

# State Advisory Panel

## Minutes

February 8, 2023

Present:

Carrie Woodcock

Erin Frazier

Tracy Whitlock

Joy Lin

Amelia Lyons

Mariela Putenas

Michael Dixon

Colette Sullivan

Jim Roberts

Leigh Lardieri

Courtney Angelosante

Susan Hogan

Public comment: Registration link: <https://www.mpf.org/2023-annual-conference/>

Erin Frazier, Department Updates:

- Transition specialist in schools trying to support organizations for functional curriculum. Work session has not been started.
- Speaking about LD 79 tomorrow which is a bill that changes the state agency client definition. This is important as people are confused by what agency client is. The term that is defined in

department of education and MUSER in statue provides mechanism for DOE to pay fiscal costs associated with educated for kids involved in DHHS. The current definition when students transition to ODES no longer have the capacity at DOE to pay for costs based on the definition. DHHS sometimes transition kids prior to 21. Student transition to 18 the DOE is paying education costs for out of state placement now which has no mechanism, and it falls back on the SAU. That was what helped realize there was a technical glitch in the language.

- No disruption of payment of educational costs for students who have some involvement in DHHS. This also expands the definition of entity to help understand for CDS and charter schools who can also pay educational costs. LEA pays for all in other states. No other states pay for this other than Maine.
- We are watching a lot of bills from Maine Behavioral Health and DHHS funding. It is complicated and hard to understand the impact in education. Changing the authorization to bill mainecare and then billing 3<sup>rd</sup> party entities. Creating barriers. Complicated bills. Maine behavioral health bills coming out around DHHS topics.
- There will be a report out on 924 soon. Focusing on bridge to transition between school and adult reporting on 1776 Medicaid bill. Another report is looking at March annual CDS report, report is a year delayed due to looking at data. Part C data. Big presentation on this in March based on increase in Part C. Increase in referrals, increase in budget. CDS shifting their focus to stay at local SAU's.
- Schools have a capacity of 450 kids alone. There is an option to have SAUs partner with DOE/CDS to provide services. Providing more restrictive placements in pre k than in public school. Districts working with 3-year-olds seeing the benefit working for kids for 2 years.
- A member commented that LD 98 aging out provided written testimony for MPF a lot of info on DHHS that got testified from some agencies. A lot testified neither for nor against. Testifying in favor of language change made it clear against extended eligibility. Maine school board association testified in support feeling it's the right thing to do. Trying to get DHHS to do work session and push back. Things stated like DHHS is delaying eligibility for adult services which is not happening. A lot of services within section 29 can have services while in school.
- AAG will be present to help misinformation.

Mariela Puentes, Statewide Family Engagement Center Grant:

- The CFAM project out of MAEC is an educational nonprofit founded in 1991 dedicated to increasing access to high quality education. Each center works with administrators educators.
- We are building relationships among schools. Through this grant partners include NAFSCE PAT ME cap. Some work is with state education. Services through partners and centers provided to families: leadership development, school readiness, academic achievement, etc.
- Providing opportunities for parents to be heard/acknowledged. Value systemic equity rate ensuring everyone is receiving services they need to thrive.
- Statewide family engagement center is creating structure. Objective one improves SAUs objective 2 capacity building in LEAs schools etc. objective 3 cross agency collab objective 4 building compacity on communication with all families like website sharing resources etc. objective 5 family facing practices working with families to face school readiness and child

development with teachers and parents. Objective 6 supporting emotional social needs from covid 19.

- Questions/comments for Mariela:
- A member stated they are interested in this work and look forward to collaborating/joining forces (PBIS) is interested in comprehensive assessment statewide level. Excited about this great work happening. Part of committee welcome on group next meeting in May looking to have one in September in person.
- Regarding family needs assessment development tool through the center and hope to use in Maine which takes equity audit tool and looks at family practices at the school and district level to see where those point so that educators can have better partnerships. In the past we have had many trainings with MD schools. There are lots of possible entry points. It is important to collaborate. Special Projects would also like to jump in as we have a grant for work and Math4ME. looking at family engagement would be nice if someone from our office (OSSIE) can participate.
- A member mentioned this work through Math4me, one partner holds a grant for a family math center. Family math is a possible connection point and seeing what work is already done so we don't duplicate efforts. A member stated that their region was excited a lot of parent information centers weren't being included and that they should include PTI.
- A member stated that they look forward to seeing how this work develops. A member asked how do we leverage resources from this grant? Answer: One thing we hope is to establish committee to put together family engagement framework, a place where someone from OSSIE could make sure that perspective gets heard. MPF is working to provide outline made for teachers to use on that level with engaging parents and families. Thinking about ways that center can push out work once developed sharing across statewide centers. A member also mentioned to put together webinars explaining how to use and who it benefits. This is something to explore later.

Leigh Lardieri, Due Process Updates:

- Last year we launched a facilitated FIEP program. This will almost be a year into review. Facilitated IEP programs allows parents and schools to work together collaboratively during the IEP process. Most of the time parents/staff agree but this is not always the case.
- IEP facilitation is an optional process for using neutral 3<sup>rd</sup> party trained facilitators to assist the IEP team in developing a mutually acceptable IEP. There are currently 4 trained facilitators under contract that do not work directly with the department. Facilitators are neutral and partial. They are not members of the IEP team and are not involved in determinations.

- Last year March-June 22 process is voluntary so if a parent requests for an FIEP meeting and the district declines then a meeting doesn't happen and vice versa with FIEP.
- We talk about this program and it is important to know that we never give out legal advice but do provide the parents with options/resources and this is 1 we now can talk about and has been beneficial.
- September-present outcomes are very pleased with full agreements. Based on evaluation/feedback forms we receive from the parties after their meetings. The data is looking favorable for this year. We acknowledge up to 3 hours (or less) is necessary for facilitators to try and prepare before the meetings take place. The meetings may only go for an hour. Complex in challenging topics or issues it might take up to 3 hours. We Try to give parties and facilitators a heads up on what kind of time frame we are looking at. We have had feedback in some cases that 3 hours were not enough and parties will then reconvene. We try to keep the same facilitator if parties decide that reconvening is necessary to reach a positive resolution.
- CADRE center for appropriate dispute resolution in special ed collect all of our data across USA and produce data in forms.
- We try encouraging mediation because that step allows parties to come together and work out resolutions before it moves to more adversarial processes. Mediations scheduled over the last 10 years are inching up and we still have complaints from fiscal year 20. The pandemic shows how it dipped and goes up a little for fiscal year 22.
- A reminder that public decisions link is on our webpage which will get you to public redacted CI reports once cases are closed. A member asked if the graph presented represent ages birth-22? Answer: Yes, some data would include pre k children.

#### Questions/comments for Leigh:

- An attendee asked if Leigh would mind sharing the power point slides with the SAP group.  
Answer: I am not sure about sharing the slide deck with the group but you are always welcome to visit our website if you'd like to look at reports. We do have a link to CADRE where you can go back and find data for state of ME information.
- Public Comment: A member stated that people are concerned that they just issued new guidance to the public for hearings. Are there any concerns on this? A member commented that in their experience you used to be able to submit testimony in person but also submit a written copy if questions that you could answer as to why you were feeling that way. You can still submit a written copy in person. An attendee asked what if you are submitting virtually?  
Answer: You can submit a copy of testimony to the committee for MPF. I testified in person and brought with me a testimony and handed it to the committee and they hand it out. They are trying to avoid confusion on receiving 2 copies. An attendee commented that it is great that they are still allowing virtual testimony.

Carrie Woodcock, Life Span Waivers:

- Lifespan waiver introduced by office of ODES through DHHS to introduce a waiver start at age 14. The concept behind the waiver is to avoid falling off a cliff when applying for adult services.
- Seeing individuals applying to be eligible be 17 ½ also eligible to show disability is impeding the ability to access outside support. May currently receive section 28 for behavioral health.
- The concept starts at age 14 replace 28 based on individual and their needs. Hoping it wouldn't be interrupted when a student is out of school system. It would be great to be able to give people a plan for needs so we don't end up with wait lists. Libby can touch base more on this topic in our next meeting.

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/specialed/dueprocess>

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/specialed/dueprocess/decisions>

<https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/specialed/SAP>

<https://www.mpf.org/2023-annual-conference/>