



Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

School Board Meeting
November 9, 2017

Executive Director's Report

From the Office of the Executive Director

What a month it has been! Most recently we were hit hard with a power outage on Mackworth Island such that we had to shut down the school from Monday to Wednesday. Portland resumed power by late Tuesday resulting in the opening of the school on Wednesday. Our bus company was able to pick up all but two students on that day. The K-12 program follows the Portland School calendar so it was important to try to adhere to their schedule especially as it relates to the closing of school. Many of our staff members endured the inconvenience of no power at their homes but diligently came in each day to serve their children. I am proud of everyone for being so positive through it all.

I have attended four different conferences this past month. First, I went to the Coalition of Private Schools Serving Deaf Children (COPSSD), which was held at the American School for the Deaf's summer camp, Camp Isola Bella located in Salisbury, CT. This retreat occurred October 12-13, 2017. The second conference I attended was the Clarke Mainstreaming Conference in Marlborough, MA on October 19-20, 2017. The third conference was the MSMA Conference held in Augusta for primarily Superintendents and Board Members. Finally, I attended the MADSEC Academy primarily for Special Educational Directors. Each of these sessions proved to be invaluable to me as they allowed me to connect with the many stakeholders that I needed to meet personally. My biggest take away from all these conferences is that MECDHH is clearly the front runner when it comes to providing services for Deaf and Hard of Hearing children and family members. The contacts made will prove useful as I continue to navigate my journey as the Executive Director of MECDHH/GBSD.

The Percival P Baxter Foundation for Maine's Deaf and Hard of Hearing Children has now had three Board meetings with a strong slate of 7 current Board Members. I serve in an ex-officio capacity. The kick off fundraising event, hosted by Barbara McMannus, occurred on October 25, 2017 with over 30 attendees at the Portland Country Club. Gimbal Sankare, from WEX Corporation, is the Chair of the Foundation.

During the loss of power, a break-in occurred on Mackworth Island. The targeted area appears to be the Pre-School area. Loss of several iPads along with an FM system with an estimated loss of approximately \$5,000. Traci Drake is working with the Falmouth Police Department and our insurance company to reclaim our loss of stolen equipment. Thanks go out to Traci for her excellent work in handling all of this.

Disability Rights of Maine is scheduled to move in on December 1st. We are working with the Bureau of General Services on the schedule of the construction project. We are awaiting final ADA review to issue a letter of occupancy. The maintenance crew has been doing a terrific job in prepping the C building. Hear Me Now (HMN) lease is all set as well.

Basketball season has been suspended this season with only 4 players available to participate. We will still retain our membership to the conference with the hope that we can build a roster of healthy and available players.

Public School Outreach and Community Programs

PSO staff is very busy serving 170 requests for services that have already come in this year and the 143 students who are included in our three established regional programs. The challenge of servicing students statewide involves working with many different schools and many different groups of professionals who have varying levels of experience with our students. Our program has integrated SLP consultation, Functional Listening Assessments and the newest aspect of our program the "Deaf Mentor" concept. These new components have



Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

School Board Meeting
November 9, 2017

Executive Director's Report

been welcomed with open arms by the districts as our team educates and supports programming statewide for student with the full range of hearing levels and some with additional educational challenges.

Kids Like Me

KLM programs are off to a great start. Our Oxford Regional Program has embedded KLM programming fully into our regional model. Two groups have been established, one at Guy E Rowe School for K-8th graders (12 students) and another at Oxford Hills Comprehensive High School (7 students). Each of these groups are meeting monthly and the students are sharing openly and supporting each other. In addition, the other student almost all have chosen to join our overnights. It is obvious that they enjoy being together and developing long term relationships with their peers who are also deaf or hard of hearing.

Last year we developed a more focused KLM for middle schools which began in Falmouth with their 5 middle school students. They have already had one meeting to share how the start of school has gone and plan to meet again in January.

KLM Programs have been set up for this coming month in Buxton, Livermore Falls and Litchfield areas. They are set to start in November and December. Several other programs are being negotiated throughout Maine. Patty and the outreach staff work hard to help districts and parents understand why these group are so important to these students. After a student has participated in the group the students are our best PR, often asking when they will be able to get together again!

The October 20 & 21 KLM Overnight Program for 6th-12th graders was a big hit. 15 students and staff hiked to and stayed over at Stratton Brook Hut, one of the huts in the Maine Huts and Trails System. The hike was challenging but it was well worth it. The hut overlooks the Bigelow Mountain range and the views were stunning since there was still plenty of foliage to take in. The hut crew took good care of everyone by preparing delicious meals and being gracious hosts. As one student said with eyes opened wide "Wow this hike was so worth the effort!!!"

Be on the lookout for our next overnight for our next overnight on February 2-3, 2018. Thanks to the support of the Baxter Foundation we have a very special event scheduled for this group!!

Webinar Series

Our first webinar for this year, "**Working with a Sign Language Interpreter in Your Classroom**" was presented by Linda Koehler and Shannon Locke TODs from the PSO program. They discussed strategies for successful teaming and the necessity for teacher/interpreter collaboration so that students receive the most effective interpreted education possible. The topics of discussion included the different roles and responsibilities of teachers and educational interpreters as well as research-based best practices. They provided resource information for administrators, teachers, interpreters and parents.:

The goals of the workshop were for participants to develop an understanding of:

- 1) the importance of collaboration between teachers, interpreters, and other team members. 2) evidence-based best practices.
- 3) differing roles and responsibilities of the teacher and the interpreter.



Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

School Board Meeting
November 9, 2017

Executive Director's Report

6-12 GBSD Academic Programs

The first quarter just ended and students and staff have been scurrying to get all the projects and assignments completed before the close of grades. The teams have been working so hard this year to motivate students and it is obviously working. There students are demonstrating responsibility and commitment to their learning. I think the excitement the staff is demonstrating is being caught by the students or vice versa. The dedication and motivation of all involved is obvious when you are lucky enough to watch them all in action!

Lyman Moore Middle School

The student in the 8th grade class at LMMS has been working hard to keep up with the many challenging concepts being taught this year. Our one student has a huge support network that is creative and motivated. They provide a strong follow-up support to mainstream classes by expanding on concepts by developing a wealth of visual supports and creative use of resources. Their focus on supporting independence and problem solving is certainly prepping our student to join the HS next year.

PHS/PATHS

The PHS MECDHH team has upgraded their famous "coffee cart" and are having more success than ever! Students engaged is all aspects of prep for this venture from planning menu items, cooking, budget and counting out profits to full clean up. You can smell the fresh baked cooking as you walk down the hall. It is a hard for staff and students to resist and at 50 cents an item it is certainly a bargain.

Teachers have been working with Terilynn to create an intergraded curriculum unit

around the theme community and how the students fit into various "communities". They are using the common core standards and backwards planning to make sure all students will be working on these standards with their own individual levels. Staff is reaching out to community and set up collaborative with organizations and companies like IDEXX and Portland Water district. They are hoping to have a culminating student lead activity which will include "giving back" through some volunteer effort.

We have also applied to have a team attend the academic bowl this year. Jonathan Connick and Emily Blachly are our coaches. This year the process is a little different. Teams are not automatically signed up. They have a mock challenge that is scheduled for November 16th. Gallaudet judges will present questions to our group and watch them perform. They will then notify teams that have been accepted. Our team this year is Taylor Gagnon, Emma Foster, Cole Crossman and Alister Hanna. We are a small school but what we lack in size we gain in heart. Wish them luck!

Early Childhood Education and Family Services

The early childhood and elementary programs have had a busy few months! Corri O'Brion has been named the new ECFS/HRSA grant coordinator and has been meeting with Karen to begin some of this work. She is transitioning from her role of ECFS consultant. We are in the process of hiring a new ECFS consultant to replace Corri on the team. This consultant will cover the Waterville area and will support families in early intervention from Portland to Waterville.

The ECFS team has been working on developing a model for preparing for the eligibility process for when a child transitions from early intervention into school age (Part B) services at age 3. Our team has been meeting to



Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

School Board Meeting
November 9, 2017

Executive Director's Report

look at various observation models, evaluation tools and how to collect appropriate language samples to provide accurate, up to date, data to the IEP team for consideration.

Karen Hopkins and Katie Duncan have been working to develop a process with CDS for oversight of all hearing assistive technology. We will now oversee all purchases and maintenance for technology as well as support the IFSP and IEP teams in determining needs for services related to audiology. We will be meeting with the CDS administrators on Wednesday to finalize.

Karen presented a session at the National Clerk Center outreach conference that was very well received nationally. She has been getting many calls and emails from other states seeking guidance and consultation. She has meet with NH and is having a conference call with both Indiana and Rhode Island to support them in modeling our early intervention program. We also have a visit from the VT EHDI program coordinator coming to meet with Karen the end of November to learn about our collaboration with Part C and how we have integrated services from newborn screening through early intervention.

Karen has been very busy getting the HRSA grant up and running. Our initial area of focus is re-establishing the Parent to Parent Guide by Your Side Program and establishing the new Deaf/Hard of Hearing Guide Program. We had \$80,000 in the grant for these programs that will embed these services into the early 6 -visit process of early intervention with our ECFS providers. We have national trainers coming from Hands & Voices to train Maine's parents and Deaf and Hard of Hearing Guides on Dec. 8 & 9. There will be a stakeholder meeting the morning of the 8th that the community and board will be invited to participate in to learn more about these two exciting programs.

Another area of focus is working with Maine's birthing facilities to look at where the gaps are in newborn screening and what we can do to support them in their learning. A survey is being sent out statewide to collect this data. We will also be reaching out to disseminate and new prenatal brochure on newborn hearing screening to OBGYN offices and midwife offices to educate expectant parents of the importance of follow up in the screening process.

Karen is working with the director of Children with Special Health Needs at DHHS to establish an MOU to continue our work together. With this MOU the work of our HRSA grant and the state's EHDI Grant will be collaborative and will allow us to continue our contract with them in providing them with a parent consultant, loss to follow up coordinator and audiology consultant. This is very good news for us as it brings us funding for professional development and continues to have us immersed in the 0-5 programming in the state.

The third area of the grant we are working on is establishing Learning communities with early intervention, physicians and audiologists. These learning communities will also include a strong component of family engagement. We will be providing professional development and opening up an avenue for parents to share their experiences with these three groups. Family engagement is a critical part of the HRSA grant and funds are allocated for 12 individuals (parents and deaf /HH guides) to attend this year's EHDI conference in Colorado! Maine will be very well represented!

The preschool program continues to evolve and improve! With 32 students our team is busy and thriving! We are looking at our process of language planning and making changes that will be great for the students in providing a clear focus on which language each child is using throughout their day. We have also been getting lots of visitors from other states wanting to learn about our model! We had the Supt of the Utah School for the Deaf come and Horace Mann School for the Deaf is coming the last week of November! It is exciting to share our



Maine Educational Center for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing
The Governor Baxter School for the Deaf

School Board Meeting
November 9, 2017

Executive Director's Report

program ideas with other states and share what we have learned! We are definitely on the map! The children have been enjoying playing outside in the leaves this fall on this beautiful island!

East End Community School currently has 14 students. The integration in this beautiful school is amazing to see! The teaching team has been working closely with our new curriculum coordinator Terrilyn to improve our overall educational offerings for our students. We are analyzing student writing and looking at next steps with clear plans in place for improving their skills. We are also putting the new Bedrock ASL Curriculum in place to ensure our students literacy continues to grow through their native language of ASL. The program is beginning to look more closely at student language plans and look at how each student spends their day. We are realizing more direct instruction from teachers of the deaf is needed to provide quality deaf education to our students. We are fortunate to have staff that are motivated to learn and improve our programs! The overall community at EECS is extremely welcoming to our staff and children. Karen is now on the leadership team of this school and staff are participating in all school professional development and activities. It's a beautiful collaboration!