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Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources Quarterly Report, December 1, 2022

Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources

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**Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources
Quarterly Report
December 1, 2022**

Goal 1 Assessment: Assessment plays a foundational role in promoting inclusive education: It allows teachers to identify individual students' strengths and needs. Inclusive teachers need to be able to administer and analyze assessments to provide necessary services and develop individualized education programs. Not only do assessments help special educators identify the strengths and needs of their students, but they also help parents better understand the needs of their children.

Yearly Professional Development (Senior Personnel will coordinate)

October: De-Escalating Challenging Behavior (Courtney Angelosante, Maine PBIS Initiative Coordinator). This module was designed to provide professional learning in the cycle of escalating behavior. Participants learned the 7 phases of escalation and the adult strategies that promote de-escalation for the student, as well as strategies adults can use to help increase the odds of staying calm. Participants were guided through how to develop an individualized de-escalation or safety plan to promote the implementation of evidence-based strategies and positive behavior supports. This module was based on the research of Geoff Colvin and Terry Scott who wrote, *Managing the Cycle of Acting-Out Behavior in the Classroom*, Second Edition. Over five parts or modules, University of Maine PBIS Initiative Coordinator [Courtney Angelosante](#) guided participants through these topics and more. Upon



completion of this training, participants are eligible to receive 3 contact hours.

As of November 28, 2022, a total of 166 participants had registered for this 3-hour module. Participant evaluations rated this module as high to very high in the effectiveness of delivering evidence-based practices (EBPs) that support improved student achievement. Participant evaluations rated the preparation, knowledge, and skill with which the materials were presented as high to very high. The relevance to the participants professional development needs and participants' school improvement efforts was also rated as high to very high. Some quotations from participants: *“The de-escalation template was new to me. It’s nice to have a guide for what works/doesn’t work for each student. I also appreciated the advice that when a student is escalated, don’t keep repeating directions.”* *“Thinking about behavior as a cycle and expanding on ways that staff can regulate ourselves in order to support success for students in the classroom was new to me.”*

November: PEERS® Dating Bootcamp (Dr. Elina Veytsman, postdoctoral fellow at the UCLA PEERS Clinic). This Dating Bootcamp is open to all including teens, young adults, parents, and professionals. Attendees are presented with targeted skills through didactic instruction, and role-play demonstrations, and can practice newly learned skills through behavioral rehearsal exercises. During these rehearsals, attendees are divided into small breakout groups to practice with direct coaching.

Topics covered:

- Flirting
- Letting someone know you like them



- Choosing appropriate people to date
- Handling rejection
- Turning someone down
- Planning and going on dates
- Dating Do's and Don'ts
- Handling Pressure from partners

Elina Veytsman is a postdoctoral psychology fellow at the UCLA PEERS Clinic, where she conducts young adult and parent social skills groups focused on developing friendships, dating and romantic relationships, and finding and maintaining employment for young adults with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). She also provides certified trainings and workshops for mental health professionals and educators seeking to implement the PEERS intervention. Additionally, she provides individualized social skills, career skills, and dating skills coaching for teens and adults with a range of neurodevelopmental conditions at the Center for Pediatric Neuropsychology in Los Angeles.

The Dating Bootcamp was opened for registration on November 22, 2022. As of November 28, 2022, a total of 8 participants had registered. Dr. Howorth also has an approved IRB to evaluate the pre/posttest understanding of dating etiquette by module participants. At the time of this report no participants had completed the evaluation form yet.



Upcoming in January, February, and March Professional Development online modules :

**Upcoming MAIER
2023 PD:**

JAN	BILINGUAL SPECIAL ED WITH DR. GLISET COLON
FEB	1) MTSS: 101 2) MTSS FOR MATH
MARCH	EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION TO PROMOTE INCLUSION
APRIL	CO-TEACHING FOR INCLUSION

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In addition to those PD listed above, Dr. Howorth plans to create a series of PD modules that will teach educational professionals how to implement the PEERS® for School Based Professionals curriculum in January, February & March with associated communities of practice.



Communities of Practice (CoPs) for associated professional development offerings

Transition to Adulthood Community of Practice. We have 7 registrants for this CoP. This CoP's learning objectives will be community led, and we are framing it around topics like policies, early transition plans (starting at age 14) and extended eligibility. We are also looking at discussing which programs exist, what works, career and tech ed, and what if you're not sure where to start. This is a follow up to our September PD module with Joshua Taylor, Ph.D., Colleen Thoma, Ph.D., Yetta Myrick, Lauren Bruno, Ph.D., Holly Whittenburg, Ph.D., Lauren Avellone, Ph.D. The transition from school to adulthood is an important stage in the lives of young people when the focus of our education, planning, and support of individuals should center around their goals and aspirations for the future. In MAIER's Transition to Adulthood Training Module, participants learned about why transition is important, what success looks like, and how we can use effective strategies for getting our students prepared for the future. Over eight parts or modules, University of Maine assistant professor special education Joshua Taylor and guests guided participants through these topics and more. Upon completion of this training, participants were eligible to receive 12 contact hours.

Self-Advocacy Community of Practice scheduled for early 2023. Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources (MAIER) is pleased to launch a self-advocacy series designed to promote strategies that can help young adults / college students prosper in their transition into adulthood whether it's college or just getting a job. This four module educational series will prepare students and families with this self-advocacy communities of practice series. *About Module Series Leader:* Connor J. Archer, MBA, is the self-advocate



advisor of the Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources and is an individual who lives with high functioning Autism. Connor received services while in school and recently graduated with his Master's in Business Administration from Husson University. Connor is the founder & Chairman/CEO of The Courageous Steps Project, a local 501(c)3 non-profit organization helping children and young adults with various abilities and challenges live a fulfilling life. Connor is also a leader in our state Co-Chairing the Maine Department of Education's Executive Student Transition Committee and has recently been honored with the Autism Society of Maine's Professionals Providing Service Award for 2022. **Expectations of Series:** It is the expectation that each session is attended to receive credit towards contact hours. We will talk for 15-20 minutes at most and leave the remaining time for discussion on each of the below topics.

Resource Hub via the MAIER website: <https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>

Family Collaboration regarding assessment (Research Associate will coordinate)

Goal 2 Collaboration- For teachers, constantly working with a wide range of people—other teachers, school staff, families, and caregivers—is more than part of the job description.

Working with these various groups and collaborating with them is essential and ultimately provides many inclusive benefits for the children we work to support. Implementing inclusive and collaborative practices builds effective relationships and creates a better understanding of all students' needs, which allows everyone to be included and to succeed.

- See planned PD modules for 2023 above. Each PD will have an associated community of practice.



- **Resource Hub via the MAIER website:** <https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>
- Family Engagement resources (Research Associate will coordinate)

Goal 3 Instructional - teacher's inclusive instruction should focus on inclusive learning goals, being explicit and flexible, and using various learning tools such as technology. When instruction is well designed, strategic, and adaptable, teachers have the skills to improve inclusive student learning.

- See planned PD modules for 2023 above. Each PD will have an associated community of practice.
- **Resource Hub via the MAIER website:** <https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>
- Family Engagement resources (Research Associate will coordinate)

Goal 4 Social/Emotional/Behavioral - teachers want their students to feel included, comfortable, and learn while they are in the classroom. To achieve this, a teacher needs to establish a consistent, inclusive, organized, and respectful learning environment. If a learning environment like this is created, then it will serve as a strong platform to successfully implement all the other high-leverage practices to promote inclusion.

- See planned PD modules for 2023 above. Each PD will have an associated community of practice.
- **Resource Hub via the MAIER website:** <https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>
 - Family Engagement resources (Research Associate will coordinate)



Deliverables:

Create an online professional development training methodology to deliver varying levels of information for including students who are at risk of or have identified disabilities to a wide variety of disciplines and audiences for general information, continuing education, and professional development. Training will be specific to high leverage practices to promote inclusion and evidence-based inclusive teaching strategies for all school-age students, especially those at risk of or who have identified disabilities. Continue outreach, training, and technical assistance to the field to include:

- 5 webinars per year for three years to include high-needs topics in the areas of promoting evidence-based inclusive educational practices identified by the DOE
 1. De-escalating Problem Behaviors (HLPs-Collaboration, Assessment, Instruction & Social Emotional Learning)
 2. Dating Bootcamp (Social Emotional Learning)
 3. Upcoming: Bilingual Special Education, MTSS, Explicit Instruction, and Co-teaching.
- 5 toolkits per year for three years to include accessible infographics & multimedia resources Toolkits to date are linked here: <https://umaine.edu/maier/tool-kits-and-videos/>
- 2 modules per year for three years on applicable topics that are like the FACES and Social Skills modules currently on the MAIER website: Dating Bootcamp & Upcoming PEERS® for School Based Professionals.



- Technical assistance in inclusive practices will be provided upon request of school districts to promote inclusive teaching practices such as UDL, Co-Teaching, and High leverage Practices to Promote Inclusion <https://highleveragepractices.org/>
- Continue to update the interactive website: <https://umaine.edu/maier/>

Continue to disseminate information and resources to the field and to the Department through the following methods:

- Clearinghouse of information EBP and High Leverage Practices to Promote Inclusion linked on MAIER website: <https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>
- Information guides on EBPs and High Leverage Practices to Promote Inclusion are linked on the MAIER website: <https://highleveragepractices.org/>
- Calendar of state events linked on MAIER website: currently being updated:
<https://umaine.edu/maier/events/>
- Research dissemination is linked on the MAIER website and via presentations of MAIER work at the state and national education professional conferences:
<https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>
- MAIER will provide age-appropriate, evidence-based social skills curriculum professional development for school districts, educational professionals, and related service providers. Such as the Program for Education and Enrichment of Relational Skills (PEERS®) via Telehealth: Part of Pre-Employment Transition Services and in-person



through the PEERS® Lab at UMaine for teens and young adults (ages 14-22) with social communication challenges and/or an ASD, Level 1 diagnoses. This is the only evidence-based social skills program for teens and young adults with Autism. Given that social communication challenges are a defining feature of ASD, and often these challenges interfere with academic and vocational success, this would set the Maine DOE apart as a leader in the nation for its support of this intervention.

- Dr. Sarah Howorth, Director of MAIER, will continue to collaborate with Dr. Libby Stone Sterling and MADSEC to identify teens and young adults from which participation in the programs offered by the PEERS® Lab at UMaine would benefit. Dr. Howorth, the family liaison, and the two MAIER graduate assistants will help with screening, implementation of PEERS®, and collaboration with students, families, and district administrators to recruit PEERS® participants.