Massachusetts Autism Commission

14-22 years of age/Employment Subcommittee Meeting

Virtual - via zoom

March 14, 2023

11:00 a.m.– 12:30 p.m.

**Remote Participation**

 Toni Wolf (Co-Chair), Dianne Lescinskas, Carolyn Kain, Gyasi Burks-Abbott, Pam Fergerson, Ellen Taverna, Michael Stepansky, Janine Solomon, Greg Rosen, Elizabeth Sandblom, Carol Gracia, and AJ Cullen

Guests: Andrew Mackenzie, Amy Poulin, Amy Krukonis and Vani Rastigu-Kelly, Moses Nduati (DESE)

**Welcome and Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Commissioner Wolf welcomed members of the 14-22/Employment Subcommittee and reviewed the agenda. Members of the subcommittee introduced themselves via zoom and the minutes from the last meeting were reviewed. Ms. Kain motioned to approve the minutes and Ms. Solomon seconded the motion. Hearing no discussion or opposition, the meeting minutes were approved.

Commissioner Wolf introduced members from the Public-School Monitoring of DESE. They were invited to present to this subcommittee on DEI and public-school monitoring – many of DESE offices focus on racial equity, and they are always looking for room to improve their work.

**Presentation by DESE**

Ms. Rastigu-Kelly, Director of Public-School Monitoring led the presentation.

* Presentation includes information on students with ASD and placement
* Intersection of race and disability
* DESE uses tiered focused monitoring and data (based off a 5-year graduation rate and LRE)
* They examine data in districts and examine the districts own self-assessment
* Indicators 5 and 6 looks at placement/LRE
* Slide 4 described placements – full inclusion, partial inclusion, sub. Separate, separate day school and residential school
* Data was presented on placement of students with ASD by race for school year 2022 and by student group
* DESE has provided ongoing racial equity professional development over the past 6 years – most recently, 6 session PD on the intersection of race and special education
* Tiered focused monitoring and data begins with looking at sped. Placements, graduation rates, attendance rates, discipline rates, physical restraints
* Whenever possible, data is disaggregated to focus on specific categories, including special ed. and race
* Focused data review- 16 monitoring specialists meet with PSM Leadership to analyze data for 120+ LEA’s
* There is ongoing coaching and support for staff to engage in race-based conversations, utilizing scenarios and role play
* Concerning data points are included in report findings – placement and race – placement and disability
* Analysis of data also demonstrated high rates of placements of eligible students of color in sub. sep. programs
* Analysis of district data also demonstrated more than half of all eligible students with autism or emotional impairments are placed in sub. sep. or more restrictive programs

*Questions/comments*

* Comment on the data – white students are often placed in full inclusion as black, and Hispanic are placed in sub separate settings
* Boston rates, based on data have 3x as high individuals in substantially separate settings
* Placement can affect a student’s trajectory – start in sub. sep. you may stay there
* DESE is making family engagement a priority – they are always working to increase outreach and ensuring that the parent voice is incorporated into the process
* It was asked if DESE could look at outcome data for ASD individuals placed in inclusions vs. substantially separate setting
* This data collection started 5 years ago and DESE has gone from a place of not looking at racial equity to now looking at the trends and working with districts to make change - consistent training
* They are not collecting data on longer school year vs. longer school day

Commissioner Wolf thanked the representatives from DESE for their presentation.

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