

MASCONOMET REGIONAL DISTRICT SCHOOL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, February 15, 2023 6:15-6:45 P.M., HS Library **Community Relations Subcommittee Meeting Minutes**

A. Community Feedback/Dialogue

- Attendees: Patti Bernheart (Subcommittee Chair), Zillie Bhujju (SC member), Kosta Prentakis (SC member), Tasha Cooper (SC Chair), Lynne Bennett (Assistant Supt of Student Services), Kathleena Scarpato (community member), Carol Crispo (community member), Grethen Fishman (community member), Laura Turco (community member)
- Topics of discussion raised:
 - Gretchen F: Question at last full SC mtg was raised whether Out of District placements are driven by parents; Parent perspective on this question: there are two paths to OOD placements
1. Decision is driven by IEP Team recommendation
2. Unilateral placement decision driven by parent. Parent experience is often unpleasant in scenario 2; process can be emotionally and financially draining for parents, often with need to involve attorneys and advocates, with burden of providing evidence on the parent's part for the student's need for a specialized school outside the larger public school setting; settlements often result from due process.
 - Other related issues raised around this issue:
 - Parent has never been asked by Masco staff, "how is your child doing?" once in OOD placement. Or "what could we have done differently."
 - Zillie: asked if we are aiming to increase "in district" programming?
 - Community members stated that we need to take a more wholistic view of our students (regular and special ed); transition from TTU to Masco, there is an assumption students are arriving with a consistent set of competencies, yet, for example, there is no consistent SEL curriculum across the elementary schools in our three towns. Members raised desire for more consistency and continuity of curriculum across grade levels and need for more data driven interventions to meet student needs. Some community members have experienced lack of understanding among some Masco staff, with comments made such as "kids are lazy," "kids are spending too much time on their phones." Parents raised issue of inconsistency among attitudes of Masco staff towards students ranging from a supportive stance to one that lacks understanding of overall learning, social and/or emotional needs; divide between regular and special education approach was noted.
 - Kathleena: asked how M block is being used across the board? Inconsistencies noted by parents in how M block is being used; inconsistencies also raised by parent regarding student perception of M block, some feel it is not useful and some do find it helpful. Questions raised: does it need to be every day or could it be 2-3 days per week? Can M block have a more academic focus vs. another study hall approach? Community members also pointed out that M block is an equity issue: students on IEPs no longer have to be pulled from an elective course to get their academic, social and/or emotional needs met per their service delivery requirements, now that M block can provide a time during the day for this to occur. Patti: suggested that administration take a "deep dive" look at how M block is being used across the board during this pilot year, to ensure consistency in approach and that student learning needs are being met.

