

QUINCY SCHOOL COMMITTEE

SPECIAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING ~ Wednesday, January 4, 2017

A meeting of the Special Education Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, January 4, 2017 at 6:00 pm at the Coddington Building. Present were Mr. James DeAmicis, Ms. Barbara Isola, Mrs. Emily Lebo, and Mrs. Anne Mahoney, Chair. Also attending were Superintendent Richard DeCristofaro, Ms. Sarah Anderson, Mrs. Catherine Carey, Mrs. Donna Cunningham, Ms. Julie Graham, Mr. Richard Kelly, Deputy Superintendent Kevin Mulvey, Mrs. Maura Papile, Mrs. Erin Perkins, Ms. Madeline Roy; Quincy Parent Advisory Council to Special Education Board Members Ms. Beck and Ms. Nabstedt; Ms. Laura Owens, Clerk.

Mrs. Mahoney called the meeting to order at 6:00 pm.

Director of Special Education Erin Perkins introduced the presentation on Special Education Pathways in the Quincy Public Schools. Mrs. Perkins reviewed the Special Education mission statement focused on empowering students and stressing that Special Education is a service provided to support students, not a place that students are directed to. In addition to academic services, student support is provided by music, physical, occupational, and social/emotional therapies.

Starting at the Pre-Kindergarten level, the pillars of Special Education are to identify students as early as possible; maximize exposure to language; meet students at their developmental level both academically and socially; and to prepare students for the transition to Kindergarten and beyond. Both the Snug Harbor and Della Chiesa Early Childhood Center have 10 integrated classes of 3- and 4-year old students (8 typically-developing peers and 7 students on IEPs for various reasons). In addition, CARES for Pre-Kindergarten is at the Della Chiesa ECC and there are 6 classrooms, with 42 students total (students with autism). Pre-Kindergarten students may go on to attend Kindergarten, Transitional Kindergarten, or CARES. There are currently two Transitional Kindergarten classes, at Atherton Hough or Lincoln Hancock. CARES classes are at Snug Harbor and Squantum.

At the elementary level, the pillars of Special Education are to provide a free and appropriate education for all of our students so that they may be successful in the least restrictive environment; and to identify students as early as possible and provide scientifically research-based reading, math, and writing interventions based on individual student needs. Through the Integrated Learning Team process, general education students are identified as needing support for Literacy, Special Education resource room, and/or English Language Education. For all three programs, there is at least one specialist in each area at each elementary school. For students who have not made effective progress under these supports, placement in a specialized program will be recommended (CARES, the Learning Center, STARS, or LDC). For all students in the specialized programs, inclusion opportunities are provided as appropriate for the individual student's needs or based on student IEPs.

The CARES program provides services for students on the Autism Spectrum Disorders. ABA (Applied Behavioral Analysis) services are provided across QPS by one certified teacher and two consultants. Paraprofessionals are also trained in ABA and two additional teachers are working on certification. CARES students begin at Della Chiesa ECC and transition to either Squantum or Snug Harbor for Grades K-2. At Grade 3, students may be fully integrated into general education or continue at Snug Harbor for Grades 3-5.

The Learning Center program is for students with intellectual or developmental delays. The program provides individual or small group instruction in a highly structured environment. This program begins at Della Chiesa ECC and moves to Squantum for K-2 and Parker for 3-5.

The Language Development Program is designed for students who present with a language-based learning disability and may also demonstrate weaknesses in receptive language. Individual or small group instruction in a highly-structured environment with inclusion opportunities as appropriate. LDC begins in Grade 1; students may come from Transitional Kindergarten or may enter from general education at any grade. Students may attend Snug Harbor or Atherton Hough for Grades 1-5.

The STARS program is for students who present with emotional impairment and students require individual or small group instruction in a highly structured environment. Students may enter the program from the Transitional Kindergarten or enter at any elementary grade. The program is located at Clifford Marshall for Grades 1-4.

For Middle School Special Education, students are ages 11-13, but vary dramatically in terms of maturity. For middle school, the emphasis is on promoting collaborative practices across educational settings between general and special educators and service providers, while providing academic, social, and emotional supports necessary so that students enter high school on the path to college and career readiness. Middle School Special Education includes Inclusion Support, Resource Room Support, and Specialized Programs (CARES, Learning Center, STARS, LDC). Teachers are supported through the Middle School Math Special Education Team, which provides opportunities for collaboration with Math content teachers on curriculum goals, classroom strategies, and unit development that directly align to the specific needs of students. Diagnostic tools include the iReady and MAP assessments.

For CARES, students from Snug Harbor transition to Sterling for Grades 6-8. For the Learning Center, students transition from Parker to Broad Meadows. For the Language Development Class, students transition from Snug Harbor and Atherton Hough to Broad Meadows. STARS students transition from Clifford Marshall to Point Webster for Grades 5-8. At all middle schools, multiple inclusion opportunities are provided for all students as it meets their needs for socialization and academic support. Teachers collaborate on co-teaching and inclusion opportunities and students are integrated in homerooms, lunch, and specialists. The STARS program has a dedicated Guidance

counselor working closely with the students in the program, to give them the tools to self-regulate in a general education setting.

Mrs. Mahoney asked if there are inclusion opportunities at all middle schools and Mrs. Perkins confirmed that these are in place. Mrs. Mahoney asked for follow up on the types of inclusion offered and the number of students served.

For the high school level, the middle school pillars of providing collaborative practices and academic, social, and emotional support are continued. At Quincy High School, students may have attended middle school at Broad Meadows, Central, Point Webster, or Sterling. Resource Room options are available for Math, English, Social Studies, and Science for all grades as needed. There are currently Inclusion Classes for English, Math, and Science content area classes.

At North Quincy High School, students are generally from Atlantic, Central, and Sterling; there are Inclusion Math, English, and Science classes, but no separate Resource Room classes.

Both high schools offer Learning Strategies for Grades 9-12. Currently, QHS has 200+ students on IEPs and NQHS has 90 students on IEPs. Mrs. Lebo asked if students are being routed to Quincy High School because of Resource Room opportunities, but most students are attending the high school that their middle school is aligned with, programmatically or by neighborhood. Mrs. Perkins said that adjustments are made at each high school as needed to meet individual student needs.

Specialized programs for high school: CARES and the Learning Center (combine into one program) at NQHS; PASS at North Quincy High School; GOALS; and PACE (upper LDC) at GOALS. The CARES/TLC students in Grades 9-12 are from Broad Meadows and Sterling and are working on self-advocacy, portfolio assessment, and towards a certificate of attainment.

The PACE program at Quincy High School consists of students from LDC at Broad Meadows and some CARES students from Sterling. With consistent support, these students are working on transitioning to inclusion and general academic classes. These students take MCAS and graduate with a diploma.

The STARS program at Point Webster transitions to the GOALS program for Grades 9-12. Students may transition in and out at any grade, small group academic, social, and emotional interventions are provided.

The PASS program is based at NQHS and is a program for students with social-emotional and/or mental health concerns. The goal of the program is to develop coping skills and self-regulation strategies that will enable them to return to the general setting. Group and individual counseling, life skills, and collaboration with outside agencies are key components of the program.

The Transition Program (LEAP) is for students ages 18-22 and provides a unique and meaningful educational experience together with real world learning opportunities that will empower young

adults with disabilities the knowledge and skills needed for a successful transition into the community. The program will emphasize community-based instruction and community work experience with a focus on the development of social skills, independent living, and financial literacy. Students are training for custodial and food services positions in Quincy Public Schools and training and internship opportunities will be provided by a number of outside agencies.

Out-of-District students are recommended for placement for a variety of different reasons after exhausting the resources within Quincy Public Schools. There are many resources for placement, 169 students currently in out-of-district placements, ranging from Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12 and beyond to age 22. 53 students are placed for autism, 37 for emotional needs, and 24 for multiple needs. Many Quincy Public Schools students attend programs at the South Shore Collaborative.

Mrs. Perkins completed the presentation by noting that as educators, we are always striving to improve practices through strengthening the relationship between general and special educators. Mrs. Perkins thanked School Committee for their continued support and parents for entrusting their students to the Special Education Department.

A parent asked about integration of content at the elementary level, especially at Atherton Hough for lower grades. Mrs. Perkins said there is definitely movement towards that, all general and special education teachers are implementing the Close Reading program.

For the QPAC Update, Ms. Beck thanked Mrs. Perkins and Dr. DeCristofaro for their support in the Gingerbread House event and Enchanted Village outing. Ms. Beck updated on the upcoming Transition Fair, collaborating with Sarah Anderson on the planning process. QPAC received a grant of \$1,000 which will fund many of this year's activities. Ms. Beck would like to work with Transition class on a craft night, feels that including successfully transitioning adults might have a positive impact on QPAC. QPAC now has 400 followers on Facebook, positive feedback from parents is a credit to the school system.

Mrs. Perkins mentioned the next Parent Academy will be held in two-parts on January 12 and 26 at 6:30 pm, the Homework Treaty for parents of students in Grades 3-8. The workshop will provide strategies for parents to use at home each night.

Mr. DeAmicis made a motion to adjourn at 7:30 pm, seconded by Mrs. Lebo. On a voice vote, the ayes have it.