

Ad-Hoc Practitioner Committee Summary Report

April 19, 2017

Committee

The committee included co-chairs Jordan Shurr (University faculty, current President-Elect) and Polly Parrish (Teacher, former President) and members Val Sharpe (University faculty, former president), Iris Kerbis Cantor (Retired teacher, former board member), Jenny Hahn (Teacher, current member), and Anita Robertson (Retired teacher, current member).

Background

During the summer of 2016, the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities President David Cihak formed an ad-hoc committee to focus on issues related to the divisions current and future practitioner members. The committee was charged with providing a report to the board on the status of practitioner members focused on perspectives of engagement and support and to provide related recommendations for moving forward.

Timeline

- August 2016- Ad Hoc Committee formed, co-chairs assigned, open call for members (Facebook, Express Newsletter, word of mouth from board members)
- October 2016- March 2017- Committee meetings to outline information sources
- March 2017- Practitioner survey disseminated (DADD member list)
- April 2017- Data analysis and report compilation

Source of Information

- CEC provided DADD membership data with professional role classifications from March 15, 2017.
- DADD board member list from archives as well as supplemental information from the DADD Express.
- Committee-created survey focused on engagement and support send to DADD practitioner members on CEC membership list, and as a link via Facebook and member word of mouth to both members and non-members (including former members). Participants included 175 current members (14% of current DADD practitioner members), 8 former members, and 106 non-members with representation from 48 US states and 3 Canadian Provinces.

Brief Summary of Findings

- Practitioner members make up half of the division membership
- Over half of these members have joined DADD within the past 5 years
- Slightly more practitioner members work with students with autism than with intellectual disabilities
- Practitioner members have an interest in engaging in DADD, but some note barriers such as time, conference cost and location accessibility.

- An overwhelming majority of practitioner members find the DADD journals beneficial, and a majority also find benefit in the CEC online community and the Express newsletter.
- A majority of practitioner members have not accessed the DADD conference, while a near majority have not accessed DADD webinars, state subdivision activities, or DADD sessions at the CEC convention due to barriers such as lack of opportunity (e.g., due to time or money) and awareness of the support/ service.
- A majority of practitioner members are not familiar with the Dolly Gray book award and the Prism book series. One third of these members are not familiar with state subdivisions and DADD position papers, while one fifth were not familiar the DADD express.
- When asked about their ideas of additional relevant practitioner supports from DADD, the majority of respondents mentioned a desire for networking and more options in disseminating relevant information (e.g., webinars, state conference).
- One third of non-member respondents expressed an interest in the DADD conference and collaboration with colleagues.
- When asked about their ideas of relevant practitioner supports from DADD, non-members requested both more information about the organization as well as opportunities for professional development.
- 72 non-members gave their contact information to receive more information about DADD

Committee Recommendations

1. Targeted marketing to practitioner members and non-members highlighting opportunities for engagement and available supports and services (e.g., Prism book series, Dolly gray award)
2. More regular and direct communication (i.e., email) with practitioner members providing a snapshot of division activities and resources (e.g., journal article highlights, policy updates, position papers, upcoming events)
3. Expansion of information dissemination opportunities beyond conference and publications (e.g., local conferences, opportunities for networking, mentorship for new practitioners and/or new members)
4. Utilize state subdivisions for increased DADD visibility and practitioner support opportunities
5. Consider practitioner accessibility issues related to committee work (e.g., meeting schedules, member recruiting strategies)

Findings (*indicates table or figure included)

***1. Current DADD Practitioner Membership**

- Practitioners (including: teachers, administrators, consultants, related services professionals, and paraprofessionals) make up 53% (n = 1291) of DADD members (N = 2451).
- 62% (n = 795) of current practitioner members became members in the last five years including 27% (n = 343) in 2016, 21% (n = 275) in the last 6-10 years, 6% (n = 80) in the last 11-15 years, and 11% (n = 141) in the last 16+ years.

2. Historical Board Makeup

- Over the past 17 years the DADD board has contained an average of 3.94 (median= 4) practitioner members per year with a range of 2-5. The makeup of the board is the result of many factors including willingness of individuals to run, results of member elections, and in some cases board appointments.

***3. Practitioner perspectives on Engagement in DADD**

Current Practitioner Members- Highest Rated DADD Engagement Interests

- 79% - DADD conference (of which 24% are unable to access)
- 69% - collaborate with DADD colleagues (of which 16% are unable to access)
- 52% - involvement in subdivision (of which 31% are unable to access)
- 47% - serving on a DADD committee (of which 24% are unable to access)
- 41% Contributing to a DADD newsletter (of which 29% are unable to access)

*Reasons given for inability to engage included: time, cost & location (related to conference), and lack of information.

***4. Practitioner perspectives on DADD Supports and Services**

Current Practitioner Members- Highest Rated DADD Supports and Services of Benefit

- 93% - Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities
- 90% - ETADD
- 65% - CEC Online Community
- 59% - DADD Express
- 45% - DADD Position papers

Current Practitioner Members- Highest rated DADD Supports and Services Not Accessed

- 55% - DADD Annual conference
- 46% - DADD webinars
- 43% - DADD state subdivision activities
- 42% - DADD sessions at CEC annual convention

*Reasons given for "Have not accessed" included: many related to opportunity (usually time accessing materials, or cost related to conference) and a lack of awareness of the support/ service.

Current Practitioner Members- Highest rated DADD Supports and Services Not Familiar With

- 61% - Dolly Gray Book Awards
- 52% - DADD Prism Book Series
- 38% - DADD state subdivision activities
- 31% - DADD position papers
- 22% - DADD Express

Current Practitioner Members- Desired supports and services

- A majority of the comments related to options for dissemination of information (e.g., networking, opportunities for collaboration, webinars, state-level conferences, marketing, online community) and some comments related to content (e.g., inclusive settings, practitioner oriented)

5. Non-Member Practitioners Respondents (n = 106)

Respondent Snapshot

- 48% - Teachers
- 24% - Administrators
- 16% - Related Services Professionals
- 92% - Work with students with Autism
- 85% - Work with students with Intellectual Disabilities

Non-Members - Highest Rated DADD Engagement Interests

- 37% - DADD conference
- 32% - collaborate with DADD colleagues
- 15% - involvement in subdivision
- 14% - serving on a DADD committee

Practitioner Non-Members- Desired supports and services

- A large majority of the comments related to a need for more information about DADD and the supports and services available, professional development was also mentioned frequently as a need.

1. DADD Membership Professional Roles as of Match 2017

Category	Specific Role	Number	% practitioner members	% of DADD members
Practitioner		1291		53%
	Teacher	739	57%	30%
	Administrator	324	25%	13%
	Consultant	151	12%	6%
	Related professional	44	3%	2%
	Early childhood interventionist	17	1%	1%
	Paraprofessional	16	1%	1%
Higher Education Faculty		341		14%
College/ University Students		334		14%
Family Members		12		0%
Other/ Blank		473		19%

Current Member Survey Participants

Professional role	Student age	Years in the field	Disability categories
Retired 3%	Early Childhood 37%	0-2 4%	Autism 95%
Special education teacher 50%	Elementary 61%	3-5 9%	Intellectual Disability 75%
General education teacher 1%	Middle 45%	6-10 14%	Multiple Disabilities 50%
Related service professional 5%	High School 52%	11-20 33%	Developmental Disability 39%
Consultant/ Specialist 22%	18+ 22%	20+ 40%	
Administrator 20%			

3. Engagement- Current Members: “Please indicate your current, past, and/or potential engagement in DADD.”

	Serving on the Board	Serving on a committee	Contribution to newsletter	Contribution to a position paper	Involvement in state subdivision	Collaboration with colleagues	Conference attendance	Award nominee or nominator	Other
Interested	21%	35%	29%	22%	36%	58%	60%	25%	7%
Interested, but not able to	9%	11%	12%	8%	16%	11%	19%	9%	2%
Total Interested	30%	47%	41%	31%	52%	69%	79%	34%	9%
Not interested	61%	42%	49%	54%	33%	22%	14%	42%	70%
Not familiar with	8%	11%	10%	15%	15%	9%	7%	24%	21%

“Not able to”= 31 mentions of time, 13 mentions of cost (conference), 8 mentions of location (conference/ committees), 4 mentions of information

- “The conference are at a great distance away and I have access to very little ProD funds”
- “It would depend on the location within state as to ability to access and other time factors.”
- “School consumes too much of my time now, what I have left I like to do unrelated to education activities.”

4. Supports and Services- Current Members: “Please indicate your perspective of the following DADD supports and services in regard to your professional role.”

	ETADD	Focus	DADD Express	Position papers	Prism Series books	DADD sessions at CEC Convention	DADD conference	CEC online community	State subdivision activities	DADD webinars	Dolly Gray book award list
Beneficial	57%	60%	25%	19%	9%	24%	13%	28%	7%	5%	4%
Somewhat beneficial	33%	33%	34%	26%	8%	8%	5%	36%	9%	10%	3%
Somewhat-Beneficial	90%	93%	59%	45%	17%	32%	18%	65%	16%	15%	8%
Not beneficial	2%	1%	3%	2%	3%	0%	1%	9%	3%	3%	2%
Have not accessed	3%	2%	16%	22%	27%	42%	55%	18%	43%	46%	30%
Not familiar with	5%	4%	22%	31%	52%	26%	26%	9%	38%	35%	61%

“Have not accessed”= 53 mentions of opportunity (usually time accessing materials, or cost related to conference), 32 mentions of not being aware

- “No state subdivision, Haven't gone to DADD in several years because it is always seems to be east coast or Hawaii. I have a better chance of marrying a supermodel than I have of my organization sending me to Hawaii for a conference. Never seen or heard of the book series or webinars.”
- “I am a busy professional, but no excuse. I really just didn't even realize they existed. I have undoubtedly not familiarized myself with nor taken advantage of all the benefits of my membership!”
- “Haven't used webinars (time limitations and not direct need); am unaware of state subdivision but would like to be more active in local group; have participated in the conference recently due to financial limitations”
- “So much info- so little time or I only just found out about it”

“How can DADD better meet your professional needs (e.g., networking, camaraderie, workshops, mentorship, webinars, literature, seminars)?”= 71 comments related to dissemination (e.g., networking, opportunities for collaboration, webinars, state-level conferences, marketing, online community), 13 comments related to content (e.g., inclusive settings, practitioner oriented)

- “I think the biggest thing is knowing how to access the information we are able to. Since I am a new member, I didn't know that I could have access to a lot of the content that was presented in this survey. It would be helpful to know where to find the content and how to access it.”
- “Support states that don't have divisions”
- “Networking is my first thought as I learn more how I benefit from DADD member benefits.”
- “I would like to see more Workshops and seminars that help inform and give us opportunities to interact with fellow colleagues, especially in Utah County area”
- “The CEC community message boards are great, but I would be interested in a sub-community specific to other teachers who work with my population. Free webinars to use during PD days (when most school-based material does not apply) would be great. I have been part of the CEC mentorship program but there is never enough participation, so my experience has been lackluster. Would love to network!”
- “Be more involved at the local level with school boards. Tremendous workload when working with severe behaviors. There is little understanding”
- “Continued professional learning in a blended format, and opportunities for local level collaboration would be great. Seminars, workshops. I work for a Regional Education Service Center- and we would welcome some opportunities to host or collaborate to serve our region.”
- “workshops that rotate around regions of the state & webinars that can easily be accessed online”
- “Providing a structured collaboration system for subdivision work”
- “Practitioners drive learning. Increase focus on these valuable stakeholders.”

DADD Engagement and Support Survey

The Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) of the Council for Exceptional Children (<http://www.daddcec.org/AboutUs.aspx>) is committed to being both relevant and invaluable to practitioners who work with individuals with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities. DADD has recently created an ad hoc committee to explore issues related to practitioners in the field including: engagement in the organization as well as experiences and perspectives on professional supports and services. Your input on this quick survey will inform the board and organization as a whole on the needs and viewpoint of practitioners in the field.

In addition to completing this survey, we ask that you please consider forwarding this to your colleagues working in some way with students who have autism, intellectual disability, or other developmental disabilities. We look forward to hearing from members, former members, and non-members alike.

For questions or comments on the survey, please contact the practitioner committee co-chairs: Jordan Shurr (shurr1jc@cmich.edu) or Polly Parrish (pollyparrish@mac.com)

1. Membership Status

Please indicate your current official DADD membership status

- Current Member
- Former Member
- Not a member

2. Demographic Information

a. In which state/ province/ country do you currently reside? _____

b. What is your current professional role?

- Retired
- Special Education Teacher
- General Education Teacher
- Co-Teacher
- Inclusion Teacher
- Paraeducator/ Teacher Assistant
- Consultant/ Specialist- Please describe: _____
- Administrator- Please describe: _____
- Post-Secondary Educator
- Related Service Provider- Please describe: _____
- Other- Please describe: _____

Specific Professional Title: _____

c. What age students do you primarily work with (select all that apply)?

- Early Childhood

- Elementary
- Middle
- High School
- 18+
- College/ Post-Secondary
- Other- Please describe: _____

d. How many years have you worked in the field?

- 0-2
- 3-5
- 6-10
- 11-20
- 20+

e. Which disability category or categories are represented in the population with which you presently work?

- Autism
- Intellectual Disability/ Cognitive Impairment
- Deaf-blindness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Learning Disability
- Hearing Impairment
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Speech Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
- Developmental Delay (Early Childhood)
- Other: _____

3. Supports and Services

Please indicate your perspective of the following DADD supports and services in regard to your professional role.

	Beneficial	Somewhat Beneficial	Not Beneficial	Have not accessed* (see below)	Not Familiar With
The journal: Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities					

The journal: Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities					
The newsletter: DADD Express					
DADD position papers					
DADD Prism Series books					
DADD sessions at the annual CEC Convention					
The annual DADD conference					
The CEC online community					
DADD state subdivision activities					
DADD webinars					
Dolly Gray book award list					

If "Have not accessed", please explain: _____

4. Engagement in DADD

Please indicate your current, past, and/or potential engagement in DADD.

	Interested	Interested, but not able to* (see below)	Not Interested	Not Familiar With
Serving a term on the board of directors				
Serving on a DADD committee				
Contribution to DADD newsletter				
Contribution to a DADD position paper				
Involvement in DADD state subdivision				
Collaboration with DADD colleagues				
DADD conference attendance				
DADD award nominee or nominator				
Other* (see below)				

If "Other", please explain: _____

If "Not able to", please explain: _____

5. How can DADD better meet your professional needs (e.g., networking, camaraderie, workshops, mentorship, webinars, literature, seminars)?

6. Contact Information

Would you be interested in receiving more information from the Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities? If yes, please provide your name and contact information below.

Yes No

Name (Optional): _____

Email (Optional): _____

7. Questions or Comments (optional)
