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Blueprint for Maryland's Future Special Education Workgroup

Workgroup Meeting #13

**Division of Early Intervention and Special
Education Services**

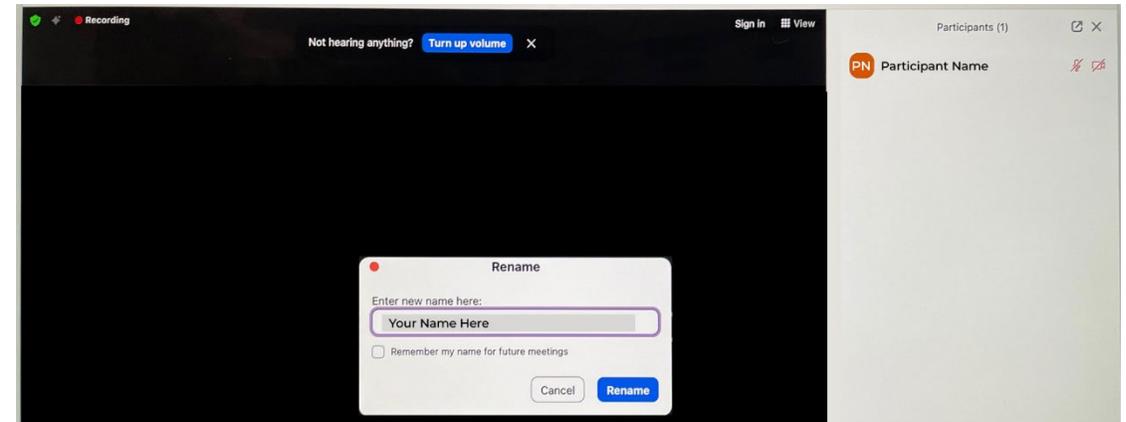
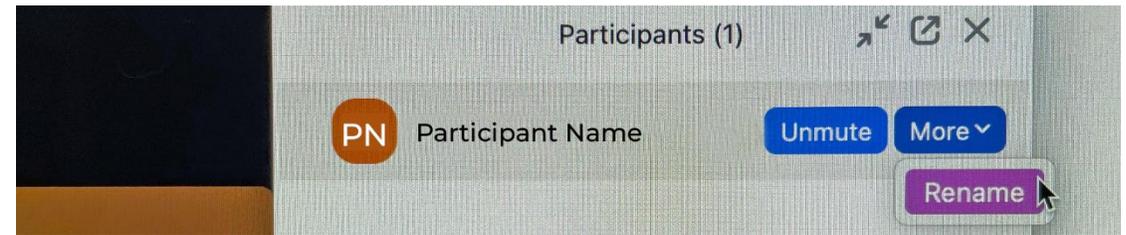
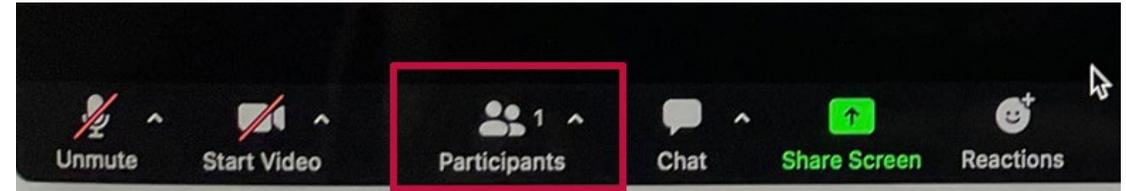
October 16, 2024

CO-CHAIRS

Dr. Carey Wright, Interim State Superintendent of Schools
Liz Zogby, Special Education Policy & Advocacy

Please Ensure Your Name Appears Correctly

1. Select Participants, located in the bottom toolbar of the meeting window
2. Hover over your name and select More (desktop) or tap your name (mobile)
3. Click or tap Rename
4. Enter your desired name and click Rename (desktop) or Done (mobile)

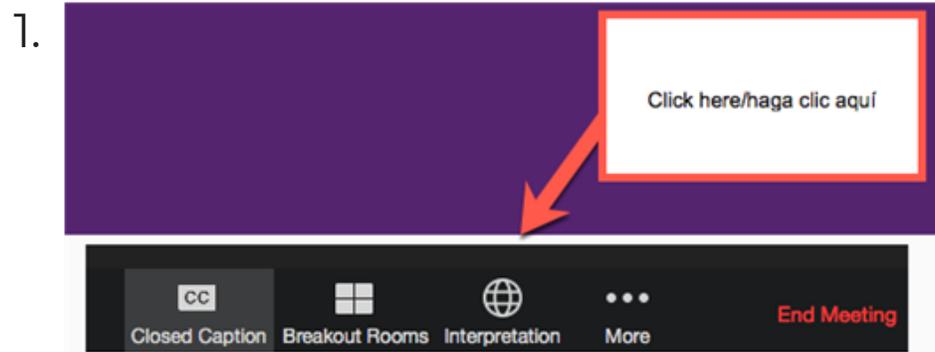


Note to Attendees

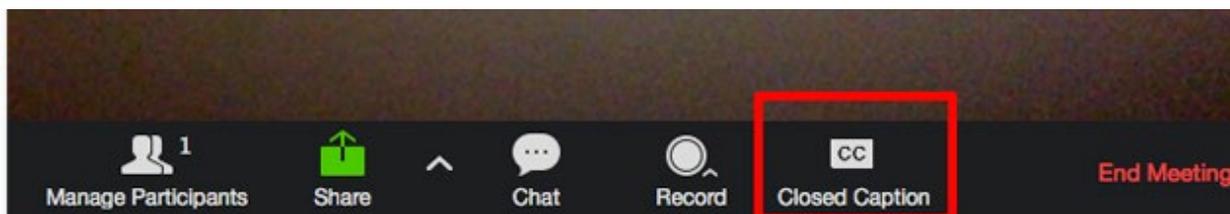
<https://youtube.com/live/00sRjNqQn-g?feature=share>

This meeting is being recorded and livestreamed via MSDE's YouTube channel:

¿Español?



Closed Captioning





Presentation Outline

1. Welcome/Introductions
2. Public Comment
3. Review of September Feedback
4. Proposed Recommendations
5. Authentic Parent & Family Partnerships
6. Discussion
7. December Report Update
8. Wrap-Up/Closing

Blueprint Special Education Workgroup

Meeting #13

Guiding Question(s)

How can authentic family-school partnerships be strengthened, particularly to support infants, toddlers, and students with disabilities?



Public Comment

Public Comment

Hear from Registered Guests – Public Comment Period



Feedback from September Meeting

Recommendations for Discussion

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

1. To increase access to inclusive high-quality Pre-K for all 3- and 4-year-old children with disabilities, comply with federal and state law, and meet the intent of the Blueprint to eliminate achievement gaps and ensure that all young children are ready for kindergarten:
 - a. The General Assembly should expand Tier 1 to include all 3- and 4-year-old children with disabilities, regardless of family income, for prioritization for seats and for full funding
 - b. MSDE shall ensure that 3- and 4-year-olds with disabilities who attend publicly-funded Pre-K programs receive the services and supports they need by providing guidance to the LEA holding LEAs accountable for the distribution and monitoring of Blueprint special education weight funding, along with guidance on the different funding streams for Pre-K students with disabilities
 - c. MSDE should develop a plan for a plan within 60 days with tasks and timelines to meet the specific challenges of Pre-K expansion and a mixed delivery system that will meet the needs of students with disabilities, including recruiting and preparing private Pre-K providers, transportation, and facilities requirements

Recommendations for Discussion

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

2. MSDE should develop a plan for a plan within 90 days with specific tasks and timelines to improve access to high-quality inclusive child care for infants, toddlers, and young children with disabilities. The plan should address:
 - a. The need for increased and improved provider training that is on-site or at accessible times and includes knowledge on the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and inclusive practices beyond behaviorist approaches
 - b. Increased resources for providers to prioritize inclusion
 - c. Staffing needs through partnerships with IHEs and high school programs

Recommendations for Discussion

Early Intervention/Early Childhood Special Education

3. MSDE should develop a plan for a plan within 90 days with specific tasks and timelines to improve the state support for Local Infants & Toddlers Programs (LITPs) in implementing evidence-based practices in early intervention to meet the individual needs of children with disabilities and their families. The plan should address:
 - Standards and guidance to ensure fidelity of implementation of reflective coaching (parent and peer), teaming, authentic assessment and primary service provider models, as well as the use of other evidence-based practices (including implementation of assistive technology, family centered practices, routines-based intervention within the natural environment) and service delivery models as needed
 - Guidance for LITPs on cross-jurisdictional service provision
 - Guidance and updates on policy changes for LITPs on staffing challenges related to a 12-month program staffed with primarily 10-month employees
 - Outreach barriers and challenges
 - Guidance on the roles and responsibilities of each of the three agencies responsible for the implementation of early intervention services



Authentic Parent and Family Partnerships

Authentic Family Partnerships

Since its inception the IDEA prioritized family partnership in the development of their child's educational program and the importance of consistent expectations between home and school.

This legal requirement has been supported by over 30 years of educational research reflecting the importance that family partnerships have in enhancing student progress.

Common threads in recent studies from Johns Hopkins and Harvard studies on the importance of family partnerships include power-sharing, co-design of engagement strategies, the need for training of educators and families, and centering the shared goal of student achievement and support.

Addressing the Power Imbalance

- The IEP process is inherently structured to appear to have a power imbalance unless all participants are viewed as equal partners in the process.
- The Ohio Statewide Family Engagement Center developed the following research-based strategies addressing best practices for family partnership:
 - *Treat parents as experts and value their input.*
 - *Practice culturally responsive family engagement.*
 - *Practice effective, reciprocal communication.*
 - *Commit to inclusive, empowering, consensus-building IEP processes.*
 - *Start transition planning early and connect families to services for all aspects of a full life.*
 - *Support children and youth in their family engagement.*
 - *Support families by providing mentors.*

Dispute Resolution and Family Partnerships

- Family–school partnership relies upon and reinforces trust. This is even more critical in the special education process where a lack of, or broken trust is, one of the major causes of disputes between families and professionals.
- The breakdown of trust and relationships is reflected in the dispute resolution data, with the most recent national data from the Center for Appropriate Dispute Resolution in Special Education (CADRE) showing a return to pre-pandemic levels.
- Maryland has the 8th highest rate of dispute resolution activity in the country for SY 2021-22.
- The number of State complaints, requests for mediation and due process hearings have steadily increased since 2022-2023.

Maryland's Efforts Addressing Family Partnerships

- Family Support Branch
- Local Education Agency Family Support Teams
- "5 Day Rule"
- Parents Place of MD
- Technical Assistance and Resource Provision
- Facilitated IEP Team Meetings

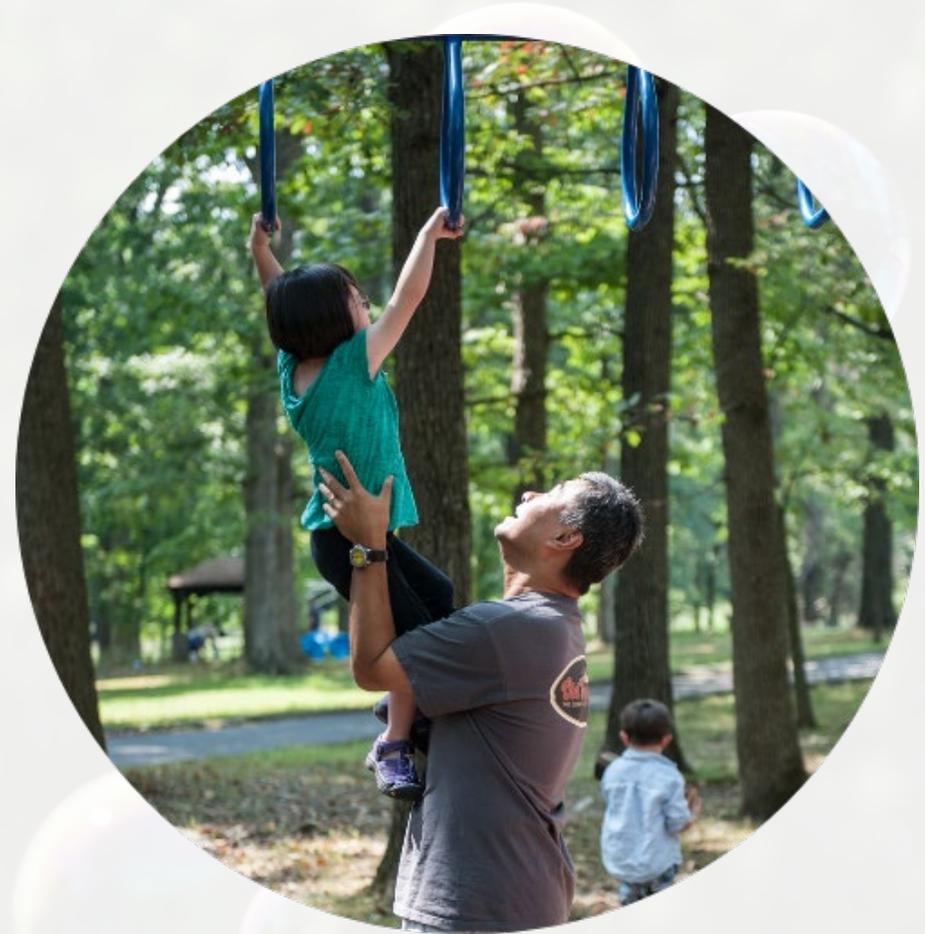


Family School Partnerships Results



Brief Background

- IDEA's Commitment
- The Parents' Place of MD's
 - Who
 - Why
 - What
 - How
 - Outcome



Who is PPMD?

- Maryland's Special Education and Health Information Center
- Established in 1990
- Family Governed, Family Led



PPMD's information, resources, and trainings can be made available in languages other than English, including sign language upon request. Please contact us regarding your translation and interpretation needs.



Our Mission

To empower families as advocates and partners in improving education and health outcomes for children with disabilities and special healthcare needs with a commitment to diversity and equity.



PPMD's information, resources, and trainings can be made available in languages other than English, including sign language upon request. Please contact us regarding your translation and interpretation needs.



Our Services

- One-on-one assistance to families
- Resource & Materials
- Trainings



PPMD's information, resources, and trainings can be made available in languages other than English, including sign language upon request. Please contact us regarding your translation and interpretation needs.

We help families...

- Better understand their children's disabilities, education, and healthcare needs
- Communicate more effectively with school and health teams
- Understand their rights and responsibilities under special education law
- Understand their rights and benefits in healthcare systems
- Obtain services for their children
- Resolve disagreements with the school or other agencies
- Connect with other community resources



Partnership with MSDE

- Requested a BRIEF survey of families across the state
- Virtual Roundtable of Professionals

Results of the Online Survey

Do you feel that you are an equal member of the IEP Team?

- 55% feel that they are equal members of the IEP Team
 - Felt heard & valued
 - Consistent communication
- 45% do not feel they are equal members of the IEP Team
 - Not being heard & valued
 - Not enough updates & communication
 - Need more Training
 - Language is a Barrier

Results continued

What would strengthen partnerships?

- Communication (friendly) & Transparency
- Includes Parents in the Planning & Decision Making
- Help families better understand IEPs
- More training for Teachers
- Hispanic Liaison

Results of Virtual Roundtable

- 100% reported that the families they work with & support do not feel they are equal members of the IEP Team:
 - Language Barriers
 - Not feeling Valued
 - Little Communication
 - Unable to understand decisions
 - Power Imbalance

Results Continued

What is Working Well?

- Well Trained IEP Teams & Chairs
- Cultural Brokers
- Partnership w/Community Organizations
- Schools will to become partners
- Clear Communication using a Holistic approach
- Time for staff to observe & participate in IEP meetings

Results Continued

What are the Barriers?

- Overwhelmed School Staff
- Power Imbalance
- Meeting Times not convenient
- Poorly Trained IEP Teams
- Not having the right information and resources to make an informed decision
- IEPs not being translated
- Not enough resources for schools & families

Results Continued

What would strengthen partnerships?

- Communication
- Cultural Brokers
- Well trained IEP Teams & Chairs
- Update MSDE's Guidance Documents
- Understand Immigrant Families needs
- Be flexible w/meeting times

THANK YOU!

For more information, or if you have questions, contact us!

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Breakout Groups

Small Group Breakout Sessions

- We have altered the breakout groups to Random Grouping to ensure everyone has an equal chance to participate, **ensure like-sized groups with diverse perspectives**, and to save time by automating the grouping process.
 - You will **automatically be assigned a group to move to (Except Room 1 – which will not move)**
 - When you receive a notification asking if you would like to move to a breakout group – please click **“move to breakout.”**
- Please **use the chat** if you have additional comments so that your feedback can be recorded.
- Breakout Group #1 will be live streamed and all will be recorded and posted on the MSDE website.
 - NOTE: Sign language** interpreters will remain in **breakout room #1** and will be live streamed.
- Each breakout group is assigned an **MSDE staff** as a **notetaker**.
- Each breakout group is asked to please **identify** a:
 - Facilitator
 - Timekeeper
 - Reporter to share out 2 – 3 minute highlights of the discussion
- There are six (6) total questions this evening – as there is limited time, do not feel you need to respond in order.

Small Group Breakout Sessions: Group Norms

Group Norms:

- **Speak with care:**
 - Speak from your own experience and be mindful of how your comments may impact others.
 - Use “I” statements and avoid speaking for or generalizing whole groups.
- **Listen respectfully:**
 - Avoid interrupting the person speaking and talk that evaluates/judges their comments.
 - Limit your comments to 1 – 2 minutes.
 - Understand that there are no right or wrong answers.
- **Lean in/Lean back:**
 - Give your input and make space for others to do the same.
 - Be aware of your talk time and try to stay on topic.

Small Group Breakout Questions

1. What are the specific areas of capacity building needed within our schools and systems to support authentic family-school partnership? How should the State support this capacity building?
2. How can state policy and guidance ensure that parents are full and equal partners in the special education process (e.g., addressing language/cultural barriers, ensuring parents are fully informed, etc.)?
3. What specific changes would you recommend within the special education process, including the resolution of disagreements and disputes, that would maintain and reinforce trust and positive family-school partnership?
4. What additional recommendations do you have about increasing positive family-school partnerships in Maryland?

Large Group Report Out

1. What are the specific areas of capacity building needed within our schools and systems to support authentic family-school partnership? How should the State support this capacity building?
2. How can state policy and guidance ensure that parents are full and equal partners in the special education process (e.g., addressing language/cultural barriers, ensuring parents are fully informed, etc.)?
3. What specific changes would you recommend within the special education process, including the resolution of disagreements and disputes, that would maintain and reinforce trust and positive family-school partnership?
4. What additional recommendations do you have about increasing positive family-school partnerships in Maryland?

Future Meeting Dates

Date	Time
Thursday, November 21, 2024	4:00 – 6:00 pm
Wednesday, December 18, 2024	4:00 – 6:00 pm
Wednesday, January 29, 2024	4:00 – 6:00 pm

Final Report

Final Report Timeline	Anticipated Date
Draft Report to Exec Committee	October 7, 2024
Draft Report to Workgroup	October 17, 2024
Address Comments	October 24-28, 2024
Final Report to Exec Committee	October 28, 2024
Final Report to MSDE Leadership	November 1, 2024
Final Report to Workgroup and AIB	December 1, 2024

MSDE Blueprint Special Education Workgroup Webpage:
Blueprint.MarylandPublicSchools.org/Special-Education-Workgroup

BLUEPRINT

FOR MARYLAND'S FUTURE

More information can be found on MSDE's Blueprint webpage:

Blueprint.MarylandPublicSchools.org