State Advisory Panel

August 12, 2020 via Zoom conference

Meeting Minutes

Present:

Jodie Hall

Carrie Woodcock

Libby Stone-Sterling

Gwen Sartoris

Sherreccia Jackson

Susan Walters

Benjamin Jones

Valerie Mattes

Brian Cavanagh

Christine Sullivan

Courtney Angelosante

Erin Frazier

Artulean McKenna

Tracy Whitlock

**1.** **Open comment:**

* Moose update, Tracy Whitlock:
  + 1st quarter modules are finished, awaiting upload to the platform.
  + Modules will be available to anyone, anywhere, including anyone that does homeschooling or is located outside of the State of Maine.
  + Work is being done to assist in making sure that these modules are accessible to people with disabilities, including large font, text to speech, etc.
* Plans for if there is an outbreak in school?
  + CDC will be working with schools if there is an outbreak.
  + Cohorts and wings of students will assist in limiting possible exposures.
  + There will be close training and collaboration with nurses as schools reopen.
  + Districts will be responsible for remote learning if there is an outbreak.
  + Districts are being asked to have a plan for if there is an outbreak or their color designation changes. Each District should have two plans; one for remote and one for best-case scenarios.
* High-school diploma –
  + These guidelines has been reorganized

**2.** **Concerns around teachers returning to work, Erin Frazier, MDOE Special Services**:

* There is a significant number of educators that are in the retirement range.
* There are many who are not returning due to COVID, if required to return in-person.
  + Remote options seem to be helping with this, including an ed. tech. in person and teachers on monitors.
* MDOE and districts are currently working on recruiting and retaining Special Education educators.
* Currently working on changes on Chapter 113 to assist in the certification process for educators and phycologists from out of the State, coming to Maine.
* There is a TeachMaine section under the webpage for Maine to encourage educators to come to the State of Maine to teach.
* There are currently many educators certified in Special Education that are working in general education due to varies reasons.
* There is a strong desire to work on setting a better trek for Ed Techs to become teachers.

**OPEN COMMENT:**

* There is a pay gap in Maine compared to other states but there is also a difference in cost of living in Maine as well. Unknown how the two are currently factoring into recruiting and retention.

**3.** **Concerns about Least Restrictive Environment (“LRE”), Erin Frazier, MDOE Special Services.**

* Concerns on special education students not being able to have access to their non-disabled peers.
* No matter what, Districts will need to provide LRE to their special education students and students without Internet
* With cohorts, Districts will still need to keep LRE in mind.
* While Parents may be given the choice and choosing the “better of the two evils”, they should be encouraged to have IEP meetings, which request and encourage both special education instruction and LRE.

**OPEN COMMENT**

* Concern that there may be some playing into parent fears, while making decisions.
* Gwen Sartoris – Students are segregated currently, and they are being cautious considering most students will not wear masks. Space may be a concern for many of the schools in terms of finding space and locations for every student safely.
* Each district will have a different plan and approach and communication and leadership will be crucial to this process.
* Concern over options being presented, but parents not knowing their rights if they are not being met.

**4.** **Remote Learning Plan**

Individualized Remote Learning Plans

* There is a contingency plan that has been approved for the use if there is a sudden break in learning.
* **The contingency plan is not an IDEA mandatory document from the Federal Department of Education**, it is a suggestion and plan/form designed and created by MDOE that can be used to ensure proper communication and implementation of IEP processes, if remote learning is needed. It is not to be confused with the official IEP.
* This form includes how districts and parents can see if learning and improvement is verified.
* Services are being identified as to how much and when/how services will be given if they are red, yellow or green.
* This document simply breaks down each goal and process, in each color scale and should be used as a communication tool and is meant to be a flexible document.
* If a District is using this, there should not be an expectation that this document will be available for every student on the first day of instruction.

Personal Protective Equipment, Toileting and Restraint and Seclusion Plan:

* This covers instruction, buckling, R&S, medical treatments and general guidance for all persons five and up while receiving in-person instruction. Having a change of clothes is encouraged.
* Children cannot have a face covering on while being restrained and airways must be unobstructed.

**OPEN COMMENT:**

* Due to the emergency basis of the current situation, current level of learning should be established as soon as possible, which should include annual reviews and/or IEP meetings. This will take time to establish due to the gap in routine learning.
* Results over intent with regards to seclusion –
  + If a student is suspected of having COVID and involuntarily told to sit in the nurse’s office, R&S procedures must be followed.
  + Districts have been asked to communicate updates and options with parents.

**5. Update from the Commissioner’s Office, Erin Frazier**

* The MDOE is seeking waivers waiving requirements for chronic absenteeism, achievement indicators and assessments.
* Public opinion on this is due August 26
* <https://mainedoenews.net/2020/08/11/seeking-public-comment-to-waive-requirements-related-to-assessment-chronic-absenteeism-accountability-identifications-and-accountability-components-within-maines-model-of-school-support-2/>

**6. Open comment**

* Survey results are not in at this time but should be released soon.
* Five-week Department of Labor Step-Up program is ending, and was successful considering it was virtual, and included several different modules. 9 young-adults with autism participated fully this year.
* Maine Parent Federation has two webinars coming up, including one on August 17th and 27th. These will be put on Facebook Live as well, for people that cannot access via Zoom.