

Concord School District
Special Board meeting
July 25, 2018

Board members: Clint Cogswell, Tom Croteau, Chuck Crush, Nathan Fennessy, Jennifer Patterson, Liza Poinier, Maureen Redmond-Scura, Pam Wicks

Board member absent: Jim Richards

Administrators: *Superintendent* Terri Forsten, *Assistant Superintendent* Donna Palley, *Director of Student Services* Bob Belmont

Others: Bill White, Brittany Snow, Sara Lamaronde

Board President Jennifer Patterson called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m., noting that the meeting was a presentation by Bill White Associates to discuss services provided for special education students, particularly those with autism and/or behavioral issues.

Mr. White noted that his educational consultation services have, over the past 30 years, provided comprehensive behavioral and educational support services for children with autism (ASD), children with intellectual disabilities, and children with emotional/behavior disorders (EBD) within their schools, homes and community environments. His firm partners with school districts to assist them in developing support structures within schools so all children are educated in their home schools; to provide functional skill training to children that leads to independence and lifelong success in the community; and to provide family support in the home through contracts with state-wide agencies, Medicaid and private insurance companies.

The service delivery model has evolved over the years to meet the ever-changing needs of the population served, due to a dramatic increase in the number of children with ASD, EBD and co-morbid conditions, and an increase in severity of involvement. The current service delivery model includes research-based assessment and program development strategies; tenets of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA); Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and Registered Behavior Technicians (RBT).

Over Mr. White's 30-year partnership, there has been a dramatic increase in the number of children diagnosed with ASD nationwide, and in District schools between 1999 – 2010. In 1999 there were 20 children with ASD and in 2010, 120 children. He worked with District staff to develop a curriculum that led to meaningful inclusion of children with ASD and brought students back from out-of-district placements.

The partnership with Bill White Associates provides a support network for increasing numbers of EBD children in the District and for behavior consultation, including five building-wide Behavior Support Specialists at the elementary level. Current initiatives include increasing the District's capacity to meet the educational and behavioral needs

of children with ASD and behavior disorders in a cost-effective manner through the ABA model; consultation; Educational Assistant training; and 1:1 direct support staffing. Board-Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) and behavioral consultants use the tenets of ABA to assist each child's school team in assessing challenging behaviors and developing a plan. Through a 40-hour, hands-on Registered Behavior Technician (RBT) training program for District Educational Assistants, highly trained staff capacity for the most challenging children will be increased.

One-to-one (1:1) direct support staffing is used to bring students back from out-of-district placements, supports in-district students at risk of needing out-of-district placements, and support students when there are staff shortages in critical areas.

In response to a question from Nathan Fennessy about the number of staff supporting behaviorally challenged students, Mr. Belmont indicated eight. In response to a question about the number of consultants from Chuck Crush, Mr. Belmont responded that there were 177 contracted days for consultation.

A committee dedicated to Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), composed of Director of Student Services Bob Belmont, ASD consultants, and the District Special Education Directors and Coordinators, meets monthly for two hours. The committee agenda includes an update of the census spreadsheet; discussion of challenging individual cases; transition planning between grades; extended school year planning; discussion of role and placement of teachers of autism; discussion of overall progress with district ASD initiatives; adjusting initiatives as needed; discussion of out-of-district placements; assignment of ASD resources to individual buildings. Currently there are 22 preschool students, 63 elementary students, 32 middle students, and 44 CHS /Transition students with autism in the District; 161 students total.

All of the District's youngest students with autism are supported by this collaborative team approach with the Bill White Services so that a solid skill foundation can be built; as students move through the system, ASD consultation services are no longer necessary for all students. By high school only 29% of District students with autism continue to need this level of support. This indicates that the foundation of skills built in preschool years is successful and results in meaningful long-term progress.

Tom Croteau asked how student progress is measured. Mr. White explained that the monthly meetings dedicate time to the most involved students. Daily data is reviewed regularly by school and District teams. Mr. Fennessy asked how services and supports are modified and would eventually not include consultant services; again, school and District teams constantly monitor each child.

Sara Lamaronde, BCBA, reviewed the new student process: a Special Education facilitator requests an initial observation on a student; the student is observed in several settings throughout the school day; a document review is conducted to provide additional background information; an Initial Observation Report is written and proactive supports are recommended. The school team discusses these observations

and recommendations, decides as a team which behaviors to target and which strategies to implement first, and develops a “behavior package” individualized for that student. The “behavior package,” of which Ms. Lamaronde provided a sample, includes a daily ABC (Antecedent-Behavior-Consequence) grid-style data collection form, definitions of self-regulation levels or bio-behavior levels, and operational definitions of the student’s targeted behaviors.

In response to a question from Mr. Crush about when parents are included in this process, Ms. Lamaronde noted that if these services are part of a student’s IEP, parents would be well aware of the consultation. She estimated she worked with 60 students in the last year.

She noted that the ABC sheets are: collected daily and data is transferred to the monthly summary page; stored in the student’s binder in a secure location; provided to the BCBA at least monthly for analysis. Monthly, bi-monthly, or quarterly behavior summary reports are created and shared with the student’s team (including family members) to track behavioral progress over time. Data may also be shared via District email if behavioral patterns (or new behaviors) emerge.

Ms. Lamaronde reviewed the requirements for Registered Behavior Training Technician (RBT): must be 18 years of age and complete a background check; must possess a minimum of a high school diploma (most have a Bachelor’s degree); must complete 40 hours of live training with immediate feedback; must pass the RBT Competency Assessment (working with student and/or role play); must pass the RBT examination (computerized exam). Once certified, must have ongoing supervision by the BCBA twice each month; must pass the RBT Competency Assessment annually to maintain the credential. The first Registered Behavior Training Technician cohort began summer 2016 with 11 total participants. Seven became certified; five are active at this time. The second cohort began summer 2017 with 13 total participants. Eleven became certified; 10 are active at this time. The third cohort in summer 2018 has 13 total participants. There are a total of 15 active RBTs in Concord.

She described the process to become a Board-certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA), including a Master’s degree in Behavior Analysis, Education/Special Education, or Psychology (no exceptions); must complete a graduate-level course sequence approved by the BACB (Behavior Analyst Certification Board), usually six classes; must accrue 1500 hours of independent supervised fieldwork experience, of which 75+ hours must be face-to-face supervision with a designated BCBA mentor; must complete a computerized assessment (4 hours). Once certified, must complete 32 hours of Continuing Education Units every two years and must be able to supervise RBTs and candidates pursuing BCBA certification.

District professional development includes four days per school year; a 3.5-hour morning session for RBTs only; a 3-hour afternoon session, invitation only, for staff working directly with ASD students.

Ms. Lamaronde defined ABA for the Board: applied science centered on developing procedures which will produce measurable changes in behavior; focused on: analyzing behavior within the context of behavior-environment interactions (antecedents and consequences); teaching replacement behaviors that serve the same function as problem behaviors; improving socially significant behaviors for the learner and meets the needs of the learner at the current time.

In response to a question from Ms. Redmond-Scura about how students are diagnosed with autism, Ms. Lamaronde noted that this is a medical diagnosis.

Brittany Snow introduced the support continuum for students with emotional or behavior disorders (EBD), characterized by: difficulties with appropriate social interactions and relationships or academics; chronic behavior problems such as refusal, aggression, disrespect toward authority, inappropriate language, property destruction, etc.; processing work demands, tasks, or adhering to regular school-wide expectations; severe trauma and/or environmental triggers that impact their performance; processing verbal directions and/or prompts in a timely manner; controlling their thoughts and ideas; sleeping, concentrating, worrying and self-regulation. The District has a 1:1 framework of Positive Behavioral Interventions and Strategies (PBIS) with a focus on prevention. Each school has a Student Support Center with dedicated support staff. If a student is in crisis, or a teacher needs assistance, this staff is called to respond.

EBD consultation and support includes monthly consultative services at all elementary schools including the 3R program at Beaver Meadow, potentially involving formal observations, evaluations, behavior support plans, data collection, provide classroom and school wide behavior management strategies, ongoing team support and collaboration, and supervision of the school-wide behavior specialists.

In response to a question from Mr. Crush about local mental health providers, Ms. Lamaronde noted that several families support communication between school and mental health providers.

Ms. Snow described the student support room (SSR) model, a Tier 2 intervention, that provides collaborative, non-confrontational, problem-solving instruction in a 1: 1 setting. The SSR flow chart allows for predictability during SSR visits, provides staff with a map to handle the students' crisis, and ends with the goal to return to the classroom.

She also described the 3R Program, a Tier 3 Level support, at Beaver Meadow School that provides individualized academic and social skills instruction to students in grades 2 through 5 with various emotional, behavioral and academic needs. Students referred to this program often consistently demonstrate difficulties appropriately accessing academic and social learning opportunities.

In response to a question from Clint Cogswell about work at the middle and high schools, Mr. Belmont noted that school psychologists and consultants provide student supports.

In response to a question from Pam Wicks about how the District connects with preschool-aged students with behavior issues, Donna Palley highlighted the Family Center program.

There was further discussion about middle- and high-school program for students with EBD, and a discussion of data.

The Board voted 8-0 to adjourn (motioned by Mr. Cogswell, seconded by Mr. Fennessy).

The meeting was adjourned at 7:44 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Maureen Redmond-Scura, *Secretary*

Terri Forsten, *Recorder*