Autism Commission Meeting Minutes

February 28, 2018 11:00a.m. –1:00 p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue, Boston, MA

Present: Secretary Marylou Sudders, Carolyn Kain, Rep. Christine Barber, Rep. Kimberly Ferguson, Jessica Katon for Sen. Richard Ross, Ayana Gonzalez (DHCD), Linda Spears (DCF), Janet George (DDS), Christine Hubbard, Patricia Gentile (NSCC), Carolyn Langer (MassHealth), Janet Ross for Kathy Sanders (DMH), Russell Johnston (ESE), Jane Ryder (DDS), Toni Wolf (MRC), Tim Cahill (DDS), Alison Mehlman for Ron Benham (DPH), Jason Albert (EOLWD), Rocio Calvo, Todd Garvin, Judith Ursitti, Amy Weinstock, Ann Neumeyer, Cathy Boyle, Michele Brait, Rita Gardner, Julia Landau, and Chris Supple.

**Meeting Minutes Approval**

Secretary Sudders called the meeting to order and welcomed the Commission members. She asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the meeting on December 4, 2017. Rita Gardner gave a suggested edit under Recommendation #5 – the edit will be reflected in the minutes and the minutes will be presented for approval at the next meeting in May.

**Review and Discussion of the 2017 Draft Annual Report**

The Autism Commission reviewed the 2017 Draft Annual Report up to Recommendation #9. The Commission will start the discussion today beginning at Recommendation #9 to finalize this report. There also will be a discussion on the sub-committees and the chairs of these committees, as well as, a robust conversation of the priorities of the commission going forward.

**Review of Recommendation #9**

The members reviewed and discussed all sections of Recommendations #9 and made adjustments, where appropriate based on members feedback.

The discussion then moved on to a review of Recommendation #10, #11 and # 12. Minor adjustments were made to these sections, where appropriate based on feedback.

**Review of Recommendation #13**

* Completed

Rita Gardner made suggested edits to the minutes under Recommendation #4(d). The change will be reflected in the minutes.

Pat Gentile provided updates on Higher Education that she received from Pat Marshall regarding the MAICEI program.

Rocio Calvo recommended using the term Health Care providers instead of Medical providers (pg. 24).

There was no further discussion on the 2017 Annual Report; Ms. Kain will make the changes and send it out to the Autism Commission members. Members were asked by the Chair to respond to the revised report either concurring or not. The report will be submitted to the Governor and Legislative Committees as required by statute.

**Discussion of Commission Work and Priorities**

Secretary Sudders commented that the Autism Commission is made up of many voices and that we need to find things that we can collectively agree on given the respective roles of the members. She said that the Commission should have aspirational and achievable goals. The actual work needs to happen at the sub-committee level and for the subcommittees to develop short-term and long-term recommendations and then bring their recommendations back to the Commission for its consideration.

*Structure of Co-Chairs and sub-committee work*

* On the go forward, sub-committees will be co-chaired by a state agency member and an appointed member of the Commission. The Secretary said anyone interested in filling an opening for a subcommittee co-chair should let Ms. Kain know.
* Co-chairs of each sub-committee will share information with each other to ensure that the subcommittees are aware of the work by each sub-committee.
* The Adult Sub-Committee is focused primarily on behavioral health due to the statute requiring an interagency agreement between DDS and DMH
* Discussion regarding Workforce Development needs of attracting/retaining and training employees
* Discussion on the additional layer of cultural and linguistic diversity, systemic inequity of access, and sensitivity and having this addressed by each sub-committee
* Todd Garvin said that he wanted to see more involvement of self-advocates and their voices being heard.
* There was discussion of having separate Healthcare Sub-Committee added
* The sub-committees will be informed of the common themes discussed by the Commission and that they should each focus on developing 3 priorities
* The Commission members discussed that since it meets 4 times per year, and presentations should occur outside of the Commission meetings and where possible to use webinars. Any webinars will be for the purpose of providing information and not live discussions to respect the Open meeting law.
* Sub-committees will also be asked to look at the 2013 recommendations and make decisions on what items to carry forward.

**Sub-Committees**

Birth-14 years old

14-22+/Employment

Adults

Housing

Health Care

Workforce Development

The Secretary said that Ms. Kain will send out an organizing memo to the commission members with timelines and the list of sub-committees.

Ms. Weinstock asked to review the list of additional recommendations to see where they will fall under the sub-committee work. Ms. Kain suggested that in the interest of time, given that there are twelve pages of new proposed recommendations from individual members, that she review them and recommend which subcommittee should be assigned to review each one.

**Announcements**

Rita Gardner will send a recent Federal Report to Ms. Kain to forward to the full Commission.

Russell Johnston thanked Ms. Kain and Ms. Lescinskas for their presentation to the Special Education Directors across the state and for the brochures that were developed for the families.

With no further discussion there was a motion to adjourn. A motion to adjourn was made and it being duly seconded, the meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.