

NH Connections Activity Update
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1.1 Develop a statewide framework and infrastructure that builds the capacity for the development of a special education family and school initiative that incorporates the following actions:

1.1.3 Provide a timeline for each year of the project that includes when goals, objectives will be accomplished, and all activities will begin and end.

1.1.4 Conduct an annual evaluation of the statewide framework and make necessary improvements to the initiative for each year of implementation.

See NHC Infrastructure attached to this document which guides the work of the project.

1.1.1 Create a universal design strategy that provides targeted technical assistance involving educating, training, and supporting schools/school districts, parents and family members, and community leaders that foster school and district-wide strategies to effectively promote partnerships and family engagement systems based on promising practices and evidence-based research.

NH Connections recognizes that different school/school districts are at different points in developing their family-school partnership or family engagement system. As part of the universal plan, NH Connections co-facilitated 3 webinars all related to the Parent Involvement Survey that featured districts/school personnel discussing their real-life experiences in improving family-school partnerships in special education. The project also developed an on-line module regarding the NH Standards for Family-School-Community Partnerships that featured examples of how the standards are being demonstrated in relation to special education in local schools/districts.

NH Connections provided targeted technical assistance in the form of professional development on family-school partnerships and effective communication strategies for Keene School District special education staff; families and staff in Goshen-Lempster and Hinsdale School Districts; and families at Rundlett Middle School in Concord. Targeted technical assistance also took place to support pre-existing parent groups in both Rochester and Fremont to try to assist them in strengthening their relationships with school district staff.

NH Connections Facilitators are currently providing individual technical assistance to several districts throughout the state including Kearsarge School District, the Hillsboro School District, North Hampton School District, and SAU 48. This support includes the development and implementation of individually designed action plans for improving family-school partnerships in special education utilizing a variety of promising practices and evidence-based research models that will continue into the next school year. SAU 48 the action planning broke into 3 separate school level action plans. These long term plans have included professional development and training for school staff and families around partnership, as well as support in the planning and implementation of joint activities. Additionally, the project is providing individual technical assistance to school district staff and parent leaders in the Londonderry School District, SAU 17, Pelham School District, Dover School District and White Mountains School District in the development of Family-School Partnership groups.

1.1.2 Provide a data driven decision making improvement model that incorporates quantitative and qualitative data analyzed from the Indicator 8 Parent Survey and other data collected to promote the understanding, design and implementation of strong measurement strategies to build evaluation plans that assess the effectiveness of family involvement systems at work.

Over the past year, NH Connections saw an increase in the number of school districts interested in learning more about the Parent Involvement Survey/Indicator 8 and the use of data. Like with systems for family-school partnerships and engagement, schools/districts are at very different places when it comes to Indicator 8 and the survey. This year the project partnered with NH Association for Special Education Administrators (NHASEA) to attend regional special education director's meetings to talk about the survey and how the project can support them in understanding and using the survey. During one of the meetings, SAU 19 Assistant Superintendent expressed a need to have his Indicator 8 survey data at a school level. This need was echoed by many of his colleagues. To address this need, NHC partnered with the SAU to establish a pilot project to develop a system for the tracking of school level data which was implemented for this year's survey administration.

Additionally, NHC partnered with PTAN to discuss the survey at 4 regional clinical support meetings (for preschool special education staff, coordinators, and administrators). Many were vaguely familiar with the survey, but were not aware of the details or of what the data could tell us and how to use it. As a result of this meeting, the NHC Facilitator met with the Administration and preschool staff for the Hampton School district to better understand their survey data and implement strategies to increase the response rate.

Targeted training on the Parent Involvement Survey took place for both parents and district staff (in collaboration with each district's Family-School Partnership Group) in the Dover and Pelham School Districts. From that, additional staff training was provided to the incoming Special Education Administration for the Pelham School district. Staff development training was also provided to special education administrators and staff of the Keene, Winnesquam and Lebanon School Districts as well as SAU 17. All these districts/SAU's determined they felt that the next step for each was to work on increasing the response rate to the survey. This work led to the creation of various marketing tools including a series of short articles to be used in newsletters, on websites and/or social media and as scripts for calling or talking to parents about the survey as well as 4 videos on the survey.

In-depth training and technical assistance in relation to the survey took place with the Barnstead School District, SAU 20, SAU 77 (Monroe) and Littleton School Districts as well as Pembroke Academy (the high school for 5 school districts). All requested 5 years worth of Indicator 8 data and NHC facilitators worked with staff to better understand their data and in identifying trends etc. Like the other districts looking at their data, these districts were very concerned with response rate. With the exception of SAU 20 who had already been implementing an action plan, all districts felt that increasing their response rate was their priority.

1.2 Provide evidence of a current family engagement system at work that creates an infrastructure that supports: district-wide leadership for both parents and district staff, the use evidence based data to inform planning and improvement activities, and performance management that promotes facilitation of parents in the special education process to improve student outcomes through training and technical assistance that can be incorporated to support the objectives of propos

This year, NHC put high focus on supporting Parent Leaders, specifically those who are coordinating family-school partnership groups or those working in partnership with district administration by hosting bi-monthly statewide parent leader meetings. Currently NHC actively is providing technical assistance to parent leaders in the Bedford, Hampstead, Hollis/Brookline, Dover, Pelham and Londonderry school districts as well as SAU 17 and 20. This support has ranged from facilitating meetings between parent leaders and school district administration to planning joint events, direct support to parent leaders in planning and facilitation as well as attendance at events. Additionally, NHC has supported a parent leader in participating in the Indicator 8 Stakeholder group and sees this type of support as an unmet need that the project is able to provide.

In the past, NHC has also conducted Parent Leadership trainings. One occurred this year in Concord, but the project has struggled to figure out how to support leaders in implementing action plans when they don't have a pre-existing relationship with their school/district. This year the project took a different approach and instead conducted Parent leadership training as part of facilitating an action plan for improving family-school partnerships in the Kearsarge School District and SAU 48. NHC found this approach to be more beneficial in ensuring that parent leaders had the opportunity to implement action plans in collaboration with their school district.

1.3 Coordinate efforts of the RFP with current Department of Education initiatives and the Bureau of Special Education priorities, including the Indicators on the Statewide Performance Plan (SPP) with a specific focus on Indicator 8, Parent Involvement and student achievement.

NHC has a strong working relationship with the Bureau of Special Education and Measurement Inc. in relation to the marketing and survey administration process. This has only strengthened over the past year. In addition, NHC has taken a leadership role in supporting the Bureau with planning and facilitating the Indicator 8 Input Group. The project has continued its collaboration with the technical assistance project for the educational supports for students who are deaf and hard of hearing and the NH AIM. This has included working to support a parent leader in the creation of family friendly material on NH AIM, the creation of a video on NH AIM, and working on the NH Team working with the National AIM Project. Additionally, the project has supported the Northeast Deaf and Hard of Hearing in learning more and connecting with statewide work regarding secondary transition.

1.4 Identify resources and promising practices that includes data as evidence that core components of a systemic family engagement plan include a shared vision of family engagement, purposeful connections to the special education process and student achievement, a model of a robust communication system that share meaningful information to implement effective strategies effectively and proven evaluation strategies that assess the impact of parent involvement efforts to improve outcomes for students with disabilities

NHC did extensive work this year to research and document best practice strategies currently happening in NH. We recently updated the website so that we could have a repository for these best-practice strategies. The new website also includes a wealth of information regarding the Indicator 8 survey, including contact information and all NHC marketing material in downloadable formats. NHC also distributes a monthly e-newsletter with best practices statewide

to over 3,500 individuals including all special education administrators, school district staff, parents and community members.

Conclusion and Recommendation

NH Connections has strengthened family/school partnerships throughout the state, individualizing technical assistance and support. Additionally, marketing tools and strategies have assisted all districts in outreaching to parents about the importance of completing the Parent Involvement in Special Education Survey.

NH Connections identified the following as areas to develop in the future:

- Developing school level capacity/system, when appropriate, to promote family-school partnerships in special education. Critical to this area is the ability to have Indicator 8 data at a school level.
- As part of goal 1.3, NH Connections assists the Bureau in addressing parent involvement in the design on the state's Results-Driven Accountability System (OSEP's proposed Indicator 17 on the State Performance Plan/Annual Performance Report)
- Expanding parent leader component to provide additional training and coaching for parents to participate in state and local teams
- Continue to work collaboratively with the Bureau and Measurement Inc. on marketing and survey administration
- Continuing to address both global needs for supporting family-school partnerships and the use of Indicator 8 data to drive improvement planning process