
**MAINE EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING
THE GOVERNOR BAXTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF**

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MONTHLY REPORT TO THE SCHOOL BOARD

TO: THE SCHOOL BOARD
FROM: DAVID SHERRY
SUBJECT: MONTHLY REPORT – JUNE 2017

Academic Department

Spring appears to be officially here as evidenced by the smell of cut grass that, once again, permeates the island campus.

The Academic Department has been busy the past month. State-mandated assessments are being completed, budgets are being finalized and planning is underway for the summer school program. We are pleased to announce that the summer school program will begin on July 11th and run until August 3rd on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. The week of July 4th will remain a regular summer break period for non-administrative staff. Summer school will again be located on Mackworth Island to take advantage of the many outdoor learning opportunities as well as the additional space on the island. Also, the last day of classes will be June 22nd. This will be a half day for all Academic grade level programs. The six snow days this past year accounts for the later than expected ending of the school year.

We are looking forward to an exciting professional development opportunity in June with Kristen DiPerri, Ed.D, from Boston University. Dr. DiPerri will be providing literacy supports and coaching to our staff that is centered on the “Bedrock” curriculum that she and others have developed to provide Teachers of the Deaf with a more comprehensive continuum of literacy instruction. This curricular approach will provide the necessary structure to support systematic literacy growth for our students. Dr. DiPerri will be with us for a full staff day on June 23rd with follow up sessions throughout the 2017-18 school year. She recently presented at a conference at the American School for the Deaf in Hartford which was attended by some of our staff members. The Bedrock curriculum will provide our teachers with a great foundation for direct instruction and interventions to accelerate student literacy and language development.

Recently, a few of our Jr.NAD participants from Portland High School attended the Thriving Together celebration at Boston Children’s Hospital. This event celebrated the 200th year of Deaf Education in the US. There were many guest signers and speakers who provided a glimpse of both the challenges and accomplishments of Deaf Education from the past all the way to the present. Many thanks go to teacher Jon Connick for supporting our students on this informative field trip.

A very busy month awaits the Academic Department. There are many IEP meetings to complete, reports to be written, schedules to be established, and progress to be monitored. There is also much planning and preparations to be done for the summer program as well as the upcoming 2017-2018 school year. Each year the Academic Department takes a very deep look at student needs and adjusts our staffing patterns and instruction to accommodate every student's academic learning and social/emotional growth. While this typically results in some changes to our classroom staffing patterns, we continue to make great things happen.

Business Operations

Maintenance Department

Goodbye snow, hello SPRING!!! Our Maintenance Staff have been busy doing grounds work after a harsh winter. This past week we were able to do the first of many lawns mowing days, don't you just love the smell of fresh cut grass?! Well, maybe not if you have allergies, but for most of us, it's a true sign that summer is near. You may have noticed that they have been hard at work expanding the edge of the parking lot by the boiler room, the dumpster, and Carter Hall. The hope is to give a little more parking space and turning radius for cars that park in that area. We appreciate all the hard work that are crew do to make our island look great.

IT

Rich has been tirelessly writing the MLTI grant to obtain 19 new computers for next year. Thank you to John and Angie for their help on this project as we write the justification for the needs of our organization. We are also working with our vendor to place an order for additional replacement computers for those scheduled to be renewed. As you can imagine, this takes a lot of coordination on Rich's part to make sure everyone's needs are met. We are so thankful that he keeps us all plugged in!

Public School Outreach

Public School Outreach and Community Services

As the close of school approaches the PSO staff is attending an endless flow of IEP/504 and transition planning meetings. Our final ASL for Families' program took place on May 10th. Preparing families for the fun of spring and summer was the topic of "**Let's Go Out, It's Spring & Summer!**" The children of the group showed much excitement as these concepts were practiced. I am sure they will use this language often over the months to come!

Regional Programs

Regional itinerant staff have enjoyed providing more in-depth services to many of our students this year. They have been reporting some outcomes that are showing growth that reflect the success of their efforts.

“Kids Like Me” (KLM) and Family Fun Days

Patty Cook Stewart, KLM Coordinator, headed north to Aroostook County to work with Kim Matthews and Polly Earl. Together they ran a successful KLM program in Houlton that brought students from southern Aroostook together. The plan is to have these students meet together a couple of additional times to continue to develop communication and self-advocacy skills. In addition to the KLM, they had a very successful first Family Fun Day in Houlton with seven families and approximately 30 people joining in the fun.

Friday, May 19th began our final KLM overnight. The students hiked into the Maine huts at Flagstaff Lake. The crew headed to the beautiful Carrabassett Valley Region to commune with nature. We were very excited to be able to offer this unique opportunity to our students to enjoy some of the most beautiful parts of Maine. We had a gorgeous couple of days!

Webinars

Our final webinar entitled, “Routines Based Early Intervention for Children Who are Deaf or Hard of Hearing ” will be presented by Corri Saunders & Cathy Glover on May 23rd at 3PM. This webinar will include information about routines based early intervention, what it is, and how it is different for children who are Deaf or hard of hearing. We will discuss tips for working with young children with varied levels of hearing and needs for communication.

About The Presenters

Corri O’Brion Saunders, M.E.D, M.Ed. works at the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing as an Early Intervention Specialist for children who are Deaf or hard of hearing birth through age five. She organizes a parent infant toddler playgroup throughout the year on Mackworth Island and works closely with the state’s early intervention teams.

Cathy Glover, M.Ed. has worked for the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing (MECDHH) for over 12 years as an Early Intervention Specialist for Deaf and hard of hearing children birth through age 5. She is on the Maine Hands & Voices Executive Board and is also on the Commission for the Deaf, Hard of Hearing, Late Deafened, and Dual Sensory Impaired.

Learning Objectives

Participants will be able to:

- explain the elements of successful Routines Based Early Intervention
- Recognize the differences in Routines Based Early Intervention for children who are Deaf or hard of hearing
- Identify specific strategies for working around routines with children who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

Target Audience

This webinar will provide information that may be useful to families and or caregivers of children who are Deaf or hard of hearing, early intervention providers, teachers and specialists.

Early Childhood Education and Family Services

Early Childhood and Family Services (ECFS)

The ECFS team is supporting many families who have children transitioning to kindergarten. Each transition involves: family support, a full preschool observation, assessments and a report with recommendations for the transition team to consider when planning for the child. Assistance is provided to students who will either transition to EECS (East End Community School) or to their local school district for kindergarten placement.

ECFS has been collaborating with our preschool team, audiologists, our PSO team, and also the EECFS staff in supporting smooth transitions for our students and families statewide.

Recently, Corri Saunders represented the ECFS team at the CDS (Child Development Services) Routines Based Early Intervention (RBEI) Train the Trainer session. This process involved a week long intensive training where Corri was involved in both furthering her knowing on RBEI and being observed by others in the learning process. She was selected by CDS to participate in the training because of her knowledge and skill in the RBEI process. Congratulations Corri and thank you for representing us so well!

Katie Carmina and Meg Kish recently wrote a proposal for the upcoming statewide Early Childhood Conference happening in June. Their proposal for a presentation on “Conductive Hearing Loss” was accepted for not one but TWO breakout sessions. Great job Meg and Katie! Good luck on your presentation! The ECFS team will be attending this conference as CDS teams statewide will be in attendance as part of their early intervention learning process. We hope everyone enjoys the conference and learns a lot.

Cathy Glover was recently asked to participate in infant mental health training with her early intervention team at CDS. It is wonderful how our ECFS staff are being included and asked to represent as part of the CDS team as well as our ECFS team. This shows how hard our team is working to collaborate and how respected they are by their peers.

Cathy Lushman and Kim Matthews were selected to be two out of 20 professionals in the nation to be involved in an upcoming ASL Assessment training at Gallaudet University in June. We are excited to have them represent MECDHH and to share what we at MECDHH do for ASL assessments. We are looking forward to their learning from other professionals how we might improve our process! Kim and Cathy will be sharing information on what they learn in the fall!

Karen Hopkins, Director of Childhood Education, has begun work on the HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) Grant recently received. She has a team set up to help her map out the work of this grant and begin to look at ways to set the work in motion. Karen met with the Maine Newborn Hearing Program advisory board last week and will meet with their program team this week. The purpose of the

meetings was to explain the goals of the grant and what aspects will be related to the work they do. We also looked at ways that our collaboration can strengthen the program and services for children and families. The Guide by your Side Parent to Parent Support Program will be expanded by beginning a new Deaf Guide program. We are excited to be able to bring more Deaf and Hard of Hearing adults into the early process with families. Meetings with the federal HRSA office will be held to formally establish the grant and learn about reporting and other requirements to ensure that all timelines are met. There is a lot to do but it is all very exciting for our programs, children and families.

Maine Hands & Voices has been providing many events for families. Please keep an eye out on Facebook for the listing and encourage families and the Deaf community to join them. We recently had a playground meetup on May 20th in three locations throughout the state. There is much fun in store for children and families in the next few months.

Mackworth Island Preschool

There is just over six weeks left of preschool. Believe it or not, we have a new child who started with us last week. We are excited to have him join us for the remainder of the year and for summer program. We are busy compiling our summer roster for children and staff as well as starting to discuss what our fall program will look like. We are halfway through the first round of kindergarten transition meetings. Most of them have ended with a follow up meeting being scheduled. The teachers and therapists have been very busy attending all these meetings.

We will be scheduling end of the year assessments and parent teacher conferences soon. We have not been able to fill two vacant, part time Ed Tech positions. Luckily, one of our subs transitioned into a long term sub position with us every day until the end of the year. Thank you, Danielle!

We just finished the Week of the Young Child unit. The children worked hard on life size art projects of them and were excited to invite their families to school for a picnic. They also did an island walk to pick up trash.

Our preschool program is highlighted in the spring edition of Odyssey magazine published by the Clerc Center at Gallaudet University in an article written by our director, Karen Hopkins. Karen was approached by the Clerc Center to write this article after the National EHDI conference she presented at. Since the conference, professionals have been asking the Clerc Center questions about “that new program in Maine!” See below for the link to our article!

http://www3.gallaudet.edu/Documents/Clerc/Odyssey/2017_issue/ODYSSEY_2017-12_Hopkins.pdf

Lastly, we had a licensing visit today from the state of Maine. We passed with flying colors! We have also received our 15-day window for our NAEYC (National Association for the Education of Young Children) accreditation visit. The assessor will be coming sometime between now and June 9. We are finishing up the last minute details in preparation. This visit is the final step in a year of extensive work on the preschool team’s part. Wish us luck!

Administrative Updates

As you can see, based on the reports provided by our organizational leaders, there certainly is no shortage of work to be done. This time of year is one of our busiest. Despite how busy each staff member is, I am proud that each and every one of them continues to put student learning and development needs at the top of their priority lists!

The Development Committee met on May 16 to review the documents prepared by our pro bono attorney, George Burns and to brainstorm potential members for the newly forming Percival Baxter Foundation for Maine's Deaf and Hard of Hearing children. Newly appointed Executive Director, O.J. Logue, was able to join us and had many new ideas to share. Contacts will be made with potential Foundation Board members; applications will be submitted and a new board formed. This is very exciting for our organization and for children with hearing loss in the state of Maine.

As you might be aware, the proposed budget includes a downsizing of the current Leadership Team. This was a difficult and challenging task. The Director of Instruction position was not included in the proposed budget for the 2017/2018 school year. Clearly, this means a shift in administrative responsibility for other members of the MECDHH Leadership Team. Various models of change to the organizational chart were discussed. Each model had variations of shifts related to administrative responsibility. We worked this down to two models which we continued to discuss. After hours of discussing the pros and cons of each model and sharing the models with the incoming Executive Director, we determined how we would proceed should the budget (which does not include a Director of Instruction position) be approved at the School Board meeting on June 1. I will be reviewing the proposed changes at our upcoming All Staff meeting on May 31.

There are many activities coming up over the next month. This means many demands on our time. I want you to know how much your participation and dedication means. You are a staff of unsurpassed work ethic and enthusiasm. The Deaf and Hard of Hearing children of Maine and their families are so fortunate!