

Virtual Special Education & Student Supports Sub-Committee
Wednesday, April 28, 2021
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of this meeting will be to highlight Autism Acceptance Month, to discuss what CPS is doing to support autistic scholars including transition services, and the resources available to scholars, families and educators. This meeting is expected to end by or before 8:00 p.m.

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

Also present: Dr. Turk, Deputy Superintendent; Dr. Morgan, Assistant Superintendent; Jean Spera, Special Education Director, Dr. Karyn Grace

Member Wilson started the meeting at 6:00 pm. Member Wilson turned the meeting over to Dr. Morgan for a presentation. The presentation objectives were to communicate OSS's efforts to enhance transition planning for students and autism acceptance month, celebrating successes of supporting neurodiverse learners. The agenda was: welcome and introduction, transition services, successes and challenges, questions and answers, and then closing.

Member Wilson opened the meeting to questions on services.

Cambria Russell asked for further clarification on the relationship with DMH (Department of Mental Health) in addition to DDS.

- Shannon Shute clarified that they have a new contact for DMH who is a Cambridge graduate and how to best coordinate.
- Jenna Callahan provided further information on CPS's relationship with DMH.
- Cambria Russell shared the MRC got a new director

Rae Ann Somerville asked Cambria further about MRC and asked how we are getting the information out to the community about services.

- Shannon Shute discussed how getting the resources earlier to students is important especially in DDS.
- Jean Spera discussed how they've expanded their outreach.
- Cambria Russell discussed how there is a DDS 101 class coming up soon.

Dr. Morgan continued with the presentation and shared what they are doing for Autism Awareness month. Elizabeth Rollins shared what Special Start does.

Kaitlin Barlow discussed how they deal with transitions.

Dr. Karyn Grace discussed program enhancements and continuing to build on that work.

Liza Gosselin shared an update that her program is in the middle of a name change, she discussed how special education is trying to get the students to access the general curriculum and discussed how educator's voices are being listened to and mentioned the inconsistencies across classrooms.

Rae Anne Sommerville shared her experience as a speech pathologist and how service providers are trying to be more collaborative.

Member Wilson turned the meeting over Cambria Russell for a presentation, Cambria presented "How FCSN Supports Families and Professionals."

Member Wilson asked Ms. Russell for further clarification on relationships.

- Ms. Russell clarified that they are working with the family engagement department and utilizing family liaisons. She discussed the work in Brockton and how they are bringing different community members. She discussed how there are different ways to do this and they try to meet the district on where they are.

Member Wilson opened the meeting to other Committee members for questions.

Member Rachel thanked the staff for their work. Member Wilson and Member Weinstein echoed Member Rachel's sentiments.

Member Weinstein talked about transition planning and the trouble with getting transition services. He wanted to know where we are with this.

Member Wilson extended the meeting for ten minutes.

Dr. Shute discussed how staff considers themselves advocates to help access services. She discussed the challenges of systemizing it through the grades.

Ms. Spera discussed how they have been building relationships with CPS and all the agencies.

The discussion then turned into what happens to students receiving services after high school. Jenna Callahan provided information about the post graduate program.

Member Wilson asked how we are centralizing data and evaluations.

- Ms. Spera discussed the challenges of confidentiality

Dr. Morgan thanked the staff of OSS for their hard work. Member Wilson echoed those sentiments.

Member Rachel thanked Dr. Morgan and appreciated the clarification for post graduate programs. Member Rachel voiced her support and for the staff to come to them about possible policy creations.

Member Wilson ended the meeting at 7:39 p.m.

Attest:

Allison Daley

Confidential Secretary to the Office of the School Committee