

September 26, 2013

Approved without correction at Joint Meeting on 6.5.14

Present:

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| Jill Staudinger | Cathy Haarstad |
| Jennifer Barry | Amanda Carlson |
| Tammy Gallup-Millner | Shannon Grave |
| Holly English | Rita Wiesz |
| Carol Brakel | Cindy Lund |
| Nancy Skorheim | Patti Redding |
| Holly Major | |
| Moe Schroeder | |
| Stephen Olson | |
| Cassie Keller | |

Staff:

Gerry Teevins
Roxane Romanick

Guests:

Steven Smith
Trisha Page
Tara Bitz

The meeting was called to order by Jill Staudinger, Vice-Chair of the NDICC.

Topic: Introductions

Welcome and Introductions were conducted.

Topic: Agenda

The agenda was reviewed and approved through consensus.

Topic: Family Story:

Trisha Page, the new state autism coordinator, was present to give the “family story”. Trisha told the committees that when her son received his diagnosis, she and her husband were told to move to the east coast in order to receive the best services. She noted that they did not move east and that she considers her family to be flourishing in ND. Her son’s diagnosis motivated her to go back to school and she obtained a master’s degree with a certification in Autism. Trisha shared her family’s decision about treatment approaches and described the joy she felt after intense use of the PECS system, he began verbally labeling objects. Trisha shared information about learning about IEP teams and how much her child’s elementary school supports have meant to her. She shared a letter that she wrote to Governor Hoeven regarding Horace Elementary School. Trisha referenced a PBS special that she recommended entitled “Best Kept Secret”. Here is the link to it: <http://www.autismspeaks.org/news/news-item/%E2%80%9Cbest-kept-secret%E2%80%9D-discovered> . When asked her recommendation to the committees, Trisha noted that transitions are hard when you are dealing with kids with

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autism – even just switching clothing to be appropriate for the weather. You need to consider transition at each point and make sure that supports are in place.

Topic: Minutes – June

Jennifer Barry made a motion to approve the minutes, Carol Brakel seconded it. Motion carried.

Topic: Setting 2014 Meeting Dates

Joint Committee made the recommendation that we would meet one timer in September, 2014. Committee members were requested to reserve September 10, 11, and 12, 2014 at this time and the joint chairs will meet to discuss how to configure the agenda amongst those dates.

Topic: Member Updates

Cathy Haarstad reported that Pathfinder's has a new outreach coordinator in the Bismarck area, Kirsten Dvorack. She reported that the Department of Education has made some changes federally in regard the national parent center. They have eliminated the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHY) effective 9.30.13. The website will be maintained for another year – and then it will probably change. In addition, a new national TA center was awarded to the consortium of regional TA centers. PACER has had that grant for many years.

Jill Staudinger reported that Region VIII is still experiencing growth in the west. Head Start partners in that region continue to see a mismatch between who's financially eligible but who still needs services. Jill has moved to Bismarck and she is working out of the HIT office in Bismarck and then commuting 2 days a week.

Gerry Teevens reported that the state special education office released new guidelines on Intellectual Disability and education. Gerry reported that DPI received a \$145,000 federal grant to work on the Common Core Standards and the state is developing a new state assessment.

Jennifer Barry reported that there are some federal proposed rules and law change that represent some significant changes for child care. Federally, there is some exciting talk about early childhood but no additional funding coming at this time.

Tammy Gallup-Millner reported that there is movement towards accreditation of State Health Department. Children Special Health Services (CSHS) has moved to the Community Health Division and they are busy transitioning. Tammy noted that DOH had their federal block grant review and that this was a good experience and there were good results in ND. Maternal and Child Health programs federally continued to experience a reduction in programs and funding. Tammy reported that the department is moving forward on initiating the Autism Registry/data base.

Holly English reported that they are preparing for a move and this will be her last meeting.

Rita Weisz reported that the state continues to experience an increase in foster care and child protection. There continues to be a rise in the number of cases where infants are being born to meth use/addiction. There is a concern about how this will affect children long-term. Rita noted that her unit in Region VII will be going through many changes due to retirements. Rita

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noted that she will be retiring in a year. Rita noted that the impact of in-migration is that there are fewer people with support systems to keep children out of foster care.

Shannon Grave noted that UND hired 3 more new faculty in special education. Also Shannon also commented on the extensive growth in the West Fargo School District.

Carol Brakel noted that the DD system has seen a number of retirements as well and that there are many regions with new DDPA's.

Nancy Skorheim noted that she was sad to hear about the loss of NICHY as she often uses the Legacy Modules on their website for training purposes. Nancy reported that this year, ND will need to report out again the target that was set last year in Indicator 6. Indicator 6 relates the least restrictive environment in preschool special education settings.

Holly Major reported that her daughter with Down syndrome is now 6 and there was a major discussion about repeating Kindergarten at their house.

Moe Schroeder reported that Family Voices of North Dakota is currently in a contract with the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities at Minot State to provide navigation services for individuals who are interested in the new insurance marketplace. These services were made available through the Affordable Health Care Act. Moe also reported that Family Voices of North Dakota was also contacted by FV National to take part in Project Impact where three Bright Futures themes are selected. FVND is setting up 3 focus groups across the state to address the three themes. The first focus group is on October 26th in Dickinson and will focus on mental health. Presently they are targeting Williston for another focus group on child development. The third theme will be sexual development. Suggestions were made from the committee members on who to contact to assist with this area.

Stephen Olson reported that Blue Cross Blue Shield of ND (BCBS) announced changes on 9.1.13 on authorization requirements. Essentially BCBS removed the authorization requirements for related services. Instead of prior authorization, BCBS will audit for usage. They will flag those users that are in the high range and then audit. The audit will reveal if the service is "medically necessary" or not. If deemed to not be medically necessary, then BCBS will educate the provider on error. This process gives the provider more flexibility in how they use the allotted visits. Overall rationale is that providers weren't doing anything out of the ordinary so it didn't make sense to require the ongoing authorization. Stephen announced that Pediatric Therapy Partners has opened a new therapy practice in Bismarck.

Cassie Keller showed off her new baby. The baby had to spend a little bit of time in the NICU. She noted that she is planning a walk in Fargo in Carson's honor, tentatively set for October 26th.

Roxane Romanick reported that the National Institute of Health has just opened up a Down syndrome registry. The link for this registry is:
<http://downsyndrome.nih.gov/registry/Pages/default.aspx>

Topic: Pre-K Standards

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Tara Bitz, representative from DPI – Title 1 and Early Childhood Education State Administrator, was present to review the process of developing the standards and then to present the standards to the members of the committee. Tara shared that the next steps is to arranging for professional development in the field for those programs that are committed to implementing the standards. There is also a Frequently Asked Questions document along with the standards at this link: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/standards.shtm>. Tara noted that the use of the standards is voluntary at this point for early childhood programs in the state. A question was asked by a committee member on whether or not the standards would be helpful for parents who are trying to make a decision about repeating Kindergarten or advancing to Kindergarten. Tara reported that the standards would be helpful. An additional support on the DPI website is a guide to selecting a preschool curriculum. Here is a link to that document: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/curricguidance.pdf>

Topic: Update on ND Early Childhood Initiatives

This agenda item was presented by Jennifer Barry, Early Childhood Administrator for the Department of Human Services and Tara Bitz, the Early Childhood Education Administrator for the Department of Public Instruction.

Tara reported that SB 2229 contained language and funding for an Early Childhood Study (\$200,000). DPI has just contracted with the University of Denver to conduct this study. A 30-person workgroup has been established and the first meeting is 10.16.13. The results of the study need to be delivered on 6.1.13 to the Education Legislative Interim Committee. Tara noted that members had to be nominated and recommended to be on the committee. Actions of this study group will be posted at: <http://www.dpi.state.nd.us/EarlyChildhoodEduc/study.shtm>

Tara also reported that the state is currently part of a consortium of other states that received a grant to create a Kindergarten Entry Assessment. This will be a four year process to develop the assessment. Having this standardized assessment will help with North Dakota's longitudinal data system.

A question was asked whether ND would be applying for the federal Early Learning Challenge Grant and Tara stated that the state would not be applying for the grant at this time.

Jennifer Barry reported on the following items:

- Bright and Early: This is a voluntary 4-step system of quality recognition for early childhood programs. This has been piloted with child care programs in Cass County for almost 4 years and there will be limited statewide roll-out over the next 2 years.
- Inclusion Support Program: Increased funding has allowed for an expansion of grants and technical assistance to assist early childhood providers in developing and maintaining inclusive early care and education environments. Information on how to access the grants and technical assistance will soon be on the DHS website at this link: www.nd.gov/dhs/services/childcare/
- Connections Directory: The resource is a collaboration project between DHS and the Dept. of Health. The directory is a collection of information on available

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services for families and children. The directory will be printed, but can also be found online at

<http://www.ndhealth.gov/familyhealth/publications/connectiondirectory.pdf>

- Early Childhood Data System: A statewide team is working to address the integration of early childhood data into the State Longitudinal Data system to provide information about the outcomes of our children as related to services they have received during early childhood. A pilot will be starting in Cass County and use enrollment data.
- School Readiness Initiatives:
 - Planning is underway for a statewide Transition to Kindergarten summit, in partnership with DPI, to explore the needs for a successful transition of children into Kindergarten and to provide an introduction to the new pre-k standards.
 - ND Head Start Association, in partnership with the HS State Collaboration Office, will hold a follow-up summit, focusing on birth to three years.
 - A School Readiness Survey has been conducted by the Head Start Association. The responses of over 400 stakeholders regarding the importance of specific factors in school readiness are currently being evaluated.

Topic: Update on ND Autism Services

Gerry Teevens reported that the State Autism Coordinator has been hired. DPI put on autism training this summer with national experts and 169 teachers were trained. Teams from local school districts attended with four to five individuals per team. DPI will start revising the Autism guidelines in the near future. A consultant has been hired and a task force formed.

Amanda Carlson reported that the proposed renewal of the autism waiver remains the same. The current Autism waiver is due to expire on 10.31.13. The changes that were made by the legislature in the last session will not be in the renewal language, but the Department will need to submit an amendment to the newly updated waiver. This is because none of the legislated changes could take place until after 1.1.14. There was an attempt to get an extension to the waiver, but this was not granted by CMS. The renewal was submitted on 8.1.13 and the Department has received a 28 page request for information from CMS in regards to the submission. Amanda noted that the person that initially approved ND's waiver is no longer working on it. CMS has 90 days to review the submission, but that clock stops as soon as CMS sends a list of questions back to the state that need to be answered. Amanda noted that the Department is currently projecting that the implementation of the new changes to the Autism Waiver will be in the spring of 2014. Amanda reported the Autism Task Force has come up with a prioritization to decide who will receive the waiver slots.

Trisha Paige reported that the Department is working on the Autism Voucher so that the timeline will be met. The Autism Voucher is designed to support individuals with higher functioning autism. July 1, 2014 is the timeline to implement the voucher. A question was asked by a committee member about how the Department will seek input on the design of the

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voucher system. Trisha noted that feedback will be important but there is no specific design for input at this time.

Topic: Levels of Determination for Part B and Part C

Gerry Teevens reported that North Dakota received a “Meets Requirements” for their FFY ’11 APR.

Amanda Carlson reported that North Dakota received a “Needs Intervention” for their FFY ’11 APR.

Topic: OSEP Dear Colleague Letters

Gerry Teevens reported on four Office of Special Education “Dear Colleague” letters that have been issued:

- Braille Instruction – This letter was offered as guidance to states clarifying that Braille Instruction should be viewed as a literacy tool as well as clarifying it’s use for assessment purposes.
- Highly Mobile Students – This letter provides further clarification on what should happen what happens for students that move frequently and are involved in a special education evaluation or services. If an evaluation is started at one location, the next LEA must continue. If a child is in services, the IEP must be considered and comparable services must be offered until a new IEP can be developed. This also applies to a decision regarding Extended School Year.
- Bullying Students with Disabilities – Clarification that an IEP should be convened to address the issues and the LEA must ensure that the student receives a Free and Appropriate Public Education.
- Parents’ Rights Regarding the Use of Public and Private Insurance – This has to happen when services are first initiated and then on an annual basis. There were some slight changes to what the consent needed to say.

Gerry noted that these guidance references can be found at www.ed.gov.

Topic: Agenda Topics for September, 2014 Meeting

Autism Update

Early Childhood Update

Possibly Legislative Happenings