

# *Cohasset Public Schools*

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

*Empower Students to Improve Communities*

## **REGULAR MEETING OF THE COHASSET SCHOOL COMMITTEE**

### **School Committee Minutes**

Wednesday, November 1, 2023

6:00 PM

Learning Commons

Cohasset Middle/High School

Virtual Meeting - Cohasset 143TV/Zoom/Facebook

### **In Attendance:**

Ted Carr, Secretary

Lance Dial, Chair

Paul Kearney

Jennifer Lesky

Craig MacLellan, Vice Chair

### **Also, In Attendance:**

Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka, Director of Student Services

Noah McDowall, Liaison, SSAC

Rock Roberts, Cohasset Public Schools, DEC

Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors

Sue Owen, Director of Finance & Operations

Dr. Leslie Scollins, Assistant Superintendent

Dr. Patrick Sullivan, Superintendent

All school committee meetings are recorded.

## **AGENDA**

**Call to Order** – Chairman, Lance Dial welcomes everyone to the Regular Meeting of the Cohasset School Committee for Wednesday, November 1, 2023 at 6:00 PM. This meeting is being held in-person at the Cohasset Middle High School in the Learning Commons. With the magic of technology, this meeting is virtual for those who want to attend via Facebook or Zoom. There is a new feature on Zoom for closed captioning, this feature can be found in the upper right on the toolbar to access and click where it shows closed captions to activate. Zoom allows live chats for comments, and Facebook is watch and listen only. **Roll Call: Mr. Kearney-Present; Mr. Carr-Present; Ms. Lesky-Present; Vice Chair, MacLellan-Present; Chairman Dial-Present.**

**Opening Remarks** – The Chair states the Halloween holiday is obviously for dressing up and this school committee had some questions come in from the community about the school dress up policy, to whether or not costumes can be allowed at the elementary school, or any other places. Chairman Dial had a conversation with Dr. Sullivan that in general there is not a district wide moratorium or forbiddingness of any sort of costumes. Our policies are handled at the building level and these decisions are made by the building principals. People have pointed out there are times costumes are worn for Spirit Days in school and these are intentionally not to be a district wide policy, but a building wide policy set by the building principal.

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**Opening Remarks** – We certainly appreciate all of the community’s comments which have raised an issue that this school committee may want to discuss further. The first line of inquiry would be towards the building principals to see what their decisions are that could be very valid reasons for not wanting to shoulder any distraction. The school committee certainly wants to be a clearing house for that line of inquiry. The Chair also wants to let people know this is a building policy and not a district wide policy.

Vice Chair MacLellan asks the Chair what that means for a parent at home who may have an issue with the dress code policy. What if the parent had contacted the principal and was told that there is a prohibition on costume options and what should that parent do.

The Chair states parents should contact the principal of that school about their dress up policy. The next step would be like any escalation, either go to the Superintendent, the school administration, or to the school committee with specific discussions about what the policy is and views from the community to consider.

**Public Comment** – None

## **Invited Guests**

### **Superintendent Student Advisory Council (SSAC) Liaison Report (Noah McDowall)**

Noah McDowall expresses this school year went off to a great start, the past couple of months have been really good, especially with the senior class setting a good tone for the high school which is an important thing to note. Noah McDowall is also an Ambassador with Safe Harbor who says they have a few projects down the road on what they’ve been doing. From a more macro level, Noah says there are two things that he’s mainly been noticing. One is from the mental health side, obviously being a senior, you get a different perspective on the stressors related to college applications and early decision deadlines which were today and how that affects the senior class. Noah says the administration, especially the high school, are doing a good job with guidance and how the school is handling that intentionally is really well handled. Noah thinks if guidance were to apply a similar approach to the underclassmen is what they’ve heard and voiced a lot in Safe Harbor. The Guidance Department’s role takes seniors within their academic life handling and helping seniors, but if guidance could continually throughout high school and develop this relationship can help the underclassmen for when they become seniors.

The other thing Noah notices is related to substance misuse which really touches a lot on the Safe Harbor presentation that will be presented today. There’s been some concerns about substance misuse in the schools that have not really been directly brought up by the administration. There have been some concerns about the use of vaping devices found in bathrooms. The administration has locked doors to some of these bathrooms and the administration hasn’t directly given a voice to that or has said they’re locking the bathrooms because noticing an increase in vaping devices. Noah hopes the administration going forward should definitely give voice to that and should definitely give voice to problems they’re seeing with concerns around that. The administration doesn’t speak directly to the student body on how to help prevent this.

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Mr. Kearney says that is such a good perspective from Noah and that's what he's here for, to let us know what's going on for concerned parents, concerned administrators, and how to emphasize that. We should be working on that as a community to educate why this is happening, to be honest and tell us so that we can shed some light to this problem, kudos to Noah, and Safe Harbor for doing this presentation.

Dr. Sullivan has a quick question to ask Noah just for clarification. Has the administration at the high school communicated to students about why they're locking the bathrooms.

Noah says the administration has communicated occasionally earlier concerns was some vandalism in some of the bathrooms. Some bathrooms are being locked around lunch time, or around lecture time, which is the main concern about activity with vaping that hasn't really been communicated with the student body. The administration hasn't been communicative on why they're doing this, and what they're doing about it.

Dr. Sullivan says that is a place to start, to have an open conversation with the administrators to get their point of view and to really understand why they're locking bathrooms, and what they're trying to do. Dr. Sullivan can certainly speak on behalf of Principal Scott and Principal Noyce as a team, they don't want that behavior happening. They want to partner with students to make sure it doesn't happen, but it's important to have open conversations to understand exactly why they're doing this. Expressing students' feelings as to why they're doing this so we can get to the bottom of it.

Mr. Carr says this is a very important topic and the school committee should keep this on our agenda regularly to make sure that we're responsive and discuss it.

Noah says at the health and wellness programs we really talked about these issues, it's just more specific on how it's going on at school. This was Noah's main concern he wanted to raise, but overall, the administration is doing a large amount of work within the curriculum for educating students around substance misuse, such as vaping. There have been a lot of teacher conversations amongst students and Safe Harbor will be touching on this that is also related to alcohol abuse where shared stories from past colleagues of their experiences and doing a lot of great work. A room for improvement would definitely be addressed in this area or being communicative for this one especially.

Dr. Sullivan expresses how proud we are of Mr. Kearney and the Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors and the work that they're doing. We'll be seeing this in the Safe Harbor presentation, and the administration is 100% behind that from the event we just had around alcohol is evidence to that. No one wants to push anything under any rug, we want to be really, really transparent about it. If there is something that the student body feels are happening and the administration is dealing with it in a particular way and students feel that's what is happening, we need to surface that to make sure that first of all we stop any behavior that might be behind that.

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Secondly, students should have a good idea of what is actually going on in closing those bathrooms, so there are no misconceptions. Dr. Sullivan appreciates and thanks Noah for speaking about it.

Ms. Lesky is super appreciative of Noah bringing forward this topic. It's hard to hear as a parent and for the administrators who are sitting here at the table to know that's potentially happening. Ms. Lesky would like the students to advocate for clear conversations with the building administration, but also about how important Noah's role is with Safe Harbor. If these particular bathrooms are being locked, they'll find other places to do that, and times to do it, whether it's on school property or not. That educational piece is really important rather than a punitive piece of not having access to bathrooms for all children during particular times of the day just serves as a general philosophy. Getting to the core of why those bathrooms are closed. It could be very well plumbing, who knows! As a student body they'll have some guesses about what that might be and find out why and what it is. Then really making sure that the education piece is taken care of. Students have a voice to do that, which is wonderful.

Vice Chair MacLellan thanks Noah for the update. Ms. Lesky just made the point that he was thinking about what the defectors are in the bathrooms. Mr. MacLellan asks Noah what is the frequency of that factor, and how many times has this happened?

Noah says two to three times throughout the year, but not the same bathroom that has been occasionally closed. It's really not denounced when this happens.

Chairman Dial thanks Noah and Safe Harbor who will be showing us a presentation tonight. The Chair wants to acknowledge what Noah talked about earlier that is worth talking a little bit about the role of guidance counselors and how they can play a larger role throughout the year, which is an important observation as well. The Chair doesn't want that to get lost as we focus on other things, and this will be placed as a future item on the school committee's agenda.

## **Invited Guests**

### **Cohasset Spotlight on Learning: Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors [Stopping Teen Drinking]**

The first introduction is from Jack Kearney, a senior at Cohasset High School as well as a senior Cohasset youth leader for Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors. Jack thanks the school committee for having him along with some of his CYA peers as invited guests today. Also, Calvin Spear is a Senior at Boston College High School and one of the founding members of Cohasset's Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors and super involved with the Cohasset community. Maxwell Fernald, a junior at CHS and his first year as a youth leader in training at Safe Harbor. Noah McDowall, senior at CHS as well as a senior youth leader for Safe Harbor. Layla, senior at CHS and also a youth leader for the Cohasset Youth Ambassadors Program. Ivan Triaki, a junior at CHS and youth leader. Marcella Reyes, freshman at CHS and this is her first year as a youth leader in training with Safe Harbor, and Samantha Kearney, who is a senior at CHS, and a senior youth leader for Safe Harbor.

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## **Invited Guests**

### **Cohasset Spotlight on Learning: Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors [Stopping Teen Drinking]**

Dr. Sullivan thanks Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors that are here today and for all their efforts. He can't say enough how proud we are with Safe Harbor and the promoting of the youth to lead their endeavors not only make sense, but it's tied in with everything we want to do as a school district, and we're so very proud of them all.

The Mission Statement for the Cohasset Youth Ambassadors is a program under the umbrella of Safe Harbor Cohasset Coalition. This youth-led program builds leadership skills, raises awareness around health issues affecting the Cohasset community, and facilitates lasting peer relationships. Their first goal for this year and the second year in a row doing this was preventing under-age drinking and drug use on Halloween, promoting safer alternative activities to celebrating the holiday. The CYA held events like a pumpkin decorating contest to enhance community connectivity, helping to create a safe environment for those struggling with addiction or looking for a better alternative.

The next project the CYA are set to work on that CYA has been doing for a number of years up to this point is a sticker campaign at Curtis Liquors on 3A around the Thanksgiving holiday. The CYA designed sticker with a graphic picture along with specific statistics, or data points focusing on discouraging adults from providing alcoholic drinks to underage teens. Teenage drinking is related to adults buying alcohol and bringing it to teens. The campaign is put on drinks that most appeal to teenagers, a piece of awareness for adults when purchasing alcohol.

A student alcohol talk was held last Tuesday at CHS along with statistics from a 2021 survey. Around 16% of students in CHS who drink are provided alcohol by a parent. This presentation opened a conversation for students around alcohol and its effects, without harsh negative stigma. Speakers focused on providing their experiences without giving a "because" answer. Nurse Esson gave students some possible vital information about how to help someone experiencing alcohol poisoning.

Another event CYA will be hosting is the Holiday Stroll. They'll set up a booth to develop family fun trivia games, and give out candy which all members of the community can participate in. This helps people to connect with other families and children who attend the same school and learn about substance misuse prevention, mental health, and healthy coping skills.

The CYA also designs and creates bulletins to display in Cohasset Middle/High School. They hope these bulletins will send an anti-alcohol message that are designed by their peers. Each year the CYA performs for younger children, Samantha Skunk, a favorite event hosted by the CYA that teaches the younger generation the dangers of substance abuse and vaping. Samantha Skunk is a play performance, the CYA usually performs for the elementary grade levels. The play is about a skunk, named Samantha, that actually goes into two stories. The first part of the play is about Samantha, a skunk who vapes and gets sick, then turns green. Then this really nice parrot comes into her dreams and tells her she needs to spread the word that vaping is bad.

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### **Cohasset Spotlight on Learning: Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors [Stopping Teen Drinking]**

Last year the CYA raised awareness around youth mental health a program called Cohasset Minds Matter. This was a beneficial way of taking in outdoor surroundings to pause when stressed with yoga, guidance resources, stress balls, and yard games.

Mr. Kearney says the presentation was fantastic, it really educates people, especially when they pinpointed how kids get alcohol. This is a whole community that needs to be educated and for the CYA to come here today and educate us, it's a great start and thank you all for everything you do.

Mr. Carr says the CYA does a great job talking with really young people and genuinely thanks them for speaking here today about this important topic and appreciates them all for being here.

Ms. Lesky thanks the CYA for being here today and speaking to the school committee and showing the breadth of the work they are doing this year, getting super important topics to know. As parents, we know that what is said amongst peers, whether it's the younger students in the CYA program or when speaking to other schools, it's so much more powerful coming from you as your peers as super cool members of the high school community, than whatever parents could every say, and knowing that is such a gift that you all are giving to our community by speaking about a really important topic.

Vice Chair MacLellan expresses his gratitude to each and every one of the CYA for everything they do in order to educate their peers about the dangers of alcohol and substance abuse and for serving as role models to others who may not feel comfortable standing up in the face of peer pressures. It's really important to increase awareness about these issues and all of them do that. If it's going to start somewhere, it starts with all of you and you all should be very proud of yourselves for doing that. It's quite courageous at your age to endeavor in this, thanks for everything you all do.

The Chair echoes on all the comments from this school committee. Thank you for what you're all doing for our community. Ms. Lesky alluded to this on what you're doing is not just putting stickers on there and putting up posters, signs, and posting bulletins. You're creating a safe space for people who don't want to drink or feel like they should, or don't want to do things and feel like everything is pushing them in one direction. You're the role model, you are the people standing up and giving people an alternative, and you're showing that it can still be cool, and that's phenomenal! While you're doing this, you're doing good and you're also building great leadership skills. You're finding opportunities with different ways to connect and you're being creative. These are skills that you're going to develop all your life and you're all going to be really beneficial as you all go forward. You're going to be ahead of people because you've already gone beyond and created a marketing campaign, and you've already gone and convinced people on difficult topics. You've opened up difficult conversations and had people talk about it and think about things in ways they may not have before. This is a fantastic thing that you're all doing both not only for the community, but for the people in it and for themselves. Thank you very much for all you're doing, definitely a pat on the back for them all.

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**Cohasset Spotlight on Learning: Safe Harbor Youth Ambassadors [Stopping Teen Drinking]**  
Dr. Sullivan would like someone from the CYA to explain a little bit more about the presentation at the high school last week, such as the format so that people who might be watching may want to know what happened, it was a powerful approach. Dr. Sullivan says with him being on the Steering Committee he knows that alcohol awareness and avoiding alcohol as teens was something that the CYA really wanted to focus on, and it's been identified as a community concern. Mr. Kearney always took note of this, and Dr. Sullivan thought that was a really neat collaboration happening, and he just wanted to make sure everyone was aware of that. This is fantastic work, and he can't express his thanks enough for all that you all do.

There were three speakers at a presentation last Tuesday who spoke to the entire high school on how alcohol affected them, how recovery helped them, and how their forecast will be after recovery. The entire student body broke out into groups with various volunteers and members of the Cohasset Police Department, each class then had open discussions about it.

## **School Updates**

**School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)** – Dr. Sullivan has an exciting piece of news to share with the school community, some may or may not know that our Food Services Director, Marilyn Howarden, is moving to a different position outside of Cohasset. Dr. Sullivan would like to thank her for all that she's done for Cohasset Public Schools. We really wish her the best in that endeavor. With that, came an opportunity for us to look for a situation that would best suit us in filling that position and we did have a very representative search committee and Mr. Kearney was on it, Mr. MacLellan was on it, Dr. Sullivan was on it, Sue Owen, our Director of Finance and Operations who oversees our Director of Food Services was on it and two Food Service workers on the team as well as our HR person, Jerilyn Ballard. It was a wonderful group, we looked at some very excellent candidates for not just replacing the Director of Food Services. We also looked at companies to make sure that we had the best possible situation for our Public Schools. One individual shined above all others, and Dr. Sullivan expresses how excited he is that we're getting this individual because he brings so much to us. Dr. Sullivan will highlight some of his previous work, who owns a restaurant called Sabar which was once in Plymouth and a beautiful restaurant for years and years before moving to be a Food Service Director in Westwood. We have him coming in from Westwood and his name is Venicio Cordon and Venicio is from Guatemala originally where he studied, and he brings an incredibly collaborative approach with a lot of creativity and he's going to be the perfect choice for Cohasset Public Schools. He'll be transitioning the week of November 13<sup>th</sup> and Dr. Sullivan can't say enough how excited he is to introduce him to the school community and to improve on what we have. We have a lot of momentum going on with our Food Services, much thanks to our subcommittee, with Mr. Kearney and Mr. MacLellan on it. Dr. Sullivan just wants to keep that momentum going and the new Food Services Director is a perfect person to do this, he's a wonderful addition to our staff.

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## **School Updates**

### **School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan)**

Mr. Kearney would like to give the Administration some credit for how this was handled with the whole process. It was done professionally, and it was great to put everybody on a team to come up with a synergy. We looked at companies, we looked at individuals, we spent a lot of time and Mr. Kearney says it was exciting to be part of it. Good things to come and Mr. Kearney just wanted to let the Administration know they did a great job, thank you.

Our PSO led a Trunk or Treat at the Osgood School, it was phenomenal to see the community come together. They really deck out the trunks with some very creative decorations, a happy event for all. Dr. Sullivan thanks the PSO for sponsoring this, it was great!

Dr. Sullivan had the opportunity to view our new panels, all of our learning spaces are outfitted at the Middle School now with interactive panels, a great improvement in our schools and the learning that's happening because of these panels are definitely benefited. Dr. Sullivan would like to thank the Capital Committee and all of the school committee and Dr. Leslie Scollins for advocating for this as well as for Sue Owen for her good work to make sure this happened.

Historically, we held our Black College and University Fair that our METCO Director, Alyse Gittens-Carl brought our METCO students too, just a wonderful opportunity. We had a lovely Middle School Coffee with parents that was very highly attended. We're trying to do this type of activity at all grade levels this year. We had our "O SO GOOD" celebration party for our Osgood students. The students were all so proud as they should be of being chosen.

All of our school sports teams are thriving. Our Athletic Director, Mr. Rotondi and Dr. Sullivan were talking that we may indeed be the only school district that has home games for all of our sports teams, meaning that we're all high seeds, it's not only in the tournament, but we're also expected to do very well in the tournament.

### **Cohasset High School Fall 2023 Athletics Update**

#1 The Boys Soccer MIAA Division 4 (13-3-2) will host the winner of the preliminary game between Mashpee and Greater Lawrence in the first round. [Date and Time TBD].

#2 Our Football MIAA Division 7 (4-3) will host #15 Manchester-Essex in the first round on Friday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

#3 The Girls Soccer MIAA Division 4 (11-3-3) will host the winner of the preliminary game between Sturgis West & Tri-County Tech in the first round. [Date and Time TBD].

#8 Field Hockey MIAA Division 4 (11-6-1) will host #25 Bellingham in the first round on Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 4:00 p.m.

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## **School Updates**

### **School News (Dr. Patrick Sullivan) Cohasset High School Fall 2023 Athletics Update**

#13 Volleyball MIAA Division 4 (14-4) will host #20 West Bridgewater in the first round on Thursday, November 2<sup>nd</sup> at 6:00 p.m. Dr. Sullivan expresses how amazing this is! Not having an official Volleyball team last year. Typically, those teams struggle when they become a Varsity program, not Cohasset! We right away won our league and became #13 in the Division in the State.

The Boys/Girls Cross Country MIAA Division 3 will compete at the State Meet on Saturday, November 11<sup>th</sup> at the Northfield Recreation Center. Boys Golf MIAA Division 3 completed their season on Wednesday, October 25<sup>th</sup> at the South Shore League Tournament held at the South Shore Country Club. The Cheer program will continue to support our Football team and perform during their playoff games.

*Dr. Sullivan throws out a little pitch for our Special Town Meeting scheduled for Monday, November 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. in the Cohasset High School Gymnasium. This is very important because on this is a vote for our School Stabilization Fund which would give us \$1.5 million for very needed improvements for which Dr. Sullivan encourages folks to come out. They'll be partnering to try to get some babysitting services during the Special Town Meeting.*

## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins and Mr. Rock Roberts)**

We'll be looking at our scores, our achievement scores, and our growth scores. Rock Roberts will be showing 10<sup>th</sup> grade all the way down through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade and look at score's comparison to last year with 2019 our pre-pandemic numbers to see where we are. Rock Roberts says this is a two-part presentation, tonight he'll be presenting the data from 2023 MCAS. On December 6<sup>th</sup> they'll have an action plan of what they're doing with that data. Currently, they've been in discussions with school departments in grade levels how to go over the data, discussing growth areas, and things of that nature. The following scores deserve some headlines.

### **MCAS Results Presentation -2023 MCAS Headlines**

- Cohasset High School and Deer Hill Elementary School both are 2 of the 66 schools recognized by the state for demonstrating high achievement and strong growth under the state's accountability system.
- In terms of meeting/exceeding expectations, the 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS scores were among the highest in the state: [ELA 5<sup>th</sup>] [Math 17<sup>th</sup>] [Science 14<sup>th</sup>] (Introductory Physics)

### **Grades 6-8**

- Achievement scores in ELA and Math are higher than in 2019.
- The average growth score percentage in Math is 70%.

### **Grades 3-5**

- [5<sup>th</sup> grade achievement scores are higher in all subject areas]
- [4<sup>th</sup> grade students exceeding expectations in Math increased by 9%]
- [3<sup>rd</sup> grade students exceeding expectations in ELA increased by 8%]

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## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Academic Initiatives / Updates (Dr. Leslie Scollins and Mr. Rock Roberts)**

The next few slides from Rock Roberts presentation are focused on achievement data that starts with 10<sup>th</sup> grade, from 3-year studies, 2021, 2022 & 2023. In terms of ELA, we had 34% of students whose scores exceeded, which is a huge, huge jump from the previous year. In those exceeding scores they were the highest ever for Cohasset going back to after the legacy, which is pretty significant. In Math the scores jump in the number of students who are exceeding or meeting that are up to 18% from 2022. In Science they don't have 3 years of science data, they only have 2 years because in 2021 they were still on a legacy, 2021 they had partial abbreviated testing.

In 2023 Science MCAS students exceeding or meeting expectations is up 12% which is also reflected in the number of students exceeding. In the next slide of Rock Roberts presentation is a 2-year comparison with surrounding towns for students' percentiles in 10<sup>th</sup> grade. We see an increase in Cohasset starting with ELA that was 76% in 2022, and 89% in 2023. In Math it was 67% in 2022, and in 2023 it was 85%. Science was 63% in 2022, and in 2023 it was 75%. A typical growth is 40-60 and a high growth is anything above that, and we're well within a typical growth. Cohasset has the highest of meeting or exceeding in ELA in comparison with our surrounding towns.

One of the things that jumped out to Dr. Sullivan is our achievement level. In the middle of last year and basically all metrics, the number that really shouts out to Dr. Sullivan is the growth. Looking at the growth in 2023 in ELA, and looking at the growth in 2023 in Math, both are by far pretty firmly. Duxbury definitely grew a lot as well, but we're firmly growing faster than any other district in terms of our MCAS scores. Growth is measured like cohorts of students' so it's comparing students who have performed at a particular level across the district and our students are outperforming and are growing in comparison on how they did the previous year at a more rapid rate than the districts surrounding Cohasset. For that, Dr. Sullivan is very proud of and very much focused on making sure that every student grows.

Rock Roberts says when we're looking at percentiles, the state is really looking at that 40-60 typical growth zone and this is what they expect students to be growing in this area. When we see 60-79 that is a high growth and anything over 80 is a very high growth. When that average growth is in the high growth zone, it shows that students are really doing well.

Dr. Sullivan says not to mention our district was #2 in the state when we looked at all of this put together and factored in growth. Growth is a very important measure of how fast the district is progressing in the Public Schools. Rock Roberts presentation shows that the Cohasset Public Schools are recovering faster than any district from the pre-pandemic.

At every grade level, students come in with different personalities, different strengths, and different weaknesses. On September 21<sup>st</sup>, the Boston Globe had an article that MCAS scores are still well below pre-pandemic levels. There's been some progress, but there still below pre-pandemic levels. Cohasset Public Schools look really good in relation to the state.

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Students who were in grade 1 when the pandemic came around and schools were shut down are now in grade 4. That early literacy piece has been a struggle for students statewide and we can see Cohasset Public Schools are growing, we're not quite where we were in 2019 when looking at ELA scores for 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and even into 6<sup>th</sup> grade. After that CPS clearly caught up and surpassed from 7<sup>th</sup> to 10<sup>th</sup> grade and really in Math across the board.

Dr. Sullivan says just to expand this a bit, the state says many, many districts are not where we are right now, where some of the districts around us are that were blown out from the data Mr. Roberts just showed us.

Rock Roberts says that the general growth opportunities will be shown at the December 6<sup>th</sup> school committee meeting. ELA scores remain at or below the 2019 levels in grades 3-6. Room for growth with high needs students. Moving the margins is when we go through this data, we're looking at students who are on the cusp. How do we get students meeting expectations to exceeding. How do we get from partially meeting to meeting will become target areas when we're approaching this.

Mr. Kearney says this is fantastic news, this was a well thought out plan and appreciates Mr. Roberts presentation. He also would like to thank the Administrators and all the work they did, especially when we'll focus not only on the kids that are exceeding, but the kids that are also struggling.

Mr. Carr says just in general the presentation is great, it shows that we're killing it! Mr. Carr just doesn't know what to do about the state numbers in his mind that say how do we make sure for the long term we're paying attention to what else is going on in the state because it could at some point affect us too, every grade is different, every change is different in school, another pandemic, the world's a bit of a mess these days, and the states numbers are a little alarming to him.

Dr. Leslie Scollins says it's interesting from the state level too. Obviously, we're looking across velocity and absenteeism that is still a huge issue, it's not a speedy recovery here. As long as we keep our families and our students engaged and they're here in our classrooms and working with our teachers, it goes well for us too to stay above the state's average. To Dr. Sullivan's point is we've rebounded faster, we're really fortunate our families have been so supportive, and our teachers have been really working so hard. We've made some adjustments in our practices and in our curriculums and the school committee has really supported the administration so much with willingness for us to be able to do that. We should really keep an eye on the state's numbers.

Dr. Sullivan expresses his sincere thanks to Dr. Leslie Scollins and obviously to the staff, they're the ones that are teaching material to teachers, but we did invest right away in early literacy and early numeracy and those are the areas we know we need growth in, but the whole state needed this too, and Dr. Sullivan believes that investment is paying off with our students as they move through the system. That was a very wise and a very smart decision by Dr. Scollins to drive us in that way.

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## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Curriculum Guide Work Update / Director of Data, Circulation and Evaluation Update (Mr. Rock Roberts)**

Mr. Roberts states the MCAS is one data source, it's a significant data source, it's one that we share in common with every public district in the state. It's something that's a graduation requirement and we're bringing in and looking at all different sources of data that helps us get ahead of possible problems or possibly somethings going to go down the pipe. We see it in some of our social emotional wellness programs. Some of our curriculum data, the i-Ready scores and how we dropped in our Spring Dibles8 course, all those things come into play that we do pilot and look at it as a whole.

Ms. Lesky really appreciates how they're pulling all this information together so we can clearly see this year versus last year and accounting for the pandemic, etc. Ms. Lesky is so happy to see so many areas of growth. There's one thing that Mr. Carr commented on was the conditions of schools statewide that sort of flip sides of that coin is if there are so many schools in Massachusetts that are struggling currently, and the average scores are sort of artificially deflated because of that. Maybe it makes sense at some point to set our district goals around percentages and sort of measure our success against ourselves versus sort of the external of the state. Some of these slower growths, even though they're within range, may be indicative of children who are meeting expectations because we do have so many benefits. We scaffolded in such a lovely way in this district to succeed, that we're not helping those kids to reach their academic potential fully. They are reaching academic potential but maybe not to the extent where they can really soar. On the flip side of that is the other sort of group of students who we talk about as high need students, but we also have students who are on IEP's or who may not qualify.

There were two things that Vice Chair MacLellan liked the most from this presentation. One is of course the students are making a comeback from the pandemic and are performing generally well, this obviously is our primary mission here as a school district. These scores demonstrate that the administration was leading the district in this particular direction was very responsive to the community in voicing concerns about MCAS scores that is also encouraging because it shows a certain level of responsiveness and accountability that lack in other districts that makes Vice Chair MacLellan very proud of our district and appreciative of our administration. Mr. MacLellan directs this appreciation to the Dr's, as he calls them. Knowing that there's a whole team of individuals that work within their leadership team are also responsible for that. Thank you, and Mr. Roberts should be commended for these results here. That being said, it's one data point and we've talked about before and this is a well understood data point, generally a widely embraced data point. That improves us to discuss this openly and talk about the areas of improvement and the areas of achievement, but it's also of equal importance to focus on other data points which the administration is doing. Looking at these scores to see certain things that may raise an eyebrow and then flip to the last page of the presentation where Mr. Roberts certainly identified basically some of the problems. This shows that the administration is using this not just as a presentation but to look at how we're doing and also as a tool to approach development solutions for their growth and that's great, we're doing that with the other data points as well.

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**Teaching and Learning**

**Curriculum Guide Work Update / Director of Data, Circulation and Evaluation  
Update (Mr. Rock Roberts)**

Vice Chair MacLellan wants everyone to understand as folks may be watching this and hear us express our satisfaction and happiness with this overall, we're simultaneously critical of any of the areas for growth that are demonstrated by this but also where we're exploring all the areas for growth that are exhibited in other data points, the many data points that Dr. Scollins, Mr. Roberts, Mrs. Cerwonka, and everyone reviews on a day-to-day basis as students are evaluated. This is encouraging, it's also really exciting to have Mr. Roberts here with us now because we now have someone that is dedicated and is a dedicated team member and we'll look forward to see future work products and the benefits the district will realize as a result of Mr. Robert's work and that he'll be completely dedicated to this sort of evaluation and this very robust analysis and examination of the data and not just MCAS, but the other data points, data sources is going to absolutely 100% help us identify more students in need, more areas where our curriculum might be lacking and it's going to improve our school district. Vice Chair MacLellan will be interested to see next year's results, but particularly because we've sort of did a lot of these categories that bounced back to our pre-pandemic figures which are really encouraging. Now we'll see how we drive from that platform without a pandemic in-between as we come out of a full robust solid academic year. To Ms. Lesky's point, Vice Chair MacLellan doesn't even look at the state's figures on these things. He looks at our figures, our percentage of meeting or exceeding would be great to know. What is that percentage point that we think is a really solid, commendable, appropriate, practical, and a realistic goal for us in terms of the percentage of our students that are meeting or exceeding, we don't know exactly where that is. To Mr. Carr's point that's why Vice Chair MacLellan doesn't look at the state's numbers, there are so many factors that go into that state average and so many districts that lack so many resources that reflect our achievement here in Cohasset. It might be more reflective of some of the inequities that are afoot in terms of access to education and resources, which is another issue altogether.

If you're a family member sitting at home and your student is struggling and having a really hard time as we say when we're talking about these academic updates and these achievement evaluations because we're generally pleased with that as a district with this does not mean that we're not going to search for ways to improve and we're certainly not saying that every student is met with everything that he or she needs right now at this moment and they should always express their concern if they have concerns about their individual student. We're always being critical of ourselves as we should. The Vice Chair is so grateful for primarily our faculty who teaches our students. We're really lucky to be blessed for the fact that we have them and they need to be commended for this and given the credit that's due for getting our students to this level and certainly to the administration for being responsible and leading us in the right direction. We need our students to read, write, and communicate, add, subtract, divide and multiply and do all those things when we're sending them off into the world fully prepared to do and to become protective members of society that are changing our communities. Empowering students to improve communities as we're trying to do so. Dr. Sullivan should be very proud of himself and this school district.

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**Curriculum Guide Work Update / Director of Data, Circulation and Evaluation  
Update (Mr. Rock Roberts)**

Dr. Sullivan states he loves the word responsive, and the staff was very responsive to this. They have a lot of pride in what they do, it is a data point and they really performed well with it, and Dr. Sullivan really thanks all of them.

Chairman Dial states as an initial matter he echoes to a lot of what this school committee said. The Chair is as pleased with these results in this as he was displeased last year. There were a lot of points of concern, a lot of difficult conversations we had, and he's glad we had those, the results are showing. The Chair wants to highlight one thing in Mr. Roberts slide presentation to one particular figure under the ELA column for the FY2022, CPS shows 4% of our high need students are meeting or exceeding expectations. If the Chair is reading Mr. Roberts chart right that should move down where it turns from 4 to 52, that's huge, and the Chair wanted to highlight that data point because we specifically talked about that last year, now we're looking at a massive increase there. Chairman Dial wanted to commend the Administration on that, that's real evidence to what they're doing is working. On the other side to Mr. Roberts' ledger, again always looking for improvement, Mr. Dial is really interested in learning more about the 7<sup>th</sup> grade because we're seeing it drop from 37 to 17 there. This 7<sup>th</sup> grade theme keeps popping up a little bit and doesn't know if it's the number of students, but it seems to be from the limited data we have at the present time. The Chair is curious to know if there's an area for growth there, he'd like Mr. Roberts to come back so that we can hear more about that. This is phenomenal, and echoes everything that was just stated about our staff, the Administration, our teachers, it's fantastic!

The Chair shares a granular point on conversations they've had and it's a little bit of a plug for parents. He recently attended a parent/teacher conference for his older son in Middle School. This parent/teacher conference was different than anything he's ever had because the teacher had a folder with data, tests, metrics, and benchmarks that showed where his student is benchmarking there. The teacher apologized there were only three layers worth of data and the Chair found that to be massive. The conversations that we can have and with the tools that Mr. Roberts is providing with our teachers are amazing. They clearly identify actual areas for growth, and action plans which are phenomenal! The Chair encourages all parents who are watching and all parents generally to attend parent/teacher conferences, they will learn something amazing about how their child is doing in school even if they don't think there's a problem. There is something there and parents will learn something, and the Chair learned a lot from that data point. It does go all the way down to your individual student that really does help. Congratulations to Mr. Roberts on these results, and well done on his first presentation, thank you.

Dr. Sullivan really appreciates all the support from this school committee and the administration appreciates the high expectations of the community, they deserve that, and we need to be accountable for it. Once again, Dr. Sullivan would like to thank the staff for their great work, they all certainly did a fabulous job.

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**Curriculum Guide Work Update / Director of Data, Circulation and Evaluation Update (Mr. Rock Roberts)**

Dr. Leslie Scollins echoes what Dr. Sullivan's just said, the principals and everyone coming together, really worked hard and they should take a lot of credit for that too.

Mr. Carr mentions he read something about the teachers' union that they wanted to make a big move with graduation requirements and asks if others know if that is happening. At some point we should figure out what that is all about.

The Chair states we'll be having our state representatives come to one of our school committee meetings to give us some legislative updates. That would be a great topic to discuss with them for that visit.

Rock Roberts attempts some humor to his occupational title which he doesn't see how it really ever goes over really well. Mr. Roberts' position is in the arrangement of DCE, DEC, EDC, CED? What is this new position? Is it the Director of Data, Curriculum Evaluation, Data Evaluation Curriculum, and it's a mouthful! We've decided to go with the DEC because it has a ring to it, it flows better. DEC: Director of Data, Evaluation, and Curriculum.

The point of Rock Roberts' presentation today is to layout the three different areas that are part of Mr. Roberts role responsibilities and focusing on an area, or goal area for the year. Just looking at data he also collaborates with the principals, teachers, department heads, and building leaders on how we're using data in informing teaching, learning, and decision making. Works with staff on the regular practice of using data to inform teaching and learning goals and looking at all the sources and how it's being used. Part of Mr. Roberts' focus for this year is to audit the academic, social, and emotional learning, culturally responsive teaching, and the Multi-Tiered System of Support data throughout the district in order to develop a systematic approach to data. In order to assist with that systematic approach Mr. Roberts will be working on identifying a lot of different things related to data in the district in terms of what data sources we have and in what domains do we support. Identify the tools, practices and procedures used (formal and informal) to analyze data in gaps, strengths, challenges, and opportunities. Having dialogues with the leadership team on how we'll look at data to see if we do have the data sources we need, or lacking on certain things we need to find other pieces there. Mr. Roberts will collect the data, store it, and distribute it and to whom he'll share this and what's the process for systematic thinking around that. How does the analysis of data lead to improvement with our action plans and results for people who are accountable for that. Towards the end of the year, Mr. Roberts will compile and synthesize the data that he'll use and the data points they have and share that synthesis with the leadership team where they'll identify gaps, opportunities, strengths, challenges, and next steps. Lastly, Mr. Roberts will draft a data auditor report for an action plan that includes recommendations for the collection, analysis, and the use of data moving forward.

# *Cohasset Public Schools*

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

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## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Curriculum Guide Work Update / Director of Data, Circulation and Evaluation**

**Update (Mr. Rock Roberts)** – Mr. Roberts also did a need survey that was really done ahead of his arrival. One of the needs they had coming in when Mr. Roberts came into the district was really looking at our curriculum documents. We didn't have standard curriculum documents across the district to look at; example this is what happens in 4<sup>th</sup> grade ELA and the 3<sup>rd</sup> unit of study; We're working on putting together a curriculum mapping process that will become a basis for us to do deeper curriculum work because we know where everybody is. It will ensure that we have vertical and horizontal alignment with our curriculum.

This school year, Mr. Roberts has been implementing a Curriculum Mapping Process and has been working a lot with Dr. Scollins on this and working with building principles, department heads, and laying out a timeline for the work, organizing a drafting process and explaining key terms and getting the teachers involved in the process so that we can as a whole get into the process of mapping out our entire curriculum from PreK-grade 12 in all subject areas. This will help new teachers know where they are and be ahead of them. Mr. Roberts will lay out a curriculum mapping process for the district and we'll review that and establish a curriculum committee to help drive the mapping process. This will be a continuous, live document to make changes in areas we need to make improvements in terms of the curriculum. This will also be continuously live on the school website and will be open to feedback.

Rock Roberts shows what he calls an 8-box template. A curriculum map template that consists of a unit summary and how it's connected to the state standards. What skills are being taught and essential guiding questions that are being used with objectives of the unit, any resources, and unit and benchmark assessments. The department heads and grade level teams have a lot of this information for them in scope and sequences and have them as an unofficial curriculum that they've kept in binders and things. All this is information that is being pulled out all together that can be a little bit tedious. In order to engage people through this process, Mr. Roberts wants people to be thinking critically as they go through this. The other box is for concerns and ideas for improvement.

The DEC overarching responsibilities for this year is collaboration with the leadership team and work to improve the evaluation process. The DEC will be serving as a primary evaluator for the math and reading specialists. The DEC will be the Secondary evaluator for first year teachers in the district to develop and run calibration exercises as part of this year's leadership work and initiate and monitor the evaluation process through TeachPoint and that in a nutshell is the DEC!

Mr. Kearney says Mr. Roberts did fantastic work, this is what the district needed to be able to do and what we're doing, we're doing it right.

Mr. Carr has no questions, just a comment. Mr. Roberts has a very cool and important job, and hopes Rock is enjoying the work, and thanks him for being here today.

# *Cohasset Public Schools*

143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

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## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Curriculum Guide Work Update / Director of Data, Circulation and Evaluation**

**Update (Mr. Rock Roberts)** - Ms. Lesky says the curriculum mapping project is just going to be such a gift to the entire district community, the teachers, the administrators, and families as well so they can more accurately follow along how their children are doing in school. There's a nice opportunity once everything is in its place, in a similar format and easy to use looking at cross-curricular connections where when you're studying it you can then design your own column or something like that and some really nice opportunities once you can really see the big picture view of the curriculum. This allows for some good teaching and learning too.

Mr. Roberts says we're always looking for those elements in an elementary classroom for Science, Social Studies, Literacy, Math, and now we have those and we're seeing the curriculum designed of this alliance on this writing, and this reading which aligns perfectly. We can do this with non-fiction text, and they're dealing with the historical concepts that we're supposed to teach in 4<sup>th</sup> grade. This also sets us up for building out some curriculum around deeper learning project-based stuff, it's grounded in our maps and in our skills.

Dr. Sullivan says that is such a *huge move* for us in the next 3 years. That is where we have these pieces in place in order to do that properly, Dr. Sullivan just wanted to assert that! That deeper learning and project-based learning, and problem based-learning is what we're all about in our next strategic plan.

The Chair is glad that Mr. Roberts did this because there's been a lot of acronyms, and this is a helpful overview. This all sounds like desperate issues on data, curriculum, evaluation, and they're all together and they're moving because the curriculum is what's driven up the data to figure out what we're teaching and what the evaluation is how well it's being implemented. Chairman Dial has a question on the evaluation and asks Mr. Roberts if he could give us a little bit more detail on what that is, and where he thinks we are and where he thinks we need to go. If he had a chance to formulate thoughts on how the evaluation process works. It's critical for us to know where our strengths and weaknesses are and where our areas for improvements and efforts are that we need to focus on. The Chair thanks Mr. Roberts for taking on this challenge.

Mr. Roberts says it's really at this juncture by having conversations and going in and do some co-observations, walking classrooms and having those discussions with the leadership team in terms of what do we see when we see this. What does this look like if we're talking about a higher level of skills, things like that. That is where we are now on what that part of the process becomes with the discussions when you get into calibration and does this look like the same sort of thing.

## **Teaching and Learning**

### **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys

Students Services partnered with SEPAC's home office, and through SEPAC's request they want Student Services to describe the Special Education programs here at the Cohasset Public Schools.

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143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

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## Teaching and Learning

### **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys

Mrs. Cerwonka says this seems to be a good place to share with the school committee in a very detailed way what our Special Education programming looks like with all of our watchers and listeners as well.

### **Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings - OCTOBER 2023**

<b>OCTOBER 2023</b>				
<u>Meeting Type</u>	<u>Elementary</u>	<u>Secondary</u>	<u>Out of District</u>	<u>Total Meetings</u>
Annual Review	8	9	1	19
<b>Localization</b>	1			
Re-Evaluations	1	2		3
Initial Evaluations	6	5		11
	MTSS: 1 (Eligible)	MTSS: 1		
	1 (Not eligible)	Parent: 3		
	Parent:	CPS: 2 (1 Eligible)		
	CPS:	(1 Not eligible)		
		Non CPS: 1 (1 Eligible)		
Initial Evaluations	Non CPS: 1 (Eligible)			
Referral Source	1 (Not eligible)	Move In: 1		
Early Intervention	Parent: 1 (Eligible)			
EI	CPS: 1 (Not eligible)			
Independent Evaluations				
				Total: 33 Meetings

Student Services added a localization line to their chart which means when a student moves into our district from another district, we take that IEP and have thirty (30) days to make it our own and localize it. We get to know that student, know them within our school and we rewrite the IEP to make it a Cohasset IEP. Our Early Intervention, EI is for our elementary students that also includes PreK students once they turn 3 years old and are in our Early Intervention program brings meetings to that. Student Services had 2 students in the month of October and one of those students was found to be eligible for Special Education Services in our Preschool. One was found not eligible for Special Education Services which doesn't mean they won't be coming to our preschool, just means that student won't be coming into preschool on an IEP. It is now the parent who is the referral source for their child to receive some services through an IEP.

Student Services continues to receive parent feedback through our IEP evaluation documents when families write back their summaries and their perceptions. All the feedback continues to be very highly rated, and families are very happy at the top of the charts they received on their feedback. So far, Student Services have received four (4) back this month and families are very satisfied along with some nice feedback.

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143 Pond Street

Cohasset, MA 02025

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## **Teaching and Learning**

### **• Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys

Ms. Lesky asks if a parent with a child in PreK came to the school and asked for their child to be on an IEP, would that be inside that EI program and asked the school to do an evaluation of their child without being involved in the eye.

Mrs. Cerwonka says if that PreK student is under the age of three (3), Student Services would not. Special Education programs and services in Cohasset are designed to meet the specific needs of students with disabilities in the least restrictive setting. Cohasset offers a continuum of services and programs to meet the needs of students with disabilities. The Individualized Education Program (IEP) indicates the special education services that are required within the general education and special education settings. A variety of special education services are provided when assessment information, current performance level and the IEP Team determine that specially designed instructions are required outside of the general education setting. Related services are also provided and are listed following the program descriptions. The professional staff that deliver special education services are certified and trained to work with a wide range of students with specific disabilities.

Through the IEP Team process, students can receive services individually designed for the student's needs from our comprehensive resources. Then the nature and/or severity of the student's disability is such that a less restrictive general education environment with the use of supplementary aides and services would not meet the student's needs, consideration is given to out-of-district placements. All the programs offered by the Student Services office can be found on our school district website. Under the guides tab are programs and services that describe Cohasset Public Schools. Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka states she made some recent changes so families know what IEPs are about, what the IEP process is, and how we identify students. Also, all the programs that we offer at all of our schools in the district. Qualifying for Special Education services obviously goes through an IEP team process and involves a lot of formal assessments, it also involves a lot of informal observational assessments. It involves current performances in the classroom, and participating in certain services is entirely dependent upon particular level of need and how much services are needed within special education.

**Cohasset Public Schools Special Education Programs** - We have special educators who push general education in the classroom. This school year, Student Services started a formal co-teaching model at JOS with Seaside Consulting who did all of our co-teaching training for CMS and CHS teachers which has been running well before Mrs. Cerwonka and Seaside Consulting continues to come back to review and revamp to check in with those secondary teachers. This started with us at JOS to bring co-teaching as a formal model into 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade. That is something that Student Services is working on and will be enveloped probably next year once it's really formalized is a model specifically for that school and that grade level with a focus on literacy because that is our predominant focus this year and for those students who are very young students is what it's all about.

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Cohasset, MA 02025  
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**Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

**Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys**

**Cohasset Public Schools Special Education Programs**

Student Services also has Learning Centers that are places when special education students sometimes need more individualized focused in a smaller group instruction that might pull out of the general education classroom and come into a special education classroom with a special educator for some very intensive individualized specific work, sometimes in small groups, sometimes individuals with just a special education teacher, not in the general education classroom. At the Joseph Osgood School they have a STARS Program, “Students Together Achieve Real Success.” This is for students who particularly show significant language delays and those delays prevent them from being able to have full participation in a general education setting. They need to develop strategies to participate in an academic day and be able to access their education. These students have some developmental challenges, sometimes in areas of social skills, self-awareness, some developmental areas in terms of their academics, some executive functioning, sometimes sensory or emotional regulation.

There is a cohort to the STARS Program called the ILC Program, “Individualized Learning Center.” Students will stay in these programs to develop skills and abilities to move into a more co-teaching or inclusion, or a learning center model. All these special education programs and related services offered by Cohasset Public Schools can be found on the Student Services website that are very transparent for families to easily understand.

Mr. Kearney is so impressed with how we’re doing, especially inclusive activity where we’re trying to improve everybody in the classroom.

Mr. Carr says we know children do not come with directions. All of a sudden, they’re very young and you’re a parent, maybe a first-time parent and trying to figure out what’s going on with their child. The first time we touched on an early intervention classroom was super important especially in a small district. Mr. Carr wants to make sure we’re giving Mrs. Cerwonka all the tools and the toolbox she needs to make sure we’re reaching all those parents. We have this unbelievable support system as they go along, but that early intervention is interesting, how do we get that across on how it’s better for the child, it’s better for the parent, and it’s better for the district. The earlier we catch up, the better!

Mrs. Cerwonka is very grateful to the school committee as has right along because they supported and expanded our PreK in listening to our families and being able to grow double our previous opportunities this year. All of those students who come to Student Services from that program we were able to support more of them and Dr. Scollins and Mrs. Cerwonka are bringing some training and partnering with other districts.

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**Teaching and Learning**

**Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

- Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys
- Cohasset Public Schools Special Education Programs

Mr. Carr says the reason why this district is so unique is because we have the ability to catch a student early who might be struggling, this early intervention stuff is awesome.

Ms. Lesky wonders what if seeing these equivalent programs across the grades. It looks like there's a language-based program for grades 6-8. What is the equivalent then for Preschool, don't understand where those students would go.

Mrs. Cerwonka says in time with all of those steps are the way those programs are designed like that. Students have learned the skills they need to learn because they've been having them since 3<sup>rd</sup> grade all the way up. The special education teachers who support those students in ELA and in reading are able to really remind themselves of the strategies that they need to use to be successful readers and able to use those strategies at that point in time. At the time when Mrs. Cerwonka came on board it felt that the program at CMS was really sufficient and students were ready to go on to High School from that. When Mrs. Cerwonka looked at the success rate of students and where their needs were, what she found was the need really was in grades 3-5, but that was too late. For grade 6 they had that intensive support and we needed to push it down to ensure the greater success of our High School students. That's why we've gone in that direction, and we really haven't seen a cohort to support the High School.

Vice Chair MacLellan thanks Mrs. Cerwonka for the presentation, and also would like to voice a general concern. Mr. MacLellan says he's always meeting with Mrs. Cerwonka and the Student Services department that Mrs. Cerwonka just outlined perfectly on the programs we have throughout all the buildings to provide special education services to our students who are most vulnerable at various levels. The Vice Chair just wants to reiterate to Mrs. Cerwonka that we want to make sure that we're evaluating all of those programs for opportunities in terms of communication with the families so that we are being less reactive and more proactive. There are a lot of families that are really struggling. If there's a lack of progress and if there are any new problems that arise. Vice Chair MacLellan just wants to make sure that parents aren't encountering before letting us know that we've seen this. If we're looking at some data for a particular student that is on an IEP and we noticed that there is something that might raise an eyebrow or might be of concern especially to an EI person looking at these without a trained eye in terms of how to evaluate or analyze data that they're getting which is one of the concerns that we had in disseminating and broadcasting a whole spectrum of data to families that may cause unnecessary concern, or maybe an inability to necessarily digest or interpret it in a way that it's meant to be interpreted.

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**Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

- Data Sharing on Individualized Education Plan (IEP) Meetings and Parent Surveys
- Cohasset Public Schools Special Education Programs

Chairman Dial thanks Mrs. Cerwonka for the excellent overview. As he saw and heard the presentation, the word that comes to his mind is robust! This feels like we have a robust of special education programs and services. He asks how do we compare to other peer districts? Are we heavier on the number of services and programs we provide? Are we lighter? Are we right where we're in? Mrs. Cerwonka may not have that now but asks maybe that's something to come back to us with. The Chair is curious how our offerings compare with what is seen in other areas.

Mrs. Cerwonka says an example of our surrounding districts such as Scituate or Hingham are a much bigger district than we are and do they have more programming than we do, Mrs. Cerwonka says yes, they have a number of students who would have support in that. That is what Mrs. Cerwonka always looks at and that is why we have the development of the therapeutic learning center programs. Where are we going with our students and when do we know we're hitting that tipping point where it's time for us to invest in it and stay here. It is sustainable and it is going to be worth budgeting for and putting that kind of program together. Mrs. Cerwonka tries to look at that several years out that we were just talking today about. What does exist out there in other places. Mrs. Cerwonka came from a larger district, and she has experience in building programming and how can we do it here even though we are in a small way that will really support our students and make us a district that people can look at and say, WOW you have a lot going on for your size and that's where we're heading!

The Chair would like to have the school committee and administration focus a little bit on the Capital budget as well. What does our spending look like, where is it going. Are there opportunities for us to capture that by investing in our own programs.

Dr. Sullivan agrees with the Chair and on the point referring to in terms of those margins whereas where is the tipping point where we really need to look at this programmatically. We want to help all kids and if we hit a point where we're not helping kids that are exhibiting similar disabilities, we have to move and adjust. The key in a small district is to be flexible and to be able to provide resources for larger group of disabilities that may not be desperate but might not be the exact same disability. We have to look at that and really focus ourselves on what are our needs for programming moving forward.

**Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

**Staff Training Updates** – We continue to train through Seaside Consulting for co-teaching to go on. We've had that meeting this week and we're looking to bring that to the Deer Hill School for the 2<sup>nd</sup> graders who will be moving up there next year. Shannon Parillo, an expert from Seaside Consulting who has been working with us for a number of years is also coming to give refreshers to some CMS staff.

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## **Special Education Update (Mrs. Barbara Cerwonka)**

**Staff Training Updates** –Mrs. Cerwonka and Team Chairs went to the training for the new IEP and really had a very productive and wonderful day, it was a very good presentation by DESE. We were involved in a full day and Mrs. Cerwonka had the opportunity to send some staff here, Allen Bloom, who did a presentation on the new IEP, and has been for a long time, quite the guru of IEP writing. Mrs. Cerwonka along with 3 staff members went to a Fall presentation to watch him do that. They will also be working with Student Services in department meetings, bringing that and helping us develop the new IEP. There will be another training in the Spring that Mrs. Cerwonka is looking forward to potentially being able to send some staff too. Mrs. Cerwonka has contracted with Allen Bloom this week to come in and work with her staff on training. We're looking for other people who've gone to them with this stuff in our department meetings all year long in small segments and getting ready to implement this new IEP. Allen Bloom will come in June, and kind of take us where we are with the nuts and bolts and bring us to that next level, so our teachers feel very confident next September when we roll out the new IEP. In between all of that we're going to have parent presentations on the new IEP and comparing to the existing structure of the IEP. This obviously is an identified area of growth for us, making sure that families are as comfortable as possible during that process.

## **Budget, Resources and Governance**

**Budget and Finance (Ms. Susan Owen)** -Ms. Owen says there are no updates other than what we've already shared about.

Mr. Kearney says they're going to do a walk through for getting a list together now, so we do have to have a sub-committee pretty soon to do a regular walk through. Once we get the list, we'll do a Capital walk through. Mr. Kearney says he'll keep the school committee updated on that in advance.

**Food Service** – Ms. Owen says an FY25 document went out to department heads and principals to start that process for next year. Venicio Cordon is welcomed by all staff members who will be the new CEO of Food Service.

**Transportation** – We're in very good shape, everything is going well.

## **Community Relations / Communication**

Reports from School Committee Sub-Committees and Liaisons - Mr. Kearney just wants to say we're very blessed here with all the teachers that we have. We also have a middle school council meeting today. The first meeting was a kickoff meeting and Mr. Dial was unable to attend that, he had his own liaison going on there, but it was an excellent meeting. We talked with Principal Mills and a good group of parents that are putting together what their goals are.

## **School Committee Governance**

Topics Not Reasonably Anticipated by the Chair - None

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**School Committee Governance**

Approval of Minutes\*\*

We do have some minutes to approve, although the Chair hasn't had a chance to fully review them, he did note onto some comments made.

**Motion by Mr. Carr to delay and table the approval of the minutes until the next school committee meeting, seconded by Mr. Kearney.**

**Aye – All**

**Future Agenda Items** – Vice Chair MacLellan wants to see what our policy is on Halloween costumes that seems to be a bigger issue about prohibiting something and not having a basis for that. Mr. Kearney says the Fall school sports are ending for the year and maybe have Steve Rotondi, our Athletic Director come in and give the school committee some numbers on how productive we were and what our participation rate was and maybe evaluate our coaches.

Also, Mr. Kearney would like to talk about the 8<sup>th</sup> grade trip. We've been getting some responses about the Puerto Rico trip. He recently had parents come up to him and basically say that it's been too expensive and it's really the elite of the school district that was presented in a way why can't we just do a less expensive trip. Mr. Kearney is glad Craig brought that up, so Mr. Kearney would like to hear how we're going to do this when they come back to talk with the school committee.

Kristen Quinn from 219 Sawyer Street chimes in to say we loved seeing all the teachers dressed in costumes this Halloween and we're looking for an explanation why our students can't dress up. She's happy to wait on this and talk about this at the next meeting.

The Chair would like to have more discussions like we heard from Noah McDowell, our SSAC Liaison, about bathrooms being locked. The Chair would like to get a little more information on that. Maybe for future meetings a report from our Liaison about the guidance department and updates on guidance counselors on what the underclassmen have access to versus what seniors have access that will also be responsive to them. Also, looking at the special education out of district spending to think of a way to have a metric or something on that so we can figure out at a committee level what that liability looks like versus what our investment could be. The Chair will also reach out to SEPAC to invite them to a future meeting.

**Executive Session** – The Chair states they have no reason to go into Executive Session.

**Motion made by Mr. Carr to adjourn the November 1, 2023 regular meeting of the Cohasset School Committee at 8:45 PM, seconded by Mr. Kearney.**

**Aye - All**

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**School Committee Governance**

*The November 1, 2023 Regular Meeting of the Cohasset School Committee adjourned at 8:45 PM.*

*Respectfully submitted by  
Kathy Bock 11-09-23*