



THE MAINE EDUCATIONAL CENTER FOR THE DEAF AND HARD OF HEARING

GOVERNOR BAXTER SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

One Mackworth Island, Falmouth, ME 04105

Executive Director's Report September 1, 2022

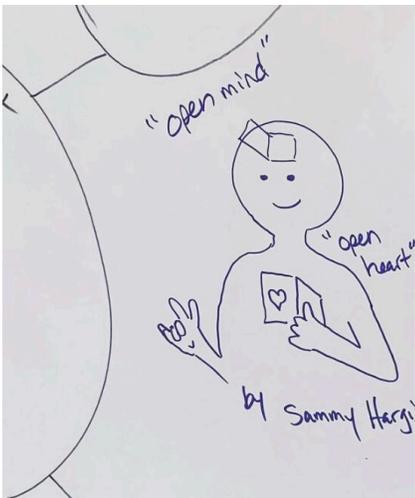
Welcome to the 2022-2023 school year at MECDDHH/GBSD. We have had an incredible summer and are gearing up for a productive and positive start to the school year! We had an inspirational professional development All Staff day last Thursday on the island. We were fortunate to have Djenne Morris (DEI Consultant and parent of a Deaf/Blind child) and Karen Putz, Passion Consultant. Davin Searles (Innivee Strategies) zoomed in for an update on our strategic plan and to review the next steps for the organization. The three consultants led us through a day of exploration and positivity.

Our new organizational structure is set in place and feedback has been extremely positive. Support for all is our goal. Please see the introductions from each of our coordinators below. We are incredibly fortunate to have this talented, motivated and passionate team leading our staff.

We are looking forward to a wonderful year together and welcoming our students back next week.

Karen Hopkins

Karen Hopkins, *Executive Director*





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Operations

Dean Flanagan, *Director*

Lori Levesque has been very busy onboarding new staff for the upcoming school year. New staff orientation was held on August 24th. We are excited to welcome new staff! Thanks to Lori for making it a friendly welcome to the MECDHH community.

Facilities projects/improvement

The Maintenance Department is finishing up their summer work projects. I would like to point out the new fence, pictured here, that was constructed between Building K and Building H which replaces a plastic snow fence. Excellent work by the team!



The Master Plan for Mackworth Island continues to move ahead. The most recent meeting on August 22nd was a first look at GBSD Campus Planning Options. Please see the maps included in your packet.

GBSD Issues & Considerations:

- Baxter Mansion is hidden jewel
- No public Front Door to the school
- Poor Wayfinding
- Inefficient use of space
- No distinct perimeter of school campus
- Deferred maintenance / condition of buildings

GBSD Drivers:

- Maintain Mackworth as home for Deaf
- Honor history/legacy of Deaf community
- Right-size campus for programs
- Address building operations & maintenance

Existing Campus:

Remove

- Vacant buildings
- Poor condition & underutilized buildings
- Excess pavement
- Ambiguous campus edges

Modify

- Campus entry sequence
- Outmoded spaces to create 21st Century learning & work environments

Add

- Vegetative buffers
- Right-sized buildings to meet program needs
- Supportive spaces to best serve school needs



Campus Phase 1:

Remove

- Buildings B & G
- Associated Connectors

Modify

- Access & views to Mansion

Add

- Vegetative buffers
- Campus parking outside building cluster
- Landscape elements where buildings are removed

Campus Phase 2:

Remove

- Building C
- Associated Connectors

Modify

- Building K
- Improve ventilation
- Accommodate Building C program
- Right-size all areas

Add

- Landscape elements where buildings are removed

Campus Phase 3:

Remove

- Building K
- Associated connectors
- Excess pavement
- Awkward parking areas

Campus Phase 3A:

Remove

- Building K
- Associated Connectors
- Excess pavement
- Awkward parking areas

Modify

- School Entry Access
 - Gate pillars
 - Access drives
 - Enhance GBSD front door

Add

- New small building at school
 - Replaces school program in Building K
 - Tightens campus
 - Opportunity to meet current specific program needs



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- New shared resources building
 - Replaces public program in Building K
 - Provides space for community partners (DRM)
 - Houses Deaf Museum
- Site improvements around mansion

Modify

- School Entry Access
 - Gate Pillars
 - Access drives
 - Enhance GBSD front door

Add

- New Right-sized building
 - Replaces Building K
 - Tightens campus
 - Opportunity to meet current specific program needs
- Site improvements around mansion

Human Resources

Lori Levesque, *Director*

The HR/Payroll office is so busy right now! New school year and new staff! We also have a Worker's Compensation Audit coming up next week and have been busy gathering the data for that meeting. The main focus is still recruitment, onboarding, and training staff on processes related to HR/payroll. The office continues to work on streamlining certification, timesheets, onboarding, evaluations, and the hiring process.

It is great to have everyone back on the island!
Thank you for the opportunity to do this work.

Maintenance

Steve Kimball, *Supervisor*

Steve has been a GBSD employee since 1993 when we was hired as a gatehouse guard. Guards regularly patrolled the buildings and checked the boilers 2 times a day. In 1997 he moved into a Maintenance Mechanic position. At that time the role included shuttling boarding students to and from the bus station and the airport. In 2021 we was hired for his current role as Maintenance Supervisor.

Steve is a Union Steward and President of the Cumberland County Chapter. He has been with the Norway Volunteer Fire Department for 47 years.

Early Intervention and Family Services

Amy Spencer, *Coordinator*

My name is Amy Spencer, and I am thrilled to be the EIFS Coordinator for MECDDHH/GBSD. After working in early childhood education, I came into early intervention as a young speech language pathologist who loved working with young children. It wasn't long before I realized the integral role families took in my therapeutic intervention. My thinking shifted to a more family focused model of shared problem solving, resource sharing, and collaborative intervention. Throughout my time in EI in NH, I worked with a few families with children who were born Deaf or hard of hearing and we journeyed together to the best of my ability at the time. I knew there was so much we were missing but teacher of the deaf services in EI in NH then were not as



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prevalent as they are today. When I moved back to Maine, I was drawn to join the PreK team here at MECDDH. It was life changing. I not only learned a new language, I was immersed in a new culture and with that came some clarity about my feeling of inadequacy during my earlier work with families. I dove into the Infant, Toddler, Families Leadership and Collaboration Certification Program through Gallaudet and soaked up every moment as inspiration to improve our already quite positive practices in early intervention in Maine. My systematic brain and knowledge statewide inequities of services led me to developing process documents for our team to have as a comprehensive guide and training component. This process document included a more in-depth Exploring Language and Communication Opportunities (ELCO) process to ensure families across the state have unbiased, comprehensive, and accurate information about access, the importance of language, and the variety of ways language can be accessed by children who are Deaf or hard of hearing to allow them to reach their fullest human potential. This process includes the critical importance of the inclusion of Deaf and hard of hearing adults as well as parent to parent support in every opportunity. In implementing these processes, I have been so honored to be part of each family's unique journey. I look forward to further growing a team of providers who will facilitate family empowerment and find their passion in fostering positive relationships and language growth for our Deaf and hard of hearing children. I see our family playgroups/ events as a crucial element of a family's process and would love to expand this along with more access to Deaf and hard of hearing adults both for individual families and embedded in a variety of community events.

Mackworth Island Preschool

Cathy Lushman, *Coordinator*

My name is Catherine Lushman. I have been working at the Maine Educational Center of the Deaf and Hard of hearing since 1996. I am currently the coordinator for Preschool.

I enjoy spending time with my family! We love to get outside and enjoy the beautiful coast and towns of Maine. We love to travel – sometimes home to Newfoundland and sometimes to Europe.

I am excited about my role as a coordinator because I am known as being a very positive and encouraging influence, a strong collaborator, and a clear communicator. I cherish and feel great pride in the rapport that I have developed with colleagues and with my students. I strive to create a caring, safe, successful environment for all the children. I am committed to the success of the children, my team, and of the organization as a whole.

East End Community School (Elementary)

Melanie Bowlus, *Coordinator*

I'm honored to be the elementary site-based programs coordinator this year. My passions include language acquisition, the holistic education of students, and mentorship. My undergrad is in linguistics and my master's is in Deaf education. Previously I was lead teacher at EECS and have led ESY for the past two summers. This year I am looking forward to supporting both the Portland and Brewer campuses and creating a collaboration between the sites. My hands-on experiences while teaching at EECS will allow me to better advocate for and strengthen both site-based programs in my new coordinator role. I'm happily anticipating a great school year!

Outreach

Donna Casavant, *Coordinator*

I am pleased to be approaching my 9th anniversary with MECDDH. I began in Public School Outreach in November 2013. In that department, I served as consulting and itinerant TOD in the Bangor/Brewer and mid coast regions and assisted with consultations with the New England Consortium for Deaf Blind Projects. I transitioned to Early Childhood Family Services Coordinator in March 2020; following reorganization, I became North Part B Coordinator in January 2021, and then Outreach Coordinator in July 2022. I have been in



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education for my entire professional career (34 years), working with families and children from birth through age 22 in regular education, special education, Deaf education, homeschooling, tutoring, and consultation. I hold six teaching and administrative certifications.

On a personal note, I was born in Lewiston, Maine, have been married to my husband, David, for almost 32 years, have three adult children scattered in Eastern US, and one teenager beginning her sophomore year. We live in Hampden, Maine.

I am excited about my new role because:

- Supporting the outreach staff is a joy; they are the best group of individuals who are creative, caring, and conscientious.
- Returning to a statewide united outreach staff will benefit staff, students, schools and families.
- Sharing outreach coordination with Amy and Kristen will be supportive and engaging.
- I see it as my purpose to make the jobs of outreach staff more streamlined so they can achieve MECDHH needs while also having more time to do what they love best in working with children around the state.

Middle/High School, North/South

Erin Bunce, *Coordinator*

Erin Bunce (Middle School/High School Coordinator) recently moved to Maine from Austin, Texas. As a graduate of the University of Texas (B.A. English) and the University of Arizona (M.A. Special Education), Erin has worked in the Deaf education field for more than 15 years at the elementary, secondary and adult education levels. Prior to moving to Maine, Erin was a high school English Language Arts teacher at the Texas School for the Deaf. Additionally, Erin worked as a Learning Specialist and taught English as a Second Language (ASL) at the Austin Community College. She also taught elementary at the Arizona State Schools for the Deaf and Blind in Tucson, Arizona. Erin is passionate about finding pathways to empower students to achieve goals and prepare for life after high school. Erin is excited about building relationships as well as collaborating with the fantastic teachers and staff at MECDHH! In her spare time, one can find Erin reading or playing with her daughter and hanging out with her family in Massachusetts.

Special Education and Related Services

Kristen Shorey, *Coordinator*

I've been a part of the MECDHH family since late August of 2006, wearing a few different hats over the years. I'm excited to share my expertise in Special Education Law, IEP development and the team approach with the team of SLPs, OTs, ASL Specialists, Audiologists, and our Social Worker. Donna and I will work closely together to create statewide consistency across all disciplines. I'll keep the board updated! Thank you for this opportunity