everyone can mix with other kids, and it shows a lot of progress. She agreed that the painting of the plaza looks great. Mr. O'Shea asked the students what they thought about the water. Ms. Hoda answered that she doesn't think a lot of middle schoolers are paying attention to it. Mr. O'Shea continued that the FinCom is expecting additional ESSER funding that will offset the FY22 and FY23 budgets. He provided a water update. The tanks were cleaned last week, and will be cleaned more often moving forward. There is currently brown water. Mr. Fortado is working with the water provider to get a filtration system installed. EDCO will no longer be operating at the end of FY22 and districts, including Carlisle, still have liability. Carlisle recently received an invoice from EDCO for over \$72,000. There will be a professional day on Friday, May 28 with no school for students.

D. Playground Presentation. Dennet Sidell introduced Brian Waterson, who will present about the Carlisle Castle project. Mr. O'Shea said the Castle has been deteriorating and needs upgrading. The School Advisory Council (SAC), led by Dr. Sidell and Dr. Mehler, engaged in several conversations about it. Dr. Sidell added that in his 9 years in Carlisle, discussions about what the Castle should look like incorporated grass and outdoor classrooms and the playground area. Every time we started doing some work, we realized this is a multi-year project. Mr. Waterson said that the Castle was built in 1988. Through SAC, a Castle Playground Improvements Subcommittee was formed, and has been meeting weekly since February. The committee discussed the scope of the project, researched the Town approval processes, worked to understand the costs, and worked on building a budget. The committee is exploring ways to fund the project including grants or fundraising efforts. Mr. Waterson noted that regulations have changed and the new Castle has to be ADA compliant. Areas of discovery included: learning about School needs, learning the role of Town boards, speaking with Towns that have done similar projects. Mr. Waterson noted that approval is needed by the CSC, the Planning Board and the Historic Commission. Contractor builds are significantly more expensive than a community build (one company estimated \$900,00 for a contractor build and \$475,000 for a community build). Landscaping also has to be considered. Mr. Waterson shared more on grants and fundraising. The committee is exploring what is available through grants and what is included in the application process. It is also considering naming rights, component sponsorship, families sponsoring pickets or bricks, and auctioning off parts of the current Castle. The committee is reaching out to members of the original Castle project to get some insight on the process. Project phases are: Discovery (which is coming to an end), Design (the committee will return to the CSC when this is complete), Approval and Build. The hope is to construct a new structure over the summer months. Ms. Lear thanked Mr. Waterson for the presentation. Ms. Wilson added that conversations about the Castle have taken place over the years and she is thrilled that the

committee has have gotten the momentum going on this project. Mr. O'Shea added his thanks for working to make the area fresher and safer for students. Ms. Lear summarized that the CSC agreed that the subcommittee should move forward in this process. She added that Mr. Waterson should let her know if there is wood available that woodworkers in town could craft into something else.

E. Revised Homeschool Policy. Mr. O'Shea said the Policy Subcommittee reviewed several policies this year, but there is an additional policy that needs an adjustment. A paragraph about special education will be added to this policy. The vote on it will take place at the next meeting.

F. School Choice. Mr. O'Shea said that a couple of CSC members wanted more information on School Choice before having a vote on whether to accept School Choice students to Carlisle. Mr. Huntress said he learned a lot about School Choice and it's clear to him why it's a yearly topic for discussion. He created and shared a rubric that included evaluating factors such as economics, (the School receives \$5000 per student but the average cost of educating a student in Carlisle is \$22,000), operational impact, specialized services for students, class size implications, if there is an impact on equity or diversity, timing and town support. Mr. Huntress questioned if this is the time to make a change given the pandemic, but it's important to keep evaluating the topic. There could be a substantial financial impact on the district, but many factors are unknown. It was felt that School Choice is not a solution for equity and diversity. It is opening up the door for families that have the means to provide transportation for their child. Ms. Lear added that this document should be referenced every year when the discussion on School Choice takes place. She feels the faculty should be ready for such a change, and doesn't want to put extra pressure on the faculty at the present time. Mr. O'Shea added that if the CSC decides to accept School Choice students, there has to be advertising, and a lottery takes place. Ms. Mostoufi said it was important to look at other solutions to diversifying our school population and questioned if there are other ways to bring additional funds to our school. Other districts have offered a process for students to pay tuition to attend. If we are looking at options such as this, it would not put an extra burden on taxpayers. The School would receive money from families who want the Carlisle program. Ms. Wilson said this topic was addressed last year and did not believe it was an option for Massachusetts schools at this time. Ms. Mostoufi will explore this idea. Mr. O'Shea will gather information as well.

G. School Fees. Mr. O'Shea introduced Business Manager Anne Mahan, to follow up on the School Fees discussion from the last meeting. Anne presented a PowerPoint that included the history of the Kindergarten fees. In 2010, the school offered 3 full days and two half days and charged families \$800. In 2014, the fee was increased to \$950 for 3 full days and two half days. In 2017, the School moved to offering full day Kindergarten for 5 days and the fee was \$1450. That fee has remained in place. It was noted that full day Kindergarten is offered for families that wish to participate and offsets the additional cost for staffing associated with attending the second half of the day. Students can attend half day Kindergarten at no cost. The recommendation was to keep the Kindergarten fee for FY22, increase it to \$1950 for FY23, and increase it to \$2450 in FY24. This plan will be communicated early to families so they can plan. Our fee is competitive compared to other districts. The average fee charged for full day Kindergarten is \$3500/year. It was noted that some districts do not charge a Kindergarten fee. The transportation fee for 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders will remain at \$395 for FY22. The fee for Pre-K will remain at \$5200 for FY22.

H. 2021-2022 School Calendar. Mr. O’Shea said the calendar was the same version that was discussed at the last meeting, but it hadn’t yet been voted on by the CTA. Mr. Huntress asked if the CTA had any questions. Ms. Vanaria answered that there were questions but the changes made have been talked about for a couple of years. The membership is looking forward to seeing how the changes work out for the 2021-2022 school year.

I. Superintendent Evaluation Timeline – Draft. Mr. O’Shea reviewed the evaluation timeline. He will provide a progress report on his goals to committee members on May 17, and this document will be shared at the CSC meeting on May 19. Members will submit their final evaluations to Ms. Anderson by May 31. Ms. Anderson will distribute Mr. O’Shea’s summarized evaluation to members on June 7. The evaluation will be reviewed and discussed at the CSC meeting on June 9.

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

Communication: Mr. Huntress reported that he and Mr. O’Shea have met over last 8 weeks about eliminating and understanding bias. There is a parent and teacher involved in these discussions as well. Mr. O’Shea added that diversity, equity and inclusion are a priority for the School. People want to know their voices are being heard, and we want to make sure that we are aware of everyone’s perspective. We want to get input from the community. We are looking to see how to expand the group and get more perspectives. We would like to send survey out to families before the PD day on May 28. Questions would include: do families feel connected to school and are they experiencing bias. Mr. Huntress said we have to model for kids and we have to do better as a society. There will be open ended questions also including: do you feel you can express your viewpoint and do you feel welcome. Ms. Lear will connect Mr. O’Shea with someone who has expertise on surveys. Ms. Mostoufi added that there is a person through IDEAS at EDCO that has experience with this too. Mr. O’Shea said the School will continue to focus on diversity, equity and inclusion as well at the portrait of a graduate, the new mission and vision.

CCRS: Ms. Wilson said that CCRSD has appointed Andrew Nyamekye as the new Director of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. He had been the METCO director and is very student oriented. The Region is doing a reorganization. The METCO Director and the Academic Liaison positions are open as well. The whole School returned to in-person learning this week. They are looking to increase the numbers in pooled testing.

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

There were no communications.

#### **VI. Warrants**

- A. Accounts Payable Warrant #6821; \$140,830.31
- B. Payroll Warrant #6621; \$399,847.45

#### **VII. Action Items**

- A. Vote School Choice.  
Ms. Comperchio made a motion to not participate in School Choice for the next academic school year; Mr. Huntress seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye.
- B. Vote 2021-2022 School Calendar.

Mr. Huntress made a motion to approve the 2021-2022 School Calendar; Ms. Mostoufi seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye.

### **VIII. Public Comments**

Carrie Patel asked when the 2021-2022 school calendar would be on the website. Ms. Anderson answered that the draft calendar is posted there and the approved calendar would be posted tomorrow. She also asked if any guidelines about schools and education for next year have been released from the State. Mr. O'Shea answered that the State hasn't provided any guidance to schools as of today. He believes that schools will not be required to offer the FCR option in the next school year.

### **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.

Mr. Huntress made a motion to adjourn the meeting for the purpose listed above; Ms. Comperchio seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in Roll Call: Comperchio, aye; Huntress, aye; Lear, aye; Mostoufi, aye; Wilson, aye. The public meeting was adjourned at 9:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson  
Assistant to the Superintendent

#### List of Documents Viewed or Reviewed:

Draft Minutes of April 7, 2021  
Revised Homeschool Policy  
2021-2022 School Calendar  
Superintendent Evaluation Timeline Draft  
Warrants  
Accounts Payable Warrant #6821; #140,830.31  
Payroll Warrant #6621; \$399,847.45