

## ASHPAC Monthly Meeting Minutes

May 11, 2021

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

Attendees: Board members Kristine Kaveney, Jill Fulhan, Diana Davis, and Anna Bukina; Kathy Silva (Director of Student Services), Kathy Bates (School Committee) and others via Zoom.

Welcome: All were welcomed to the meeting.

Topics with Kathy Silva (OSS) and Kathy Bates (SC)

Hybrid Learning Update – Ashland is back in full time in-person learning except for students who have chosen remote. Community (staff and parents) are stepping up to make the switch to full week in-person learning work. Staff is seeing some students struggling with the change to larger class size, stressors of being in-person, comfort changes from being home, etc... MCAS testing is ongoing currently with some new challenges of spacing students. Most staff are vaccinated for COVID-19. Guidelines for wearing masks, 3 feet student spacing and hygiene continue as a majority of students are not yet vaccinated (given age guidelines). Due to staff vaccinations and decreasing COVID numbers, KS has felt more comfortable visiting schools and has had joyful moments learning of unique learners' abilities to exhibit school core values.

Lighting the Way Awards – Presentation reviewed at last meeting. Per KK, call for nomination letter is being revised and will go out soon.

ASHPAC website – no new updates.

New topics/concerns:

ESY – Survey was sent to parents to see who would be interested in sending their students to ESY in-person or remote, an 'ok' response rate followed. Per DESE, ESY can be offered in a remote format since ESY is an extension of the current school year. Per KS, APS remote ESY will be individualized teaching, not a camp environment, and would include remote tutoring and remote related services. Per KS, APS in-person ESY will be a camp environment as in former years. For PreK-6<sup>th</sup> grade, there will be one class per grade with 8-9 students in each class. Nurses have been hired (from outside the district). There is a temp position lined up for OT. Tutoring can be done in-person or remotely as needed and many staff are interested in providing tutoring, with hours between 7:30am-3pm, and staff and students can arrange their own schedules. Specialized transportation and bag lunches will be available for students in ESY and ELL programs through COVID grant funds.

Recoupment Camp – There continues to be questions of equity between the COVID grant-funded Recoupment camp being arranged by Asst. Superintendent Caira and ESY: mainly, ASHPAC board member concerns about the different focus of each camp: recoupment of learning loss during COVID vs. preventing regression of skills from one school year to the next. Specifically, are COVID compensatory services and recoupment from COVID learning loss going to be addressed by ESY, similarly to the COVID Recoupment Camp. Questions were also asked, including how referrals were made (criteria) and can students get to summer programming (bus available?). Key points made by KS included:

1. For the Recoupment Camp: Teachers are making referrals to individual school principals, who are forwarding lists to Dr. Caira. The number of students referred has been higher than expected. Goal is to reach as many students as possible. Details pending on who will be offered the camp.
2. Having an IEP or 504 does not rule out a student being referred, and if they attend recoupment camp, their accommodations will be honored. Teachers will not be special educators and paraprofessionals may not be available. IEPs will not be fully implemented, since specialized instruction will not be provided.

3. ESY goal is to provide as robust a program as possible for each student to also promote growth in the summer while also being a happy/positive experience.
4. KS does not have all the details for Recoupment Camp, some parts are still being worked out.
5. If families have questions/specific concerns about camp/ESY differences or referral process, they can talk to KS or Dr. Caira directly as well.

Special Education Programming notes: KS shared that a large percentage of parents with children with IEPs have been involved with their student's programming during COVID, team coordinators have shared there is an increase in conversations about COVID effects, there may need to be an increase in ELL focus to help communicate with families who do not speak English as their first language, the negative effects of COVID will be long lasting (well beyond this summer), there is an increased number of services for many students being added to their IEPs, and there have been more IEP progress meetings than ever before.

AREA – Ashland Residents for Equity and Action – KB let them know via a SC meeting that we would like to meet up with the group to work with them and AREA seem interested. DD signed up for their listserv, will send a second email from ASHPAC and keep the lines of communication open.

Special Education Team Coordinator open position – Thank you KK for representing ASHPAC during the interview process. Both candidates to date are very good, one has been forwarded to Superintendent Adams after meeting with Principals Bennett and DiGirolamo. Outcome pending. Role due to begin July 1<sup>st</sup>.

BCBA staff – One 1.0FTE open position, primarily at AMS with some coverage at AHS and Pittaway, interviews are ongoing this week. Mindess/Warren role has decreased to .06FTE (Mindess only) and therefore a part-time 0.4FTE BCBA will be hired for Warren only.

Room 13 (Mindess) and Room 123 (AMS) classroom: ESPs stepped up to lead (via a substitute role) the classrooms during the remainder of the year as special education teachers were not to be found.

Tiered Focus Monitoring – KS has submission ready and is reviewing before submitting electronically. Deadline for submission is May 17. She expects an in-person site visit during the fall and a request by the reviewer to speak to an ASHPAC representative. ASHPAC board agreed to provide feedback as appropriate.

McKinney Vento Act Audit – KS was notified that APS was undergoing an audit for compliance the McKinney Vento Act, which offers protections and resources for homeless students. OSS is preparing feedback.

Program Quality Assurance (DESE) – KS was notified that APS meets requirements, noting that there are no discrepancies/disproportions in students with IEPs versus students without IEPs in terms of graduation, dropout, and discipline rates. ASHPAC applauded APS attention to these important metrics of equity.

Graduation – At this moment, graduation will take place on the football field with limited attendance and no scholarship presentations. KK will follow up about presentation of ASHPAC scholarships.

### ASHPAC

Vote to approve March (not October) meeting minutes – JF noted October minutes were passed at last meeting, error on agenda present. DD made a motion to approve the March 2021 minutes, KK seconded the motion. All board members were present and voted in favor of the March 2021 minutes.

Basic Rights workshop – already discussed in March.

Calendar review – deferred

Scholarship and Treasurer Report - 2020 scholarship application form was updated for 2021 and sent out via Naviance - 6 applications were forwarded to KK. Applications were reviewed by the board. All applicants met the criteria and ASHPAC will award a scholarship to each applicant. AB provided details

on ASHPAC's funds, noting programming fees for next year is TBD. Amount of each for scholarship to be awarded was discussed and after JF made a motion to offer \$300 each, AB seconded, board voted unanimously yes to give \$300 each. KK to send out award letters with date set of Monday, August 2<sup>nd</sup> for students to forward their program's details to AB to have funds transferred. AB needs a copy of each award letter for the APS business office and KK will send. If graduation plans change, JF available to present scholarships as needed.

Website update – AB to communicate for scholarships via ASHPAC email address

New items/concerns –

ASHPAC elections will be deferred until next month. Another meeting will be required. Date TBD, preferably early June.

Parent concerns regarding special education teachers at AMS and DMS were discussed and will be discussed with KS again. Also, parent concerns regarding the equity between COVID Recoupment Camp and ESY will continue to be addressed with district administrators. Parents were urged to speak their concerns directly to their child's IEP team and/or district administrators.

*Meeting Adjourned:* 9:00pm

*Respectfully submitted:*

Jill Fulhan (Co-Chair/Secretary) and Diana Davis (Vice-Chair)