

SEPAC Board meeting 5.13.2020

Present: Jessica O'Toole, Natasha Rivera, Danielle Pimenta, Heather Nickel, John Skogstrom; Jessica Clark joined at 7:45

(Not present: Jennifer O'Leary, Jess Sheldon)

- How is remote learning going? Feedback, concerns, from us and from other parents
 - HN: for her kindergartner, 2 meetings per week. The K. team has done a nice job. Problematic that the meetings are so long A lot of stuff jammed into the meeting. Started out as a connection opportunity; now content is happening too. Hard to keep them engaged.
 - NR: for her daughter OOD, they do 30-minute blocks.
 - JC: no consistency. Second-grade team seems consistent; for third-grade team, one child has a two-hour block, but other third-grade teachers aren't.
 - JOT: one third-grade teacher won't do anything virtual or video.
 - NR: this type of learning wasn't intended for this age.
 - DP: Do the kids have to produce something during those meetings?
 - HN: Some interacting; word building when the teacher does, etc. Not really producing everything. We need to upload evidence that they are doing something during the week. Online, if a kid loses engagement, impossible to reconnect them in this format.
 - NR: for kids who need redirecting, can't do this remotely. Inconsistency is a real issue.
 - JC: in third-grade class, some kids are thriving with that face-to-face. There are interactive pieces.
 - DP: even third-graders and older aren't required to pass in work?
 - JC: yes, they are. There's an expectation that some work is being passed in weekly for each grade level.
 - DP: parents or kids choose what to pass in. . . ? How do the teachers know that kids are actually learning, & that the lessons match the needs of the kids?
 - HN: our teacher is giving feedback. But in order to see what growth they are making, I think it's impossible to do right now.
 - JC: turned in something that was accurate representation of reversals, etc. Teacher said those things should be corrected. JC sent an email—purposefully left it that way. Teacher said "that doesn't relate to the topic" and those things should be corrected. JC wanted the errors there for IEP data.
 - DP: are these assignments one size fits all?
 - KLH: modified by recommended skill in 4th grade special ed.
 - JC: not individualization, but here are some extra things to practice these skills. In co-taught classroom, they have subdivided to do small-group. Wilson happening b/c JC sent an email to Jen Gaudet, who said confidentiality meant small-group couldn't happen. All parents emailed to say they wanted it to happen.
 - NR: same issue with Title 1. But teaching skills, not talking about their diagnosis. So why avoid instruction or support that don't in any way violate confidentiality?
- Admin letter to DESE
 - NR: School Department (MJ, CG) is looking to send a letter to get relief from OOD tuition. (Because services aren't happening OOD?) Sending letter to DESE Commissioner to review the matter.

- Several members: But OOD services are happening at a high level compared to in-district.
 - DP: so they are saying they're upset these services aren't happening?
 - HN: I think they'll find that those schools are doing well. Daughter still getting small-group instruction, checking work, etc. They have a good model set up.
 - NR: they are renegotiating bus transportation.
 - JS: son's teachers are working full days. (Vs. as a teacher I'm required to be online 5 hours per week.)
 - JOT: I'm worried that this will threaten the viability of the schools.
 - DP: then where would Maynard place these kids? What would the plan be if those schools don't take Maynard kids?
 - HN: the tactic of saving money by cutting special ed—it would be nice to change this approach.
 - DP: would we like to talk to the administration about this?
 - NR: will find out more. Possible survey to OOD families—are they feeling supported?
 - NR: schools are trying to retain every dollar; everyone's worried, looking for anything that could provide relief. But making blanket statements about all OOD schools is irresponsible.
 - HN: better if curriculum director were reaching out to other schools, gathering info, bringing back models.
 - DP: question about money: does remote learning cost more than traditional in-school learning? Is there some extra expense?
 - NR: not just school but town consideration; the town is expected to be short revenue.
 - DP: a short-sighted move. Save some \$\$ now, but potentially not have a placement for that child.
 - NR: also not just Maynard; potentially many towns pursuing this.
 - JC: aren't a lot of OOD schools also private pay? And doesn't contract mean we pay anyway?
 - NR: districts are saying we feel OOD is not providing full services (without fact-gathering).
 - JOT: it's like saying "I want my taxes back"
 - JC: if you're saying the OOD school didn't provide service, now you (district) are responsible for providing those compensatory services—possible legal issues
4. Have people been hearing feedback about providing special ed services?
- JOT: some families who say they need Wilson/OG, but school is saying they are only providing accommodation
 - DP: heard from a parent—speech is sending videos for kindergartner to do, but no work that would allow them to monitor progress. Even if child is getting something, it is enough to determine progress towards IEP goals.
 - HN: resources & accommodations aren't enough; need to be trained to provide.
 - JOT: I'm supposed to be delivering a lot.
 - JC: even teacher parents aren't trained in particular area
 - HN: speech & language; OT, PT, social skills
 - DP: can't expect parents to do any of this. ESL; working & not home; can't rely on availability of parent. Also relying on parent to determine how much work is enough to complete to demonstrate meeting the goal.
 - HN: should be investing in further teacher training, or more special educators.

- KLH: behavioral goals also not being monitored
- NR: pull-out services OOD—lunch bunch still happening, for example. Those services can be creatively done. If child isn't doing assignment, teacher meets with the student—burden not totally on the parent.
- JOT: should we do a Zoom meeting for all parents, find out how things are going, pass them along; also more specifically target OOD parents to find out more. Provide a forum—a check-in or survey? A listening session.
- JC: use this as a catalyst to show district that creating a cohort during the year would make this so much easier now that we're remote.
- HN: watching daughter's morning meeting—seeing how responsive classroom is supposed to be done. The OOD school is also doing a ton of teacher training about the different online platforms. Maynard could excel at this.
- NR: IT director has been tremendous. District wasn't fully 1:1 device, and grades that were weren't necessarily fluent in how to maximize that.
- JOT: choose one thing, train everyone on it.
- JC: not planning for the future—still not providing everyone with a Chromebook.
- DP: parents are really confused with the number of platforms; even harder for certain kids to navigate them independently.

5. IEP Meetings

- JC: from SpedWatch—are parents being asked to sign away their rights?
- JOT: last week, no one asked me to sign anything. Reach out to some parents.
- NR: make this an agenda topic for collaboration meeting—what is being asked of parents for IEP meeting?
- JOT: possibly post on SEPAC page?
- JOT: DESE is recommending that districts survey parents about how remote learning is going

6. Director of Student Services search committee

- Is SEPAC going to be on the committee?
- JOT to follow up with Charles
- DP: it has been hard for Acton to find someone. What is Plan B?
- NR: Interim? Can pose the question to MJ & Charles

7. Collaboration meeting

- JOT: would next week work as a time to suggest? Let's do an internal Doodle.
- Week of 25th?
- Agenda items:
 - Expansion of co-taught model 3rd grade
 - Questions on language-based program (moved to Green Meadow?)
 - General staffing & program change update
 - Clarification on literacy review committee
 - Literacy position posted—NR talked to Mary Jane; it's funding from a grant, earmarked for this kind of role. An "internal posting" (Why can't it just be transparent?)
 - DP: lots of concerns. Why are we giving money to someone who is trained, when we had identified someone trained who would do it for free?

- NR: choosing a teacher who isn't suited for/trained for this
 - What should SEPAC expect to come from this?
 - How did they decide the make-up of the board?
 - Was there training for this committee?
 - Is this person's role going to be review and training? Will they be responsible for PD?
 - Why are we reviewing preK – 12 in one grouping?
- Plans for ESY (guidance for commissioner coming Monday?)
 - Children currently not getting services—those families will deserve compensatory services; how is the district thinking about this. How has data collection been happening? How are kids being assessed to determine ESY services? How will it be different from the kind of instruction/support happening now?
 - How are evaluations being conducted? Are any happening online? Or are they postponing all until fall? Do they have the materials? What is happening with new requests?
 - How are special ed teachers collaborating with general ed teachers? Are assignments one size fits all?
 - When things aren't working for a family, what kinds of responses are team chairs giving?
 - ESL and special education: how much the schools are asking parents to help their kids; if those parents don't speak English, then that support isn't happening.
 - What is the expectation for kids whose parents are sick with COVID-19, or who are sick themselves? What kinds of questions are teachers asking; are they connecting them with resources. Does the nurse get involved?

Motion to adjourn.