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COT

THE INTERDEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON TRANSITION



Janet May

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Chair

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Portland Public Schools
Vice Chair

Melvin Clarrage

Disability Rights Center
Executive Committee

Christopher Bean

Vocational Rehabilitation, DOL
Executive Committee

**The Committee on Transition
membership represents:**

- The Department of Corrections
- The Department of Education
- The Department of Health &
Human Services
- The Department of Labor
-Transition Region Area
Coordinating Committees
- Post-Secondary Education
- Local K-12 Education
- Disability Service Providers
- Disability Advocacy Groups
- The Maine Parent Federation
- Parents
- Youth

The Maine Transition Network, a
501(c) 3 nonprofit organization,
provides staffing and fiscal
support to the COT System
COT is funded by the MDOE

Interdepartmental Committee on Transition

Report to the 123rd Legislature

2007 Project Year

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**On Behalf of The Maine Youth Committee on Transition,
COT Cordially Invites You to Join Us in the Hall of Flags
On March 19th 2008
To learn more about the journey of youth with disabilities
in transition**

Youth Leading the Way

Throughout the text of this report, we spotlight stories of youth from each of our six transition regions. We requested stories illuminating the work of the COT from youth leadership groups in each region and have included pictures and their words throughout.

Annie's story is the first...



I am Annie Raymond, a 17-year-old Junior at Mount Desert Island High School, who has participated in Downeast Youth Leadership Committee on Transition since I was in 7th grade. I think that the most important thing that I have learned by being a member of COT is self-advocacy. I have learned to understand and to be comfortable talking about my disabilities.

One of the first things I did with COT was to attend the annual Fall Youth Retreat when I was in 8th grade. It was awesome and I met other kids with whom it was easy to have fun. I went to lots of interesting sessions but I remember best the one presented by the Center for Community Inclusion called "Youth Speak". It was about what youth with disabilities want others to know about them. The presenter talked with me about joining a presentation some time in my future. I was so overwhelmed by the idea that I cried. I didn't know then that speaking about my disability would become important in my future.

Through Downeast Youth Leadership I learned to talk about my needs and how to communicate with the people in my life. Since then I have had many opportunities to help others understand what it is like to be a young person with a disability. I have spoken with other youth at conferences and workshops all over the state.

The presentation I remember best was at Husson College where we talked to a group of Physical and Occupational Therapy students. It was a Youth Speak presentation about what youth with disabilities want their health care providers to understand about them. The interesting thing was that, although the group knew I was coming and that I walk with a walker, the classroom where we were speaking was on the second floor and there was no elevator. I was excited and nervous about speaking to the group, and really frustrated that I might not be able to get up there. The COT members carried me up the stairs! It was so funny that I was able to relax. I really had a great beginning to the presentation about how it feels not be able to get where you are going because of accessibility! At the end of the presentation I felt great and I think the students really learned something from me about the challenges that people with disabilities face every day.

Without the backing of COT I would never have had the chance to speak for myself and others with disabilities. Through the opportunities and support offered by COT I have found the courage to be who I am.

Annie Raymond
Region II, Downeast Committee on Transition

Executive Summary

The Interdepartmental Committee on Transition (COT) is charged with coordinating transition services for youth with disabilities between the ages of 14 and 26 years of age. The Committee is made up of a broad range of stakeholders in the area of secondary transition and disability services. COT work statewide is done through local projects that reflect the structure of the COT at the state level. Six regional volunteer boards and their employees provide a variety of services to youth, parents, schools state agencies and service providers.

During the project year beginning September 1st 2006 and ending August 31st 2007, COT provided service to individuals nearly 14,500 times. More than half of these represent attendance at a COT sponsored training or professional development activity. COT staff and volunteers distributed almost 15,000 transition related documents to constituents. Youth leadership activities designed to assist young people to become more active in their own transition planning and to become better self advocates flourished across the state with hundreds of youth directly involved and, in some cases, leading trainings themselves.

COT focused on its established priorities and worked to improve its structure and representation. COT regions partnered with Vocational Rehabilitation staff from the Department of Labor to host Mission Transition days for youth across the state. COT worked closely with the Department of Education to deliver training and technical assistance to school districts on transition requirements in order to meet federal requirements outlined in the state's IDEA Performance Plan. COT, with funding from the Muskie Institute, developed a youth designed, youth led curriculum on disability disclosure and tested it with youth across the state.

COT also developed a series of recommendations included in this report (beginning on page 11) addressing needs relating to transition planning and services.

These recommendations encompass:

- The need for interagency data sharing,
- Better coordination of transitions between MDHHS child and adult services,
- Exploration of the use of transition specialists in larger consolidated school districts,
- Increasing the reach of *Mission Transition* activities,
- Development of a more functional student Summary of Performance,
- Increasing COT system capacity, and
- Expansion of Disability Mentoring Day opportunities.

COT believes that young people from all parts of the state should have the chance to dream of a future of their own choosing and be offered an equal chance to reach those goals. COT works to ensure that this opportunity is available to youth with disabilities throughout Maine. Locally run, COT funded projects based on best practice hold the promise of improved transitions for all.

Mission, Vision & Legislative Purpose

Mission

The Maine Committee on Transition supports youth with disabilities in making meaningful choices as they transition to adulthood by promoting collaboration within communities.

Vision

We the members of the Maine Committee on Transition, see a future where youth with or without disabilities are recognized as essential members of Maine communities. We envision that the transition process will...

- Be led by youth & their families;
- Result in opportunities for youth to pursue individual choices;
- Educate youth in the skills needed to advocate for services and programs;
- Promote collaborative efforts resulting in needed services and programs for all youth in Maine.

Legislative Purpose

MSRS 20-A Chapter 308:

TRANSITIONAL SERVICES COORDINATION PROJECTS FOR HANDICAPPED PERSONS

§7801. Purpose

It is the purpose of this chapter to implement service planning and coordination for youth with handicaps, 14 years of age or older and under 26 years of age, who are in transition from school to the community. Local projects have been established to provide more effective and efficient statewide delivery of services to handicapped youths in transition from school to the community by:

1. **Coordination.** Coordinating existing programs presently provided for these youths by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Department of Education, the Department of Labor, the Department of Corrections and other public and private agencies;
2. **Planning and delivery.** Planning and delivering services only to meet identified unmet needs; and
3. **Future recommendations.** Using results from the operation of these projects to determine the best direction for future recommendations to serve this population.

Local Projects established under MSRS 20-A Chapter 308 with counties served:

- Region I **BRIDGES Transition Council**, Aroostook
- Region II **Downeast Committee on Transition (DCOT)**, Hancock & Washington
- Region III **Penquis Regional Transition Board (PRTB)**, Piscataquis & Penobscot
- Region IV **Mid-Maine Regional Transition Board (MMRTB)**, Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Somerset & Waldo
- Region V **Advisory Council on Transition (ACOT)**, Androscoggin, Franklin, & Oxford
- Region VI **Southern Maine Advisory Council on Transition (SMACT)**, Cumberland & York

Interdepartmental Committee on Transition Overview

The Interdepartmental Committee on Transition (COT) is an interagency committee established by the Maine Legislature in 1986 to support youth with disabilities in transition to adult life (*Title 20-A, Chapter 308*). It meets on the 3rd Tuesday of each month. The Committee includes representation from the following State departments and other organizations:

- Department of Education
- Department of Health & Human Services
- Department of Labor
- Department of Corrections
- Each of COT's Six Regional Transition Boards
- University of Maine System
- Maine's Community College System
- The Disability Rights Center
- Maine Parent Federation
- Center for Community Inclusion & Disability Studies
- Learning Disabilities Association of Maine
- Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities
- Maine School Counselor Association
- Maine Association for Community Service Providers
- Maine CITE
- Maine Center for Deaf & Hard of Hearing
- Parents & Families
- Youth with Disabilities

COT also comprises six local projects; regional boards that coordinate services and deliver training and technical assistance across the state. Regional boards are made up of volunteer transition stakeholders and employ a coordinator to organize and provide programming at the regional level meeting statewide goals and regional needs.

Each of the COT's six regional transition boards works towards priority areas established annually by the COT. The priorities for the 2007 Project year were:

- **Reorganization and Restructuring of COT;**
- **The Transition Outcomes Project;**
- **Training; and**
- **Youth Leadership.**

"I was once a kid who did not know how to function truly to the best of my ability. I was always half way or sort of on the right track. SMACT (Southern Maine Advisory Council on Transition) gave me a new look at life. I found friendships made for me in SMACT reached to all walks of life. What I understand and believe now is that every kid deserves to have a chance to see greatness and then walk into the spotlight of who they truly are. It's amazing for people to look at all the youth leaders this way because a lot of them are just starting like I was, just testing the waters and on brink of becoming great leaders. I hope that all the young kids will be the future of SMACT and learn that everyone deserves to have a chance to succeed in the world.



SMACT is a healthy place for young teens because we don't judge and don't persecute anyone. If the world could learn from little groups like SMACT and Maine Transition Network, we would see peace and there wouldn't be discrimination, judgments, harassment, and persecution anywhere in this world. What I am getting at is SMACT is a community stabilizer,

meaning teens come in and grow to be great young adults. When they leave, a lot of them become leaders in what they do in this world. 'Don't give up; just keep on moving towards your dream because one day it will come true.' SMACT has taught me exactly that, just keep on truckin' because if you stop you'll never get that chance.

In the last year my love for Youth Leadership and SMACT has just gone way up with all the new people I've met and the friendships that have been created. I am not in it to prove I am the best public speaker because that's not who I am; I am in it to help people grow from what I once was and reach a point of success. It is just so exciting for me and all of the people to see the growth we've experienced this year."

Richard Johnson
Region VI

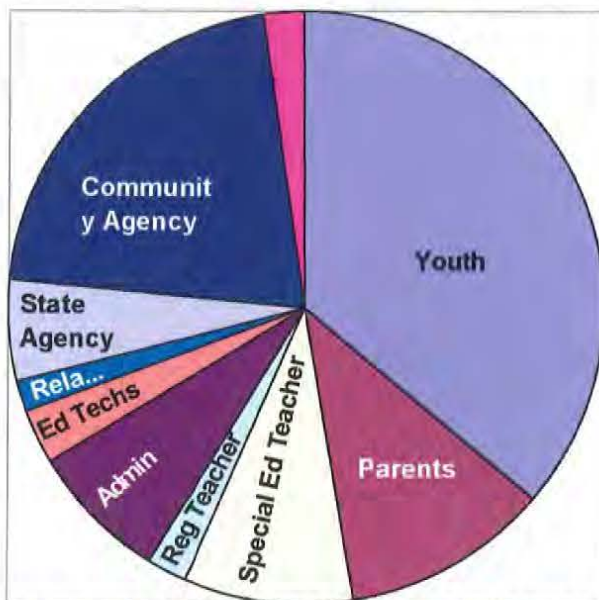
Southern Maine Advisory Council on Transition

Statewide Training Data

COT and its six regional boards provide technical support for individuals participating in or facilitating the transition of youth from school to life. COT's target service population is youth with disabilities from age 14 to 26. COT's work impacts this group through interagency coordination, provision of technical assistance to schools and service agencies, information and referral services and through youth leadership activities.

Activity reporting data has been compiled for the first 10 months of the 2006-2007 project year (COT project years begin September 1st and end August 31st of the following year).

During that period COT and its regions provided information, training and technical assistance to 14,481 individuals¹. Of this number, more than half (7609) participated in a COT sponsored professional development activity. The remaining individuals were supported through person-to-person consultation, via electronic or regular mail, by phone, or through other means.



Distribution of 7609 participants in COT Trainings

A total of 2751 students/youth participated in trainings and sponsored activities statewide. 839 parents participated as well. Also participating were 1791 educators, including 704 special education teachers, 173 regular education teachers, 565 administrators, 227 educational technicians and 122 related service personnel, who took part in professional development activities sponsored by COT. Additionally, 428 state agency employees and 1627 community providers benefited from COT trainings along with 173 others.

During this same time period, COT and its regional personnel distributed materials to increase public awareness of transition concepts and services 1567 times. A total of 14,896 documents were delivered, including brochures, training handouts, contact information, press releases and other materials. Of particular value was the

finalization of Interagency Linkage Charts and associated brochures which detail services available from state agencies with associate eligibility information and timelines for referral.

Each of the six transition regions held dozens of sessions over the course of the year (see regional highlights, p.13 et seq.). Statewide highlights included an overnight Youth Leadership Retreat at Pine Tree Camp involving almost 100 young people as well as thirty parents and chaperones and a transition conference cosponsored by the Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities (MADSEC) attended by over 100 educators from around the state. Additionally, youth leaders from every region hosted a Hall of Flags informational day for legislators in March. Youth leaders staffed tables describing each of the six regional programs, met with legislators and the governor and toured the State House.

¹ Counts are cumulative and may represent repeat attendance by single individuals

Highlights & Accomplishments:

Committee on Transition Retreat

COT began its year compiling information from a statewide retreat aimed at refocusing and re-energizing the work of the Committee. The retreat, held in Searsport, was attended by 59 individuals representing each of the mandated state agencies and other stakeholders in the disability service field. First Lady Karen Baldacci offered the keynote address. In September, COT amended its bylaws to clarify its relation with the Maine Transition Network² and to increase its representation on the MTN Board of Directors. It also updated its membership list to recognize state agency reorganization and to better represent K-12 education agencies involved in transition services.



My favorite BRIDGES event this year was the one on housing. I am getting ready to move into my own apartment and I found out about people that can come in and help me. I don't drive but they could take me shopping.

After she spoke to us, we went to the diner for supper. Some of the other kids that come to BRIDGES made the meal in their foods class. Donald took our order at the counter and Hillary put it on the plates. We had meatball subs and salad. It was great.

Justin Gauvin
Region I, BRIDGES Transition Council

COT also convened a funding formula subcommittee at the retreat which focused on the task of developing a more equitable formula for allocating funds to the regional boards. COT voted to approve the subcommittee's draft formula in May and to continue to examine ways to incorporate performance-based measures to include in the formula in the future.

IDEA State Performance Plan

A significant focus for the committee in the '06-'07 project year was the improvement of transition indicators in the State Performance Plan required under IDEA, especially SPP Indicator B-13, the "Percent of youth age 16 and above with an IEP that includes goals and transition services needed to meet goals" and SPP Indicator B-14, the "Percent of youth who had IEPs, are no longer in secondary school and who are competitively employed, enrolled in some type of postsecondary school, or both, within two years of leaving high school as compared to nondisabled youth no longer in secondary school."

COT worked collaboratively with the MDOE Program Monitoring to ensure consistent collection of data in accordance with the SPP Indicator B-13. To improve this indicator, COT regions also engaged school districts to participate in the Transition Outcomes Project (TOP), a nationwide program in which schools partner with COT regional personnel to conduct file reviews of Special Education required transition plans in order to improve transition outcomes for youth. Schools receive feedback of the results of an initial review and develop an action plan to improve performance. A second file review provides data on the level of improvement resulting from the action plan.

A total of 30 districts have participated in TOP reviews. Of that number 13 have completed both file reviews (a number chose not to continue due to changes in Special Education regulations which

² Maine Transition Network (MTN) contracts with MDOE to provide fiscal support for COT and staffs the Committee

changed the file requirements being reviewed). The 2007 project year saw few initial reviews due to the extended time it took to establish final regulations.

Those who completed the Transition Outcomes Project saw significant increases in each of the twenty specific areas reviewed. On average, files showed a 17% increase in whether students were invited to their I.E.P. meetings, a 16% increase in whether the child's preferences and interests were considered in the development of the I.E.P. and 27% increase in whether transition activities promote achievement of the students' postsecondary goals.³ TOP summary data reports are available for review from the Maine Transition Network and will be posted on the MTN website.

COT also assisted the Department of Education in the collection of information needed to determine SPP Indicator B-14. COT personnel, with assistance from MTN, collected post-secondary contact information for special education students exiting in the 05/06 and 06/07 academic year from targeted school districts to be used by MDOE to survey students a year after graduation. Survey results are available from MDOE.

Mission Transition

Four of COT's regions held Mission Transition activities in the spring (though all regions sponsor similar activities whether or not they receive Mission Transition funding). Mission Transition is a collaborative project with Maine Department of Labor, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, COT and other cooperating agencies. MDOL provides seed money through an application process to support daylong "conferences" for youth. Each region creates a unique experience for youth, but all include opportunities for youth to participate as young adults in learning about transition supports and future opportunities in education and employment in a non-school setting.

Mission Transition activities were funded in Regions II, IV, V, & VI. Region II activities were held at the University of Maine in Machias. Region IV partnered with University of Maine Augusta and the Hutchinson Center and held workshops on those campuses. Region V sponsored two Mission Transition days for targeted groups of young people at Central Maine Community College in Auburn. Region VI activities took place at York County Community College.

My name is Faith. I am 17 years old and a senior at Bangor High School. This is my second year in Youth Leader's Club. When my mother first found out about it, I was just going into my Junior year. I didn't have much of a social life and my mother was looking for some sort of activity for me to do with other kids with special needs.



A teacher at Bangor High sent her an email about Youth Leadership Club and I joined. We have done some really fun things in the last two years and I have made some new friends. I also learned some important things like I need to speak up for myself and be involved in making decisions that affect me. My parents say I have matured a lot this last year. I guess they are right because I have worked hard and gotten good grades.

I made the honor roll twice this year and have applied to College for the fall. I am looking forward to getting a part time job and going to collage part time.

I am thankful to School to Life and Youth Leadership Club for giving me the confidence to succeed.

Faith Cole
Region III, Penquis Regional Transition Board

³ Percentages are derived from all reviewed files. Individual school district results will vary. Percentages are rounded and represent the difference between the total valid percent in round one file reviews and the same indicator in the round two reviews.

Across the four participating regions 663 students were served from 55 high schools. 219 adults, including parents, educators and agency providers participated as well. Vendors from 106 different state and independent agencies, businesses and service providers offered information. Almost 50 workshops were held, many presented by youth. Workshops covered all areas of transition planning; employment, education, housing, transportation, legal services, community participation and health.

Youth leadership

COT welcomed youth as voting members at committee meetings. COT formed MYCOT, the Maine Youth Committee on Transition, made up of elected representatives from regional youth leadership groups. After bylaw updates in the fall, MYCOT was added as a voting member of the committee. MYCOT also participated in the planning of the theme and meals for the Youth Leadership Retreat held in Rome at the Pine Tree Camp. Regional Youth Leaders again hosted the COT's annual Hall of Flags Information Day where students met legislators and the Governor to discuss the needs of transitioning students and showcase the accomplishments of their region.

Regional youth leadership continued to grow with hundreds of participants statewide. A primary focus of youth leadership activities is to develop student self-advocacy skills, especially those that lead to more direct involvement in the I.E.P. process and transition planning in particular. Students are also leading an increasing number of trainings for other youth and had a primary role in the development of a new self-advocacy curriculum, the *411 Disability Disclosure Curriculum*.

411 Disability Disclosure Curriculum

COT received funding from the CHOICES CEO Project at the Muskie Institute to take an existing disability disclosure curriculum and modify it for youth. COT, lead by regional coordinators and assisted by youth, made initial modifications to a USDOE sponsored curriculum. The product of



My name is Terra White. I am a senior at Leavitt Area High School. I started Vocational Skills the beginning of my sophomore year. That is when I started in transition.

I got involved in Youth Mentor's Inc. and MYCOT and attended the Quaglia Institute on Student Inspirations workshops. For this we attended workshops at different area high schools on the following topics: UMF Quaglia Institute's "train the trainers", Belonging/Heroes, Sense of Accomplishment, Fun & Excitement, Curiosity & Creativity/Spirit of Adventure, Leadership/Responsibility and Confidence to take Action.

We also led the Disability Disclosure workshop at the Hilton Garden in Auburn as well as hosted and attended dances which were my favorite.

Terra White
Region V, Advisory Council on Transition

this work was then taken to the Youth Leadership Retreat and the 96 students there both taught and learned from the activities while also providing feedback on how to modify the curriculum to make it more student-friendly.

The resulting curriculum was then tested throughout the state. Each region sponsored a student-led training using the curriculum and attendees were given a pre-survey and a follow up survey months later to determine whether the curriculum was effective. Resulting data showed that students better understood accommodations and were significantly better able to describe needed accommodations in school and to ask for needed accommodations.

The final report on the curriculum is available for review upon request and additional dissemination of the curriculum is planned.

Upcoming work for the 2008 Project Year

COT and its regional committees remain dedicated to the work of assisting youth and families during the complicated transition from school to adult life. Given the limited capacity of the system, establishing priority areas for the work is critical.

The priorities for Project year 07-08 are:

- **Training/Technical Assistance** –To provide schools and other agencies with the support needed to improve performance in the area of transition planning and to provide youth and families with the skills necessary to plan successfully for adult life;
- **Youth Leadership** –To encourage youth statewide to develop self-advocacy skills to enable them to take control of their own transition planning and to teach other youth to do the same;
- **Maintaining/Strengthening the COT system** –To increase the capacity of the system to achieve its vision through development and refinement of appropriate internal processes; and
- **Data Collection and Analysis** –To collect analyze and reflect data to improve the function of the COT system.

Specific activities include the development of an electronic system for developing regional workplans and for collecting more complete and more comparable data across regions. The annual youth leadership retreat will start the project year's youth leadership activities in all regions. The COT will continue to seek better representation from all transition stakeholders at statewide and local meetings. The Transition Outcomes Project will expand to new school districts and COT will explore the possibility of purchasing data collection technology to speed the return of data to school systems. As in recent years, the COT will continue its strong relationship with the Department of Education's Program Monitoring office and will support the collection of data for the IDEA State Performance Plan. COT regions will continue to sponsor and host trainings for school personnel, case workers, agency staff throughout the state and to host increasing numbers of students at youth leadership activities.

COT looks forward to expanding its programming to more schools and agencies but currently has limited capacity. COT system funding has been reduced by a third which has restricted programming. COT regions now charge fees to agency personnel for specific trainings and work collaboratively to seek non-governmental funding to continue their work. COT believes strongly that good transition planning is essential for all students regardless of ability or disability and continues to strive to make that vision a reality in a time of limited resources.

One of the things I learned was that leadership is more than just teaching.

Through COT I learned that leadership can be done by anyone and it doesn't matter who you are. Everyone has a story to tell good or bad, but, no matter what the story is, someone gains something from it and someone else might learn something different.



Every now and then you might change someone's life like COT has done for me. COT lead me to start my own youth leadership branch in my high school and I got those

students to go to some of the conferences and meetings. I could definitely tell a difference for the better in their attitude and self-esteem when we met as a group.

Robin Harvie

Region IV, Mid-Maine Regional Transition Board

Recommendations

COT has identified a number of areas for continued work and offers the following recommendations for the consideration of the legislature and other state agencies. The Committee and regional personnel are happy to assist in any way to increase the likelihood that the identified issues are resolved.

A. IDENTIFIED NEED: - Data sharing

Data relating to individuals with disabilities is collected by various state agencies in a variety of ways and for a variety of purposes. It is impossible, however, for information from one data system to be compared or aligned with data from another. For example, MDOE collects information on students using a unique identifier assigned by MDOE. MDOL uses social security numbers to track employment information. Currently it is impossible to align school exit data with employment data on exiting students. This is true for metrics across state agencies. The result is that it is impossible for the state to compile a true picture of what happens to students as they move from school to post-secondary education or into the job market. Thousands of students who do neither are unidentifiable and lack supports for which they are eligible.

RECOMMENDATION 1: Support projects that will increase sharing of data among agencies regarding youth at the transition stage.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Require that agencies serving youth with disabilities develop summary data on youth who have exited school including whether they are employed or continuing with education or training.

B. IDENTIFIED NEED: - Coordination between Child & Adult Services

The reorganization of MDHHS has had many salutary benefits. However, the transition between child and adult services for those eligible individuals remains a challenge. Many child service providers do not provide adult services and are unfamiliar with adult eligibility requirements. Further, it is not possible for adult providers and child providers to bill for the same service so collaborative planning involving both child and adult providers is not fundable. The baton is not passed smoothly from one part of the agency to another.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Better integrate services for students moving between child and adult services; develop a method of funding transition planning opportunities so that case managers from both adult and child services can be present with school personnel and families; and, consider the creation of a mental health services category for adolescents and young adults ages 14 to 26.

C. IDENTIFIED NEED: - Transition Specialists

Transition Specialists are found in few Maine School districts though they are common throughout the country. This has largely been due to the small size of districts –it is not cost effective to dedicate a position to transition when the number of impacted students is small. As

Maine moves to larger districts it is worth considering changes that would support Transition Specialists for all large districts.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Develop methodologies to support the creation of Transition Specialist positions in districts across the state. Identify parameters for Specialist to student ratios, explore inclusion in the Essential Programs and Services formula, and investigate whether certification of Transition Specialists and related training is warranted.

D. IDENTIFIED NEED: - Mission Transition

Mission Transition is a successful opportunity for students to step into adult roles and to participate in training to improve their understanding of the transition process and, most importantly, to see firsthand opportunities that await them as they exit school. The program is minimally funded by Department of Labor and by COT using Department of Education Funds. Reallocation of existing resources to expand support for these activities to all COT regions is warranted and represents a unique opportunity for MDHHS, MDOE, and MDOL to demonstrate collaboration in a highly visible way.

RECOMMENDATION 5: Explore interagency funding to expand Mission Transition to all regions of the state; use the opportunity to demonstrate cross-agency commitment to youth in transition.

E. IDENTIFIED NEED: -Expanding Capacity

The COT system's funding was changed significantly in the previous biennium. MDHHS funding was moved to MDOE, though MDHHS case workers continue to receive training from COT personnel. MDOE funding provided under the Comprehensive Systems of Personnel Development program was reallocated. The result is that the COT system lost nearly a third of its overall funding. Regional programs were already at or nearing capacity. The loss of funding has put significant stress on the system and has resulted in a loss of services. Currently the system has no available resources to meet increasing demand for training and technical assistance. Further, COT lacks the resources to expand programming to new populations such as incarcerated youth and returning veterans with disabilities.

RECOMMENDATION 6: Restore COT funding to previous level.

F. IDENTIFIED NEED: - Improved Summary of Performance

Under the most recent reauthorization of IDEA and the state special education regulations a new requirement was added. Schools must now provide exiting special education students with a so called "Summary of Performance" including academic and functional performance as well as recommendations for accommodations likely to increase success in post-secondary settings. Current requirements are unlikely to create a document useful to students, post-secondary institutions or employers. COT believes that the Summary of Performance is an opportunity to create a document useful for improving transition outcomes.

RECOMMENDATION 7: Engage stakeholders including students, employers, post-secondary institutions and K-12 schools in the development of a more functional Summary of Performance format.

G. IDENTIFIED NEED: - Mentors for Youth with Disabilities

Each year in October many Mainers participate in Disability Mentoring Day. As the baby boom generation retires, the need for able workers will expand greatly. Currently individuals with disabilities are 60% less likely to be employed than non-disabled peers. Maine needs to take action to increase the number of individuals with disabilities entering the workforce. Mentoring helps young people understand the world of work and also helps employers see individuals with disabilities as potential employees. Supporting mentoring is a critical action.

RECOMMENDATION 8: COT challenges all legislators to participate in the mentoring of a youth with disabilities.

Regional Highlights



REGION I – BRIDGES Transition Council, serving Aroostook County

Documented Volunteer Contribution: 800 Hours

One major project offered in Region 1 is BRIDGES Transition Summer Camp, a week-long intensive training experience for youth in transition, in Mapleton. This second annual event was a success with training sessions covering Education, Employment, Legal Concerns, Community Activities, Health, Housing, IEP/PET Facilitation, and Advocacy, all mixed in with traditional summer camp activities. Running parallel to youth transition sessions are Professional Development workshops for parents and providers with contact hours offered.



REGION II – Downeast Committee on Transition (DCOT), serving Hancock & Washington counties

Documented Volunteer Contribution: 1410 Hours

DCOT is well known for their strong collaborative programming and for their strong representation in the schools of Hancock & Washington counties. During the project year, every high school in both counties sent representatives to the *Developing Realistic Transition Plans* workshops hosted by the region. This training on changes and expectations for transition planning in new federal and state Special Education regulations is a key component of the technical assistance provided to schools to assist them in meeting state monitoring requirements.



REGION III – Penquis Regional Transition Board (PRTB), serving Piscataquis & Penobscot counties

Documented Volunteer Contribution: 690 Hours

Region III's *School to Life* workshop series continues to top the list of hosted activities. Each fall the region publishes a calendar of monthly trainings for transition stakeholders on timely and important transition topics. Youth, schools, parents and agency providers come to learn from both noted presenters and youth leaders at these evening sessions. Additionally, Cindy Tuck, regional coordinator, was named 2007 Special Education Advocate of the Year.



REGION IV – Mid-Maine Regional Transition Board (MMRTB), serving Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Somerset & Waldo counties

Documented Volunteer Contribution: 1600 Hours

Mission Transition highlighted the spring in Region IV. Held at the University of Maine, Augusta and the Hutchinson Center in Belfast on separate days in April and May, *Mission Transition* brought 154 students to 19 workshops. 8 youth leaders presented to their peers and to the 77 adult teachers, agency representatives, service providers and parents who participated.



REGION V – Advisory Council on Transition (ACOT), serving Androscoggin, Franklin, & Oxford counties

Documented Volunteer Contribution: 2400 Hours

Youth Mentors, Inc., ACOT’s youth leadership program serves more than 150 students from 11 different high schools. Youth from each school develop transition related programs for other participating schools and host other school groups to provide training. Trained youth then return to their sending schools to train other youth.

ACOT also hosts a monthly support group for parents and caregivers of children on the autism spectrum, helping them navigate currently available service and advocate for changes to support children with this disability.



REGION VI – Southern Maine Advisory Council on Transition (SMACT), serving Cumberland & York counties

Documented Volunteer Contribution: 1700 Hours

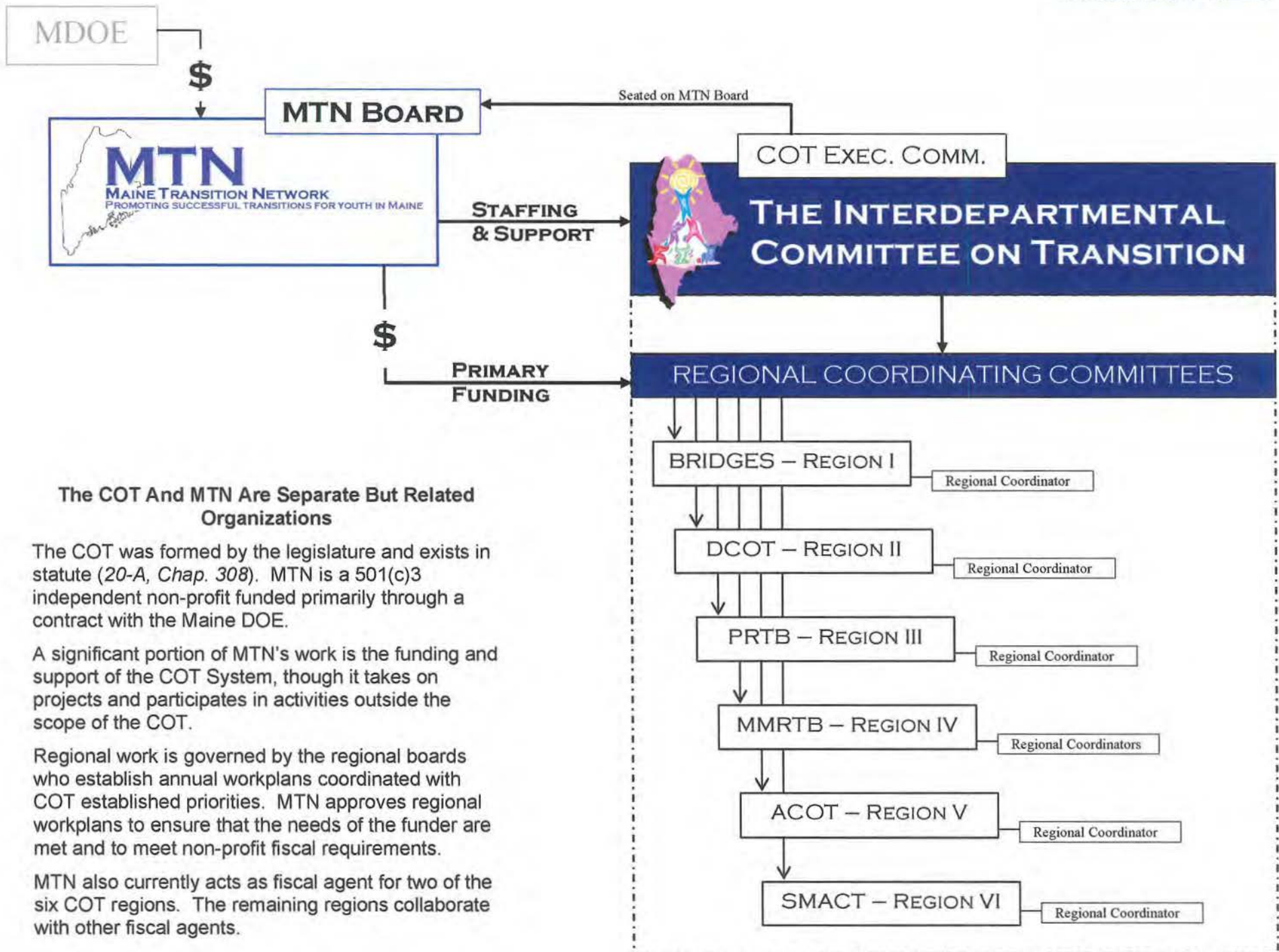
A SMACT highlight is its monthly Transition Council meetings held in each of its two counties. 25-30 people per county; including school personnel, youth, parents, community service providers and state agency representatives; attend to gain and share transition-related information. In 2006-07 over 100 different representatives attended meetings during the year.

Coordination is a primary purpose, so each meeting contains a presentation on what exists for supports, services and options for the young adults we serve. Individuals attending Council meetings describe them as being, “the best on-going technical assistance related to transition planning that is available.”

Glossary

- 411 on Disability Disclosure:** A new curriculum designed by and for Maine youth on disability disclosure and self-advocacy.
- ACOT:** Advisory Council on Transition; COT’s Region V local project serving Androscoggin, Franklin, & Oxford counties.
- BRIDGES:** COT’s Region I local project; a part of Helping Hands, the Aroostook County social service agency.
- CHOICES CEO:** A project of The Muskie Institute at University of Southern Maine working to create more opportunities for people with disabilities who want to enter the workplace.

COT:	The Interdepartmental Committee on Transition, organized under <i>MSRS 20-A Chapter 308</i> ; to coordinate transition services projects for youth with disabilities.
CSPD:	Comprehensive Systems of Personnel Development, a USDOE program providing discretionary funding to state departments of education.
DCOT:	Downeast Committee on Transition; COT's Region II local project serving Hancock and Washington Counties.
IDEA:	The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; the federal law governing special education services (Maine's special education statutes are <i>MSRS 20-A Chapter 101</i>).
IEP:	Individual Education Plan; the document that describes a special education student's program.
MADSEC:	Maine Administrators of Services for Children with Disabilities.
MDHHS (or DHHS):	The Maine Department of Health & Human Services.
MDOE (or DOE):	The Maine Department of Education.
MDOL (or DOL):	The Maine Department of Labor.
Mission Transition:	A collaborative project with MDOL, Division of Vocational Rehabilitation, COT and other cooperating agencies providing education and professional development to youth and service providers.
MMRTB:	Mid-Maine Regional Transition Board; COT's Region IV local project serving Kennebec, Knox, Lincoln, Sagadahoc, Somerset & Waldo counties.
MTN:	Maine Transition Network, a nonprofit that provides fiscal and programmatic support for COT. MTN contracts with MDOE to support and fund COT.
MYCOT:	Maine Youth Advisory Committee on Transition, a youth leadership project providing youth input at COT meetings and representing all transition regions.
Program Monitoring:	The office in MDOE's Special Services division responsible for ensuring compliance with special education regulations by school districts throughout the state.
Project year:	For COT, project years begin September 1st and end August 31st of the following year; also called the contract year or period.
PRTB:	Penquis Regional Transition Board; COT's Region III local project serving Piscataquis and Penobscot counties.
Secondary Transition:	The period between ages 14 and 26 in which a youth leaves school and moves into further education and/or a career path.
SMACT:	Southern Maine Advisory Council on Transition; COT's Region VI local project serving Cumberland and York counties.
SPP Indicators:	Two groups of indicators, or data summaries, depicting the state of special education services.
SPP:	State Performance Plan; the five-year plan for improving statewide school-based services to youth with disabilities, from birth to 20. Required by the federal Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP).
Summary of Performance:	A required special education document, given to youth upon graduation, documenting academic and functional performance as well as recommendations for accommodations likely to increase success in post-secondary settings.
TOP:	Transition Outcomes Project; a nationwide technical assistance program offered to school systems by local transition specialists.
Transition Planning Areas:	Employment, Health, Housing, Continuing Education, Legal services, and Community participation (Transportation is sometimes included as well).
Transition Regions:	Six local projects established under COT's mandate, covering the entire state of Maine and managed by independent volunteer boards. Also called COT Regions.
Youth Mentor's Inc.:	ACOT (Region V)'s youth leadership initiative.



The COT And MTN Are Separate But Related Organizations

The COT was formed by the legislature and exists in statute (20-A, Chap. 308). MTN is a 501(c)3 independent non-profit funded primarily through a contract with the Maine DOE.

A significant portion of MTN's work is the funding and support of the COT System, though it takes on projects and participates in activities outside the scope of the COT.

Regional work is governed by the regional boards who establish annual workplans coordinated with COT established priorities. MTN approves regional workplans to ensure that the needs of the funder are met and to meet non-profit fiscal requirements.

MTN also currently acts as fiscal agent for two of the six COT regions. The remaining regions collaborate with other fiscal agents.

COT Regional Staff Contact Information

Reg.	Regional Board	Counties	Staff	Address	Phone/Fax/email
I	BRIDGES Transition Council	Aroostook	Jeanne Bugbee	34 North St. Suite 3 Presque Isle, ME 04769	764-8331 phone or 1-800-464-7664 764-7664 fax bridges@ainop.com www.ainop.com/users/hhcf/bridges.htm
II	Downeast Committee on Transition (DCOT)	Hancock Washington	Lori Joy	15 Prescott Dr. Machias, ME 04654 c/o Career Center	963-5973 Hancock County phone 255-1921 Washington County phone 255-4778 fax lorinda.joy@verizon.net www.downeastregionaltransitionboard.com
III	Penquis Regional Transition Board (PRTB)	Penobscot Piscataquis	Cindy Tuck	141 No. Main St. Brewer, ME 04412	992-2270 phone 992-2270 fax schooltolife@midmaine.com
IV	Mid-Maine Regional Transition Board (MMRTB)	Kennebec Knox Lincoln Sagadahoc Somerset Waldo	Marion Greene Carol Brown	295 Water Street Suite 226 Augusta, ME 04330 P.O. Box 93 Phippsburg, ME 04562	621-9893 phone 623-1677 fax ythdreamsmg@mainetransition.org 837-8644 phone ythdreamscb@mainetransition.org
V	Region V Advisory Council on Transition (ACOT)	Androscoggin Franklin Oxford	Mary Redmond-Luce	Levitt High School 21 Mathews Dr. Turner, ME 04282	225-5055 mary@acotme.org www.actome.org
VI	Southern Maine Advisory Council on Transition (SMACT)	Cumberland York	Betsy Morrison	P.O. Box 2227 So. Portland, ME 04116	878-5166 phone 774-7695 fax smact@gwi.net www.smact.org

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