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Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources Quarterly Report, April 17, 2023

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Goal 1 <u>Assessment</u>: 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)

January:

Februrary:

March:

April:

Communities of Practice (CoPs) for associated professional development offerings

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

Goal 2 <u>Collaboration-</u> 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.

- **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 <u>Instructional -</u> 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.

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

Goal 4 <u>Social/Emotional/Behavioral -</u> 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.

PEERS for School-Based Professionals Research Modules:

- Dr. Howorth plans has created a series of PD modules that will teach educational professionals how to implement the PEERS® for School Based Professionals curriculum with associated communities of practice.

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 **(We have exceeded this in year one and have provided seven PD opportunities!)**

    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.

    4. MTSS 101

5. MTSS for Math

6. Explicit Instruction

7. Co-Teaching for Inclusion

- 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/

  a. De-escalating Challenging Behavior

  b. Sexual Education Tool Kit

  c. MAIER's Dating Bootcamp Toolkit

  d. MAIER's Self-Advocacy Toolkit

  e. Multi-tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) Toolkit

- 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:

Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources (MAIER)

Professional Development Offerings 2023,

quarter 1 (January - March)

Overview

MAIER launched five professional development learning opportunities during the first

quarter of 2023 (Table 1) although I will only report on four since the last one to be launched,

"Co-Teaching, Planning, and Assessing 101" was only very recently launched and we have no

data on it as of today's date. The focus of these professional development offerings ranged across

thehigh leverage practices from those for assessment and instruction for multi-lingual learners,

multi-tiered systems of support for academic content areas like mathematics. The thread linking

them together was their work to increase inclusive practices within K-12 educational spaces and

thus more broadly helping teachers to create cultures of belonging.

Of the 89 educators and professionals that registered for these four educational

experiences, a varying percentage of them completed an evaluation of these experiences. The

evaluation completion rate ranged from 3% (Inclusive Mathematics) to 70% (Multi-Tiered

Systems of Support). That the evaluation rate differed so widely is an interesting phenomena we

will consider but since every professional learning opportunity is available for free in an online

asynchronous environment we can only guess that the evaluation completion rate is largely

dependent on the number of teacher professionals needing a Certificate of Completion provided

by the University of Maine if they complete an evaluation. The one PD experience that got a 70% completion rate, "Multi-Tiered Systems of Support" was the PD that was offered in a Webinar environment and we asked people at the end of it to complete the evaluation thus increasing the return rate. But since the other three PD events were all delivered in an asynchronous environment, we were not able to ask people to complete the evaluation once they were done with their learning, and thus the completion rate for these three PD's was markedly lower (28%, 8%, and 3%) than the "Multi-Tiered Systems of Support" PD response rate of 70%.

Information gleaned from the evaluations that were completed are detailed below based on the specific professional development opportunity. Overall, we can report that across the evaluative measures the participants rated their experience as positive, ranking their experience as either "high" or "very high" in every evaluative category except one. The category that was ranked low or very low was the "Presenter's response to needs of audience" question. Except for in the "Multi-Tiered Systems of Support" PD, which was held synchronously online, the other three PD experiences were asynchronous and thus did not provide space for audience engagement. We will remove this question from asynchronous PD evaluations going forward. This was a hold over question from other evaluations that are given to individuals that take part in other professional development learning experiences provided by MAIER, like the Communities of Practice. In the Communities of Practice there is live, synchronous engagement, we wanted to consider the participant's feelings around the presenter's response to them as an audience member. Since these professional learning experiences we are reporting on here were all provided in asynchronous, online spaces the presenter was not able to engage or respond to

the participant, and thus, the evaluation that the presenter was reportedly ranked as low or very low in their response to the audience makes sense.

Table 1.

Overview of MAIER Professional Development Offered During Quarter 1 of 2023

PD	Presenter	Month Launched	# of Registered Participants	% of People Who Completed Evaluation Form to Date
Bilingual Special Education	Dr. Gliset Colón & Dr. Tamara Alsace	Jan 2023	14	28% (4/14)
Multi-Tiered Systems of Support	Dr. Rachel Brown Chidsey	Feb 2023	23	70% (16/23)
Inclusive Mathematics	Dr. Tara Kaczorowski	March 2023	31	3% (1/31)
Explicit Instruction	Dr. Courtney Dexter	March 2023	24	8% (2/24)

Co-Teaching, Planning, and Assessing	Dr. Wendy Murawski	April 2023	Just launched	Just launched

Specific Professional Learning Opportunities Offered

Bilingual Special Education. Of the 14 registrants most (11 out of 14) were from Maine although other New England states were represented as well (New York (n= 2) and Massachusetts (n= 1)) (Table 2). The registrants represented various professionals in the educational sector. 10 of the registrants self-identified as "Educator/Educational administrator," three self-identified as "Professional in the Field," and one self-identified as "other."

Table 2.

Town and State Represented By Registratants

Town	State
Mount Desert Island	ME
Orono	ME
Portland	ME
Ellsworth	ME
Wilton	ME

Weymouth	MA
Brunswick	ME
Brunswick	ME
Yarmouth	ME
Buffalo	NY
Gray	ME
Buffalo	NY
Orono	ME
Corinth	ME

Although only four of the 14 registrants of this professional development provided feedback through our online feedback form, their responses were still able to provide useful evaluative information. The participants rated the quality of the workshop on a 4-point Likert scale where 1 = Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = High, and 4 = Very High. Overall, the participants indicated that this was a useful and positive learning experience for them by reporting the experience as either high or very high across the various evaluative measures 100% of the time, except for one response the respondent said that the "relevance of the session to the school's improvement efforts" was only "low" (Table 3). However, the three other respondents said that they felt the "relevance of the session to the school's improvement efforts" was "very high"

suggesting that they felt they were in school systems that would be able to respond to the topics outlined within this professional development experience. Perhaps the one respondent that ranked the relevance as low is in a school where they felt implementation would be challenged. Yet, no follow up questions were asked so we have no data to make more credible findings about the reasons behind this one respondents evaluation to the relevance of the PD for them.

Table 3.

Evaluation Questions and Likert Scale Response from the Bilingual Special Education Professional Development Learning Experience Completed Evaluations

Evaluation Question	Likert Scale Response
Effectiveness in delivering research-based practices	100% rated high or very high
Support improved student achievement	100% rated high or very high
Preparation and knowledge of presenter	100% rated high or very high
Preparation and knowledge of presentation:	100% rated high or very high

Skill with which material was presented	100% rated high or very high
Relevance of the session to your professional development needs	100% rated high or very high
Effectiveness in addressing multiple learning modes	100% rated high or very high
Presenter's response to needs of audience	100% rated high or very high
Quality and relevance of handouts	100% rated high or very high
Relevance of the session to school's improvement efforts	25% rated low, 75% rated very high

The respondents did take the time to let us know in the comment section of the evaluation form that they learned specifics such as the benefit of Univeral Design of Learning (UDL), and the importance of teaching multicultural students. These were unprompted comments made in an open response section of the evaluation form and since the benefits of UDL and teaching multicultural students were desired learning objectives from the experiences, these are then two additional positive responses about this professional learning experience further supporting the

likert scale responses which were also overwhelmingly positive. Those same two respondents who commented on the benefit of UDL and the importance of teaching multicultural students did make suggestions for improvement and requested more examples on how to promote UDL, and more information on multi-lingual students. Perhaps suggesting that these were important areas of interest for them and would appreciate even more indepth knowledge on these two aspects of inclusion education. We have incorporated these suggestions into our planning of next year's professional development learning experiences through MAIER.

Multi-Tiered System of Support. This professional development opportunity, offered as a webinar, was the one synchronous online professional development offering, compared to the other three PD opportunities that were available asynchronous and online. We received a lot of interest in this, and many people wanted to make sure that even though it was a Webinar they wanted to make sure thet we would be recording the session and making it available online at a later date. We did this, and 23 people registered for the PD.

Of the 23 registrants they reported their professional connection to students in the following ways. 14 said they were a "teacher or school administrator." And then the remaining respondents all represendented the following professions with only one response each, including a "school board member," a "state worker," an "ed tech," a "MTSS specialist," "faculty," a "consultant," a "school psychologist," a "parent training and information center," and a "leadership coach."

These 23 registrants were also from across the state of maine including, Topsham, Midcoast region, Freeport, Augusta (n = 2 respondents), Winslow, Madison, Windham,

Readfield, Hallowell, Orono (n = 2 respondents), state-wide (n = 4 respondents), Windham,

Unity, Westbrook, Blue Hill, Portland, and Hampden.

Overall this PD experience also received positive feedback across the responses but with

an increased spectrum of responses across the 4-point Likert scale of evaluative ratings where 1

= Very Low, 2 = Low, 3 = High, and 4 = Very High. The questions and the likert scale responses

are shared below in Table 4 in order of questions with the highest ratings to questions that had

more of a spectrum of rating responses.

Table 4.

Evaluation Questions and Likert Scale Response from the Multi-tiered Systems of Support

Professional Development Learning Experience Completed Evaluations

Evaluation Question	Likert Scale Response
Effectiveness in delivering research-based practices	100% rated high or very high
Preparation and knowledge of presenter	100% rated high or very high
Preparation and knowledge of presentation	100% rated high or very high
Skill with which material was presented	100% rated high or very high
Quality and relevance of handouts	100% rated high or very high

Relevance of the session to school's improvement efforts	6.3% rated low, 31.3% rated high, 62.5% rated very high
Relevance of the session to your professional development needs	6.3% rated low, 43.8% rated high, 50% rated very high
Presenter's response to needs of audience	6.3% rated low, 56.3% rated high, 37.5% rated very high
Support improved student achievement	6.3% rated low, 62.5% rated high, 31.3% rated very high
Effectiveness in addressing multiple learning modes	6.3% rated low, 68.8% rated high, 25% rated very high

From the responses, the expertise of the presenter and how and what they were presenting was very well received across the registrants. 100% of the respondents rated the knowledge of the presenter, knowledge of presentation, skill with which material was presented, and quality and relevance of handouts as high or very high. Whereas the registrants were more mixed about their feelings regarding the relevance of the session to their personal practice and their school's professional development needs (Table 4). These responses indicate that the registrants were feeling less confidant about how this PD related to their personal and professional needs. But, they felt more confidant in the information they were getting. This potentially indicates that the

registrants might benefit from more specific implementation strategies, ways of advocating for this work in their school context, building a deeper understanding of the system of MTSS and their role in it. We have considered these responses and incorporated more MTSS PD into next year's planning in such ways as to increase the understanding of each level of MTSS, logistics of implementation, and enhanced ways of understanding the connection between MTSS and building a broader inclusive practice and building a culture of belonging.

Outside of the likert scale questions, the respondents made open ended comments as well including what they felt they learned. From their comments the things they learned through this PD experience included "effective sources for evidence based materials," that "all students should be in tier 1", an overall "greater understanding of MTSS," and that MTSS "tiers are not mutually exclusive." These comments of specific learning take aways were positive for us to see because these were similar to the designed learning goals of the MTSS Webinar PD experience, so we were pleased to see that some people reported learning those specific points without us even asking directly.

The respondents also made open ended comments about their suggestions for improvement which included, "webinars for each tier," a "how to pull it together in practice" webinar, "research based interventions at each tier," and "specific MTSS support for different subjects including math." These comments speak to a need for further PD on the MTSS topic including more specificity on MTSS, more applied and practice-based PD, and more content related MTSS support. We have taken these comments into consideration when designing next year's PD experiences.

Inclusive Mathematics. The inclusive mathematics professional development experience provided by MAIER in March, 2023 had 31 people register, the most registrants received from any of the PD experiences. These 31 people were from across the state of Maine. They reported they were from the following municipalities- Mount Desert, Hampden (n = 2), Waldoboro (n = 2), Dyer Brook, North Berwick, Winterport, Berwick (n = 2), Enfield, Friendship, Solon, Mexico, Naples, Turner (n = 3), Auburn, Orono (n = 3), Houlton, Brunswick, Waterville, Brewer (n = 4), Ellsworth, and Hartland.

The registrants also reported the ways in which they were professionally connected to this work. The vast majority (n = 28) reported they were a "teacher or school administrator." While one reported they were an "Ed Tech III," one reported being a "non-profit service or program administrator," and one reported being an "after school or other learning provider."

Overall the PD experience was received favorably, but this response and our associated findings need to be considered extremely limited due to the fact that only one person filled out an evaluation on this experience. This one response is useful and will be considered, but it provides only a limited scope of evaluative information on which to make any conclusions that would help us consider future PD experiences.

This person marked all of the responses as high or very high (Table 5). However, considering that they even marked the question "presenter's response to needs of audience" as "very high"   when this was an asynchronous online learning experience, so there was no interactive experience, and thus no way for the presenter to respond to the needs of the audience,

it suggests, that perhaps this person was just clicking along quickly and not paying a tremendous amount of attention to the specific wording of the questions.

Table 5.

Evaluation Questions and Likert Scale Response from the Inclusive Mathematics Professional Development Learning Experience Completed Evaluations

Evaluation Question	Likert Scale Response
Effectiveness in delivering research-based practices	100% rated very high
Support improved student achievement	100% rated very high
Preparation and knowledge of presenter	100% rated very high
Preparation and knowledge of presentation	100% rated very high
Skill with which material was presented	100% rated very high
Relevance of the session to your professional development needs	100% rated very high
Relevance of the session to school's improvement efforts	100% rated very high

Effectiveness in addressing multiple learning modes	100% rated high
Presenter's response to needs of audience	100% rated very high
Quality and relevance of handouts	100% rated very high

One way we did get accurate qualitative data from this respondent was in the open ended questions asking "What are two (or more) new things you learned today?" and "Suggestions for improvement or topics for future sessions; other comments." This person wrote in that they learned "More in-depth knowledge on scaffolding techniques to use inside the classroom along with PBL techniques and the steps to address and use supports and manipulatives to further help lessons." This comment suggests that this was a useful professional development learning experience for them, and provided useful connections to their inclusive building classroom practice. And, when we asked for suggestions, they responded, "Great Development Series. Thank you!" So as much as we are heartened that so many people registered for the PD opportunity, it was disappointing that so few filled out the evaluation, but the one that did provided feedback that this was a useful PD opportunity for them.

Explicit Instruction. The Explicit Instruction professional development experience provided by MAIER in March, 2023 had 24 people register. These 24 people were mostly from across the state of Maine, while one was from Hawaii, and another from Massachusetts. They reported they were from the following municipalities across Maine- New Gloucester (n = 2), York, Dover Foxcroft (n = 2), Howland, Waldoboro, Wilton, Enfield (n = 2), Cumberland

County, Penobscot, Brewer (n = 5), Portland Public Schools, Houlton, Hartland, Phippsburg, Topsham, and one from Wailuku, Hawaii, one from Concord, Massachusetts. Although I do not know how the teachers from outside the state heard about this PD opportunity, it is interesting to see the multi state reach MAIER is having. It is also interesting to consider across these PD opportunities how many teachers are attending from the same district. Are they attending together, or are teachers telling their colleagues, or are administrators recommending these opportunities to their teachers? We have no data to answer those questions, but it could be useful to reach back out to all of our participants and ask some simple follow up questions such as these at a future time. Going forward,w e will add the questions: *How did you hear about this PD opportunity? Did you participate in this PD opportunity with others in your building/ district?*

The registrants also reported the ways in which they were professionally connected to this work. The vast majority (n = 13) reported they were a "teacher or school administrator." While other professions were reported as "Ed Tech" (n = 8), one reported being a "special education consultant," one reported being a " non-profit service or program administrator," and there was one "parent" as well that registered. It is interesting to note that this was the highest reported number of educational technicians that took part in one PD opportunity. Again, we do not know how this increased number of educational technicians happened upon this particular PD opportunity, but we are pleased to see a wide assortment of teaching professionals interested in enhancing their inclusive classroom educational practices.

However, once again there were only a few (n = 2) registrants that went on to complete the evaluation of their experience. Therefore, although we are pleased to be able to consider their thoughts and ideas, we need to take the limited number of evaluation responses into consideration and understand there is a lack of generilizability we can attribute due to the low number of responses.

What these two registrants said in their evaluation was again, extremely favorable overall. Only one question, outside of the "presenter's response to needs of audience" question (which we know is not a valuable question in this case) was rated as "low." Every other question was rated as "high" or "very high" by both feedback providers (Table 6). The one question that one of the respondents reported as "low" was to the question that asked about "Skill with which material was presented." One of the respondents answered "low" while the other one reported "very high." Therefore there is a discrepancy between the two evaluations concerning the one question that was not rated as "high" or "very high."

Table 6.
Evaluation Questions and Likert Scale Response from the Explicit Instruction Professional Development Learning Experience Completed Evaluations

Evaluation Question	Likert Scale Response
Effectiveness in delivering research-based practices	100% rated high
Support improved student achievement	100% rated high

Preparation and knowledge of presenter	100% rated high or very high
Preparation and knowledge of presentation	100% rated high or very high
Skill with which material was presented	50% rated low, 50% rated very high
Relevance of the session to your professional development needs	100% rated high
Relevance of the session to school's improvement efforts	100% rated high or very high
Effectiveness in addressing multiple learning modes	100% rated high or very high
Presenter's response to needs of audience	100% rated low
Quality and relevance of handouts	100% rated very high

While neither respondent provided qualitative information in open ended responses concerning suggestions for improvement, one did report that they learned "the importance of teaching vocabulary explicitly and how these strategies help students." This specificity is helpful in knowing what part of the PD opportunity was taken up by the education professional and what they found useful by doing this learning module.