



“OWL” News from the Office of Student Services

*Who thinks some changes are meant to be?
The Office of Student Services thinks this,
that's whoooo!*

Recently the Office of Student Services experienced a staffing change that I would like to let you all know about. Ms. JodiRene Anderson had the fortune of being recruited by the business office to take control of the grants and student activities accounts. This of course meant that Student Services needed to search for a person to come in and join our team taking responsibility for the scheduling of team meetings, transportation of special education students, and the financial aspects of circuit breaker and purchasing. We are very lucky to introduce to you our newest team member, Mrs. Linda Lee. Linda comes from Blackstone Millville Regional School District and will assume the responsibilities formerly performed by JodiRene Anderson. Although Ms. Lee has been with us only one week, she has already settled into her role nicely and we are thrilled! However be patient as she continues to “get up to speed” on how Ashland’s Student Services Office operates. I am impressed with how much there is to learn and very grateful that Ms. Anderson is “just across the hall” for quick questions and guidance. If you are in AMS, please stop by and introduce yourself to Ms. Lee. I am sure she will enjoy getting a chance to put names to faces!

Another change that is coming to Student Services is our office will be piloting the use of the new Parent Portal in our special education software program, Frontline ESped. At this time, we are using the Parent Portal to share meeting notices, School District Proposal narratives and evaluation consent forms with parents via the portal. Parents will be able to sign in and view the documents, and electronically sign documents. Parents will receive this notification via email and the office is alerted when documents have been viewed and/or signed by parents in the portal. The office will also be hard copy mailing these forms as we are mandated to do so, but we are hoping to be more efficient in the use of this tool for parents. Should you have any questions or concerns, please reach out to Colleen Brewer at cbrewer@ashland.k12.ma.su and she will be happy to assist you. Feedback is welcome and appreciated as we pilot this new application!



Seeking English Language Learner Parents for an Advisory Board

Please help the district be better at programming for students who are learning English! Ashland seeks to start a parent advisory board for support and advocacy for our English Language Learners. The group will be parent led and how often it meets and the mission and vision will be decided by those who choose to participate. However, it will be incredibly helpful for parents to give Student Services feedback about how to support students who are learning English and potentially learning new cultural norms which are different from their family background. If you are interested please contact me at ksilva@ashland.k12.ma.us

Ask Student Services

This is a new section in the Owl News....Parents contact ASHPAC with questions and maybe one of yours will be featured and answered here in the Owl Newsletter.

Question: School Refusal: What is it? How common is it? What can parents do to help? What can the Office of Student Services do to help?

Answer: Thank you for this question. The incidence of school refusal is very low which is good because it is a very difficult behavior to reshape. Generally, school refusal stems from an anxiety disorder and therefore addressing the symptoms of anxiety is critical. Most clinicians would state that making sure to continue to push exposure to that which causes the anxiety is important so gradual desensitization plans might be helpful. Also teaching strategies to cope with the feelings of anxiety are also helpful. This includes many mindful strategies such as breathing exercises, self talk, visualization and biofeedback. It will be important to work collaboratively with your community based therapy team and the school team throughout this process. Finally it is also important that your student does not receive any secondary incentives from their school avoidance, such as the ability to game all day, or participate in fun activities when they should be at school. Student Services will support every team in their determinations on what the best education plan is, as each child may need something unique to their situation.



"One More Award" Recipients



Congratulations to the
following staff:

Sarah Finn, John
Ciampaglia, Holly
LeBlanc, JodiRene
Anderson, Jess Curran,
Susan Faranda, Lena
Minucci, Rachel Wright,
Cassia Ashman, Brenda
LeBlanc, Sunitha
Kothapu, Tamara
Saviatto, Sali Diamond



ASHPAC news...



ASHPAC is a group of parent and caregiver volunteers. We would love to see some new faces at our next meeting. Do you have a talent that you would be willing to share with our group? Please reach out to one of us for more information:

Kristine Kaveney, Co-chair: kriskaveney@yahoo.com

Jill Fulhan, Co-chair: jill.fulhan@verizon.net

Diana Davis, Vice-chair: diana.davis.ashpac@gmail.com

Anna Bukina, Treasurer: a.v.bukina@aol.com

Please join us for our upcoming 2020 events:

March 4 Monthly meeting

March 24 "MCAS: Access and Achievement for Students with Disabilities" presented by Jessica Sales Cohen, FCSN

April 2 Monthly meeting

April 7 "Demystifying Psychological Assessments" presented by Jane Greenstein, PhD

May 11 Monthly meeting (Board Elections for 2020-2021)

May 14 "Special Needs Parent Advocate: When and Why You Might Need One" presented by Scott O'Donnell

June 3 Monthly meeting

We would love your input. We meet from 7:00 – 9:00 PM at Ashland Middle School in the Activity Room. Feel free to stop by for part of a meeting if that works best for your schedule.