

**Carlisle School Committee
Special Education Subcommittee
Joint Meeting with SEPAC**

Minutes

Tuesday, February 25, 2020

Carlisle School Community Room, Carlisle Schools, 83 School Street, Carlisle, MA 01741
9:30 a.m.

Present – School Committee: David Model, Eva Mostoufi.

Present – School Administration: James O’Shea, Superintendent; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Linda Vanaria, Second Grade Teacher; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

Present SEPAC: Kate Mazzola, Angela Richardson, Meredith Bielecki, Sessa Gadey, Melissa Suderman

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 9:40 p.m.

II. Introductions

III. SEPAC Discussion Items

Minutes were approved. Ms. Bruce provided a Special Education update. A team of teachers attended a Dyslexia training at Harvard in the fall; a different team will be attending an EDCO course on Dyslexia this spring. She continues to work on the Special Education model for next year, where, in general, special educators may work across two grade levels. Ms. Mazzola reported that SEPAC was considering doing a survey after IEP meetings about the IEP process, but then thought to wait until the fall when there would be more concrete ideas on what will be done with the survey data. Ms. Bruce shared copies of surveys that were done by Lunenburg and Arlington.

IV. Special Education Subcommittee Discussion Items

1. Objectives. The Special Education Subcommittee is also interested in doing a survey.
2. Survey. Mr. O’Shea explained that the idea is to generate and distribute a general survey to parents of students in Special Education. This Committee wants to explore the deeper issues of how special education is being approached in Carlisle; and to find and implement best practices in Special Education. Ms. Bruce has worked to make IEPs consistent. It is felt that IEP meetings go well and people are heard. The concern is at the school level; are case managers able to service students in the best ways? The new model provides more continuity which is beneficial to students. Ms. Bruce further explained that students will be paired with special education teachers that have the

expertise, strengths, and talent to work with these students. The same structure will be implemented with paraprofessionals. Additional training for staff will also occur. Another plan is to work on the best way to move forward with co-teaching, possibly co-teaching some subjects. There will be no whole-class co-teaching next year. It was felt co-teaching needs more exploration and training. The parents present are happy and feel that their children are receiving their services. Parents are also aware of the many children with varying levels of need at certain grade levels. Ms. Bruce added that she is monitoring how special educators report disabilities. It is felt that often a Developmental Delay diagnosis should be given to young children, under 3rd grade, because the diagnosis is not yet clear. After a child is initially diagnosed, the staff can monitor how he or she responds to interventions. The survey discussion continued. Mr. O'Shea stressed the importance of soliciting both parent feedback and teacher feedback on the survey. It is felt the survey should be brief but comprehensive. Ms. Mostoufi has reached out to SEPAC parents from Lexington, Bedford, Manchester, Natick, Swampscott, Winchester and others, to see if people are interested in learning more about improving curriculums that deal with students that struggle with literacy and dyslexia. All of the SEPACs question how to formulate survey questions; if there is a need for open-ended questions about how services are delivered, how to document parent experiences, and ensure the surveys are returned. Groups have an interest in a forum to talk about sharing ideas about what works in districts; should a survey be done after that meeting? WestEd did a comprehensive analysis of special education in Carlisle. Mr. Model added that if schools want to reform, everything can't be done at once. His priority is Learning Based Learning Disability (LBLD) reform, as almost 30% of students in Carlisle struggle with a LBLD. Ms. Bruce said that reform is not all about literacy; Carlisle should continue to provide programs that meets the needs of each individual child. The best practices, but not the same practices, have to be implemented to students. Mr. Model added that it's important to be proactive on the resourcing. The Committee should determine what areas should be worked on and ensure that we can use the data. Ms. Bruce shared her thoughts on three major areas about which to solicit parent feedback: Communication (from special educators and teachers), the IEP experience (how is it going, what are concerns), and Services (do you understand the services your child is receiving, do you feel your child is getting enough services, are there services you want to see the school provide that they don't provide). It was felt that it was important to include a child's grade level on the survey too. Surveying the teachers is important as well; do they have the training and resources to work with their students? Do they feel they need more training? Do we have the resources to address what data comes back from the survey? How to best support Ms. Bruce and the teachers was discussed. Mr. Model feels that one step is to embrace the Universal Design for Learning (UDL). Mr. O'Shea questioned how success is measured. For example, are parents happy, are students doing better on state testing? He added that the School will put out a survey to parents with the three themes that Ms.

Bruce discussed. The administration will ultimately analyze the data and determine where changes can and should be made at the school. Mr. O'Shea will work with Ms. Bruce to draft a survey. He will then contact Ms. Gadey to see if she will review the questions and confirm if the data generated will be manageable and useful. The survey will come from administration. When information is presented, it will include findings and trends. There was discussion about sending a survey every year to measure success. SEPAC will reach out to parents to make sure they know the survey is important because a large sample size is preferable. Perhaps the last question could be "Would you be willing to participate in a focus group?"

3. Schedule of Meetings. The Special Education Subcommittee may join a future SEPAC meeting.

V. Solicit input for next SEPAC Meeting

VI. Public Comments

There were no public comments.

VII. Adjourn Meeting

The meeting was adjourned at 11:27 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent