



Special Meeting  
May 28, 2020

**CAMBRIDGE SCHOOL COMMITTEE**  
(Official Minutes)

Called for 6:00 P.M. A virtual special meeting of the School Committee with Public Comment was held for the purposes of continuing the conversation about a COVID-19 recovery plan with a focus on special education supports and services.

Members Present: Mayor Siddiqui, Vice-Chair Bowman, Member Fantini, Member Rojas, Member Weistein, Member Rachel, Member Wilson.

Also Present: Superintendent Kenneth Salim, Dr. Carolyn Turk, Claire Spinner, James Maloney, Maureen MacFalane, Barbara Allen, Dr. Lindsay Pinkus, Dr. Alexis Morgan, Dr. Michelle Madera, Steve Smith, Maureen McFarlane

In addition to Superintendent Salim presenting, Dr. Alexis Morgan, Shelagh Walker, Karen Grace, Margie Carman, Desiree Phillips and Jean Spera all spoke on behalf of the Office of Student Services.

Student School Committee representatives present: Sophie Green, Hersh Kanner,

A quorum of the School Committee being present, Mayor Siddiqui called the meeting to order at 6:00 P.M. and read the call of the meeting. She also read that the Open Meeting Law that has been approved for remote participation.

- Roll Call vote was taken to start the meeting:

Vice Chair Bowman present, Member Fantini present, Member Rojas present, Member Rachel present, Member Weinstein present, Member Wilson present, and Mayor Siddiqui present.

The Public Comment portion of tonight's meeting was opened.

The following citizens spoke on behalf of tonight's meeting:

Dan	Monahan	Special Education
Ruth	Allen	Special ed Summer services fall plan
Marianne	Rezaei-Kamalabad	OSS program, Special Start sup separate, Fall planning
Karen	Dobak	Special Education during COVID
Katherine	Gamble	Not sure what motions are up
Robyn	Towner	I'd like to speak as a Special Educator about the issues with Special Education during the school closure

Lisa	Downing	special education
Jessica	Hatlen	Special Education at CRLS

On a motion by Vice Chair Bowman, seconded by Member Wilson, to close public comment: Vice Chair Bowman YEA; Member Fantini YEA; Member Rojas YEA; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui YEA.

Mayor Siddiqui introduced Superintendent Salim to speak and update the School Committee on the Covid Recovery Plan and special education supports and services.

Superintendent starts the presentation with thanks to all the staff who are in attendance this evening. Then turns the presentation to Dr. Alexis Morgan, who begins with an overview of the Office Student Services.

[Distance Learning Plan OSS Update 5.28.20](#)

The presentation will entail the following:

1. Overview
2. Successes and Challenges
3. Key Considerations
4. Looking Ahead

Dr. Salim interrupts the presentation for initial questions.

**Member Rojas** ask for clarity when defining differences for Special Educators, Specialists and Service Providers and what are related service providers.

Karen Grace and Margie Carlman answer on behalf of OSS.

Clear examples of resources -

Online websites

**Member Rachel** thanked the staff for the presentation. Asks about data for two way contact. She also follows up with conducting reevaluation and how is that happening?

**Dr. Morgan** answers that she will get that data to her but then explains in great detail what is in place for follow through with the student and wellness checks.

**Jean Spera** answers yes - that it is an individual process and goes through some examples. Initial evaluations are much more complex. Annual review is more complicated than an initial reevaluation. Explain the protocols for OSS and evaluations.

**Member Weinstein** thanks the staff for their information and input. How many students with an IEP are not getting support and resources? What is needed to get there? Expands the need to plan for the Fall

**Dr. Morgan** follows up with the following - Student learning plans and its documents of , what supports or services students are getting are monitored by week by week, and when we come back into the building, we have all of that documentation. Because of the detailed documents that outline what the student did receive or did not receive, there is a sense of the totality. Which will follow up with a conversation with each IEP school based team.

Asynchronous lessons for the district -they are terrific. Are they being saved and organized across the district and families directly?

**Margie Carlman** answers yes - through a huge google drive. Yes we have the resources we have not made them available as of yet - handouts have been made available. Resources are being modified. It abuses a wealth of information.

**Member Fantini** what services are we not providing. Testing?

**Margie Carlman** answers - We are offering everything - asynchronous and live are both options. It is being offered and any variation possible. We know that some families are not accessing them. We are trying all avenues to get to the families. OSS teams every week meet to know what students are in need and what is needed for the variations.

In her own area of expertise -so much of her testing is hands on. Online format is not the best option for testing.

**Jean Spera** answers that's why we're relying on the expertise of our professionals. Because we're using that in conjunction with looking at the individual student what the student needs. We're trying to discern through the evaluation process. So I think those are the two key components that we are trying to use to determine, you know, what we need to do in terms of the initial and reevaluate.

**Member Wilson** Practices in place for time management, sleep schedules? What are the challenges parents are having with getting their child online?

**Desiree Phillips**, Coordinator for Upper Schools and High School. There is a behavior specialist who works at the high school, and she puts together calendars and daily routines that case managers could share with families suggesting just ways to chunk time to have a more predictable routine, a few different options, you know, because families are all different. We also the counselors are working with families, you know, the student is experiencing, you know, some students are just sleeping because that's what adolescents do. But I think some students are sleeping because they're struggling with anxiety and depression. So the counselors have been working with team members around that. And honestly, a lot of our service providers are providing their services later in the day. Using morning time for parent consults.

When did home base services start?

**Jean Spera** - Some started in early April, and have started later. So we're working in conjunction with the individual agencies and who are contacting us because they are able to provide virtual services, there are some agencies that weren't up and running. And so we had to wait for them to become up and running and coordinate services, there are some parents who are opting not to choose those services as well. So that plays into the mix. Virtual services, and Home Services, there are students in residential settings, who we provide particular services through via a contracting agency as well. Determining whether the residential setting was stable enough in terms of there were many cases of COVID-19 In the residential settings. There were a lot of staff that tested positive. So they had particular circumstances that impacted when services could stop. So those are important variables as well.

**Vice Chair Bowman** What is the engagement plan, strategies and methodology for children with special needs? For a quick follow is this framework that you typically use with engaging this cohort of kids?

**Margie Carlman OSS** answers I can speak to the academics if what the difference is at the elementary, the lessons are targeting goals and objectives on the IEP, and they're delivered using specially designed

instruction. So what that for an example of that would be for decoding. If a child is receiving Orton Gillingham, that's the SDI that is being delivered. So, though the medium is similar to technology, what's actually being taught and how it's taught. So Orton Gillingham has an explicit systematic, multimodal approach to reading that is designed to shift and move with students lesson to lesson. You design your next lesson based on that day's lesson until there's mastery and you're always reinforcing previous skills. The difference is that the special educator is delivering specially designed instruction for writing that could look like framing your thoughts, for you may have explicit instruction with a standard space lesson, a different approach. For math, you might be using a concrete model first and then move to representational instead of more of an inquiry based approach. The special educator's job is to deliver that specially designed instructor.

Specially designed instruction would often be seen if we were on site, you would see similar, you would see that same Orton Gillingham being done at a table with a student or at a board. So the difference is using the computer in this virtual session. What's missed with that is proximity.

**Mayor Siddiqui** wants to underscore the data piece. Who is engaging with the live lessons and interactive video?

Presentation continues.

**Member Rachel** offers the suggestion in the spirit of collaboration, of using a nontraditional approach for survey for the families with children of special needs. She also follows up her initial question with staffing and what is the timeline. Looking for a follow up for more guidance for educators through DESE.

**Superintendent Salim** no group of students is not monolithic, he does think the more components to a survey is necessary. That type of conversation cannot happen in a multiple choice format.

**Dr. Morgan** follows up that they have been collecting data through student office hours and multiple faculty conversations have been hearing student voices.

**Vice Chair Bowman** wants to know are the children positioned to learn using this platform if it has to continue. Engagement? What is working and what is not and future strategies? Follow up answer from OSS.

**Member Rojas** remarks about the complexity of challenges that special needs students are facing. What challenges are able to be tackled with more resources?

**Member Wilson** are services happening at the same rate of time as directed in the IEP during this remote period?

**Margie Carlman** Synchronous sessions as well as asynchronous sessions. So it doesn't necessarily look the same way that it is on the IEP, but all being offered some face to face time, as well as some asynchronous learning to just address both needs. And for some students, the asynchronous is actually a better format. So we've kind of left it to the providers to determine in their professional judgment, which is the most appropriate for the students. Of course it is different than being in school. For sure, but how it works.

**Desiree Phillips**, Coordinator for Upper Schools and High School, answers it is not being provided at the same rate of time. A large number of the services in upper schools and the high school are what we call grade v services, their services designed to happen in a general education setting. A student may have a co taught English class, which they have service in five days a week. But English classes only happen one day a week right now. So they're getting that one day a week of service, but not five days a week of service. It has been very, very complicated to provide grid based services in remote learning. Many of our teams were still honing their co teaching skills in person. And now they're trying to figure out how to be co

teachers online when they don't even know, how to be teachers online. So I would say that special education services at the secondary level have been very complex. So just speaking for the secondary level, all the services are being offered, you know, you're getting at least one of everything that's on your IEP, and a lot of case management and just, general support that I don't know we'd necessarily even count as a service.

- Member Wilson moves for extending the meeting by an fifteen minutes seconded by Member Weinstein: Vice Chair Bowman Yes; Member Fantini Yea; Member Rojas Yes ; Member Rachel YEA; Member Weinstein YEA; Member Wilson YEA; Mayor Siddiqui Yea -7 to 0 in the affirmative.

**Member Wilson** is concerned for the Summer and Fall that scholars are not getting their services for special education. We need to intentionally figure out how our scholars are to receive their services consistently. What does outside services look like and how do we obtain that?

**Superintendent Salim** asks for clarity and Dr. Morgan answers on behalf of Superintendent Salim. Yes, so if we have a student and we're not able to meet their needs, or if they're receiving, they're receiving home based ABA services or they are receiving a specific program, most of our staff members are Training all these things but the issue comes in when maybe on their IEP they're documented to have a service that is not part of the is not held or provided by a CPS employee. And so what we do there is we would contract one of our sorry, did you contact one of our agencies and we would find a provider who is able to address in meet that child's IEP goals provide the service, the frequency and the duration, and we would pay that provider or that agency for that service.

**Member Weinstein** asks about a working group focusing on special needs and the COVID 19 Task Force. CPSD should be meeting with the families of students with IEP's to best position their children in the Fall. Will there be a Summer plan for students with IEP's?

**Superintendent Salim** answers in the affirmative for the task force.

**Dr. Morgan** answers that content will be provided at the end of the year via the progress reports. Each case manager based upon our students will provide the families with how the student progressed over the summer, what strategies were tried, and what are some additional resources or supports that could be in place that could support the child's learning over the summer. The second part in terms of summer options, whether they are CPSD or something from the Department of Human Services or even another outside agency. We have our supervisors of our summer school, our OSS comprehensive and our therapeutic and their tutoring program, who are collecting that data from there. Teachers collected the data about how we had. We know which team which students we've had the IEP meetings from, but also, from a general set side, if the student hasn't been found eligible for the summer with OSS, have they been targeted? Are they being targeted for perhaps the gen education summer school session. We also have a number of providers with DHS who really have amazing options for students with a disability they provide. There's a social emotional camp for students. There's another camp for students, tied to a more academic site, academic slash enrichment. There are multiple different options for our students. I don't necessarily know per se if our staff members would have an idea of all of those different options, but we're trying to do as much as we can at the district level to provide that information so that parents know that they're there. Just multiple resources for them that are available.

**Member Fantini** thanked the educators for their time, professionalism and efforts, very appreciated. Summer School is a very important part of general and special education. Virtual Town Halls are great and the more communication is a key factor - brings up a data dashboard.

**Student School Member Green** are students just starting the IEP process? Has there been any reaching out from students?

**Dr. Morgan** answers that our school based teams if this child has not yet been found eligible, they haven't maybe started the process, and the teams are working together so they are collaborating weekly. So even if the child surfaces as a concern for the general educator, that special educator is meeting weekly, as well as a related service provider, to maybe provide strategies to maybe provide different resources and or ideas that the general educator can try and apply for that student. And as always, we are definitely keeping our eye out and trying to get students through the pipeline through the process as quickly as possible.

**Student School Member Kanner** speaks about the importance of the communications between teachers and OSS staff. Is that happening?

**Jean Spera** answers that our counselors are in constant contact, especially at the high school, the contact is really pretty intense and maybe not so much just in terms of sessions, but in terms of, or supporting with the Learning Community staff. They're part of the whole community staff. They're part of the special education, community staff meetings, and so they are really doing tons of work with all the students on their caseload, and they know them pretty well. Their goal is to make sure that we're looking to support these students where they are now and we're, where they may be in the summer and in the fall. So I think that's definitely part of the thinking. It's part of their nature to think like that and they do.

**Desiree Phillips, Coordinator for Upper Schools and High School**, also lets the School Committee know that OSS is working closely with the guidance counselor's to work on schedules for next year, making sure that students are set up to have what they need, right as school opens. So we're right in the middle of A lot of intense work between the special education department CLS and the guidance department to make sure that students are getting what they need as far as credits and services and things for the fall.

**Mayor Siddiqui** asks are there any plans for an exit interview scenario for the graduating seniors with disabilities? Thanks all for the presentation.

**Desiree Phillips, Coordinator for Upper Schools and High School**, they have mechanisms in place for follow up but not specifically an exit interview.

Motion to adjourn by Vice Chair Bowman seconded by Member Wilson and subsequent vote was taken, Mayor Siddiqui (YEA), Ms. Bowman (YEA), Mr. Fantini (YEA), Mr. Rojas (YEA), Mr. David Weinstein (YEA), Ms. Rachel (YEA), Ms. Wilson (YEA). Meeting adjourned at 8:17pm.

Next meeting scheduled will be a virtual special meeting on Tuesday June 2, 2020, 6PM.

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Dever Wood  
Executive Secretary to the School Committee (temporary)