

OPTIMISE Task Force Minutes
June 30, 2023

1. Welcome—Laurie VanderPloeg welcomed the group and introduced our newest member Renee Brunette representing Launch Michigan. Present: Shailee Patel, Kanika Littleton, Teri Pettit, Rachel Toloday, Colin Ripmaster, Lauren Mangus, Stephanie O’Dea, John Severson, Cheryl Levine and Renee Brunette.
2. Action Item:
 - a. A presentation was made by 3 representatives of the School Psychologists Action Team, Dr. Amanda Unger, Dr. Lauren Mangus and Dr. Cheryl Somers. The group reviewed their 2 recommendations—1) Increasing the number of School Psychologists training programs in Michigan and developing more online options within programs. 2) A line item in the state budget specifically for mental health professionals. The SMART bill/state-funded “Grow Your Own” program provides paid work experiences and practicum opportunities for School Based Mental Health graduate students to attract more people to the field. This was included in the state budget at \$15 million and also includes 1 fte at MDE to support this work. The School Psychologist Action Team recommends also that an advisory team is selected to support the work at MDE. The \$15 million is a work project so dollars can be carried over but the Action Team recommends that there is long term funding for this work.
 - b. The Task Force approved moving these recommendations forward.
 - c. A new powerpoint presentation is attached to the email.
3. Information Items:
 - a. Infographics from the vacancy survey were sent to the members. A brief description of the data was provided.
 - b. An overview of our Elevate the Profession Campaign was given including data around statistics on social media. OPTIMISE would like to have Task Force members become storytellers. An email request will be sent out.
 - c. Standards Action Team- we are working with the Office of Educator Excellence/MDE began convening a team of stakeholders to develop/adopt new standards for training special education teachers. The timeline for this work was shared.
 - d. Credential Action Team-the work of this group has moved to the Office of Special Education/MDE to develop MARSE rule language about the recommended

change to credentialing special education teachers in Michigan. A timeline for this work was shared. OPTIMISE will work closely with them on the draft rules.

- e. Other action teams:
 - i. Paraeducators—this team has been holding focus groups including a large paraeducator summit on June 23 sponsored by the MEA.
 - ii. Building Level Support-Colin Ripmaster provided an overview of their work and sent supporting documents to the Task Force. The OPTIMISE management team will meet with them soon to review their recommendations and determine next steps.
 - iii. Behavior Support-this Action Team just met for 2 days in Lansing to begin the process of developing recommendations. A very broad stakeholder group was convened with the members very excited about their work.
 - iv. DHH-we are beginning to develop this team and currently have identified 2 individuals to be co-leaders.
 - v. SSW-have just begun conversations with this group.
 - f. Legislative support—we now have a lobbyist to assist OPTIMISE in carrying our message and recommendations to legislators. Also note that 2 of our recommendations made it into the state budget—SMART line item for mental health professionals and money for mentoring.
4. Coordination of work-the group was asked to share any information they had a work their organization was doing around the shortage.
 5. Future of OPTIMISE-the Task Force was told that we are beginning to think about how this work can be continued after Sept. 2024 and about continued funding for our Elevate campaign. Task Force members shared ideas.
 6. The meeting was adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

Here is a link to the recording for those interested. It starts just a minute or two after we began.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/rec/share/4XzLPToxwKnCcvABUjtcdDi4QVO1LfXYzF3k4A7hJBq-1JPzT8fYQRsAgoLtCWMt.pJlbjullv8x-9rWh?startTime=1688130665000>
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Respectfully submitted by,
Kathy Fortino
OPTIMISE Project Manager