



To: Robert G. Hasson, Jr., Ed.D., Commissioner, Department of Education
From: Roy K. Fowler; State Director, Child Development Services on behalf of the Part B 619 Advisory committee
Re: Committee recommendations for consideration

Date: December 28, 2017

Commissioner Hasson,

As of December 11, 2017, the Part B 619 Transition Committee completed its discussion of the transition of the responsibility for providing services to children with disabilities, ages three to kindergarten-age five, to the public schools. Through that discussion, the Committee completed its task of developing recommendations for your and the Department's consideration. Per your request, the Committee focused its recommendations on funding, facilities, staffing, and regionalization. The recommendations are as follows:

The committee recommends, for your consideration, that:

Funding

1. As current funding levels do not cover the needed cost for the provision of special education and related services to this population, a funding level should be developed and implemented to ensure that Child Development Services maintains its ability to fulfill its mandate
2. Funding for these services not be part of the current funding formula (EPS)
3. As the State currently bears financial responsibility for actual cost of services, if school administrative units (SAUs) become responsible for services, the State should continue to bear financial responsibility and reimburse SAUs 100% of actual costs
4. Regionalization efforts are incentivized
5. Advanced funding for start-up is provided to SAU's
6. At minimum, IEP case management should be the responsibility of districts
7. The State provides support with regard to accessing Mainecare funding (i.e. central/regionalized billing, clarity and reliability of Mainecare requirements)
8. Funded pilots be implemented, both rural and urban, in advance of full statewide implementation

9. SAU's have access to currently available regionalization funds for the purposes of developing new three to kindergarten-age five programs

Facilities

1. Potential collaborations between SAU's and community providers be explored to support the efficient provision of appropriate least restrictive environments
2. Funding is made available for leased spaces
3. Funding be made available to build/expand settings for the efficient provision of services
4. Guidance is provided with regard to safety and building codes which apply to these settings

Staffing

1. A "bridge" be provided, with regard to certification, for SAU staff who are not currently certified birth-through-five
2. A "System Indicators of Quality" be created to guide implementation, ongoing programming, technical assistance, and professional development
3. The Department coordinate/guide professional development
4. The Department incentivize the expansion of programming, particularly in rural areas
5. Clarification is provided as to the role of community service providers
6. The discrepancy between Behavioral Health Professional requirements (60 hours) and Education Technician III requirements (90 hours) be reviewed
7. Programs utilize staff with education and experience specific to three to kindergarten-age five special education

Regionalization

1. Programs developed through regionalization efforts provide appropriate least restrictive environments – specifically the inclusion of typically developing peers
2. Transportation to/from regional programs is safe, reliable, and practical with regard to time spent in transit

In addition to the four areas addressed above, the Committee was also tasked with developing recommendations for consideration should the transition not be enacted.

In the event that the proposed transition is not enacted, the Committee recommends, for your consideration, that:

1. A funding formula be developed and faithfully implemented to ensure that Child Development Services maintains its ability to fulfill its mandate

2. Support is provided in developing CDS-SAU collaborations to ensure effective and efficient provision of services to children (i.e. transportation educational technician support, special education settings)

On behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank both you and the Department for the opportunity to engage in a robust conversation regarding the proposed transition and to provide recommendations for your consideration.

Thank you,

Roy K. Fowler
State Director, Child Development Services

Cc: Janice Breton, Director, Office of Special Services