Autism Commission

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

July 18, 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, Kevin Barrett, Ilyse Levine, Jennifer Stewart, Terri Farrell, Ann Guay, Lea Hill, Janine Solomon, Dian Bohannon, Jeanne Hoerter and Margaret Van Gelder

Remote access: Michael Stephansky

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 June 11 were reviewed and with one minor change proposed by Dianne Lescinskas, were approved unanimously,

**Data Request Follow Up**

Amanda Green was not present at this meeting and Toni Wolf, co-chair of this subcommittee, will follow up with her to regarding the DESE data request. Michael Stephansky, from DMH, will gather the data requested by this subcommittee and send it to the co-chairs by the end of this week. Once all data has been collected, Ms. Ursitti will add it to a visual graph and have it available for members of this subcommittee to review in August. Mr. Stephansky also shared that training would be very useful but to think beyond the annual/semiannual training. How to best support direct support workers with follow up training to continually enhance their skills. DMH has more work to do in this area and recognizes it as an area of need. MRC is also looking at doing more supportive training. Mr. Stephansky will reach out to his manager to inquire what DMH is doing with supportive training.

Jennifer Stewart, from MRC, discussed the changes that will be taking place at MRC. She will be able to speak to these changes in more detail this fall and will update this subcommittee. She did have discussions with individuals from MRC regarding Pre ETS and CIES and they are thinking about a strategy on specialization on ASD. She will also be speaking with Pre ETS vendors and gathering feedback on strategies on how best to support individuals with ASD. She discussed new vendors applying for Pre ETS and the quality of their services may not be as good as those who may have more experience. This committee should consider a survey to find out what is happening in the field, who is focused on serving those with ASD and what the needs are to better serve those with ASD. Also, Ms. Stewart discussed that MRC is looking at Universal Design for Learning (UDL) as a way to better serve those involved with Pre ETS. It was asked if this subcommittee could provide feedback on the changes that will occur with Pre ETS. Ms. Kain mentioned how this subcommittee was able to provide input to the RFR for Pre ETS last year that identified the needs of individuals with ASD consistent with the language used in chapter 71B and that MRC had agreed to make those changes to ensure that providers are aware of and able to meet the needs of individuals with ASD.

DDS reported on data for the FY18 Turning 22 Class. Approximately 1100 were found eligible and out of that number 250 are ASD only. It was asked if that data could be broken down by age to get a gage on who is graduating with their class and who is staying in school longer. Not everyone with a diagnosis may be found eligible. Ms. Kain discussed that the numbers from DESE compared to the numbers from DDS – they are vastly different and this prompted a meeting to discuss how to better capture ASD only or newly eligible, prior to them leaving their school. It was noted that many of the eligible individuals are using self-direction services and part of that could be for supportive employment. It was also said that MRC and DDS are encouraged to work together to support individuals that are found eligible for both agencies.

DDS data was discussed and Ms. Ursitti commented that in the ASD category they did not include individuals with ASD and IDD. She wants to be sure this information is captured and segregated. Ms. Kain stated that this data has been collected by DDS since the passing of the Autism Omnibus Law (2014) and that data is included in the Autism Commissions 2017 report, and that she had forwarded that to the Chairs prior to this meeting.

*Other comments*

* Understanding how to work with individuals with challenging behavior is critical
* Mass. Advocates sees the school and community perspective and many individuals lack readiness skills
* Collaborative Schools – they are doing a lot of supportive employment and parents are lead to believe their young adult is more prepared for employment then they really are - parents are surprised post 22 at the lack of skills
* There are more companies that are interested in working with the ASD population – what are the employers needs to make this successful

**Inventory of Providers to Identify Trends**

Ms. Levine provided this subcommittee with an updated inventory of providers – it is also available for members to add information to the Google document. Ms. Levine will send it via email prior to the next meeting.

* The updated version included comments from the last meeting
* Additional columns included competency requirements, locations
* Several members asked about the purpose of the data and the inventory. Ms. Ursitti responded that it is to identify gaps and then to make recommendations.
* Some of the entrepreneurships identified are “one offs” sometimes created for adult children by their parents
* Job training and job placement are the most important pieces to examine
* Ask Pre ET vendors to share what is needed to best support employers/employees
* Ms. Kain mentioned that this subcommittee had asked to develop training for Pre-ET vendors on the needs of individuals with ASD and that she had contacted the Federation for Children with Special needs about doing this type of training. She said the Federation agreed to do a training as part of its LINKS program but they had asked us months ago to provide survey questions for providers on what they have experienced and what type of training would be beneficial to them.
* Ms. Ursitti responded that the gap analysis would be done prior to the survey and training. Ms. Kain said that the Federation has been waiting several months and that she was concerned that their offer may be impacted by funding if they were using a specific grant that had deadlines, and she would check with them to make sure this will not be an issue.
* Use Year Up as a benchmark for the gap analysis
* **Questions to ask providers**: *Do you provide ongoing job support; What is the model and do they work well with families that have adults with communication/behavior issues; What gap does the employer see – what is working and what do they need to ensure success*
* Companies are looking at alternative ways on interviewing potential employees that allow for telephone conversations or teleconferencing

Commissioner Wolf commented that this subcommittee should set aside time to educate each other on what currently exists for this population and be able to have a two way conversation. Our subcommittee should invite others in the conversation to teach us what is going on in the field.

**Discussion on 688 Referral Process**

* Referral process is done at the discretion of the school district
* Ms. Kain stated that DDS and her office met with DESE to discuss a possible revision to the current 688 advisory or the creation of a new technical advisory to highlight eligibility for the “newly eligible” under the Omnibus Law to help parents know the importance of applying for DDS before a student exists high school.
* Turning 22 was fully funded this year, and ASD students only are being captured under this funding if found eligible by DDS
* Discussion around the draft recommendation to add a “check off” box to include MRC as a direct referral as part of the Chapter 688 referral Form – this form is not given directly to parents but they do have to sign the form. The hope is that it would prompt sped directors to share this information with families. Ms. Stewart will follow up on this issue with BTP.

**AANE Survey**

Jeanne Hoerter, from AANE, shared with this subcommittee the work being done across the state to conduct a survey for the newly eligible to identify their needs - it is designed to give awareness of services to individuals. Some of the questions that survey is asking are; do they access services, have they applied for services, do the services meet their needs. It is a person centered survey and this is not about what the adults may want for them but what the individuals with ASD and their families want for themselves. The survey is currently being piloted, and the current information that they are getting back from the pilot is the biggest need of these individuals is employment. This information could help inform this subcommittee.

**Agenda Items for Next Meeting**

* Ilese and Ann Guay will continue to work on the Google document and send out to this subcommittee for additional input. They will also make calls to providers about the types of services they provide and how they are meeting the needs of the ASD clients
* New data that will be obtained from DESE and was provided at today’s meeting by DDS and MRC will be used by Ms. Ursitti to create a visual graph on the data collected
* Review the proposed draft recommendations from the minutes, as well as, the proposed draft recommendations submitted by individual commission members relating to this subcommittee – Ms. Ursitti will summarize and send these recommendations out to the subcommittee members for review prior to the next meeting. Members of this subcommittee should review draft recommendations prior to the next meeting.

Ms. Kain said that the work being done is an ongoing process and that this subcommittee, in addition to working on the draft recommendations, can also work on additional items throughout the year even if they are not included as formal recommendations in the annual report.

Reaching out to the underserved should also be a priority. This subcommittee could look to identify leaders in those communities to help us address their specific issues. This could be a long term goal and ongoing work. Ms. Kain discussed the brochures that were developed and are available on the autism website in 5 languages. The brochures have also been sent to all of the Autism Support Centers.

The next meetings for this subcommittee are scheduled for August 13 and September 5 from 11am-1:00pm. Both meetings will take place at 500 Harrison Avenue, Boston on the second floor.

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