

Carlisle School Committee
Special Education Subcommittee Minutes
January 27, 2020
Spalding Conference Room, Carlisle Schools, 83 School Street, Carlisle, MA 01741
8:00 AM

Present – School Committee: David Model, Eva Mostoufi,.

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

I. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 a.m.

II. Public Comment Period

Meredith Bielecki, 45 Ember Lane, was in attendance on behalf of SEPAC.

III. Information/Discussion Items

- A. Special Education Report Focus Areas. The grid of proposed changes in Special Education was reviewed at the last meeting. The Committee would like to support the changes moving forward. Ms. Mostoufi has reached out to SEPAC groups in other districts and reported that Lexington is holding a forum about strategies that work for students with dyslexia. Ms. Mostoufi would like to learn what methods other districts are working with for Special Education students and share that information. It was felt that coordination, cooperation and sharing with other districts might be useful in discovering best practices. How do we monitor and measure students’ achievement in school? Ms. Bruce shared that last week, CASE Collaborative (that includes districts such as Lincoln, Bedford, Concord and Littleton) hosted a meeting and one topic discussed was Balanced Literacy. Ms. Bruce shared some Carlisle practices, such as the staff’s use of several different assessment tools such as Heggerty, DIBELS, QRI and DRA. Ms. Bruce shared that balance literacy is not just about phonics; it’s a balanced, multimodal approach. It was noted that other districts do not have Foundations in all classrooms, but Carlisle has implemented many changes here in a positive way. Ms. Bruce feels the staff can make the decision on what reading assessment works best for different ages. The Carlisle staff is embracing this approach. Carlisle is identifying students earlier. Mr. O’Shea shared that Carlisle belongs to two collaboratives, CASE and EDCO and would be happy to coordinate a presentation hosted by one or both of them. Mr. Model supports the idea of hearing from the parents about their concerns; specifically, what do they think is and is not working in the IEP process. This could be done through SEPAC. Mr. Model would also ask for teacher feedback about what information teachers would like to know. Could we gather a few questions that several schools might ask their parents about Special Education practices? Ms. Bruce shared that she is part of a

listserv that allows her to ask a specific question and get answers from many district administrators and is happy to utilize that channel to solicit information. Mr. O'Shea summarized the plan; to survey Carlisle parents about what they want to share about their experiences in Special Education and what they want to learn; and to ask teachers and special educators what they would like to know. He wants to identify people to develop survey questions. This information could inform our practices in the future. Ms. Mostoufi shared that Carlisle is doing many things very well including providing social emotional support for students. If something is working well, it is valuable to acknowledge that. Ms. Bruce will reach out to her listserv and ask if people have survey questions that they've used soliciting such information from parents. Ms. Bruce gave an update on Special Education, including her current plan of creating consistent IEPs. All "Current Performance" write-ups will be more detailed. Benchmarks are more measurable. The School is making progress. Ms. Bruce supports a Speech/Language Pathologist (SLP) and a general educator co-teaching the PK class. She also believes students with dyslexia in later grades could benefit from a special educator and a SLP working with them. Ms. Bruce shared some data; next year's grade 3 will have 20 students on IEPs, 15 of which are significant. In grade 4, there are 18 students on IEPs, 12 of which are significant. School wide, 5-6 students will need a one-to-one paraprofessional. Ms. Bruce discussed her proposed special education model where there are 2 special educators per grade level, so a special educator could be with students for 2 years. Next year, 30 out of 103 students will need explicit reading instruction. She discussed the Literacy Specialist who could work with struggling students at multiple grade levels. Mr. Model supported Ms. Bruce analyzing if an extra resource was needed to shepherd the 3rd-4th grade bubble of students next year. Ms. Bruce continues to explore the expansion of skills of the school staff.

- B. Timeline and Goals. The next meeting is Tuesday, February 25 at 9:30. This will be a co-meeting with SEPAC if agreed upon by the SEPAC board.
- C. Process and Protocols for Subcommittee Work. We will gather data, get feedback and discuss potential questions for the survey by the next meeting. The survey will be sent out in March, and be open for one week. There will be data to discuss by the March meeting.
- D. Schedule of Meetings. February 25 at 9:30 followed by meetings in March and April.

IV. Adjourn Meeting

The public meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Nancy Anderson
Assistant to the Superintendent