

**MOEC Board Meeting  
November 19, 2012  
At TEC**

Attendees: Anne McKenzie, Joan Dio, Cathy Cummins, Sherry Smith, Richard Murphy, Steve Theall, Mike Novick, Catherine Cooper, Suan Cuoco, Rosalie O'Connell, Joanne Haley Sullivan, Theresa Craig, Michelle Griffin (DESE), Christine Lynch (DESE), Ruth Hersh (DESE), Nancy Sullivan, Susan Rees, Colleen Dolan, Cathy Lawson

The meeting began at 9:35 am.

**Out-of-District Placement Study:**

The attendees broke into groups by region to discuss the five questions from Tom Hehir's study of out-of-district placements. The following is a draft summary of the participants' responses to the questions:

*Question 1: What are the student and district level characteristics associated with placement in each of these specific out-of-district programs?*

The groups all stated that the main reason for out-of-district placements is to help students with low incidence special education needs and students who have complex special education needs requiring intensive support. Location and relationship to the district and the fiscal health of the district were also provided as reasons that students are placed out-of-district.

*Question 2: What are the processes/pathways through which students with disabilities are referred and placed in our out-of-district programs; and what do parents and school administration perceive to be the goals and purposes of these placements?*

The groups split this question into two parts: a) process and procedure and b) perception of parents and school administration:

- a) The groups stated that special education teams make a referral because no there is no Least Restrict Environment to meet the child's needs. In general, the process is: packets sent out to referring placements, tours are scheduled, students are accepted and decisions are made.
- b) The groups felt that many parents perceive that private schools are "better" than collaboratives, due to the advertising that private schools do and the amenities they

provide. The groups also noted that some parents go directly to private schools without going through the district process first.

*Question 3: What are the key educational elements (i.e., curriculum and instruction, programs and services, management) provided by out-of-district programs?*

The groups felt that collaboratives are much more flexible than private schools and much more willing to work with school districts. They noted that at collaboratives, the staff to student ratios are generally better, that collaboratives work with students over 18 years old, and that collaboratives provide specialized management, clinical management, a social/emotional curriculum, more robust professional development and specialized communication goals that private schools do not typically provide.

The group also felt that collaboratives work harder to get students back into the district and that because collaboratives are governed by districts, they are more responsive to the districts.

*Question 4: How do students with disabilities who are educated in out-of-district programs perform on measures of school engagement as well as academic achievement (i.e., attendance, four and six year graduation rates, performance of Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment Systems tests) when compared to similar Massachusetts students who are educated in traditional school districts, and to what extent, if at all, does performance on these measures differ across schools within each type of setting?*

All the groups reported that it is very difficult to compare students in out-of-district placements to students in traditional school districts. They recommended that growth be measured over time and that the measures could be: attendance, reduced reports of troublesome behavior, level of engagement, post-graduation or completion success, graduation rates, transitional outcomes that would show skills have been developed, and student and parent satisfaction.

*Question 5: How can we best understand differences between out-of-district programs and how do these differences matter for the placement and performance of Massachusetts students with disabilities?*

The groups reported the following differences between collaboratives and private schools:

- a) the level of physical intervention – theoretically most acute disabilities go to private and less acute go to public schools
- b) cost
- c) facilities
- d) degrees of specialization
- e) inclusion/Least Restrictive Environment
- f) ability to transition back to school district

**Executive Director's Report:**

Steve Theall then gave his Executive Director's report. He informed the board that MOEC members gave five presentations MASC/MASS Joint Conference on the Cape. Steve also mentioned that he was able to announce at the conference that Sonia Chang-Diaz and Alice Peisch would be awarded the Walter G. Turner award at the AESA conference in Tampa.

**DESE Update:**

Chris Lynch of DESE provided an update on the collaborative regulations. She stated that the regulations would be presented at the December 18<sup>th</sup> Board of Education meeting. She mentioned that DESE had received comments from 30 different groups and individuals about the proposed regulations. Chris also stated that the Model Agreement is still in process and that collaboratives should not wait for the Model Agreement but should submit draft agreements to DESE by the deadline set by the legislation. Annual reports and financial statements are due to Chris Lynch by January 1.

**Collaborative Commission Update:**

Joanne Haley Sullivan and Chris Lynch then provided an update on their work on the Collaborative Commission. They stated that the Commission has been discussing regionalization and what that means for the collaboratives. Joanne mentioned that a survey would be going out to superintendents and stated it would be important for superintendents themselves to fill out the survey.

**Regional Reports:**

Western Region: Anne McKenzie reported that CES is an approved vendor of Educator Evaluation training. Anne and Joan Schuman have jointly responded to an RFP for a webinar in curriculum mapping

Central Region: Joan Dio reported that the region recently met to discuss technology needs and ways the technology roles could be shared among collaboratives.

Southern Region: Catherine Cooper reported that the region met in October and learned about ITS Learning, which is a competitor to Moodle. Catherine also reported that the region has applied for a 115 grant for Smart PD, which allows people to share empty seats in their own professional development workshops.

Northern Region: Cathy Lawson reported that the region is working on a certification master's program across collaboratives. She also stated that the region has several new directors and will be focusing on ways to regionalize their efforts.

Greater Boston Region: Susan Rees reported that the region is looking at how the new discipline law could be implemented.

**Treasurer's Report:**

Richard Murphy provided the treasurer's report to the board.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.