**Maine State Advisory Panel**

**IDEA Part B**

**Minutes**

**April 21, 2021**

Present:

Tracy Whitlock

Erin Frazier

Artulean McKenna

Libby Stone-Sterling

Carrie Woodcock

Brian Cavanaugh

Nancy Cronin

Courtney Angelosante

Colette Sullivan

Atlee Reilly, Esq.

Janette Kirk

Nancy Godfrey

1. Public Comment

Carrie Woodcock, Maine Parent Federation

1. There is a Parent Informational Specialist opening at Maine Parent Federation. This is a fulltime position with virtual and in-office responsibilities.
2. MPF is receiving the Statewide Family Network Grant again.

Atlee Reilly, Esq., Disability Rights Maine

1. There are concerns that remote learning will be used as a disciplinary tool if needs aren’t met. Some students are simply being sent home to work remotely. This may be occurring with general education students as well.
2. Safeguards need to be established to make sure remote isn’t operated as a convenience tool.

Libby Stone-Sterling, Maine Vocational Rehab

1. Vocational Rehabilitation applied for a grant for $7M to help make connections to train people with disabilities to access career pathways.
2. There is a workshop on May 12 from 2 - 3:30PM about different things kids can do and employment rights.

2. Department of Education Updates, Erin Frazier and Tracy Whitlock

1. MDOE is continuing to work on transition for extended eligibility. There will be a conference in May to continue work on this.
2. The Department is continuing special projects including PBIS and ReadME and trying to increase knowledge on behavior management and growing the number of school psychologists.
3. Special Services is working on an IEP Facilitation Program. There would ideally be a rooster of interested retired educators or parents whom have had children that have aged out that would be willing to fill this role for districts. The hope would be that with increased facilitation there would be less due process.
4. There is an increased challenge in finding staff to work summer hours, even with increased funding. More families may also opt out of ESY services this year.
5. The Department’s goal is to have MUSER ready to be commented on by summertime.

3. Assessment with DOE representatives, Janette Kirk and Nancy Godfrey

1. Overview of recent developments within assessment:
2. MEAS-
	1. There has been a removal of ELA and we have entered into NEWEA contract.
	2. Students were not assessed last year.
	3. There is a new science assessment, based on Next Generation standards.
	4. Notifications have been sent to school coordinators as well.
3. Universal, designated support and other supports are being implemented as well.
4. Text to speech has been enabled for science and math assessments.
5. Special consideration requests for significant health issues, or COVID related issues will be allowed this year.
	1. For example, remote learners who have not been in school for instruction all year may submit a request, as these assessments need to be done in-person.
6. Of all 6 assessments, only one NEWEA, can be given remotely.

Open comment/discussion:

There were concerns for not having a control group for comparing assessments pre-COVID times for most schools.

Concerns were raised that students learning, and level of education are being portrayed as being “fine”, when that has not been the reality of most and that the assessment switch was made during time of pandemic. Some members wondered how we can move forward if we don’t truly know where students are.

Accessibility concerns were raised– text to voice, voice to text, and text with braille.

There was also a desire to look at winter to winter scores (2020 to 2021).

4. Vocational Rehabilitation in Maine overview - TABLED

5. Extended Eligibility and Transition Planning - TABLED

6. Legislative Updates, Erin Frazier

1. LD 552 – Opt to pass
	1. There were concerns that the language in this bill can be disparaging to parents and the language in this went against them (parents) being a part of IEP teams.

LD 1373 – No additional movement as of yet

* 1. There were concern that the bill is written to be geared towards special education but should be a general education statute.
	2. There were concerns raised with Developmental Preschool programs

7. Public Comment

Brian Cavanaugh, University of Maine at Farmington

1. Retention of students with disabilities may be being discussed more as a tool but should not be encouraged as research does not show this to be an effective tool.

Retention should also not be primarily an IEP meeting topic.

Links Shared:

<https://drme.org/news/2021/ag-frey-kassa>

<https://www.ed.gov/news/press-releases/us-department-education-covid-19-handbook-volume-1-strategies-safely-reopening-elementary-and-secondary-schools>

<https://www2.ed.gov/documents/coronavirus/reopening-2.pdf>

Next meeting is May 19