

Student Services Committee Minutes

March 2, 2021

5:00 p.m.

ZOOM Meeting: <https://networkmaine.zoom.us/j/88399120213>

Meeting ID: 883 9912 0213

Attendance		
Committee	Admin. Liaison	Other Attendees
X Mandy Merrill (Chair)	X Jess Yates, Director of Student Services	
X Elizabeth Sokoloff		
X Lauren Watkinson		

Minutes	
Item	Discussion
Call to Order	The meeting began at 5:02 p.m.
Attendance/Roll Call	Attendance was taken. All Committee members were present.
Adjustments to the Agenda	Ms. Sokoloff requested that the Committee discuss possible scheduling changes to allow for all members to attend in person. The Committee agreed to discuss this issue after addressing the planned agenda items.
Accept Minutes	<p>The Committee voted to accept the minutes from the 1/19/21 Committee Meeting.</p> <p>Moved: Ms. Sokoloff Seconded: Ms. Watkinson Vote: Yes - 3, No - 0 Motion carried.</p>
*Job Openings	<p>Dr. Yates reviewed current job openings within the Special Education Department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due to a recent resignation, four of the eight Ed Tech positions posted in the fall remain open. Current openings:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 2 Ed Tech IIIs at Kate Furbish School○ 2 Ed Tech IIIs at Brunswick High School• Additional open positions include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ 9-12 special education teacher at the REAL School
*Special Education Budget	<p>Dr. Yates provided a brief summary of the special education budget, and associated requests, as presented to the entire School Board on Wednesday, February 24, 2021. Specifically, she reviewed components related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Special Education Infrastructure Reorganization</u><ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Remove: 4 Instructional Strategist positions

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Replacement: 1 Assistant Director of Special Education, 2 IEP Coordinators, 1 Academic Evaluator, Reinstatement of Department Head/Lead Teacher stipends ● <u>Elimination of Reliance on Contracted Services</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add: .4 Occupational Therapist position, .5 Speech Language position, 1 Board Certified Behavior Analyst position ● <u>Adherence to Caseload Limits and Equitable Distribution of Staff Practices</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Add: 1 Life Skills Teacher at Kate Furbish Elementary School, .5 Social Worker at Brunswick High School ○ Transfer: 1 Resource Teacher from Brunswick Junior High School to Brunswick High School, 1 Behavior Teacher from Brunswick Junior High School to Brunswick High School ○ Maintain: 8 Educational Technician positions added in the Fall of 2020 <p>Ms. Merrill asked for clarification regarding how the proposed model will affect those individuals currently working as Instructional Strategists, given the elimination of those positions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ms. Yates clarified that all new positions would be posted, first internally, and then externally. The individuals currently working as Instructional Strategists would be welcome to apply for those positions. Additionally, as Instructional Strategist positions are associated with the Teacher Contract, terms pertaining to position elimination and seniority apply to those individuals. ● Ms. Yates further clarified that she is working to support the Strategists throughout this change and recognizes the personal and professional impact the proposed model has on those individuals.
*Special Education Resource Site Walkthrough	<p>Dr. Yates introduced Brunswick's Special Education Resource Website to the Committee. She shared its various components (parent resources, paperwork compliance resources, etc.) and encouraged Committee members to use its resources to support their own work in regards to special education, as well as to support others' access to, and understanding of, special education content.</p>
*Special Education Team Wellness	<p>Dr. Yates shared her recognition that special educators are under significant stress, and are working extremely hard under the constraints necessitated by the pandemic to ensure their students' needs are met. She shared her efforts to provide them with support (focus on positivity, sharing individuals' good work with the larger team, Most Valuable Educator awards, staff meeting focus on topics such as Joy and Happiness, etc.) but also her desire to enhance these supports. Dr. Yates sought ideas from the Committee in regards to what might else be done to support the Team.</p> <p>Ms. Sokoloff asked if Dr. Yates had surveyed staff to identify specific needs, or to seek their ideas regarding wellness activities. She also shared a past experience she had as a teacher, in which teachers received unexpected consumables (food, etc.) from their administrators in recognition of their hard work.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Dr. Yates shared that she has not surveyed the staff formally, but has frequently engaged in conversations with the Instructional Strategists in regards to team wellness. She noted that the reports from different schools varied. Dr. Yates indicated she would consider developing a survey to get a better sense of what special educators feel they need in this area. <p>Ms. Watkinson shared her perspective that educators of all types simply need more time. She also shared that she felt wellness initiatives should not require teachers to do anything more (even if such initiatives are well intentioned), but should instead</p>

	<p>focus on giving them something.</p> <p>Ms. Merrill recalled that, in a typical year, Brunswick's parent groups have done a great job with putting together welcome back breakfasts and other activities that show their appreciation for the teachers. She wondered if surprise "grab bags" could be put together for teachers (filled with items like fruit and chocolate), given the limitations on group gatherings due to the pandemic.</p> <p>Ms. Sokoloff emphasized that constraints associated with the pandemic should be considered in order to organize and distribute items safely.</p> <p>Dr. Yates summarized that successful wellness initiatives should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An element of surprise • Consumables • No effort required from the teachers <p>She will work to develop something for teachers given these parameters.</p>
Other: Schedule Adjustments	<p>The Committee affirmed its desire to shift its meetings to an in-person format. In order to accomplish this, the Committee meeting day was adjusted to better accommodate the schedules of Committee members. The Committee agreed to shift its meetings to the first Monday of the month, at 5:00 p.m., and to hold subsequent meetings in person at the Hawthorne School.</p>
Other:	<p>Dr. Yates shared that a primary agenda item at the next Committee meeting would be discussion of the Proposal regarding the future of the REAL School developed by the REAL School Task Force.</p>
Next Meeting Date:	Monday, April 5, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.
Adjournment	<p>The Committee meeting adjourned at 5:47 p.m.</p>

