

**Chelmsford Parker School Building Committee**

Town of Chelmsford  
Chelmsford School Department's Administrative Office  
230 North Road  
Chelmsford, MA 01824  
Meeting Minutes  
January 15, 2026

**Members Present:** Select Board Member, Chair Patrick Maloney  
Town Finance Director, John Sousa  
CPS Finance Director, Joanna Johnson-Collins  
School Committee Member, Dennis King  
Town Manager, Paul Cohen  
CPS Superintendent, Dr. Jay Lang  
CPS Facilities Director, Brian Curley  
Town DPW Facilities Manager, Matthew Schweitzer  
Town DPW Director, Christine Clancy  
Town Finance Committee, James Clancy (via Zoom)  
Parker School Principal, Joshua Blagg  
Town Permanent Building Committee, Timothy Powderly  
Resident, Brandon Kelly

**Members Absent:** None

**Others Present:** David Saindon, Project Director, LeftField PM, LLC  
Hamdi Cobanoglu, Sr. Project Manager, LeftField PM, LLC  
Troy Randall, Ai3 Architects  
Julie Rivera, Ai3 Architects  
Tori Geier, Ai3 Architects

All documents referenced in these minutes are available for review at the Chelmsford School Department's Administrative Office, located at 230 North Road. This meeting was hand-recorded via the Recording Secretary and recorded through Chelmsford Telemedia.

1. Call to Order

Chair Maloney called the Meeting to order at 6:00 PM.

2. Approval of Meeting Minutes

December 18, 2025

Motion: by Mr. King to approve the Meeting Minutes of December 18, 2025, as presented. Seconded by Mr. Sousa. Roll Call Vote:

James Clancy: Aye  
Christine Clancy: Aye  
Matthew Schweitzer: Aye  
Tim Powderly: Abstained  
Paul Cohen: Aye  
Brandon Kelly: Abstained  
Dennis King: Aye  
Jay Lang: Aye  
Joanna Johnson-Collins: Aye  
John Sousa: Aye  
Brian Curley: Aye  
Joshua Blagg: Aye  
Patrick Maloney: Aye

Motion carried, 11-2-0.

3. Approval of Monthly Project Invoices

Mr. Saindon summarized the budget to date and presented the invoices and invoice packet #8, which contained project invoices through December 31, 2025. The invoice for Leftfield was \$20,859.00; the invoice for Ai3 was \$71,875.00; and there were reimbursements for Hazardous Material testing of \$9,130.00 and soil testing of \$17,138.00, for a total invoice packet value of \$119,002.00.

Motion: by Mr. King to approve the invoice packet #8, for a total invoice packet value of \$119,002.00, as presented. Seconded by Mrs. Clancy. Roll Call Vote:

James Clancy: Aye  
Christine Clancy: Aye  
Matthew Schweitzer: Aye  
Tim Powderly: Aye  
Paul Cohen: Aye  
Brandon Kelly: Aye  
Dennis King: Aye  
Jay Lang: Aye  
Joanna Johnson-Collins: Aye  
John Sousa: Aye

Brian Curley: Aye  
Joshua Blagg: Aye  
Patrick Maloney: Aye

Motion carried, 13-0.

4. Schedule Overview & School Committee Meeting Update

Ms. Rivera summarized key project milestones from January through April, including completion and submission of the PDP to the MSBA on January 22, followed by continued development and refinement of PSR options in February and March, incorporating MSBA review comments, ongoing PSR cost estimating, and community engagement. The Committee is scheduled to approve the PDP report submission at this meeting, after which LeftField and Ai3 will begin preparation of the PSR for submission to the MSBA. Project updates will be provided at regularly scheduled School Building Committee (SBC) meetings, with additional details presented monthly to the Committee. The Committee may also consider holding an additional public forum to review PSR options after confirmation from the MSBA's review of the PDP submission. In April, the Committee is expected to select a preferred option and approve the PSR submission to the MSBA on April 29.

Dr. Lang reported that a summary of discussions to date was presented at the most recent School Committee meeting. The School Committee voted to approve the proposed educational program, which will be included in the PDP submission. In addition, the School Committee discussed the three enrollment options and unanimously voted in support of the Grades 4–5–6 grade configuration option.

5. Review of Ranking of Design Options Scored by Committee Members

The Project Team presented the evaluation results for the full set of design alternatives developed during the PDP phase, which resulted in a total of fourteen (14) options across three sites (Parker, Graniteville, and McCarthy), with variations by grade configuration and project type (code upgrade/base repair, addition/renovation, and new construction). Ai3 and LeftField reported that individual scoring sheets submitted by Committee members were compiled and tallied into a consolidated evaluation matrix and ranked list.

At this time, the Chair, Mr. Maloney, asked for feedback from Committee members on the evaluation process. To start, Mr. Maloney expressed that the 5-8 grade configuration is too large and too costly, while the Code upgrade options are not feasible because too much work is required. Mr. Maloney commented that he has first-hand experience and knowledge of these facilities from his many years of involvement locally with Town-related facility upgrades. A solution with the 4-5-6 grade option seemed more reasonable. Mr. King supported the 4-5-6 grade option as it would benefit the most students by

providing a new school facility and relieving overcrowding at the elementary school level. Mrs. Clancy stated that the 4-5-6 grade option would make the most sense. While a project on the Graniteville site would be a great option, considering all criteria, a solution on the Parker site with the 4-5-6 grade configuration would be the best overall for the Town. Dr. Lang agreed with all the commentary at this point and stated that he did not support losing the field space at the Graniteville location. There would be too many impacts on high school activities, and there is no place in Town to replicate the Graniteville fields. He would like to keep the project on the existing Parker School site. Mr. Cohen also supported new construction on the Parker site and opposed the grade 5-6 option, as a 5-6 grade option would not address the current overcrowding at the elementary schools. Mr. Cohen further noted that, while the preferred enrollment option is clearly the 4-5-6 option, he had concerns should the 4-5-6 grade configuration not gain traction during the PSR phase, the Grades 5-6-7-8 configuration would represent a more viable secondary alternative than a Grades 5-6 option, as the former—while significantly more expensive—would address the elementary enrollment pressures driving the project, whereas a 5-6 grade configuration would not relieve elementary overcrowding or provide a long-term solution for districtwide enrollment and facility capacity needs. However, he and others who know the Town well clearly indicated that the 5-6-7-8 grade configuration option would receive no support from Town residents due to the cost of the 4-grade options.

The highest-scoring options, based on the compiled matrix, generally reflected a preference for new construction and for grade configurations that best address both educational programming needs and the District's elementary enrollment pressures. The initial ranking showed new construction options for 5-6 and 4-5-6 at the Parker Site, and the inclusion of MSBA policy-driven options for continued study in the PSR phase, such as the code upgrade and add/reno options for both enrollments of 5-6 and 4-5-6. The Project Team reminded the Committee that MSBA expects continued evaluation of a range of alternatives in the next phase, including at least one code upgrade/base repair option, at least one addition/renovation option, and at least one new construction option for each grade enrollment being considered. The Project Team explained that the shortlisting exercise is intended to reduce the number of options to be advanced to the PSR phase while still demonstrating appropriate due diligence of options studied.

The Committee discussion continued to focus on the rationale behind committee members' scoring and the principal factors driving the rankings. In general, Committee Members stated that the 5-6-7-8 grade options resulted in a building footprint and total project scale larger than their high school, which could be difficult to manage from an educational standpoint and to justify financially and politically, particularly given preliminary cost estimates indicating a significantly higher overall project cost relative to

other configurations. Several members noted that, from both educational and community-approval standpoints, advancing an option perceived as unaffordable could jeopardize the likelihood of a successful project vote and delay needed improvements.

All Committee Members expressed strong support for the 4-5-6 grade configuration, citing multiple benefits. These included the opportunity to provide a longer and more developmentally appropriate span for students before transitioning to the upper grades. This was mentioned by the Parker School Principal, Mr. Bragg, stating that the grade 4-6 configuration provided a better, shorter transition between schools, which would be more appropriate for students. The 4-5-6 enrollment configuration also provides immediate relief from enrollment constraints at the elementary schools by shifting Grade 4 students into a purpose-built facility. Committee members noted that elementary overcrowding and projected enrollment growth were central drivers of the project, and that the 4-5-6 grade option offered a stronger community benefit and outcome by addressing both middle-school facility needs and broader elementary school enrollment deficiencies within a single MSBA-supported project. The Town Manager, Mr. Cohen, noted that the State's and Town's housing initiatives anticipate residential growth and increased student enrollments.

The Committee also discussed site-related concerns that affected scoring. Members stated that options involving the Graniteville site raised concerns about the loss of athletic/field space, inability to replace such assets elsewhere in Town, traffic and circulation impacts, and the presence of significant project-related costs that would not be categorically reimbursable by MSBA pursuant to MSBA standard policy. Similarly, members noted that options involving the McCarthy site introduced additional complications and site constraints, and that, although considered as part of the due diligence process, they were not preferred to Parker-based alternatives.

A key portion of the Committee discussion addressed a "fallback" or secondary enrollment configurations. Members considered whether the Committee should eliminate specific grade configurations, such as 5–6 and/or 5-6-7-8 grade options, or instead eliminate entire sites (Graniteville and McCarthy) while maintaining multiple grade and project-type alternatives at a single site. The Project Team advised that the PDP submission does not require a strict "1–2–3" hierarchy; rather, it requires a defensible short list showing that the Committee evaluated a broad range of alternatives and is advancing a manageable set of options to continue with study and analysis during the PSR phase. The Project Team also noted the potential for the MSBA to request continued evaluation of certain alternatives, particularly where enrollment options change from existing conditions, and recommended preserving sufficient option diversity in the PDP submission.

After further discussion, the Committee reached consensus that the clearest and appropriate path forward was to focus the PSR phase on Site A, the Parker site, while maintaining the full range of grade configuration alternatives at the Parker site. Committee Members stated that this approach would (i) keep the PSR analysis concentrated on the site with the most favorable characteristics and strongest committee support, (ii) reduce public confusion associated with continuing to advance multiple sites which would disrupt athletic fields that are heavily utilized, and (iii) preserve multiple enrollment alternatives, including the existing configuration of 5-6, and expanded configurations of 4-5-6 and 5-6-7-8, to demonstrate thorough evaluation and maintain flexibility into the PSR phase. The Committee also acknowledged that maintaining multiple Parker-based enrollment options would allow the Committee to further validate affordability, site circulation, educational fit, and short- and long-term enrollment benefits, while working toward selecting a single preferred alternative later in the PSR phase.

In conjunction with the Committee's discussion of the options, Ai3 presented a summary of conceptual cost estimates and total hypothetical project budgets for all 14 design options in the PDP submission. Estimated project costs ranged from approximately \$105 million for base repair options to over \$390 million for larger new construction and renovation scenarios. This included a comparative cost matrix outlining square footage, construction duration, major cost components, and total estimated project costs. The Project Team emphasized that PDP costs are conceptual and intended solely for comparative purposes. It noted that options involving the Graniteville and McCarthy sites include additional non-reimbursable and enabling costs. Ai3 also presented an MSBA cost analysis of recent school projects, which showed projected average new construction costs of approximately \$889 per square foot, consistent with the preliminary cost estimates for the Parker site options under consideration.

After a robust and spirited Committee discussion regarding a short list of options to move forward, the Chair summarized the resulting direction as advancing all Site A/Parker alternatives into the PSR phase for continued evaluation and removing the Graniteville and McCarthy site alternatives from further study. The Committee then proceeded to consider a formal motion consistent with this direction.

6. Vote of Shortlist of Options to Be Studied During the PSR Phase

Motion: by Mr. King that the Building Committee, having reviewed the alternative options presented by the Project Team, together with the evaluation criteria and the comparative scoring applied to those options, coupled with Committee discussion, hereby recommends that the following alternatives be advanced for continued evaluation during

the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) phase of the Project. Said alternative options have been designated as options: X1, A1.1, A1.2, A1.3, A2.1, A2.2, and A2.3 (all under Site A / Parker). Seconded by Mr. Sousa. Roll Call Vote: unanimous approval.

James Clancy: Aye

Christine Clancy: Aye

Matthew Schweitzer: Aye

Tim Powderly: Aye

Paul Cohen: Aye

Brandon Kelly: Aye

Dennis King: Aye

Jay Lang: Aye

Joanna Johnson-Collins: Aye

John Sousa: Aye

Brian Curley: Aye

Joshua Blagg: Aye

Patrick Maloney: Aye

Motion carried, 13-0.

7. Vote to Authorize LeftField and Ai3 to Submit the PDP to the MSBA

Ai3, Ms. Geier, provided an update on the PDP report, noting that it is a comprehensive document (approximately 1,900 pages) that includes educational program materials, a preliminary evaluation of alternatives (all options), conceptual cost estimates, and supporting appendices (e.g., traffic analysis). The Committee discussed how meeting minutes and project narratives support MSBA review, and that additional opportunities to articulate rationale will occur during the PSR phase (including the executive summary and option justification sections) and at the future MSBA Facilities Assessment Subcommittee meeting.

Motion: by Mr. King that the Building Committee authorize Ai3 and LeftField, on behalf of the Building Committee, to submit the Parker Middle School Preliminary Program Design (PDP) submission, as presented, to the MSBA for review and consideration by the MSBA. Seconded by Mr. Kelly. Roll call vote; unanimous approval.

James Clancy: Aye

Christine Clancy: Aye

Matthew Schweitzer: Aye

Tim Powderly: Aye

Paul Cohen: Aye

Brandon Kelly: Aye

Dennis King: Aye

Jay Lang: Aye

Joanna Johnson-Collins: Aye

John Sousa: Aye

Brian Curley: Aye

Joshua Blagg: Aye

Patrick Maloney: Aye

Motion carried, 13-0.

Mr. Saindon indicated that a local action certification will be prepared next week and shared with the parties required to execute said document. This would be shared through DocuSign.

The Project Team provided an overview of the Massachusetts School Building Authority (MSBA) review process following submission of the Preliminary Design Program (PDP), with particular emphasis on the MSBA Facilities Assessment Committee (FAC) role. The Committee was advised that the PDP submission is a written, document-based review and does not involve a formal presentation at this stage. Following submission of the PDP to the MSBA, staff review comments are anticipated within approximately 21 days, after which the Town will have 14 days to respond in writing.

The Project Team explained that the PDP submission is reviewed by MSBA staff to confirm that existing conditions were adequately documented, a broad range of alternatives was evaluated, and that the Committee conducted a comprehensive study and analysis consistent with MSBA policies. The PDP review is intended to confirm due diligence rather than to select a preferred option.

Ai3 and LeftField informed the Committee that a more substantive review occurs during the Preferred Schematic Report (PSR) phase, at which time the MSBA Facilities Assessment Committee (FAC) participates in the review. The FAC is comprised of MSBA staff and select MSBA Board members and serves as the body that reviews and evaluates the Committee's selected preferred option before advancing the Project to schematic design authorization from the MSBA Board of Directors.

The Project Team noted that during the PSR phase, the Committee's rationale for selecting a preferred option will be more fully articulated in several sections of the PSR document, including the Executive Summary and the narrative sections describing the preferred alternative. These sections will clearly document the Committee's decision-making process, educational alignment, enrollment considerations, site selection rationale, and cost considerations.

The Committee was advised that a meeting with the MSBA FAC will occur during the PSR phase, after the PSR is issued to the MSBA, and provides an opportunity for members of the Building Committee and School Administration to participate directly. At that meeting, FAC members may ask clarifying questions regarding the selected option, and Committee representatives may explain the rationale supporting the preferred solution. The Project Team emphasized that advocacy for the selected option must come from the Town and Committee representatives, not the Project Team.

The Project Team further explained that the FAC does not select the preferred option on behalf of the Town; rather, the FAC evaluates whether the selected option meets MSBA criteria and whether the Committee's process was thorough, well-documented, and consistent with MSBA requirements. Following the FAC review, the recommendation is forwarded to the MSBA Board for final authorization to proceed to schematic design.

8. Update on Evaluation of existing conditions:

Ai3 presented updates on recently received reports:

- Geotechnical Investigation (Parker): Borings informed foundation/footing considerations; structural narratives will be developed further during the next phase.
- Soil Characterization (Parker): Two borings indicated acetone levels above acceptable thresholds at approximately 7–9 feet below grade. The team noted no health concern to the public due to the depth of discovery. Additional borings were scheduled to better define the extent and inform the remediation scope and cost. Historic aerial imagery (circa 1963) suggested a former temporary roadway/laydown area coincident with the locations of the elevated results; origin remains unconfirmed.
- Hazardous Materials Report (McCarthy): Asbestos-containing materials and lead paint were identified as typical for a building of similar vintage; materials noted as contained/non-friable and not a daily occupant hazard. Estimated hazmat remediation cost of approximately \$3.5M, included in project cost estimates for options involving McCarthy.
- Environmental Site Assessment (McCarthy): Review of historical/site conditions completed; additional investigations would be recommended if a project proceeds at that site.

9. Public Comment

There were no members of the Public present at this time.

Mr. King stated that he received a call from a resident asking about the shape of the building, particularly why there were wings, and not a rectangular-style building.

Mr. Randell of Ai3 responded that the designs shown are very schematic and diagrammatic at this stage and will evolve, with optimal site orientation, daylighting, and educational organization influencing the building organization and massing. The team noted there can be cost advantages to more compact footprints and building upward to reduce slab area and preserve green space.

10. Next Meeting

The Committee discussed scheduling the next meeting and agreed to meet on February 19, 2026, rather than during the week following February vacation.

**Adjournment**

Motion: by Mr. King to adjourn the meeting at 7:16 PM.

Seconded by Mr. Schweitzer. Roll Call Vote:

James Clancy: Aye  
Christine Clancy: Aye  
Matthew Schweitzer: Aye  
Tim Powderly: Aye  
Paul Cohen: Aye  
Brandon Kelly: Aye  
Dennis King: Aye  
Jay Lang: Aye  
Joanna Johnson-Collins: Aye  
John Sousa: Aye  
Brian Curley: Aye  
Joshua Blagg: Aye  
Patrick Maloney: Aye

Motion carried, 13-0.

Respectfully submitted,  
Vivian W. Merrill

Supporting documents:

- Draft Minutes
- Ai3/ LeftField Slide Presentation