



The MAINE EDUCATIONAL CENTER for the DEAF and HARD of HEARING
GOVERNOR BAXTER SCHOOL for the DEAF

2020 ANNUAL REPORT





VISION

In collaboration with families and professionals throughout Maine, we provide transformative learning, language-focused education and opportunities for social-emotional growth that empowers Deaf and Hard of Hearing individuals from birth to 22 to reach their full potential.

MISSION

A community where all individuals, families, and professionals are united in support of Deaf and Hard of Hearing success.

VALUES

Statewide Support & Collaboration • Compassion & Understanding
Language Growth • Family Involvement • High Standards
Whole Child Approach

Dear MECDHH/GBSD Community and Friends



As Chair of the MECDHH/GBSD Board, I am proud of how our organization let Deaf and hard of hearing children and their families through a world-wide pandemic. The school board is amazed at how our organization continued to provide evidenced based early intervention and Deaf education in virtual, hybrid and in-person models. Our leadership team and staff worked to develop new models and supported one another through new learning.

We are proud to have received another federal HRSA grant this year written by our own Karen Hopkins and her wonderful team. These funds allowed us to provide training, parent to parent support, and ensure families have opportunities to meet Deaf and hard of hearing adults. This past year we utilized these funds to contract with Shane Feldman from Innivee Strategies to begin an in-depth strategic planning process. This process involved our staff, families, the Deaf community, and stakeholders statewide. We will be sharing our new vision, mission, values and priorities with the community soon!

MECDHH/GBSD continues to be a national leader of Deaf education and is a model for all. On behalf of our dedicated board members, we feel fortunate to support our staff and the greater Deaf community. We invite you to become involved in our community and share our pride in our organization.



Lisette Belanger
MECDHH/GBSD Board Chair

It is with gratitude to our staff, students, families, school board and community members that I share our 2020-2021 annual report. The past year has been one of many changes at MECDHH/GBSD, but together our organization excelled in providing evidenced based early intervention and deaf education statewide to deaf and hard of hearing children.



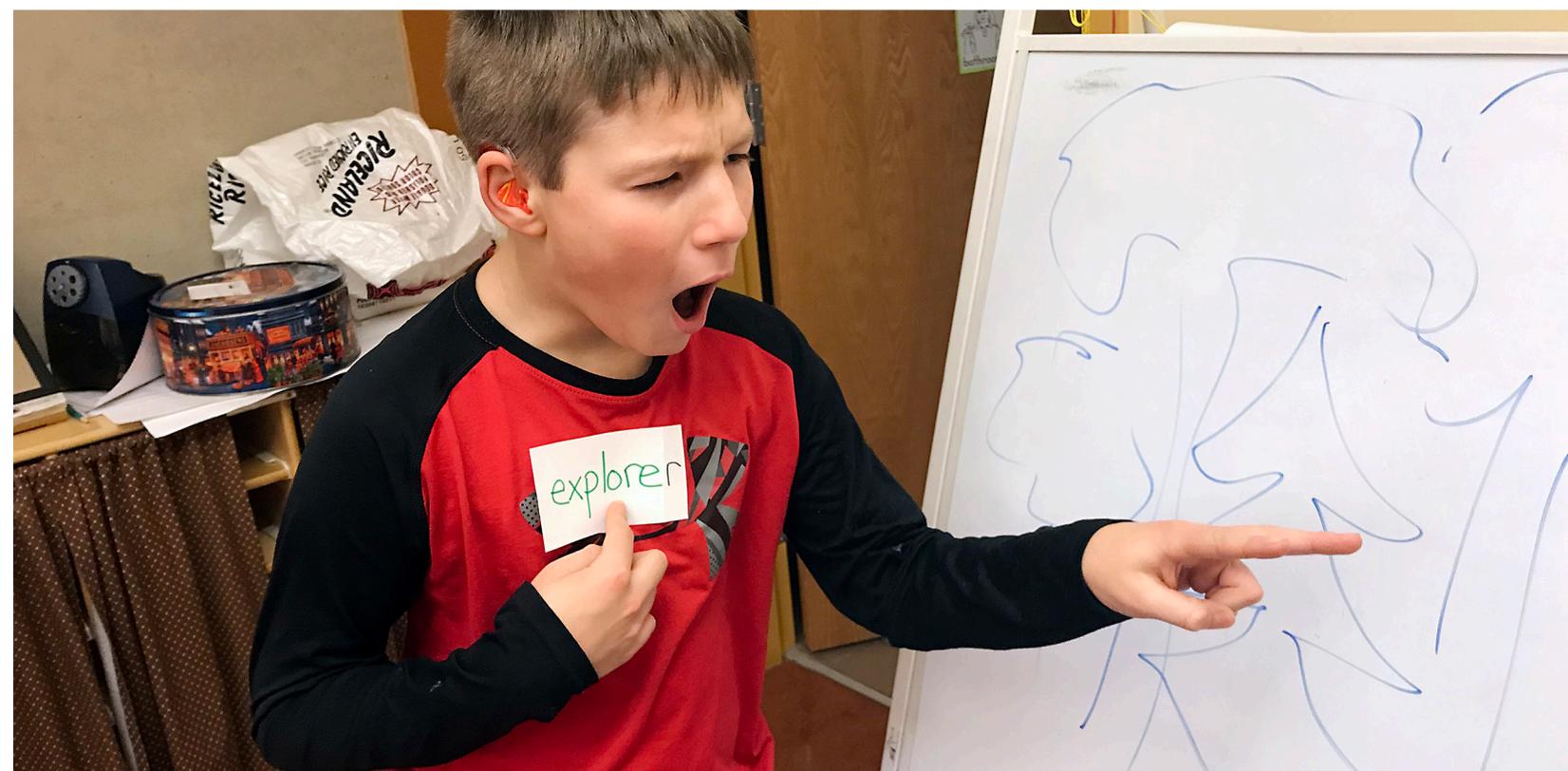
The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted our lives personally and organizationally in unimaginable ways. We began the year preparing for the safe re-opening of our schools. Our Leadership Team prepared health and safety protocols, purchased PPE and technology, prepared for training in hybrid instructional models, and focused on ways we could provide support and guidance to our staff and students. We opened in August and continued to provide virtual, hybrid and in-person instruction. We have found that change brings opportunity for growth and redirection. In this unprecedented year, our staff stayed strong together, ensuring our services continued and expanded in ways that were truly remarkable.

MECDHH/GBSD continues to collaborate with various state agencies, stakeholders, the Deaf community and family-based organizations. Together we are building a strong educational system for Maine's deaf and hard of hearing children, and I am proud to be leading this amazing organization. Thank you for taking the time to read our annual report and learn about MECDHH/GBSD. Governor Baxter would be proud of what we have accomplished this year!

Warmly,



Karen Hopkins
MECDHH/GBSD Executive Director



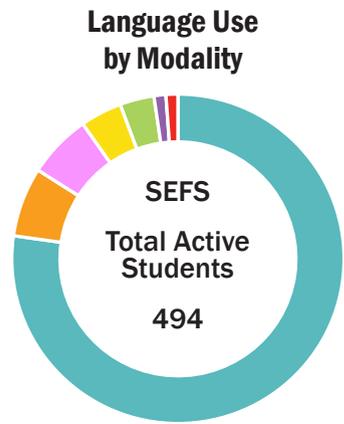
STATEWIDE EDUCATION

Total number of children served: 494

Our Statewide Education and Family Services (SEFS) programming supports children who are deaf or hard of hearing and their families from ages 3-22. Staff include: Teachers of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing, Special Educators, Educational Technicians, Speech/Language Pathologists, ASL Specialists, Occupational Therapists, Educational Audiologists, and a Social Worker. All staff have specialized education and training to support deaf and hard of hearing children. Our ultimate goals are linguistic competence and educational success.

As a statewide organization, our team members and families of deaf and hard of hearing individuals ages 0-22 have access to a variety of resources including:

- American Sign Language instruction
 - For staff and families
- Audiological Services
 - Coaching
 - Technical support
 - Consultation to families and educational teams
- Special Education Services
 - Direct service for deaf students with disabilities and deafblind students as determined by IEP teams
 - Consultation to families and educational teams
- Speech-Language Services
- Direct service for students as determined by IEP teams targeting expressive and receptive language, auditory skills, speech development, and pragmatic language use
 - Consultation to families and educational teams
- Occupational Therapy Services
 - Direct service for students as determined by IEP teams
 - Consultation to families and educational teams



- Listening/Spoken Language 77%
- Bilingual/Bimodal 7%
- Sign Supported Speech 6%
- Undetermined 4%
- ASL 3%
- Augmented Communication 1%
- Cued Language 1%

AND FAMILY SERVICES

Department-wide SEFS Services

We offer a variety of services through Statewide Education and Family Services (SEFS) to meet the needs of students who are deaf or hard of hearing ages 3-22. Services include:

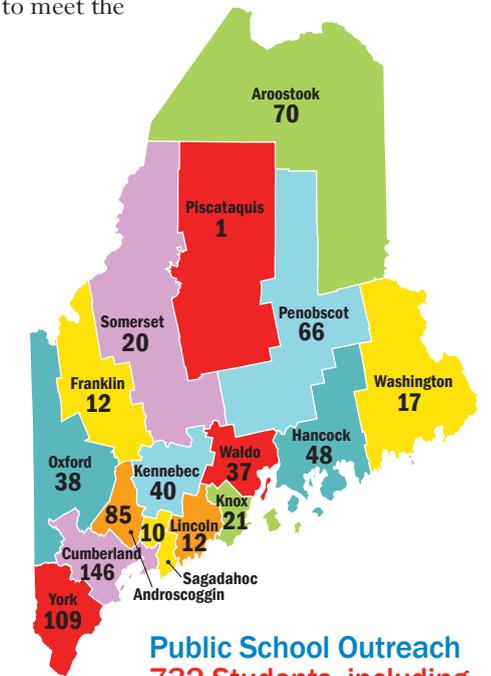
- Evaluations requested by IEP and 504 teams and completed by SEFS staff:
- Academic Evaluations
- Observation in the Learning Environment
- American Sign Language Evaluations
- Speech/Language Evaluations
- Functional Listening Evaluations
- Occupational Therapy Evaluations
- Functional Behavioral Assessment
- Psychological Evaluations (through a contracted provider)

Public School Outreach (PSO)

Total number of children served: 372

Through the 504 and IEP process, the Public School Outreach program supports school-based teams in providing appropriate educational programming for students who are deaf or hard of hearing in ages three through 22. Service is provided directly with students through specially designed instruction (SDI) and/or through consultation where our staff members consult with the professionals at each student's school district.

When SDI included in a student's IEP, that time is dedicated to targeting that student's IEP goals, which could include academic areas such as literacy and math, language development such as ASL skills, and self-determination skills such as self-advocacy.

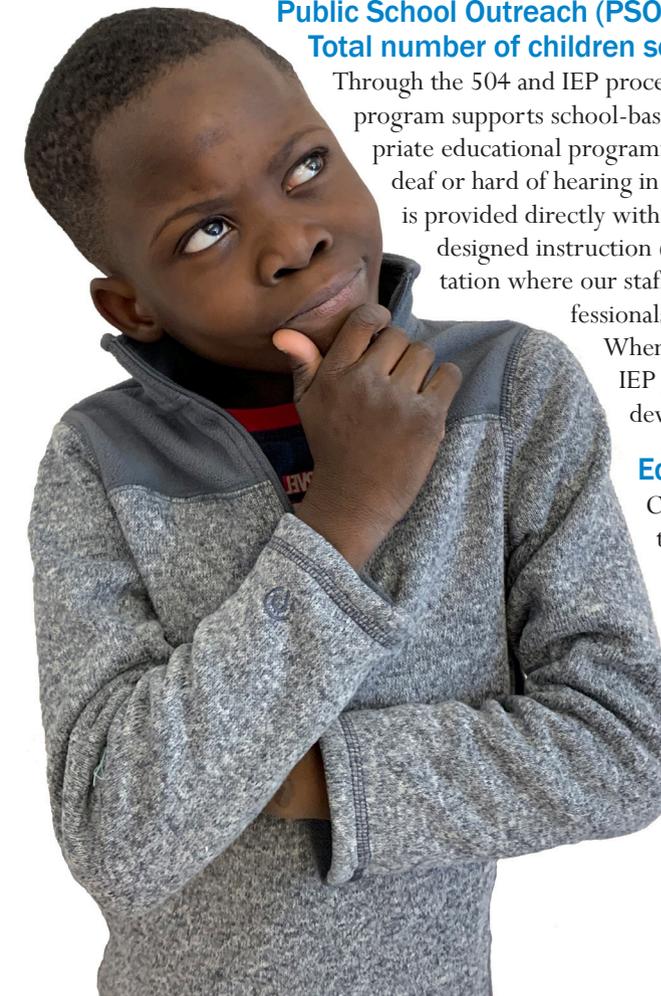


Public School Outreach
732 Students, including inactive students

Educational Consultation

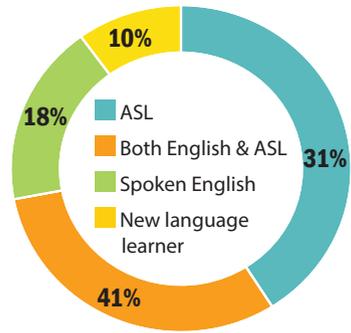
Consultants provide on-site classroom observation and consultation on array of topics, including:

- Assistance in care and use of hearing assistive technology (HA, CI, BAHA, RM)
- Instructional strategies
- Curriculum Adaptation
- Visual and auditory access
- Use of sign language interpreters and cued speech transliterators
- Social/emotional needs
- Transition considerations and resources
- Access to resource materials
- IEP or 504 team participation

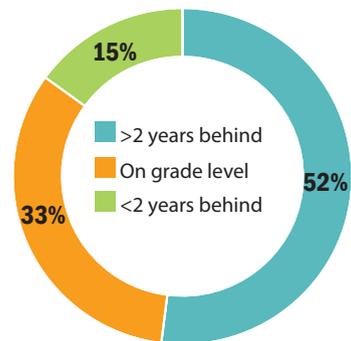


STATEWIDE EDUCATION

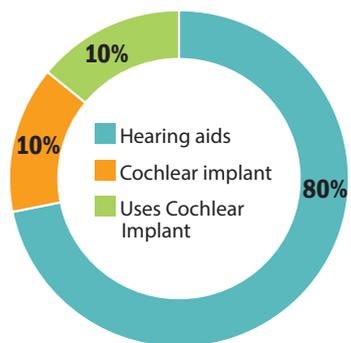
SITE-BASED LANGUAGE



SITE-BASED READING



SITE-BASED TECHNOLOGY



The MEDCHH/GBSD Site-Based Programs

Our site-based programs use the pedagogical approach of bilingual (ASL and English) and bimodal (signed and spoken), which provides opportunities for language access for all of our students. All of our site-based program students have IEPs and are transported from their home towns to their site-based program. Students in site-based programs have access to classes with their mainstream hearing peers for some or all of day while they also are part of a community of deaf and hard of hearing peers within their school.

Our site-based programs have the following enrollment:

- Portland Area
 - Mackworth Island Preschool: 22 students
 - East End Community School: 14 students
 - Lyman Moore Middle School: 5 students
 - Portland High School (includes access to PATHS technical education): 6 students
- Brewer
 - Brewer Community School: 13 students

Mackworth Island Preschool

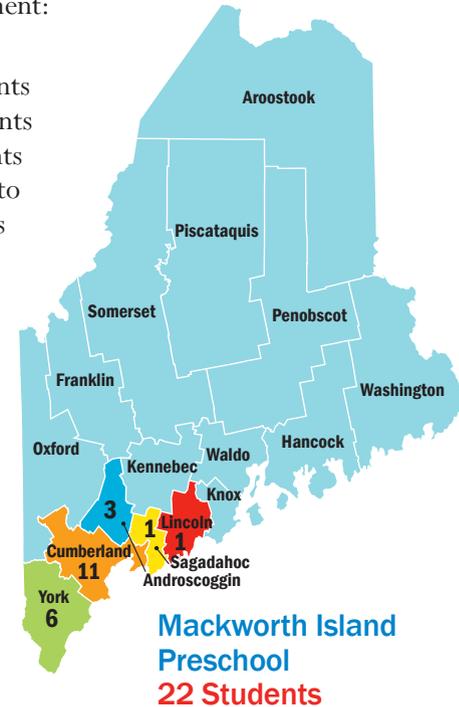
Our site-based preschool program is on Mackworth Island in Falmouth. It is accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), which means it meets rigorous national standards for high quality early learning programs. It is available to deaf and hard of hearing students as well as hearing peers. Preschool students may participate in our aftercare program.

Site-Based Programs within Portland Public Schools

At our elementary, middle, and high school site-based programs, all students participate in mainstream specials including physical education and art. Some students also participate in mainstream academic classes as determined by the IEP teams. All of our site-based programs have dedicated rooms for specially designed instruction and social opportunities with deaf and hard of hearing peers and staff who are fluent in ASL.

Social Emotional Programming, Kids Like Me Program

Kids Like Me (KLM) provides peer support and interaction for students who are deaf or hard of hearing across the state of Maine. The majority of students who are deaf or hard of hearing are in mainstream educational programs. KLM gives students opportunities to connect with peers who are “like them” and understand what it’s like to be deaf or hard of



AND FAMILY SERVICES (SEFS)

hearing. Programming is led by Deaf adult role models. KLM programming during the 2020-21 school year was entirely virtual due to COVID-19 restrictions, but we look forward to when we can provide in-person opportunities again in the future.

Junior National Association of the Deaf (NAD)

Students in grades 7-12 have the opportunity to participate in the Junior National Association of the Deaf where they can develop leadership skills and demonstrate citizenship. They also have the chance to interact with students who are deaf or hard of hearing from other schools and states. The focus is on advocacy, attitude, awareness, commitment, cooperation, friendship, information exchange, involvement and leadership skills.

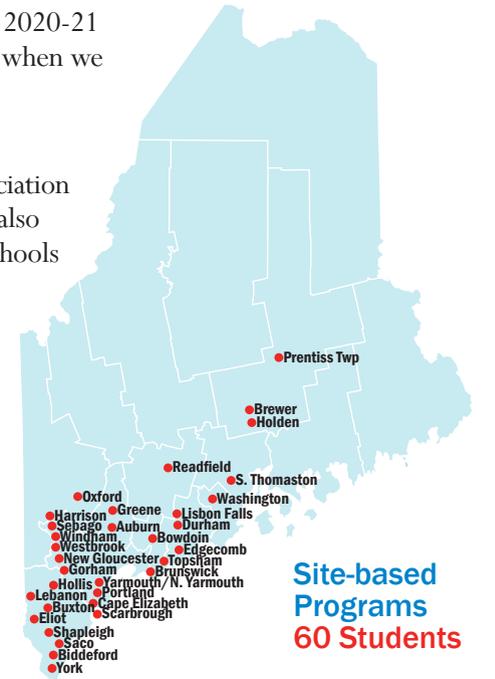
EARLY INTERVENTION AND FAMILY SERVICES (EIFS)

Total number of children served: 372

Maine Early Hearing Detection and Intervention (EHDI) Program

MECDHH was awarded a 4-year grant through the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) to support Maine’s Early Hearing Detection and Intervention program. Work supported by this grant includes:

- A recently completed statewide needs assessment focusing on the needs of families, early intervention specialists, primary care providers, birthing facility staff, midwives, and audiologists. Community needs assessed through this process included needs related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Development of Maine’s EHDI App for families, primary care providers, birthing facility staff, midwives, audiologists, and early intervention specialists to support the newborn hearing screening process, and resources for parent-to-parent and deaf and hard of hearing adult-to-parent support
- Materials created for families to more easily be connected to parent-to-parent and deaf and hard of hearing adult-to-parent support through our family-based organization, Maine Hands & Voices and their Guide By Your Side Program
- Educational videos created to allow families to learn about the newborn hearing screening and early intervention processes at a time that works for them
- Presentations to relevant stakeholders regarding the newborn hearing screening, diagnosis, and entry into early intervention process.
- Development of the Earliest Interactions website (www.earliestinteractions.com), which serves as a landing page for all resources developed through the grant.
- Oversight of the Statewide pediatric audiology work group, supporting collaboration, professional development, and improved reporting to the Maine Newborn Hearing Program among pediatric audiologists in Maine.
- Funding for multiple positions, including a Quality Improvement Specialist, Parent Consultant, Audiology Consultant, and Family-Based Organization Program Staff



EARLY INTERVENTION AND FAMILY SERVICES (Cont'd)

Birth to 5 years

Our Early Childhood & Family Services (ECFS) program provides services to families with children birth to five years of age who are deaf or hard of hearing. We provide information and resources to meet the individual needs of their infants or young children. In our Memorandum of Understanding with Maine's Child Development Services (CDS) we have created one state-wide early intervention and early childhood education system for deaf and hard of hearing children. We collaborate with all birth to 5 providers serving this population, and coordinate hearing assistive technology and interpreting services statewide.

Birth through 2 years of age

- Emphasis on family/child connections and language acquisition
- Routines-based early intervention maximizing opportunities for child interaction in natural environments
- Family exploration of various communication and language opportunities
- Supporting family in learning about their child's hearing levels and developmental needs
- Support for child and family outcomes



SUPPORTERS

Thank you to the following partners!

Catholic Charities
Child Development Services
Conference of Educational Administrators of Schools
and Programs for the Deaf (CEASD)
Deaf Senior Citizen Group
Disability Rights Maine (DRM)
Hear ME now!
Helen Keller National Center for Deafblindness
Maine Administrators of Services for Children
with Disabilities (MADSEC)
Maine Association of the Deaf
Maine Behavioral Health

Maine CITE (Assistive Technology)
Maine Department of Education
Maine General Hospital
Maine Hands & Voices
Maine Newborn Hearing Program
Maine Public School Districts
Morrison Center
National Deaf Center on Postsecondary Outcomes
New England Consortium on Deafblindness
Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services
Northeast Gallaudet University Regional Center
The University of Maine System

GRANTS

We are proud and honored to have received the following grants:

Health Resources and Services Administration: 1-3-6 Family Engagement in Maine Newborn Hearing Program
New Hampshire Department of Education: All Together Now



The purpose of this report was to not only show you who we are and what we do, but also to visually represent the overwhelming need for expanding our services to reach every deaf and hard of hearing child in Maine.

Thank you for taking the time to explore our organization. Please visit our website at www.mecdhh.org. For further information call 207-781-3165.

We look forward to hearing from you.



