

**Carlisle School Committee  
Special Education Subcommittee**

Minutes

Tuesday, May 11, 2021

12:00 p.m.

Zoom Remote Access

Present – School Committee via Zoom: Amanda Comperchio, Eva Mostoufi

Present – School Administration/Personnel via Zoom: Jim O’Shea, Superintendent; Lori Bruce, Director of Student Support Services; Linda Vanaria, Teacher and CTA President; Nancy Anderson, Assistant to the Superintendent.

Per Governor Baker’s order suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law, G.L. c. 30A sec. 20, members of the public were able to access this meeting via live stream at:

<https://carlisle-k12-ma-us.zoom.us/j/81896527615?pwd=UFJuL0ZqMDBUaXphdzlsSWlReW91UT09>

Meeting ID: 818 9652 7615

Passcode: 546847

Public comments were posted via the chat box. Questions/Comments were read and answered by the School Committee via live stream.

**I. Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 12:04 p.m.

**II. Approve Minutes**

Ms. Comperchio made a motion to approved minutes from March 26, 2021; Ms. Mostoufi seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Comperchio, aye; Mostoufi, aye.

**III. Special Education Year in Review Discussion**

Ms. Comperchio will share the summary of subcommittee work at an upcoming CSC meeting. There was a conversation about the School’s use of LLI because there has been concern voiced about bias in some of the LLI books. Ms. Bruce shared that Ms. O’Connor uses LLI in Tier II instruction as a component of our Literacy Program, and the Special Education department uses pieces of the LLI program for one student in grade 8. Ms. Bruce added that some students do not have dyslexia or a reading disability, but they rush through reading, so teachers work on teaching these students to slow down and work on comprehension and overall fluency. Mr. O’Shea added that LLI is a research based intervention program designed to assist people with reading. The School uses this as part of a tiered intervention to see if it is successful in helping some children with reading skills. He noted that Dr. Macklis, the Literacy Specialist, helped train some of the

teachers in LLI. Ms. Bruce added that the School evaluates why a student is getting Tier II intervention and what program makes the most sense for each individual student. Ms. Mostoufi asked if there is a student with fluency problems, or a special education student with a language based learning disability, does the student get supports 3 times a week for 45 minutes? If that student is missing out on a literacy program where they can practice these skills? Ms. Bruce answered that students diagnosed with dyslexia who are reading significantly below grade level are pulled 5 times a week, but are not pulled during Foundations time, so they do not miss out on opportunities to practice literacy skills. Students are pulled out during free reading time or during foreign language time. She added in the last several years, the School has changed the way that reading is taught. Ms. Mostoufi asked what methods are used to help Tier II students. Ms. Bruce answered that a variety of methods are used. Dr. Macklis is Orton Gillingham (OG) certified, so she uses OG, Heggerty, while documenting Response to Intervention (RTI). Dr. Macklis communicates with Ms. Bruce if she has concerns about any student. Ms. Mostoufi asked if we screen students for dyslexia in Pre-K and Kindergarten and Ms. Bruce confirmed this is the case. She added that there was one student identified in Kindergarten this year. Students that were identified with needs in Pre-K are already receiving services in Kindergarten, and are identified as having a developmental delay because the extent of the disability at early ages is not always entirely known. Developmental delay can only be used for students through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Ms. Bruce added that students are assessed 3 times a year, both in general education and in special education, using different tools. A lawsuit was referenced about some public school funding not being allocated to private schools. Mr. O'Shea clarified that this funding goes to private schools in the District, and Carlisle does not have any private schools so this doesn't apply to CPS. Ms. Bruce clarified that if a Carlisle parent decides to send their child to a private school, they could still ask CPS to provide reading services for that student. She remains in communication with such families. The School takes care of all of the students that reside in Carlisle. Ms. Mostoufi said research supports the idea that brains are no longer disabled if students are given phonics before 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. Mr. O'Shea is interested in reviewing that research. Ms. Bruce added that there are functional MRIs that indicate children can rewire their brains. Ms. Bruce shared that she and other faculty attended a conference at Harvard and Mass General and heard information on brain development. Working memory can be a weakness but children are able to read. She agreed that there is value of phonics early on. One child in a strong OG program was decoding and reading in six months. She added that dyslexia is a spectrum. The children that have severe dyslexia have language issues and cognitive issues, but Early Intervention works well. Some students with dyslexia don't need additional services, but some may need another program. It's complex but it's hopeful. Ms. Bruce said if children with needs are given interventions, they will likely not leave the district. She said there is so much more information available now. Dr. Sidell has had conversations with teachers, and brought in Foundations for all elementary students, which is a robust program. Ms. Mostoufi said the CSC is happy to support Special Education. The CSC wants to ask questions and feel good about standing by the decisions on the number of teachers in grade levels, the programs offered and realized that all of this helps our students and ultimately saves the district money. Ms. Bruce noted that conversations in the main CSC meetings have to be general, and the purpose of the Special Education Subcommittee is to have a forum for people to ask more questions and provide clarity. Ms. Bruce welcomes any questions and will take time to explain the processes and the programs. Ms. Comperchio asked if all students are screened. Ms. Bruce answered that students are screened 2 or 3 times a year depending on the grade level. Kindergarten uses the

Heggerty curriculum. Foundations is used in 1<sup>st</sup> grade. Ms. Bruce added that if a new student moves into town and there are concerns, we assemble the Child Study Team (CST) to look at the DIBELS score, the Heggerty score, Foundations testing, and the team also looks at language and handwriting. Ms. Bruce, the principal, teachers and Special Educators all contribute and devise a plan. All Kindergarten students get screened in DIBELS and Heggerty. Conversations with classroom teachers continually take place. Ms. Bruce said data is reviewed with the principals. Mr. O’Shea also gets reports on the data. Ms. Bruce said Carlisle picks up students faster than the guidelines say we have to. Ms. Mostoufi clarified that all students through 3<sup>rd</sup> grade are using Foundations for phonics. Ms. Bruce said Foundations is a top notch literacy program that is tied with Wilson reading. Both are used for special education; Foundations in the classroom and Wilson out of the classroom. Ms. Vanaria added that Foundations is a year-long program, lessons are given for a half hour every day, and students are practicing what they have been taught year round. The materials are engaging and interactive. It’s a wonderful program that helps with patterning, reading and writing. Ms. Mostoufi asked about the DESE audit recommendations. Ms. Bruce said three things came out of the audit; the DESE wants all general education teachers to get SEI endorsed, DESE wants to ensure that all 8<sup>th</sup> graders are contributing to their vision statement, and they want to make sure that in the non-justification participation section of an IEP, it is explained why students are taken out of class. Ms. Bruce said there is a plan to address all of these issues. SEI endorsement is for teachers who are teaching children who have limited English proficiency. The committee will convene again on Wednesday, July 21,2021 at 9:00 a.m.

#### **IV. Public Comments**

There were no public comments.

#### **V. Adjourn Meeting**

Ms. Comperchio made a motion to adjourn the meeting; Ms. Mostoufi seconded the motion. The following votes were taken in roll call: Comperchio, aye; Mostoufi, aye. The meeting was adjourned at 1:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Anderson  
Assistant to the Superintendent