

Virtual Special Education & Student Supports Sub-Committee  
Monday, October 3, 2022, 6:00 p.m.  
Broadcast from the Media Arts Studio  
454 Broadway, Cambridge, MA

Called for the purpose of discussing the new structure of the Office of Student Services, facilitating a process around policy, and reviewing the following policies: Policy Plan for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in out-of-school time programs and Programs for Students with Disabilities.

Sub-Committee Members Present: Member Wilson, Chair; Member Weinstein; Member Rojas

Others Present: Dr. Barbara Mullen; Assistant Superintendent of Student Services, Grace Clemente; Student School Committee Representative

The meeting started at 6:03 p.m. Member Wilson was in the chair.

**Chair Wilson** began the meeting by reading the call and outlined the meeting agenda and objectives which included:

- Discussion of the new structure of the Office of Student Services
- Facilitating a process around policy
- Review and discussions surrounding policies: EJ - Policy Plan for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Out-of-School Time Program and IHBA – Programs for Students with Disabilities

The meeting began with an ice-breaker, and each attendee gave brief introductions of themselves and shared their expectations for the meeting.

Following the ice-breaker and a one-minute breathing exercise, **Chair Wilson** turned the meeting over to Dr. Mullen for a presentation. Dr. Mullen presented recent updates and structure to the Office of Student Services.

Following the presentation, **Chair Wilson** opened the meeting up for questions and discussions.

Maya Gonzalez discussed the afterschool options for special education students and read aloud a statement regarding the matter. **Chair Wilson** shared her appreciation for Maya Gonzalez's urge for more afterschool programs for upper-level special education students and discussed the needed work the district needs to do to ensure equitable opportunities for special education scholars.

**Student Member Clemente** discussed her experience as a student 504 and IEP and shared the importance of the new structure of the Office of Student Services as it will assist in more achievement. **Chair Wilson** echoed Grace Clemente's comment on the intentionality of the restructuring of the OSS office as having multiple entities of student support under one umbrella. Dr. Mullen discussed the goal and possibility of ensuring student feedback is implemented and heard in the OSS office. **Member Weinstein** discussed his enthusiasm for hearing more about advanced learning support. **Member Rojas** echoed Member Weinstein's comments and inquired about conversations within the district community (conversations with students, family, and instructors) regarding support for students that may need (or are receiving) special services. **Member Rojas** also inquired that he would love to see initiatives of the OSS office included in the presentation and the ongoing district plan work.

**Chair Wilson** transitioned the meeting to a review and discussion of the two policies: EJ and IHBA.

The first policy for review was [IHBA – Programs for Students with Disabilities](#). The current policy was adopted on June 5, 2001. Dr. Mullen provided an overview of the policy and how it is relative to the work done in the OSS and how would families interpret the policy. The policy only states the CPSD offers programs for students with disabilities but lacks more clarification and information on the programs that are provided. **Chair Wilson** led the discussion by asking for ideas on the best ways to add more clarification and information to the policy. Zuleka Queen-Postell inquired about the reasoning regarding some of the language in the current policy – specifically, the language that states “which will enable them to lead fulfilling and productive lives” and what every individual student needs to live a fulfilling and productive life. **Chair**

**Wilson** stated that the Sub-Committee and SEPAC will work collectively to modify the language and clarification the policy.

- **Student Member Clemente** discussed testing accommodations for students with IEPs.
- Maya Gonzalez suggested adding language about educational opportunities and learning accommodations into the policy

A brief discussion followed on the next steps. It was agreed that the next steps regarding the policy should be to:

- Research what other school district's policies site their programs for students with disabilities policy
- Modifying language in language in the policy to better align with the district's programming and omitting language such as "handicapped" that is no longer used in the district
- Research more comprehensive policies that support programs for students with disabilities.

The second. policy for review was [EJ - Policy Plan for Inclusion of Individuals with Disabilities in Out-of-School Time Program](#). Dr. Mullen provided an overview of the policy and began a discussion regarding the best strategies to assist with the modification to the policy. **Chair Wilson** inquired about how OSS is supporting students in out-of-school time programs. Dr. Mullen stated that the district and DHSP, unfortunately, cannot serve students all students with out-of-school time commission. Zuleka Queen-Postell shared that the one issue that may arise in the capacity problem is the intake process regarding determining special education services after-school. **Chair Wilson** reiterated the need for support to DHSP to obtain more spots for out-of-school time. **Member Rojas** left the meeting at 7:30 pm. Maya Gonzalez inquired about the next steps regarding the issue and the policy. Following Maya Gonzalez's comment, **Chair Wilson** led a discussion regarding the next steps:

- Dr. Mullen stated that the biggest issue is capacity and perhaps implementing a working group to discuss strategies to provide more out-of-school time opportunities for those in special education.
- **Chair Wilson** also discussed the option of creating a policy order and implementing a working group with respect to the capacity of the administration and the OSS office. Maya Gonzalez questioned if the proposed working group would include both city and school personnel. **Chair Wilson** mentioned that she would connect with the district's Athletic Director to discuss the timeline and rollout of unified sports. She also mentioned that the Sub-committee will continue collaborating with the Department of Human Services and the OSS office to update the out-of-school time policy EJ.

The next Special Education and Student Supports Sub-Committee meeting will be held on Monday, January 30, 2023.

Chair Wilson adjourned the meeting at 7:55 p.m.