

Virtual Special Education & Student Supports Sub-Committee  
Thursday, February 25th, 2021  
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio  
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of discussing the information regarding Grid B and Grid C services, and what it will look like for 4th, 5th, upper and high school scholars.

Members Present: Member Wilson, Chair; Member Rachel and Member Weinstein

Also Present: Alexis Morgan, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Representing the Office of Student Services, Karyn Grace, Shelagh Walker, Jean Spera, and Desiree Phillips; Jillian Kalen, Ena Valenzuela; Cambria Russell; Lisa Downing; Dr. Jill Crittenden, COVID Safety Task Force; B. Kimmerman, Educational Liaison to the Mayor

Member Wilson, Chair of the Sub Committee welcomed and started the meeting at 6:00pm by reading the notice to participate and that the meeting will be recorded. She then proceeded to have the members and participants partake in a breathing exercise. Parameters for the meeting were discussed and explained.

Objectives that were introduced were to discuss the Grid B and Grid C services for expanding the in-person model for 4th, 5th, upper and high school scholars.

Presentation from the Office of Student Services for the incoming students was made by Dr. Alexis Morgan see attached.

[..\..\Downloads\Subcommittee February .pdf](#)

Dr. Morgan yielded the floor to Desiree Phillips, Coordinator for OSS, who shared a video for clarity regarding the breakdown of the presentation, the video was done by the Putnam Avenue Upper School.



OSS Day v2 (1).mp4

Dr. Karyn Grace continued the presentation of what is planned for summer as well as fellow peer, Shelagh Walker who continued the discussion.

Chair Wilson asked Dr. Jill Crittenden her thoughts on the protocols spoken about

- Dr. Crittenden, parent and COVID 19 Safety Task Force - Something's that can be deemphasized is objects are not considered a big concern. Such as touching a basketball and sharing materials, etc. Noted that eye protection has not been mentioned and should be part of the prevention dialogue as well as touching your face. Mask wearing is critical; really good masks make a difference. She then demonstrated ways to wear masks effectively. Recommended a KF 94 mask. Learn about proper steps to ensure safety and mask wearing

Chair Wilson opened up the meeting for questions from the participates.

No questions.

Dr. Morgan reminded the members that there was an OSS Town Hall the previous day and there was hearty discussion during within the setting.

Member Rachel thanked the participants and asked about providing OSS staff with higher quality masks? Also with the updated March guideline, would an OSS provider be in two schools per day?

- Dr. Morgan answered yes two schools per day could happen.
- Desiree Phillips clarified as well there are very few staff who have to go to many schools.

Dr. Morgan informed the panel that a protocol was provided to OSS staff for consistent safety practices for fighting COVID in schools as well as do a follow up reminder.

Member Rachel asked about compensatory services and the length of the day.

- Dr. Morgan answered that this is just not a OSS issue. We are working on programs that can support our families. Partnering with various stakeholders/partners.

Nathan, Senior at CRLS, remarked that there will be remote classes while being in person. If there are days he doesn't have an in person class, can he stay home.

- Desiree Phillips's replied that the student will be assigned to remote workrooms and would be able to work remotely those days.

Member Weinstein remarked how are preparing for additional staffing and how can we support that? How are we preparing to have additional staffing?

- Dr. Morgan referenced that the Summer of 2020 the opportunity was there and offered however very few enrolled, thus mitigating the need. There is a plan in place to start advertising for staffing and still aware there will be a remote piece for families. Reminds that it has been a challenging year academically.
- Jean Spera responded that they have been successful with the staffing. The previous managers have been able to get staff from other entities. Recognizes they will not get as many students similar to last year.

Member Weinstein wondered why there was a low number of student participating and followed up with outdoor education opportunities. Offers the suggestion to work with the Outdoor Education COVID Group. That there will still be two tracks for families, Remote and Outdoor.

Ena Valenzuela echoed Member Weinstein's thoughts and sees the viability of outdoor tutoring for the Summer.

Member Weinstein spoke of and the Summer remote program was not very successful. Remarked about the specialist going to multiple schools and how can the paperwork and tracing be more streamlined?

Chair Wilson reminded that families still need remote as their choice but there does need to be outdoor services for their children. Echoed what Ms. Valenzuela spoke about with the process of contract tracing.

- Shelagh Walker, answered the question of the contact tracing and the OSS coordinators and their travels to the different schools. She then proceeded to go through the procedures set in place and sites examples.

Chair Wilson asked about mask distribution done by the parents and how it is going?

- Dr. Jill Crittenden expressed thanks to Amada Beatty for all her efforts for the purchasing of these masks as well as singling out individual masks and family masks.
- Ena Valenzuela echoed what Dr. Crittenden said about the masks distribution and its success also spoke about the mask survey that was distribution to determined what masks are more successful.

Chair Wilson spoke about next steps from the members i.e., motions and future conversations.

Member Rachel inquired about buying masks in bulk for all in the district, specifically the KF 94 for the OSS team. Was curious of the number of staff?

- Shelagh Walker responded that the numbers would not be large. Would bring that number to James Maloney for possibility of purchase. As an FYI, there are vaccinations that have begun with OSS staff because of their licensures.

Dr. Crittenden agreed to the purchase and distribution of said masks, spoke of the comfort of the mask and to find something that everyone will wear consistently.

Member Weinstein asked about high quality masks and their practicality and how we can respond as a district to distribute.

- Desiree Phillips answered that ironically the free masks are quite good. Of course there is a need a high quality mask in certain instances.
- Dr. Crittenden responds does a mask fitting matter or does a masks with a good filter matter. The components of social distance and outdoors are the keys. Noted that the CDC has made recommendation for fit.

Shelagh Walker wanted to highlight that staffing has been a huge challenge, details the limited number of in person staff. Motions that there will be more scholars coming back to school and that impacts staffing. There will also be a shift between the in person and remote teams that are working with scholars.

Chair Wilson takes a moment to thank the OSS staff for all their efforts and hard work.

Member Weinstein remarked that children are going through multiple challenges and transmissions. Are there thing we can do with outdoor education. Should there be a meeting assemble of that working group?

- Dr. Morgan answered there will be finalizing their Summer principals and planning teams and they would be needed for this discussion. There will be an update as to who is on the planning team. Dr. Brown also noted that MCAS is coming and there will be an update provided for a later date.

Adjourned 7:19pm

Attest:

Jennifer Dever Wood  
Cambridge School Committee