
**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: O.J. LOGUE, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
SUBJECT: MONTHLY REPORT – SEPTEMBER 2017

Early Childhood Education and Family Services

The Early Childhood and Family Services (ECFS) team is happy to reunite with their colleagues. Working through the summer can get lonely on the island. The team has hit the ground running. They already have preschool consultations set up for this fall. As preschool students prepare to enter their classrooms in public schools, the consultants are busy offering support around visual set up and acoustical treatments for the classrooms. They train teachers how to use an interpreter or the child's hearing assistive technology. Once the child begins, they offer on-site consultation to the teachers on successful teaching strategies. Our audiology department has been busy finalizing summer checks on technology and returning them to the consultants.

With the addition of the HRSA (Health Resources and Services Administration) grant, we are surveying birthing facilities to find information related to newborn hearing screening. We are also beginning to plan for our new Deaf Guide program. Melinda Meyers and Cathy Lushman will be attending the National Hands & Voices conference with Karen Hopkins to learn about this new program and how to implement it in Maine. We will provide training sometime in November for our new Deaf and Hard of Hearing Guides. Stay tuned for more information. We will also be adding a new ECFS and HRSA Grant Coordinator to assist with the many new additions in ECFS and the grant.

ECFS continues to grow! We have added staff to our program this year: Kim Matthews in Aroostook County to full time (was part time), Peggy Cryer in the Southern office, and Amy Spencer has been welcomed back to the team after a year in preschool. Our consultants returning include: Cathy Glover and Kristen Shorey in our Brewer office, and Corri Saunders, Meg Kish, Tani Vincent and Katie Carmina in our Southern office. Katie Duncan will support the audiology needs of the ECFS team and also coordinate the Hearing Assistive Technology for CDS. For the Deaf Mentor program, we are excited that Cathy Lushman will be joining Melinda Meyers to support the ASL needs throughout the state. They will be a phenomenal team!

Parent Infant Toddler Program

The PIT program is set to begin on Sept. 13th and will be facilitated by Amy Spencer and Melinda Meyers. The program offers a multidisciplinary approach to support

families in a family-centered, play-based way. They will offer special guests this year. The first guest will be Cathy Lushman, who will join the group and talk about the Deaf Culture Festival!

Mackworth Island Preschool Program

The Mackworth Island Preschool Program is starting the year with 32 children enrolled. This is the highest number of preschoolers in years! We will be welcoming more children throughout the year as they turn three years of age.

We had a wonderful preschool open house on August 31 that was very well attended. We saw many returning friends and welcomed many new friends. It is exciting to begin the year with four full classrooms! The first day of preschool was Tuesday, September 5th.

We have many new staff members in the preschool program this year. Our program is coordinated by Lori Levesque who has done a great job organizing everything for our start up. Our students are being taught by veteran preschool teacher Julie Clark who is joined by teachers: Joanie Beth Grondin, Steva Scarpelli, and Emily Thompson. Our talented Ed Techs include: Lisa Lederer, Clayton Marr, Deaven Smith, Mary Hubert, and Megan Garrity. Our therapists include: Chantel Dionne, Christa Cook-McKinny, and Heather Valliere. Our audiologist, Stacia Thomas, is also on our staff.

Elementary Program – Kindergarten Through Grade 5

The Elementary Program at East End Community School (EECS) is off to a great start! Our staff joined the EECS staff for a day full of training. East End has been incredibly welcoming to us all. Per their request, we presented to the full staff on the philosophy of our program and the needs of our students. We were also able to teach a few basic everyday signs. We started the year with a "Popsicles in the Park" event with families and teachers in the park on Munjoy Hill. We were happy to see returning students from grades kindergarten through fifth grade. With a total of 15 students in several different classrooms, we are a busy team! We also welcomed Christy Callahan to EECS as the elementary teacher. We are expecting a new Teacher of the Deaf to the program soon. Ed techs supporting this program include: Brian Dietzel, Justine Higgins, Samantha Greenwood, Peggy Levy and Josh Seal. We are supported by Sarah Donat a new contracted OT, Nicole Dobson a contracted Speech Therapist, and Casey Etter, our Speech Therapist. Jenn McCann and Shana Kelly-Cohen are our social workers. Stacia Thomas and Katie Duncan support the audiology needs at EECS.

Administrative Updates

I am pleased to announce that, over the summer, 15 outstanding new staff members were hired. Much credit goes to Angie and Karen for organizing the multiple interviews for the many Educational Technician and teacher vacancies for the preschool program and the three Portland Schools programs.

Also hired was an additional maintenance mechanic. I would be remiss in not thanking Traci and her staff for their role in putting together offer letters, benefits summaries, etc. and setting up new staff members.

On August 22, all new staff members attended an orientation. The following three days (August 23-25) were spent with close to 80 staff members going through state-mandated training and attending departmental meetings. On August 24th, we had a guest speaker, Susan Elliot from Denver, lead a full day training on Collaborative Skills Training. Her presentation was well received. We were most fortunate to have her as our presenter as she is nationally recognized Deaf teacher.

The Percival Baxter Foundation will be convening on September 12th for its first meeting to work on recruitment of new members and to firm up goals and future events. Two private receptions are already scheduled for the month of October to kick off the new foundation. Recommendations for board membership are welcomed.

The Superintendent of Utah's School for the Deaf, Michelle Tanner, will be spending a day with us on October 10th to learn about our staff and programs. She is especially interested in the preschool program. Earlier this summer, the Tennessee School for the Deaf came to visit. We are pleased to be garnering the attention of our peers throughout the country.

Recently, Angie, Karen and I met with Portland Public Schools to revise and sign a Memorandum of Understanding for the new school year. It truly is wonderful to be partnering with such a responsive and caring school system.

Over the summer, we worked closely with LUCE transportation to find ways to run more efficient routes and to have appropriate student groupings based on age in the vans. Also, we provided training for all of LUCE drivers on September 6th.

The start of the school year is off to a good beginning!

Public School Outreach and Community Programs

Public School Outreach

PSO staff is off and traveling. The requests for services are coming in quickly, over 100 have already. It's going to be a busy year for sure! PSO staff has spent the first weeks checking in with our 35 transition kindergarten students making sure they are all set to start the school in the best possible way. WE look forward to a great year in PSO as we work to expand the support we offer within our regional areas and advocate for further regional development with DOE. We have found regionalization to be a very successful effort that allows consultants to be much more involved in the planning and implementation of our students educational programs and the attention to their social emotional needs.

Kids Like ME

Kids Like Me programs are already in the planning. Our first overnight to the Stratton Brook Hut is scheduled for October 20-21. Our students usually carry in all their own food and gear when hiking to the Maine huts. This trip they will enjoy the benefits of a "full service hut" where meals will be prepared for them. This is a result of very

generous anonymous donation. I am sure the students will find some fun things to explore given how much additional free time this will offer them.

Family Days

Our first Family Fun Day will be held in Aroostook at Goughan's farm on October 28th from 10-2. Families will enjoy a corn maze, some pumpkin carving, pizza lunch and of course some the farms delicious ice cream for dessert.

A special thanks to the great PSO team that has worked so hard to get this year off the ground, support Liz Seal and Denise Adams as new staff and show how successful things can be with teamwork, positive attitudes and collaboration!

6-12 GBSD Academic Programs

Lyman Moore Middle School

Even though we only have one student in our program this year there is no lack of excitement and involvement on the part of this team. Things have gotten off to a very positive start all around and the atmosphere at LMMS is positive and filled with great energy. Thank you to everyone for their dedication to our student and for helping make this a great year for him. A special thanks to Kerry for assuming the responsibility for teaching our ASL classes to hearing students until our new teacher arrives on September 18th.

PHS/PATHS

The complexity of organizing a successful mainstream program is challenging on all levels, but this team is amazing and certainly makes it look easier than it really is. Thanks to all the staff's hard work and collaborative efforts the start of school went smoothly as the schedules changed day to day and the teachers and students settled into a new year. Even transportation has seemed to settle in. Nice job!

Since transportation could not be arranged to send students home early the first day our team planned an exciting outing to the Portland Museum of Art. Thank you to Alicia for setting up the logistics for this field trip. I am sure it made having to stay later a much more enjoyable experience for many of our students.

The HS team is now preparing to sign up for the Academic Bowl, attend the Deaf Tea in Augusta and create their display for the Deaf Culture Festival along with all their academic responsibilities.

PATHS has now gotten underway and the students are enjoying participating in the Food Services and New Media programs this year. The comfort level of the teachers demonstrates that they have had a lot of experience with our student and enjoy working with them and the support staff.