Autism Commission

14-22 years of age/Employment Sub-Committee Meeting

August 13, 2018 - 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue – Boston, MA

Present: Toni Wolf (Co-Chair), Judith Ursitti (Co-Chair), Carolyn Kain, Dianne Lescinskas, Jennifer Stewart, Lea Hill, Janine Solomon, Kathleen Kelly, Maura Sullivan, Marisa McCarthy, Amanda Green, Jeanne Hoerter and Margaret Van Gelder

Remote access: Pamela Ferguson, Michael Plansky, Michele Brait, Ilyse Levine and Greg Rosen

Carolyn Kain stated that the meeting was subject to the Open Meeting Law and that the Sub-Committee members present would need to vote to approve the remote participation of some members because of their geographic location, whenever any members were utilizing video and/or tele-conferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously by the subcommittee members present.

The minutes from the 14-22/Employment meeting on July 18 were reviewed and were approved unanimously.

Mr. Stuart Spillman, Sr. Vice President of Advocacy from the National Office of Autism Speaks, was invited to attend this meeting as a guest of Judith Ursitti.

**Gap Analysis Update**

Ms. Ursitti would like to table the gap analysis work for now, as this subcommittee will focus on the recommendations for the Autism Commission report. We will pick up this topic after the September meeting.

**Discussion of Previous and Newly Proposed Recommendations**

This subcommittee reviewed the Proposed Recommendations from Individual Commission Members, as well as, the draft recommendations from individual subcommittee members. Up to three (3) recommendations can be submitted, for consideration, for the Annual Report to the Autism Commission. Some may not rise to the level of a formal recommendation and can be worked on in conjunction with the recommendations during the year. This subcommittee has multiple draft recommendations and will need to limit them to up to three. It was noted that the transition years (age 14-22) can be the most challenging for families and students, as many struggle in their teen years with puberty and other challenges. It was also mentioned that the outcome of school is employment and this subcommittee should have a focus on employment recommendations.

***Proposed draft recommendations from Individual subcommittee members at the June 2018 meeting*.**

1. Specialized employment training for MRC providers
* This is not a formal recommendation and is already in process with the Federation for Children with Special Needs.
* There is a lot of overlap with DDS providers and there should be training provided/developed for DDS providers as well.
1. Improve 688 Electronic Form – to include DDS and MRC Service Availability
* Ms. Stewart reached out to BPT regarding a “check off” box on the 688 form – this is not the intent of the 688 form and there is a cost associated with adding a “check off” box
* The 688 is intended for schools and not for families
* This subcommittee should think of other ways of alerting families to services by MRC
* Ms. Kain talked about her discussions with DESE on the expanded eligibility and having information shared with schools – this is in process now.
1. Strengthen Employment Data to Include Retention Data of One Year
* There is an effort being made to share data through the Master Data Management System
* DDS does collect some of this data – Ask MRC and DDS to collect the data and share
* The agencies could commit to collecting this data and this may not have to be a formal recommendation but something that both agencies could agree to do.
* DESE collects data of students one year after they leave the school district (Indicator 14) through a survey but there is only about a 38% response rate from all students, not just those with disabilities (ASD), and that number is even smaller.
* Should there be some data collection while students are in school to show the connection of work/internship while still in school and the more likelihood of employment after school ends?
1. Increase Access to youth from ethnic, racial and low social economic communities
* This is a broad recommendation but a critical topic – more specifics would be needed for a formal recommendation
* The language could be embedded in every recommendation rather than make this its own recommendation
* It was noted that some individuals from ethnic backgrounds are not being diagnosed until much later than their peers – instead they receive a diagnosis of ADHD or conduct disorder
1. Survey Individuals Receiving Employment Support
* Ilyse and Ann are working on a list of employers and will discuss an idea they have to address this recommendation
* This is ongoing work and not a formal recommendation
* AANE is ready to launch their survey to the “newly eligible” population and the survey questions focus on – Are you aware of the state agencies and services; Do you have access to services; Are the services helpful
* The survey will be in Survey Monkey format and they are using the AANE network and Autism Support Centers to reach individuals
* This survey will not reach the more severely impacted individuals – consider an additional survey to capture all individuals.
* The ISP is one way to capture what individuals are asking for in terms of support – in particular employment support. Some families report they are not receiving meaningful employment support.
* Mr. Rosen commented that it would be helpful to have more Autism Advantage Programs.

***Proposed Recommendations from Individual Commission Members for Review by the 14-22+/Employment Subcommittee***

1. Additional and ongoing DESE trainings to help parents understand the transition process
* The brochures that were created for transition aged youth could fulfill this recommendation – they have been distributed to Autism Support Centers and Advocacy Groups and are on the website. They were also distributed to Sped Directors at their regional meeting
* There is ongoing training for families at the Federation and other organizations and DESE has a technical advisory on their website.
* The Federation and DESE have information on transition services through the LINK Center (Federation) and they are available on both of their websites
1. Trainings for MRC and other agencies to support adults with challenging behaviors but the ability to work and live in the community.
* This training is meant for providers to support individuals with challenging behaviors
* DDS has a few webinars and can also offer in-person training – we should think about best practice
* The training should also include staff and providers and make sure they all have high expectations
* We need to know what exists currently and the types of support that would be needed
* Pre ETs in the school - prioritize for specialized training
* Mike Plansky from “You’re With Us” has BCBA’s involved with individuals in the intake process – they develop a plan and that information is shared with the mentors
* MRC is shifting their Pre ETS model – the model could address specific needs
* The shared provider document (MRC/DDS/DMH) can be helpful in the training needs

It was decided that this recommendation would move forward. Ms. Kain will work with the co-chairs on the language of the recommendation.

1. MRC to work with AANE to establish one or more employment pilot programs.
* We should not just identify one provider
* The gap analysis could help identify what is working and where improvements are needed
* This recommendation will not move forward
1. DESE will develop and implement a state autism Discretionary Grant Program
* This recommendation is from the 2013 Report and we are currently in a different funding environment – grant programs are dependent on funding
* We will not move this recommendation forward but put it on hold
1. Require that the new transition specialist endorsement competencies include experience working with youth and adults with ASD
* It is not a requirement that districts have a transition specialist
* This recommendation is on hold
1. Higher Ed. Institutes will design innovative services, supports and programming.
* A broad recommendation and is not MAICEI specific
* It is intended to go beyond MAICIE and it could be reworded to include support for MAICIE and best practices
* Some individuals can access higher education support though DDS and MRC
* This subcommittee should engage Higher Ed. In these conversations
* College Navigators through Easter Seals – supporting individuals on campus for one year
* MAICIE college participants develop a mentor program on college campus’
1. Increase Funding for MRC’s AT Regional Centers
* The 2013 report included outcome information along with how many individuals are using the centers and if it benefits ASD individuals
* This subcommittee will revisit this recommendation
1. Increase Funding for DDS’s AT Centers across the state.
* This subcommittee will revisit this recommendation.
1. MRC will provide the Autism Commission with quarterly data.
* The purpose of the data is to figure out how many individuals are being served and the outcome
* The MRC standard 90 day model of support doesn’t work for ASD individuals
* This is a service model that impacts the outcome
* MRC is looking at other service delivery models and is figuring out how to think differently on the way services are provided
* This does not have to be an official recommendation and data will be provided to the Commission
1. MRC will expand upon existing staff training initiatives to ensure that all staff is competent in addressing the employment needs of individuals.
* This was already discussed
1. MRC will develop and implement a plan to address linguistic and cultural barriers.
* Linguistic and cultural barriers should be incorporated in all of the work that is being addressed by this subcommittee
1. – 17. All involve DCF and it would be premature to make recommendations without DCF present and involved in this work. This subcommittee will reach out to DCF and invite them to a meeting to discuss these concerns.

**Review of Potential Recommendations for the Autism Commission**

1. Strengthen employment data to include retention data of one year – MRC, DDS and Providers
* State Agencies will commit to retention data collection
* We need to define employment – does it include simulated employment?
* Competitive/integrated employment
* Once we have the retention data look back to see what experiences were had by the individual while still in their school district
1. Additional and ongoing MRC and other agencies trainings to support adult individuals, who may have more challenging behaviors, but have the ability to work and be in the community more often with the proper supports. This population is vulnerable to being underserved or segregated more than needed due to lack of experience/skill in behavior modification.
* This is important –There was discussion on some “newly eligible” individuals that also have challenging behaviors preventing them from accessing employment
* The training should include DDS providers as well
* We should also think about the outreach to employers – the inventory of employers is being worked on currently
* Last year this subcommittee discussed training as a priority – think about what we can do as a subcommittee and what needs to be a more formal recommendation
* BSET is working on an employer training
* We need to hear more from individuals in the employment field and get a better understanding of what is currently happening and what still needs to be addressed
* MPTE grant talking to transition interagency teams – they come together to share resources and best practices – a survey to learn about their work and how they are using best practices could be helpful.

This subcommittee agreed to move this recommendation forward. Ms. Kain and the co-chairs will work on the language and it will be shared with the subcommittee.

There was additional discussion on addressing the cultural and linguistic needs of individuals and families. This subcommittee would like to look at a training that addresses these needs and spotlight these trainings.

The two recommendations that will be submitted to the Autism Commission for consideration into the 2018 report are below:

1. MRC, DDS, and their respective employments providers will commit to strengthening their data collection processes to include retention data of one year for all individuals they serve with autism spectrum disorder (ASD).
2. Additional and on-going trainings, (with specialized consideration for any cultural, linguistic, and/or socio-economic needs) for MRC, DDS and their providers to support adults individual with ASD, including those who present with more challenging behaviors, to enable these individuals to work and be in their community with the proper supports

Ms. Kain and the co-chairs will work on the language for the two recommendations to be put forward to the Autism Commission. It was noted that there was not a recommendation that addresses families and education. This subcommittee was asked to think about a third recommendation to address families and education and email Ms. Kain directly with their thoughts around that recommendation. Ms. Kain will share this information with the co-chairs and there will be discussion on any additional recommendations at the next meeting, which will be held on September 5, 2018 at 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

With no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned.