



# Cohasset Public Schools

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

*Empower Students to Improve Communities*

## Cohasset School Committee Meeting

### Student Services Forum Minutes

Wednesday, May 18, 2022

Learning Commons

Cohasset Middle and High School

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

Virtual Access via Zoom and Facebook

6:00 P.M.

#### In Attendance:

Craig MacLellan, Chairman

Lance Dial

Paul Kearney

Lydia St. Onge

#### Also, in Attendance:

Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent

Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services

Chairman MacLellan called the Student Services Forum to order at 6:00 p.m. **Roll Call: Lance Dial - Present, Paul Kearney - Present, Lydia St. Onge - Present, Craig MacLellan - Present.**

#### Introduction and Overview: Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services

#### Presentation by Special Education Parent Advisory Council: Tara Volungis, President and Cassie Muir, Vice President

Special Education Parent advisory council is an initiative of the state of Massachusetts  
Aide in the planning development and evaluation of the school districts special  
education programs

If your child qualifies for an IEP or 504 you are a part of SEPAC

Sponsor meetings/ parent meet ups monthly

Sponsoring an author speaker at Deer Hill

Student population: 1422

203 special education students as of last spring

23 special ed students out of district

State average is 17.7% of kids in a district on IEPs - Cohasset has 15% on IEPs

Largest population of IEPs are specific learning disabilities (intellectual, not visible)

SEPAC feedback – parent perspective on the IEP Process

New to SPED Process

Use of acronyms in meetings

Speaking up in a small district causes too much attention

Kids keep it together at school, fall apart at home, parents find it challenging  
to cope, relieved to be qualifying

Late identification of student

Experienced in SPED Process

Lack of substantial data to verify IEP

IEP process differs at different schools within district



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Oversight is not continuous at each school

Parents burn out

Lack of certification

Room for improvement

Peer to peer mentoring – can a SEPAC flyer be sent home with consent to test paperwork

School committee representation/ involvement

Engagement with more families

Data monitoring & advocacy

Primary Area of concern: Child Find

Families feel that it is happening too late

Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and MA Law says that districts must proactively locate and evaluate all children with disabilities, regardless of the severity of their disabilities

From a planning perspective, based on the Matthew effect, 3<sup>rd</sup> grade is a crucial time by which to be identified

Cohasset IEP Referrals 2021 – 2022 (September – March)

44 students referred for special education evaluations– 28 eligible

31 have been parent referral (70%)

13 have been MTSS (30%)

What does it mean to be a “good” school district?

“crest of the wave”

How do we know where we are in the wave?

How do we compare this year to last year?

How do we monitor appropriately to see if we are moving forward?

How are we communicating future view of SPED to parents?

Which districts excel at SPED and what makes them great? How do we compare as a district?

Carrie – Yes there needs to be more information regarding SEPAC for us to gain access to this committee.

Ginny LeClaire, 82 Pond Street – Excellent presentation, we do need to test earlier to identify.

What is being done for testing between K-2?

Craig Maclellan - Would SEPAC be able to create a standing group of SEPAC parents who could come to the table like the Student reps do at our meetings.

Cassie Muir – how many kids were picked up through the dyslexia screener?

How are parents being notified if their children are flagged for dyslexia?

Tara Volungis – Who is the one who looks at the numbers to identify these are low or these are high? That data is looked at by school level teams

How are parents being notified that children are being screened for dyslexia?

### **Presentation by District Office of Student Services**

What is student services? Special education, 504, Home Hospital Tutoring, Civil Rights, English Language Learners.

504s are a building-based accommodation plan for a diagnosed disability that requires accommodations within your classroom, but they do fall under the umbrella of student services



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Home hospital tutoring is for students who are out for more than 14 days – home hospital tutoring form is given to families by physicians when it is deemed that students will be out for more than 14 days. That is communicated through building principals

Guiding beliefs – process guides practice and best outcomes for children; we treat children as individuals, but we function as a team; we have the ability to be a primary resource for our students, families, and each other

#### Initiatives

Second school psychologist at secondary level to enable both counseling and testing

Increase in reading support staff at elementary and secondary levels

Increase in special education teacher at secondary level to address student needs through a therapeutic lens

Additional social worker

Task forces and training in reading, MTSS, data and progress monitoring

Independent evaluations; social emotional, reading, tiered focus monitoring

Melissa McDonough, 306 Fair Oaks Lane – The district is seeking engagement from parents and has task forces, most task forces don't have parent representatives on them and that feels like a big miss.

Raina Alfred, 31 Atlantic Avenue – curious about the reading support person. At the middle school, the specialist works with students who came from Deer Hill, already identified and some kids were added when identified by iReady

#### Support for students

DCAP – general education – tier 1 – movement breaks, uniformity in how hw is posted

MTSS – building based team; tiered supports

Task force has been meeting this year to design a process that is vertically aligned from grade to grade and school to school

504/IEP – accommodations/ specialized instruction

Alison Bryan, 44 Howe Road – sometime families doesn't realize that they've been referred to MTSS. It would be helpful if they received a form and were able to share what is going on.

Accommodations – the alteration of environment, curriculum format, or equipment to allow a student with a disability to gain access to content and/or complete task

#### Modifications –

##### Survey feedback:

Areas of strength: welcoming environments, supports, communications, input

Areas for growth: clarity progress monitoring and reporting, IEP process from testing service delivery and parent's role.

Need consistent clear language under annual goal to show how will we know the student has achieved this goal; and tools used

Agenda in meetings to show where we are in the meeting and tying decisions to testing and class performance

Carrie Deroche, 130 Forest Ave. – when do the surveys get sent out and how do they get sent out?

Sarah Davis, 160 Fair Oaks Lane – If SEPAC and student services can get together and come up with a cliff's notes checklist/ timeline that includes intro to SEPAC and suggestions to connect with a mentor



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Kristen Dean, 23 Summer Street – does the team all meet prior to meeting with parents – That is everyone’s opportunity to meet as a full team and discuss what to do.

Melissa McDonough, 306 Fair Oaks Lane – submitted a question about delivery times and providing a list to families about what to expect or what is best for delivery of services

Beth Frasier, 27 Windy Hill Road – MTSS process – it’s misleading to say there is a 4 – 6 week timeline and then the timeline should be updated and check ins should be happening – a defined path and a timeline

Principals should be involved in this meeting and should be more closely involved in the IEP process

Question about data, progress reports, iready reports – iready was downplayed in all conferences

June 8 school committee meeting – Mrs. Cerwonka will talk through IEP process, walk through student services website, qualifications for special education, categories, information about qualifying

Meaghan Barry, 11 Tad Lane – are there any planned modifications or additional enrichment for incoming kindergarteners especially in speech as they have missed a significant portion of their preschool experience being in masked preschool classrooms

Motion to adjourn by Mr. Dial, Seconded by Mrs. St. Onge.

All – Aye

The student services forum adjourned at 8:06pm