



Executive Director's Report

August 4, 2022

Dear Board Members,

Happy August! As I write this update, I am reflecting on the incredible 65th Birthday weekend we just had. The past few days have blended alumni, staff, families and community members. Friday we filled the gym and quad with families and children as we celebrated the end of our incredible summer school program, Saturday was a day of bringing everyone together with reminiscing as everyone walked through the school, mansion and dorms, games, interpreted music, and ended with a beautiful celebratory dinner with stories from the past. Sunday we held a lovely outside brunch for our alumni. The island was filled this weekend, with joy and hope for the future.

This summer the Leadership Team has been focusing on building strong teams. We spent three days in July with our new Directors and Coordinators together with three outside presenters; Karen Putz, Djenne Morris, and Davin Searles. The blend of positive energy, focus on diversity and strategic planning offered a theme of support, accountability, leadership and collectively moving forward. The following week Karen, Lori, Susie and Dean had the honor of meeting with Donato Tramuto at his summer home in Acton for a day of Leadership Training focusing on Compassionate Transformational Leadership. Donato also spent time with Karen brainstorming ideas for how his foundation can support students in Maine and our organization.

As you can see we are gearing up for a positive start to our school year with a strong team of leaders that will be empowering staff and families to get involved as we move through a new year. We will be welcoming new staff back to the island for a full day of training and togetherness on August 25th. I hope you all enjoy the rest of your summer!

Take care and be well,

Karen Hopkins, *Executive Director*



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Human Resources

Lori Levesque, *Director*

The HR/Payroll office is so busy this summer! The fiscal year rollover is behind us and all went smoothly. The auditors were here at the end of July and it was a great opportunity for us that are new to the organization and/or the auditing process to practice and dig in to our departments' reports.

The focus now for HR/payroll is recruitment, onboarding, and training staff on processes related to HR/payroll. I continue to work on streamlining certification, timesheets, onboarding, evaluations, and the hiring process.

Our Health and Benefits office has just announced another Premium Holiday this year! During the premium holiday months, no health insurance premiums are paid by employees or by MECDDHH/GBSD. I love being able to tell staff (and Dean) about this! ☺

I am looking forward to having everyone back in a few weeks!
Thank you for the opportunity to do this work.

Operations

Dean Flanagan, *Director*

Dear Board Members,

My name is Dean Flanagan, the new Director of Operations. I have 25 years' experience as a Director of Operations / Business Manager. My experience also includes being part of school construction teams to build 4 new school buildings and many renovation projects.

It is an exciting time to be at the Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. The budget process is underway and will highlight some of the changes taking place under recent changes to the law. Budgeting is a process to align the funding requests to program and student needs. I look forward to learning more about the educational programming taking place on the island and throughout the State of Maine. I am in awe of the vast area served.

On a parallel track, the State of Maine has formed a steering committee to assess facility needs. It is a unique committee that represents all stakeholders including MECDDHH/GBSD, State Bureau of General Services, Maine Department of Education, Town of Falmouth, and Department of Agriculture, Conservation & Forestry. Harriman Associates has been hired to undertake a comprehensive study of the facilities and infrastructure. There are many possibilities that will change the infrastructure to meet the growing needs of MECDDHH/GBSD. At the same time, changes can be made to bring energy efficiency to reduce operating costs allowing more funds to go into educational programs. Working with the Maine Department of Education, much needed facility changes can be made and bring a boost to educational programs at MECDDHH/GBSD.

Since I started on July 1st, I have been welcomed by a very helpful staff. Being at MECDDHH/GBSD brings a sense of community. I am very much looking forward to the start of the school year and learning more about the programs and meeting the dedicated instructors.

Business and Human Resources

Kathy Lagasse's last day was July 26th. We wish Kathy the best in her retirement. The search for a new *Accounts Payable Generalist* continues. In the interim, Lori Levesque, *Director of Human Resources* takes over primary duties with assistance from Chris Rheault, *Accountant III*, and myself.

The annual audit began on July 18th with Tim Gill of Runyon Kersteen and Ouellette as the lead for the



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project. The audit is going well. With me being new to the position it has taken longer to gather all requested documents. I am working with Tyler Technologies to produce reports in the requested formats. All MDOE deadlines will be met with ease. Thank you to Tim Gill and his team, and our Business Office team; Lori Levesque, Chris Rheault, and Kathy Lagasse.

Facilities projects/improvement

The Maintenance Department did an extraordinary job preparing for the 65th GBSD Birthday celebration. Steve Kimball and the maintenance team worked many hours on the inside and outside of the buildings to have facilities looking great.

The Master Plan for Mackworth Island continues to move ahead. The most recent meeting on July 29th reviewed the many points discussed at the public forum held at the Falmouth Town Hall on June 29th. Ten topics were identified and will be discussed in more detail while keeping focus on MECDDH/GBSD facilities on the island.

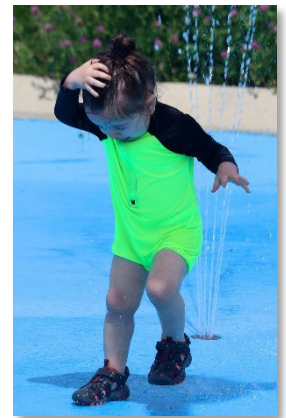
1. Nighttime traffic to island, cameras to monitor?
2. Funding to fix buildings
3. Peak parking demand
4. State Park staffing
5. Fairy Houses
6. Separation of school and State Park
7. Restore water tower
8. Condition of infrastructure
9. Trail Erosion
10. Water-related

Early Intervention and Family Services

Amy Spencer, *Coordinator*



With multiple EIFS openings, the existing EIFS team has been flexible to support the needs throughout the summer in innovative ways. Contracted providers are assisting at meeting family's needs for ASL family training and early intervention services. Offering weekly playgroups in the south has brought together families and children to enjoy juicy



watermelon, ripe blueberries, and summer island and beach walks. In the north, families came together to explore a splash pad and met up at Camp Capella to enjoy a beach for the morning.





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Mackworth Island Preschool

Cathy Lushman, *Coordinator*



Hello from Preschool!

We've been enjoying ESY (Extended School Year) tremendously!

We've been exploring friendship, making friendship fruit salad, taking turns making playdoh, and enjoying water activities during our outdoor playtimes. The slip and slide has been our ultimate

favorite. We're looking forward to celebrating GBSB/MECDHH's 65th birthday! Here are a few pictures of what our day looks like!



East End Community School (Elementary)

Melanie Bowlus, *Lead Teacher*



This year's ESY theme is "The Four Elements: Earth, Air, Water, & Fire." Students learned how these four things (the earth beneath our feet, the air we breathe, the water we drink, and fire for warmth) are essential to our existence.

Daily story times with ASL specialists Emily Blachly and Jennifer Hickey were enjoyed. Emily also shared with students a wide variety of Deaf culture topics.

Hands-on science and math

experiments involved learning about water displacement, water filtration, water and soil erosion, why objects float or sink, measuring liquid volume, drawing a mural of aquatic animals, learning how worms benefit the earth, planting milkweed seeds, and more!





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Highlights of our month of learning included touring the GBSD museum; a field trip to Pineland Farms to learn about the

important role that farms play in our lives; weekly island walks with the entire student body (preschool through high school); participating in a Deaf art design contest; and establishing a long-term, sustainable worm vermiculture which will generate rich soil for MECDHH/GBSD flower beds.



Students have spent July on Mackworth Island learning together through exploration and play. We look forward to seeing them in a month for the start of a new school year at EECS!



Lyman Moore Middle School/Portland High School

Megan Garrity, *Lead Teacher*

It is fair to say that our middle and high schoolers have been busy bees! This year's summer program has had an emphasis on student independence, self-advocacy, and communication.

Summer time often gifts us with the opportunity to bring both academic and life skills together and implement important pieces of learning in every moment. Our students have engaged with budgeting cost for food, practicing how to use communication services that benefit them such as VRS or AVA captioning. Each day they have practiced making different kinds of food and meals that they could make from home. Students have shown the importance of how the words "I can" mean.

Additionally, our students have made tremendous progress with renovating, weeding, raking, mulching and replanting in the garden near the mansion. These students were unsure of getting "dirty" but that quickly changed when they became deeply invested in the project. Take a look at the garden! Big kudos to all the hard work of staff, students, and interpreters. We had a great summer!





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Brewer Community School Site-based Program

Linda Koehler, *Lead Teacher*



For ESY summer school, we had a guest one day, Linda's son Karl, who just finished his master's degree in marine biology. He brought in some pond water and we looked at many fascinating creatures that live in that water. We improved our microscope and hand lens skills too.

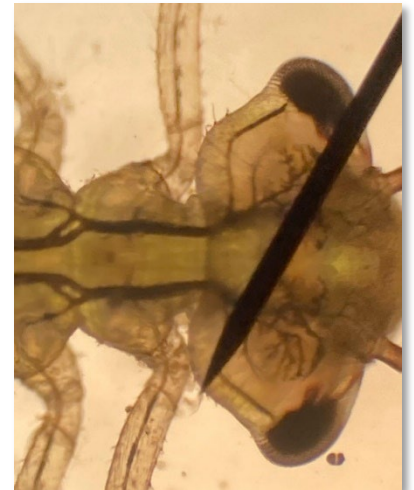


We each practiced our math skills, showing the answer on our giant hundreds chart.



We made ice cream with raspberries

from Linda's house. It was delicious! (So delicious we forgot to take a picture!) We planted green bean seeds and talked about what a plant needs to grow. We read Jack and the Beanstalk and imagined what we'd like to see at the top of our beanstalks.





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Public School Outreach, North

Donna Casavant, *North Coordinator*

A note from Shannon Locke regarding her ESY work:

Good Afternoon,

ESY minimizes the loss of skills that can occur during a summer break. Programs are necessary to ensure no lapse in the support needed to build upon and help the student meet their IEP goals. This summer, I had the privilege of working with a student virtually. This student has the support of the MECDDHH itinerant staff for both English and ASL. My role as the teacher of the Deaf for this student was to facilitate language growth, including decoding, reading, and writing skills. It can be fun for the teacher and the student as it was for this itinerant teacher. Respectfully submitted by Shannon Locke

In Part B Outreach, Kristen, Donna, Brittany, Christa, Christy, Taylor, Jennifer, Shannon, Heather, Deb, Alyssa, and Tani have been working individually with ESY students. They've completed eligibility observations, provided direct service, and been available for school teams to help ESY be successful and to help minimize regression and recoupment of outreach students. Thank you for your work.

Donna and Margaret continue to polish the Infinite Campus system. Working with our independent consult, the new school year calendar is up and running in the system and clean-up is being completed. A few outreach staff have been testing the protocols and providing welcome feedback.