Autism Commission

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

April 23, 2019 - 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

500 Harrison Avenue – Boston, MA

Present: Judith Ursitti (Co-Chair), Toni Wolf (Co-Chair), Dianne Lescinskas, Ilyse Levine, Janine Solomon, Michael Stepansky, Gyasi Burks-Abbott, Chris Supple and Margaret Van Gelder

Remote access: Amanda Green, Jeanne Hoerter, Michael Plansky, Michele Brait, Jennifer Stewart and Kathleen Kelly

Judith Ursitti 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 teleconferencing. Remote access was approved unanimously by the subcommittee members present.

The minutes from the 14-22/Employment meeting on March 12, 2019 were reviewed and approved unanimously.

**Update and Review of Training Materials Developed - Draft**

The subcommittee had developed working groups to review and have input into specific trainings. The first training was initially developed by Valarie Whiting, DDS Statewide Director for Training and Staff Development – *Understanding Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD) in Adolescence*. The purpose of this training is to help inform employees of DDS that are either new to DDS or have had no experience in working with individuals with ASD. The training will be done in a webinar format and will be housed in the DDS library of trainings.

*Comments:*

* The photos in the PowerPoint need more diversity
* Broader accessibility for the reader (vetted with adapted technology)
* The use of technology is an important support tool – will add to PP
* Slide 2 – change the numbers and the graphic

Dianne will make the suggested changes and send the PowerPoint to the chairs for final approval. The training was approved with the edits.

The second training that was developed by the subcommittee working group is a list of questions that will be sent to Pre ETS vendors as a survey. This survey will help us get a better understanding of what the individuals, which work directly with the ASD population, are seeing in the field. This will guide us on creating a training that is to be developed by the Federation.

The timing of this training will be scheduled for the fall. The new contract for the Pre ETS vendors is going out in the beginning of June.

*Comments:*

* Question #1 – go deeper with the choices – attach a metric to the number
* Question #4 – working with a behaviorist to deliver supports – for example – BCBA
* Question #6 – Add – what supports are most commonly offered
* Question #8 – Expand to include “clinical services or supports” – for example, ABA, speech, OT
* Question #9 – change to include assistive technology support that includes visual aides

The subcommittee will have additional opportunities to make comments to this survey. Dianne will email members and ask for feedback. During the next meeting, this survey will be on the agenda for approval to move forward. Mr. Plansky also suggested sending it to schools for additional input but would have to be reworded and thought out.

Ms. Van Gelder commented that this is something that could expand to Adult providers to get a better understanding of their training needs. She also discussed the work done by MPTE and a survey that was developed for school systems. She will look to see if there are specific questions that address ASD and if not, they could possibly add a few.

**Announcement**

Ms. Van Gelder shared information regarding an upcoming conference – Employment First: Expanding Job Opportunities and Pathways to Work – hosted by DDS and ICI.

There was discussion on understanding what employers are looking for in their employees. Commissioner Wolf discussed the development of MRC’s Employee Advisory Board and suggested we invite Joan to come and speak to this subcommittee about the board and how to move forward and find out the needs of employers.

**After School**

Chris Supple asked to address this subcommittee on after school opportunities and ASD. This issue has been brought up at the Commission meeting and he has had positive discussions on this topic with DESE.

* Length of a school day for individuals – some have 24 hours with residential but others only have a typical school day
* The IEP asks the question “Does this child require a longer school day”
* Would like to collect data on who is accessing afterschool and accommodations – this could lead to policy
* Relevance of why it is important – most typical teens play sports, have jobs after school and are naturally integrated with their peers. Some ASD students may be in sub-separate classrooms and afterschool could be a way to give inclusive opportunities
* DESE does not have formal data on this topic but could draft questions to capture data – Mr. Supple discussed the ABA survey that is going to schools – this work is being done by the 0-14 subcommittee – the questions could be incorporated in this survey
* Discussion on Pre ETS and working with student’s afterschool – providers are being more creative and also doing the work on weekends, as it is easier for families – the providers could also share their experiences and be part of the data exploration.
* Dianne discussed her work at the Boys & Girls Club of Dorchester and their inclusive setting – she worked closely with BPS to help with transportation, additional student support and training needs – afterschool opportunities ties into transition – many skills are learned in a community setting and there are employment opportunities – interaction with peers to help prepare them for success
* Transition Services were discussed and the pushback by some parents that only want their child to work on academics
* Districts are not required to pay for a 1:1 aide in an afterschool setting but they need to ensure the same opportunities are accessible for people with disabilities
* It was asked if there could be guidance around this topic from DESE – some parents do not know they can ask for after school support
* Question for survey for districts – How many students are there, in which there IEP calls for a longer school day, that are not in residential.

**Follow Up from AANE Survey Presentation**

Jeanne Hoerter called into the meeting to further discuss the AANE presentation and ask the subcommittee on how it would like to move forward with the results.

* One door for services
* Applying can be a barrier for some
* What kind of services does this population need – they apply for services but the particular services do not meet their needs
* Promote DDS services to encourage individuals to apply
* Increase the Autism Omnibus budget to $30 million

Commissioner Wolf discussed a pilot that MRC is doing in the western part of the state on eligibility process with a “one door” focus. It is a more streamlined process for applying. She will ask someone from MRC to come and discuss this pilot with this subcommittee.

Agencies each have specific eligibility requirements and any changes would require a change in the law. There is currently a statewide commission looking at eligibility across state agencies. Conversations are occurring on a universal application.

Currently, DMH and MRC are working on a release to share information. A global release with state agencies could facilitate faster eligibility.

**Action Steps**

* Gather more information on the Statewide Commission that is looking at eligibility across the state agencies.
* MRC’s pilot in the western part of the state
* Data element through CHIA

**Pre ETS Conversation**

Changes in Pre ETS were discussed and the goal is for potentially eligible students to be eligible for Pre ETS. MRC is not practicing order of selection. The governor approved funding to ensure this would not happen. MRC is looking at data for individuals in categories 1, 2, and 3.

Mike Plansky discussed a resource that You’re With Us is working on, with Northeastern University, that will help families with transition and eligibility.

**Next Meeting**

* Commissioner Wolf will invite a representative from the Employer Advisory Committee to speak about their work
* Pre ETS update – summary of vendors and range of services
* Rubric – Jeanne Hoerter and Ilyse will share their created list of providers (from the working group) and discuss moving forward with that tool
* Kathy Kelly asked for an agenda item related to Transition Services for Adolescents with co-occurring disabilities – ASD and mental health issues – this could be a future topic
* Look at the recommendations that this subcommittee developed for the 2018 Autism Commission Report
* Federation Training Survey
* After School opportunities for students

The next meeting for this subcommittee is scheduled for May 21st at 11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

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