

## ASHPAC Monthly Meeting Minutes

January 19, 2021

Meeting hosted via Zoom (by DD) due to pandemic.

Attendees: Kristine Kaveney, Jill Fulhan, Diana Davis, Anna Bukina, Kathy Silva, Kathy Bates

Welcome: DD hosted via Zoom. KK welcomed everyone and started meeting. Attendance not taken via Zoom except as above.

Topics with Kathy Silva from Office of Students Services and Kathy Bates from School Committee

### Hybrid learning update

KK asked for an update from KS about APS current learning model. KS expressed general District feeling is that everyone wants students in the buildings because (1) teaching remotely is challenging due to differences in student development and skills, home environments, and adult supports available and (2) school is the main social outlet/experience for many students. KS said that APS was finding it hard to stay safely in a hybrid learning model due to high community virus spread in Ashland, specifically due to issues related to quarantining requirements that challenge available resources (personnel), but not due to school transmission of COVID-19, which has been extremely limited. KS said that finding new resources/personnel is extremely difficult due to on-going concerns over COVID-19.

KK asked KS about engagement numbers for students with IEPs. KS said that the percent of students showing engagement is “reasonable” with noticeable difficulties in specific cases depending on the student profile. For instance students with a component of oppositional defiance disorder are having difficulty staying engaged due to their ability to remotely disengage with remote teachers by moving away from the computer. KS expressed that this was being followed and acknowledged that more attention and resources will need to be available upon the return to full in person learning.

DD asked about the overall perception of in-school transmission and exposure, wondering if students with IEPs were facing negative attitudes and staff were experiencing increased anxiety about the small but discernable cases of student to staff transmission. KS stated that protocols for limiting COVID-19 transmission in Specialized Programming were updated and include KN95 masks and double masking for staff, decreasing same-day cohort size, increasing physical space between these cohorts, and addition of extra decontaminating equipment (UV wands). KS stated that there has been no discernible impact on students, except for an additional decrease in opportunities for socialization with peers. Again, she acknowledged this is impactful, as are all COVID-19 protocols. Staff members who are experiencing anxiety are being supported by the District.

KK thanked KB for the tremendous hard work and dedication shown by the entire Ashland School Committee, Sergeant Ed Burman, APS Head Nurse Audrey LaCroix, and Superintendent James Adams as they work to keep APS school buildings open for hybrid learning. KB thanked KK for the acknowledgement and in turn thanked Mr. Adams, Mr. Burman, and Ms. LaCroix for their continued efforts.

KS gave an update about Out-of-District programs, saying that by and large she is satisfied and happy with the programming being offered to Ashland students during the on-going pandemic. The programs are operating responsibly and safely. There are two programs that are exceptions, but KS stated that she feels stuck with these two programs and the programs’ offerings given the current alternative opportunities to serve the affected students amidst the COVID-19 pandemic. A parent expressed satisfaction with the programming being offered to her child.

### Lighting the Way Awards Presentation

KK gave a quick recap of the Lighting the Way Award. KK asked KB if reading the 2019-2020 recipients’ names at an upcoming School Committee meeting would be appropriate and possible given the inability to host our usual award presentation night in person. KB will bring the question to the School Committee Chair this week and will get back to us. DD suggested that we usually invite APS administrators to attend. KS said

most administrators are currently attending via Zoom so that this would be very likely. KB will be in touch with KK. Of note, and reiterated below, KB said that the School Committee is moving their regularly scheduled meetings from the first and third Wednesdays of each month to the first and third Thursdays of each month starting this week.

#### Current Status of Website

DD and AB gave an update- the new ASHPAC website is live, public, and searchable. It is located at <https://ashpac.ashland.k12.ma.us>. DD thanked AB for her work in building the new website on the District domain and Anne Cantin from IT for help with the logistics of getting the site live. Attendees searched for, found, and viewed the website on their devices. DD asked that members review the website and forward any concerns to DD or AB for correction. DD mentioned that Anne Cantin updated each individual school website to use the acronym "ASHPAC" instead of the numerous iterations of the ASHPAC name that had been used to refer to this group, and systematically included the ASHPAC link under the Community Section of each website. DD mentioned that Pittaway does not have a link to ASHPAC that she could find. KS said she would mention this to Sara Davidson, Pittaway Director.

Action items- (1) AB will add updated contact information for the Office of Student Services on the relevant page. (2) DD will investigate options for creating a new Listserv. In the meantime, group will advertise new website via social media accounts and ask KK to email from OSS.

#### New Topics/concerns:

##### Coordinated Program Review

KS gave an overview of Coordinated Program Review and associated upcoming deadlines. The review is an evaluation of the District by the State that occurs in full every six years. It comprehensively looks at District programs in three areas, including Individual Education Programs, English Language Learning, and Civil Rights. Ashland is being evaluated this calendar year. The District self-assessments are due in May. There will be a site visit, anticipated during fall 2021. After the review, a report of any areas of non-compliance will be forwarded to the District, and the District will address these areas and respond with their action plan. KK gave two examples of past non-compliance issues, which the District subsequently addressed: (1) the District physical restraint policy was updated in 2018/2019 after an interim assessment and report and (2) the District outreach to withdrawing high school students was made more robust.

As part of the review, the District will be asked about its role in supporting ASHPAC and ASHPAC will be asked to provide feedback to the reviewer.

##### School Committee Scheduling Change

The School Committee is changing their scheduled calendar of bi-monthly meetings from Wednesday to Thursdays, starting this week, January 22, 2021). ASHPAC should keep this in mind when planning our calendar.

##### ASHPAC Calendar Review

Confirmed with KS and KB that dates and times of upcoming ASHPAC meetings and events were received by them. Monthly meetings dates are: March 1, 2021 and May 11, 2021. Basic Rights Workshop is March 15, 2021. All meetings and events are being conducted virtually via Zoom due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

#### ASHPAC:

##### Minutes approval

October 2020 minutes approval- JF made motion. KK seconded. All voted in favor.

##### Basic Rights Virtual Workshop Update

JF confirmed March 15, 2021 date with MassPac. Flier is pre-made by MassPac.

Action Items: DD will update flier and distribute to group and ask KS to send out via OSS listserv. Other group members will post via social media.

Calendar Review

Occurred above.

Treasurer update:

Scholarship 2020 update

AB reported that two additional scholarship checks have been mailed by APS and that a total of 4 of 6 scholarships awarded for graduation 2020 have now been fulfilled. The deadline for request for funds has now passed and scholarships for 2020 are now considered completed.

Incoming funds update

DD reported receiving funds from WAITT and will forward checks to AB.

Website Update

Occurred above.

New Items/concerns

(1) Group discussed concerns with not receiving progress reports, meeting notes, and evaluation reports within legal timeframes. Action item: DD will discuss with KS.

(2) DD noted there is a new community group called Ashland Residents for Equity and Action, aka AREA, a group of People of Color and their allies. The group is recently formed. One of the groups stated areas of interest is to advocate within the APS school system. DD suggested reaching out to the group to inform them of ASHPAC and welcome them and their efforts to the community. Action Item: DD will send an email of introduction.

Meeting Adjourned: 8:30 pm.

Next Meeting Date: March 1, 2021

*Respectfully submitted: Diana Davis / Vice Chair*