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Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources

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Repository Citation

Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources, "Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources Quarterly Report, July 2023" (2023). *General University of Maine Publications*. 3526.

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Maine Access to Inclusive Educational Resources Quarterly Report July, 2023

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. All of the PD and CoPs conducted this year addressed various aspects of assessment.

January – June 2023 Professional Development Online Communities of Practice Update:

Self-Advocacy Q&A: This self-advocacy series is 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. This series was recorded and made available on MAIER's website due to low turn out.

Link [HERE](#) for registration and more info.

Number of registered vs attended: 6/0

Dates: Thursday January 26th, 4:00pm-5:00pm;
Thursday February 16th, 4:00pm-5:00pm;
Thursday March 16th, 4:00pm-5:00pm
4th date tbd

K-12 to Adulthood Transition: Help a young person plan their transition to adulthood after high school graduation by joining this Community of Practice. We will learn about best practices in transition for local and national experts, share effective strategies and resources, collaborate to overcome shared challenges, develop collective goals, and achieve desired outcomes!

Link [HERE](#) for registration and more info.

Number of registered vs attended: 15/7

Dates: Monthly on the 2nd Wednesday of the month through May from 1:00 – 2:30 pm.
December and January dates already passed
February 8th 1:00 – 2:30 pm
March 8th 1:00 – 2:30 pm
April 12th 1:00 – 2:30 pm
May 10th 1:00 – 2:30 pm



Update: This CoP group has decided to continue with this work, and wants to continue to meet monthly starting in the fall.

Inclusive SexEd/Health: Help a young person be informed and aware of body development and sexual health so they can make safe, healthy, and autonomous choices about their body by joining this Community of Practice; designed and lead by you, facilitated and supported by MAIER's Research Associate, [Dr. Anica Miller Rushing](#), and [Maine Family Planning's](#) Lynette Johnson. We will learn about sexual health/sexuality, puberty and developmental changes, understanding developmental needs of young people, discuss what is “normal?” What do all young people need and what might people with special needs need, and how to build social awareness and understanding boundary setting in youth.

Link [HERE](#) for registration and more info.

Number of registered vs attended: 13/5

Dates: February 2nd 3:30 - 4:30 pm

March 2nd 3:30 - 4:30 pm

April 6th 3:30 - 4:30 pm

May 4th 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Update: This CoP group has decided to continue with this work, and wants to continue to meet monthly starting in the fall.

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support: This professional development and Community of Practice opportunity facilitated by MAIER and hosted by Dr. Brown-Chidsey is designed to help educators learn and develop Multi-tiered System of Supports (MTSS) frameworks that inclusively support all students. Participants worked to increase their ability to leverage both Response to Instruction and Intervention (RtI²)(focused on academics) and Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS)(focused on social and emotional learning), in order to organize supports within a classroom so that both the academic side and the social-emotional-learning side are aligned to serve the whole child. Link [HERE](#) for more information on each agenda, and registration form.

Number of registered vs attended: 13/3

Dates: February 28th 3:30 - 4:30 pm

April 4th 3:30 - 4:30 pm

May 2nd 3:30 - 4:30 pm

June 6th 3:30 - 4:30 pm

Co-teaching, planning, and assessing 101: By joining in this CoP educators learned and developed an enhanced understanding of what it means to co-teach, plan, and assess with their colleagues. This CoP was facilitated and supported by MAIER's Research Associate, [Dr. Anica Miller Rushing](#), and 2Teach's talented [Dr. Melissa Jenkins](#). Participants increased their ability to use these practical, innovative, and research-based strategies to improve inclusive practices. Co-teaching, planning, and assessing can be accomplished with the same staffing availability and



within the current planning time with planning and support and will increase your ability to more effectively meet the needs of all learners. Link to more information and the registration [HERE](#). Participants were also encouraged to do the Co-teaching asynchronous online learning modules available [HERE](#), and were very excited and encouraged to attend the in-person co-teachign conference happening in October, 2023. I will note that having the meetings weekly for one month seemed to be a right fit for this group. The more intensive, over a shorter period of time was discussed by the group as being preferred vs. meeting monthly.

Number of registered vs attended: 11/4

Dates: May 10th from 3:30 - 4:30 pm.

May 17th from 3:30 - 4:30 pm.

May 24th from 3:30 - 4:30 pm.

May 31st from 3:30 - 4:30 pm.

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

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. All of the PD and CoPs conducted this yeat addressed various aspects of collaboration.

- **Resource Hub via the MAIER website:** <https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>
- **Listserv, Newsletter, and Website Update:**

Folder with the 11 newsletters put out from January, 2023 through June, 2023 to our 866 contacts via MailChimp is [HERE](#). Overall, about 1/3 of the newsletters are opened (i.e., click rate), which is a comparable rate compared to other not-for-profit peers. We have added 15 new subscribers/contacts to our listserv/newsletter since January 2023. We continue to find that using pay-software like MailChimp has increased our ability to release the newsletter more effectively, efficiently, and is more visually appealing to the readers. Using MailChimp has also helped us to keep up to date with our contacts so that we have up-to-date email addresses and can now easily email the whole group or select groups based on how they are “tagged” in the software.

- The MAIER [website](#) is also being iteratively updated. The website is monitored and updated with new information and resources almost weekly. A new section on self-advocacy was added to encourage more people to feel welcomed to MAIER if they themselves are identified with a learning difference, are differently abled, or have a



special need. Be sure to check out the new offerings and clearinghouse of resources, options and availabilities are added often.

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. All of the PD and CoPs conducted this year addressed various aspects of instruction.

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

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.

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: <https://umaine.edu/maier/clearinghouse-of-research-and-lists-of-resources/>

Maine Family Partnership Events Update Since October, 2022

Anica Miller-Rushing worked with MAIER staff and community members to draft ideas for the 2022- 2023 Maine Family Partnership events. The groups most enthusiastic about deeply collaborating are the [Maine Discovery Museum](#) in Bangor, and the [Adaptive Outdoor Education Center](#) in Brunswick. With the Maine Discovery Museum we have not only restarted the [My Day to Play](#) Events after a hiatus during Covid, but we are also working on helping to review and evaluate learning kits they are sending out to families starting this spring. MAIER also increased the collaborative effort with the museum by working to find student volunteers from University of Maine College of Education and Human Development that can not only help with programming on My Day to Play events but can also collect simple data for ongoing evaluation and research. We had one volunteer attend multiple events, and collect data for MAIER consideration. My Day to Play spring dates [HERE](#).



Anica Miller-Rushing has also been actively collaborating with Adaptive Outdoor Education Center in Brunswick. MAIER provided the funding for the SMILE Boxes program in the early fall where AOEC sent out over 20 learning and activity boxes to families with youth that have physical, mental, or learning differences. AOEC and MAIER worked on providing a free-to-families Climbing Event at Maine Bound in Orono and an Outdoors For Everyone family day in Brunswick in early June that was sadly rescheduled due to a storm. AOEC and MAIER are collaboratively planning this family fun day to include activities stations, supplies, and gathering volunteers to help support and run the event.

Anica is also in ongoing discussions and ways of collaborating in the future with Kirsten Hibbard at the [Challenger Learning Center of Maine](#) in Bangor. We are working on finding and writing a grant to create two avenues of collaboration. One aspect of collaboration will be for MAIER to provide in-person professional development for the CLC staff on sensitivity training and high-leverage practices for inclusive education. The second aspect of collaboration is for a series of STEM for all activity days where the CLC would be open with stations throughout that are designed for families to come and learn and play together while engaging with high-leverage inclusive practices. To do these activities in the way we want to do them, we would need funding, and thus Anica and Kirsten are working on grant opportunities for these ideas.

Anica is also excited to be working with Melanie Junkins at the Maine Department of Education with their Maine's Statewide Family Engagement Center's Consortium for Engaging Families Across Maine (CEFAM) Advisory Committee. At the request of Melanie, Anica completed an application to join this state-wide advisory committee so we could more effectively collaborate on and consider ways of hosting family events that create measurable frameworks for effective and socially and emotionally framed engagement with families. Anica has attended the two meetings held thus far and finds the group to be helpful in that there is a more state-wide perspective and voice from families, but still sees that we are all (MAIER, DOE, etc) struggling with how to create metrics to evaluate if we are reaching families, or in what ways our contact is making a difference systemically.

Although I highlight the more on-going and deep collaborations, there are other groups that are also generously donating space, programming, and staff time to make the Maine Family Events a success. They are listed in the activity list below but are also listed here: Pine Tree Camp, Versant Power and Astronomy Center, Volta Climbing, York Wild Kingdom, and Spring Meadows Golf Center.

A new collaboration that is being considered and investigated is with [Dr. Audrey Bartholomew](#) from the University of New England. Her work in special education overlaps with MAIER in wonderful ways, and we are working on ways of co-producing and co-facilitating events in order to increase both MAIER's and UNE's reach across the state. We are planning on fall events, dates are yet to be determined.

These Maine Family Partnership events have successfully started back up in person after Covid-related issues. Anica and Connor Archer (a consultant working with MAIER) created a [Media Tips List for Advertising](#) so we could make sure the events are getting properly advertised since we are getting low turnout for many events thus far. Our biggest registration numbers were



for the York Wild Kingdom event (26 families registered) but even the astronomy event had 12 registrations and only 2 showed up. Although all the organizations are saying they are also seeing low turnout for their other events, we are trying to make sure the events are not only attended, but attended by a diverse representation of families. I am hoping that the time spent with the Maine DOE advisory committee time will also help us to determine more effective family collaboration regarding educational assessment, resources regarding collaboration for inclusion, and resources regarding social-emotional learning. We recognize the need to move to more measurement/evaluative-based, high leverage practice based, and diversity-minded inclusion for these Maine Family Partnership Events.

Activities: For links and more information to all events below, see the MAIER Event Website [HERE](#).

- October 22, 2022 9:00 am – 12:00 pm, Pine Tree Camp’s Flutie 5K table and info session
- December – June Select Sundays from 1:00 – 4:00 pm My Day to Play at the Discovery Museum in Bangor. My Day to Play flyer and spring dates [HERE](#).
- March 18th 1:00 – 2:00 pm Planetarium Show “Cosmic Colors” at Versant Power Astronomy Center in Orono
- April 22, 10 am - 1:00 pm, Climbing Event at Maine Bound in Orono co-hosted with Adaptive Outdoor Education Center.
- April 30th 11:00 am – 1:00 pm Indoor Climbing at Volta climbing in Trenton
- June 3rd, Family Fun day in Brunswick co-hosted with Adaptive Outdoor Education Center. Rescheduled to June, 2024.
- June 17, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm, Family meet up and play day at York Wild Kingdom in York.
- July 27th, 9:00 am - 1:00 pm, Golf Tournament and MAIER Fundraiser at Fairlawn Golf Course in Poland.
- September 9th, 10:00 am - 2:30 pm, Horticultural Therapy and Art Experience at the Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens in Boothbay Harbor.
- Fall, dates tbd, Family fun days at University of New England using special education student volunteers. Co-planned and facilitated by MAIER and [Dr. Audrey Bartholomew](#).