

# State Advisory Panel

## Minutes

April 12, 2023

Present:

Alisha Brownstein

Tracy Whitlock

Erin Frazier

Carrie Woodcock

Libby Stone-Sterling

Melinda Corey

Christine Sullivan

Michael Dixon

Howard Wright

Clayton Adams

Colette Sullivan

Courtney Angelosante

Holly Day

Jessica Wood

Valerie Mattes

Joy Lin

Susan Hogan

Jodi Bossio-Smith

Krista Averill

Jessica Wood & Melinda Corey, Help ME Grow-

- Help ME Grow is an central axis point that connects families of young children with information. Help ME Grow is there to listen, share information, provide community resources follow up on caregiver and referral sources.
- Help ME Grow provides developmental screening. Catching concerns early is important so intervention can be provided in timely fashion.
- Help ME Grow provides resource for all children in Maine, Birth-8 years and parents who are pregnant.
- A child or family does not need to have any citizenship status or Mainecare to receive help. If families live in Maine, they can reach out.
- Laser focused on early childhood/early childhood resources. Often receive requests that are outside Help ME Grow, when this happens, we refer people to our partners at 211 for needs such as heating assistance etc.)
- Goals of Help ME Grow are to help families successfully use programs and services in Maine.
- There are lots of waiting lists all over the state, but we are here to guide parents on where to go.
- We work to increase access and referrals to services. We work around identifying gaps and barriers. We are currently working to take data to report out to stakeholders such as legislators who can identify and put policy in funding to changes around barriers.
- You do not need professional or provider care referral to reach out to Help ME Grow. You may call Help ME Grow directly. You may self-refer through our website. It is also an option to be referred through a professional such as case manager, etc.) Options to refer through phone call, website, health systems, fax, etc.)
- Once families are connected, we will receive a call from a resource specialist during the initial assessing on what the family needs, their priorities, how to best support them, we might offer screening, referrals (depending on needs).
- Resource specialist will stick with the family for up to 60 days and provide at least 3 additional contacts to ensure that the process is moving along.
- An example to give is we had parents of a Pre k aged child that were seeking support due to concerning behaviors. We were able to share information with that family around what to expect given the child's age and background trauma. Sometimes sharing information to be better informed.
- Updates since launch last fall. We have served up to March 30<sup>th</sup>, 255 children ages 2–5-year-olds.
- We would love to see more referrals for 6–8-year-old ranges. Older children in school whose families may have needs to be connected.
- An attendee of the meeting stated that they were curious on how this program is funded and asked to explain who the ideal referral as child find is needed for all groups. The attendee also stated it's nice to know you're available to help! It was clarified that Help ME Grow is birth through 8 years of age always and pregnant parents as well. We want to be sure we are reaching public school partners. Federal funds (CCDF) funds this service in full.

- Authorized by state legislation in December 2021, it is considered a permanent program because it has been authorized by legislature.

<https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/ocfs/support-for-families/child-development>

Jodi Bossio-Smith & Krista Averill, Assessment Updates:

- Krista introduced herself as the State Assessment Coordinator for General Assessments.
- Approximately 99% students participate. A brief overview for key features of assessment.
- Through year model will be next academic year 23-24.
- Students take adaptive test RITS scores nationally scored showing students growth and grade levels. This requires spring assessment & personally adaptive assessment. In addition, spring assessment provides student proficiency. By providing a score spring administration will meet federal peer review requirements. This must be aligned to state standards.
- Development and design, DOE worked to meet family's needs.
- Essentially talking about 1 assessment, 2 purposes. Both MAP growth and through year assessment are developed through NWEA. Flexible and untimed.
- After every incorrect answer the difficulty of the next question is slightly lower and vice versa.
- Scoring and reports fall, winter and spring administrations allow student growth over time. Addition to reports map growth reports available to students like SAUs accustomed to in the past. Accessibility features 3 tiers universal tools (all students) designated supports determined on individual basis.
- Accommodation changes in procedures or materials. 504 or IEP only. There is a parent refusal policy. For example, If a district has decided this is necessary to graduate and the parent refuses then they cannot graduate.
- Address federal government requirements for Maine- 95% participation students must required in math, ELA, science, using either general or alternate assessment. The number of students cannot exceed 1% of total participants in the state. A question from an attendee asked if there are numbers for well below to above categories. Another question on how we are doing as a state using best instruction to teach basic skills. A member recommended presenting the dyslexia group.
- Regarding the numbers question, achievement levels are not comparable. Scores for through year assessment determined standard setting are taking place in summer so we would not be able to provide numbers right now, but these numbers will not be the same as you're seeing for previous administrations.
- An attendee stated that it would be great to see comparisons.
- The attendee also mentioned that there was an issue in the past around accessibility for blind & visually impaired. The attendee asked if a screen reader was available. Regarding the comparisons, both map growth and through year produce RIT scores which remain comparable. We can continue to see growth for individual students. We can generate paper based forms for Braille readers. Screen reader technology is not meeting Braille reader's needs. We rely on colleagues when talking about accommodations with blindness and imperatives. We will have Braille forms available this year and will continue to check in with Maine Center for Deafness. A member asked if they are still using NWEA model. Answer: NWEA is still a vendor of assessment

difference with through year in addition to math growth model also has spring portion that meets federal peer review requirements starting in May.

- An attendee asked does the DOE have plans of sharing results? Answer: Yes, these results are recorded in dashboard.
- An attendee asked there is a Braille format but not a screen reader format for the 3 year testing and is there not a plan to incorporate this in the future? Answer: NWEA has capabilities for screen reader, we just do not have students currently who need that option. Attendee asked Do you reach out to the community to make sure you are meeting student's needs. How does that work? Do you contact NWEA? Answer: This is an ongoing development cycle state specific solution part of the reason we moved to meet needs of accessibility such as map growth. We are in a constant development cycle and rely on team OSSIE.
- An attendee mentioned that they are concerned that they would have to wait on the DOE. Attendee asked what are the steps the DOE are taking to identify this need long before the student will need it so its readily available for them? Another attendee asked don't students with IEPs have accommodations written into them? That has never been an accommodation? Attendee stated that this concern should be in an IEP or part of that process. A member recommended to talk about the difference between a screen reader and TTS. These are not the same thing. Screen readers accommodation for students with blindness and visual impairment. Text to speech is a functionality available as support text on assessment on screen reads out loud. For example, in alternate assessment entire assessment can be read aloud additional alternative texts describes graphics etc.) that would not be visual.
- We rely on Catholic Charities ME for information needed, provided, etc. We always want to be anticipating what students will need and not after.

#### Erin Frazier, Department Updates:

- The Part B application is posted please feel free to give feedback to Erin Frazier.
- The amount of money received from federal government is not announced. Take amount received from previous year and formulate the budget with that amount.
- There is a slight increase in federal funding, cannot confirm and not sure when they are announcing this. I do know there will be access to the money by July 1<sup>st</sup>.
- SPEDIG math and PBIS funds work around that grant addition to federal money. Other Special Projects are being worked on. Literacy initiatives, math, inclusion, tech support.
- Looking at data across the floor, looking at Dispute Resolution data, looking to apply federal funds to those purposes. There are several different initiatives happening right now one being to expand school psychology.
- Work to support MAER, working to support inclusion rather than solely focusing on autism. Developing a inclusion plan across the state. We are looking to make sure people understand what the impact is of inclusion on overall progression of children once they leave school.
- I am taking public comment until the end of the month if you have thoughts this is a great time to me (Erin) know via email, etc.)
- Hosted an equity plan of action on new federal requirement from build back better America plan looking at equity across states. This goes into some OSSIE team work.

- Right now, SPPS who are not being funded to maintain existence. There are constraints on the funding formula from MUSER which indicates students can only receive tuition money on a day a child attends school and they have to maintain a nonprofit status. They can only keep 3% of the profit.
- Kids are challenged to attend school and feel safe and engage which is happening nationwide. SAU is not paying for the day the child does not attend.
- There is an increase of out of state referrals. Emergency rule was pulled because of some language needing clarification. We are looking to make sure this happens. We are also looking at infusing more federal money to maintain placements.
- We are working on inclusion to achieve outcomes after school. Children with exceptionalities should have access that all other students have access to. We are working with an outside entity that do a lot of inclusive practice. This summer we have the educator summit in august, OSSIE team is providing education opportunities.
- We are working to train some administration school resource officers. People in schools might be working in an emergency that will need training. Also, legal rights.
- A member asked what entity DOE is working with for inclusion? Answer: An outside agency called 2 teach from California. Dr. Wendy McCowsky is in the beginning stages. We are doing a collab with MAER as well.
- 2 inclusion schools in California agency works to support at how inclusive schools are created around the country.
- A member asked how far into the future are we looking into for these things to get going? Answer: We work on it now. Many people work to support inclusion. Training is going to be this fall. We have not yet determined what it will look like. There is a huge increase in referrals in Special Education. Inclusion plan is developing a 2-3 year plan that is staff focused and administrator leadership focused.
- <https://www.maine.gov/doe/learning/specialed/ideapublic> (Interactive spreadsheet)

Erin Frazier, Legislative Updates:

- The LD 98 act to extend eligibility has no work session on this yet. There is concern if legislative initiative does not pass to then forgo the idea of educating children. Whether or not it passes we will be held to standard schools.
- CDS programs includes part C in the bill. SAU is not involved in birth-3 services.
- A member asked if still looking at MUSER document being released in early summer? Answer: Yes, going through final revisions now through the commissioner's office.
- There is a bill to take part C and put some position into DHHS being monitored. Part C connected to CDS any referral made to DHHS is then connected to a referral to CDS.
- There is a literacy bill to provide money for literacy programming which is pretty vague and does not reference LD 38 in 2 years of reporting that has occurred. Monitoring this bill especially for dyslexia work.

- 1309 bill was to create daily rates in SPPS pre schools there is not a 30-hour FAPE requirement even though they run 30-hour programming week. Tried to provide feedback of continuing these services. Leads to a lack of inclusion as children progress in school.
- Maintaining LRE interest.