

SHARING THE COMMITMENT

An Exceptional Student Education Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES
November 16, 2009



Members: Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Wilbur Hawke, Robert Spano, Karen Stelmacki, Dr. Katrina Nedley, Debbie Tihen, Barbara Southwick, Nancy Ross, Jennifer Smith; Stan Wesser

Members Absent: Dr. Elizabeth McBride; Sgt. Dan McDonald, Adella Spinella

Wilbur Hawke reported that Lisa Nieto, PEER parent, resigned from her position.

Guests: Allman Todd, Joyce Austin,

Agenda and Meeting Minutes

A consensus agreement was reached to approve the agenda as presented, as well as, the meeting minutes from September 8, 2009.

Old Business

- 2009-2010 ESE Parent Survey** – Dr. Sartorio reported that the Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Program is moving from a paper to an online Parent Survey in 2009-2010 for purpose of obtaining input from parents after their participation (in-person or via phone) in their child's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) meeting. A label will be affixed to the IEP, by the school, which will provide the parent with the link to the online Survey. For parents who prefer, a paper Survey will be available. In 2008-2009, a paper survey was completed by approximately 10% of the parents of exceptional students. Committee members suggested that ESE identify how many parents are participating in IEP meetings, face-to-face or via conference call.
- Parent/Guardian Workshop** – Nancy Ross, ESE Program Specialist and PEER educator, reported that approximately 50 parents and clients attended a workshop, *Parents and Guardians of Students with Disabilities Preparing for Your Child's Future*, at Naples High School in April, 2009. In collaboration with Barron Collier and Gulf Coast High Schools, Nancy made arrangements with Tom Nurse and Richard LaBelle from Family Network on Disabilities (FND), for the second series of this workshop to be conducted via an interactive video-conference at Gulf Coast High School Media Center on Wednesday, November 18, 2009 from 7 – 9 PM. Nancy is pursuing the recording of this video conference.
- Response to Intervention (RtI)** – Barb Southwick, PEER parent, expressed concerns brought forward to her, from teachers and some parents, about the implementation of RtI. Issues shared by Mrs. Southwick, included:
 - All students are in RtI TIER I for 9-weeks regardless of prior school year data;
 - Other Health Impaired (OHI) eligibility is being eliminated;
 - No one understands the RtI timeline and how many data points are needed;
 - 3rd grade students will not be identified and found eligible for special education and receive needed assessment accommodations (e.g., FCAT);
 - RtI is replacing ESE;

- Principals have told teachers that there will be no RtI Tier 3 interventions this year;
- Students will no longer be identified as Specific Learning Disabled (SLD); and
- How will students be found eligible for SLD when a discrepancy model no longer exists?

Dr. Sartorio facilitated a discussion about the well documented impact of RtI on improved academic achievement, reduced disproportionality, availability of early intervention and prevention services, and reduced rates of special education referrals and placements. To achieve these positive outcomes, the school district instituted systematic change in 2009-2010 that supports the essential components of effective implementation of RtI. RtI has been introduced as a framework to improve instruction and progress monitoring for all students and involves a tiered approach to academic disabilities. This is the first year of district-wide implementation in Collier; it is a huge paradigm shift and is a work in progress at each school.

Each elementary, middle and high school in Collier has a person assigned as the RtI Facilitator. Additionally, the District has an RtI Coordinator in place – Dr. Pamela Bruening. In June 2009, a train-the-trainer event took place for school teams responsible for providing school-based training. The RtI Facilitators and administrators (principals, assistant principals and deans) continue to receive monthly training from Dr. Bruening. The District's RtI Steering Committee has a draft RtI manual which includes a Question & Answer technical assistance component. Additionally, three online RtI DirectSTEP courses are available to all teachers and administrators with the requirement that all staff complete the first module by the end of the 2009-2010 school year.

Members discussed critical information for RtI implementation:

- Tier I has no definitive timeline. Weekly progress monitoring for 6-8 weeks is best practice.
- In Tier I, all children (including students with disabilities) receive high quality research-based instruction in general education.
- Florida Assessments for Instruction in Reading (FAIR) consist of screening, diagnostic, and progress monitoring components. These new assessments are used to inform instruction and are used within the RtI model at the elementary and middle/high school levels. Data collected during RtI is a component of informing instruction.
- There is no RtI (general education interventions) checklist.
- General education interventions for all students are more significant than ever before. Teachers are involved in Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and resources to support schools (e.g., reading and math coaches, co-teach classes) is noteworthy. Differentiated Instruction (DI) is based on individual child needs.
- RtI is viewed as a vital component in the minimization of risk for later academic disabilities.
- RtI is aligned with identifying and addressing children's needs in key skill areas (e.g., math, reading, and behavior).
- In Tier II, students receive supplemental instruction within the general education curriculum. In Tier III, the frequency of interventions intensifies. Tier II and III interventions are based on individual needs identified.
- RtI is a very fluid process.
- Staffing committees must rule out that a child's lack of academic progress is not due to a lack of instruction.
- OHI and SLD continue to be eligibilities under IDEA and in State Board Rules.

- A 60-day timeline applies to an initial evaluation. The timeline starts when written parental consent is obtained. The evaluation must be completed in 60 school days in which the child is in attendance at school. This timeline does not include the determination of eligibility by a staffing committee.
 - When a parent requests an evaluation to be completed, general education interventions will be conducted concurrently with the evaluation. Results of the evaluation become part of the RtI data and problem solving strategies.
 - Accommodations are part of good instruction. Concern about a student's eligibility for FCAT accommodations, through a 504 Plan or IEP, will be discussed with the Florida Department of Education staff. Specifically, the accommodations of concern include, extra time in a separate room and have FCAT items read aloud to the student. These accommodations are not permissible on district and state assessments unless provided daily during class instruction and the student's 504 Plan or IEP documents the specific need.
4. **Sensitivity Awareness Training** – Training has been completed at Eden Park, Highlands and Sabal Palm Elementary Schools. Training is scheduled on Dec 4th at Lely Elementary School and is being planned for Avalon Elementary, Lake Park Elementary, and Manatee Elementary School in April, 2010. Principal at Manatee Middle School inquired but has not confirmed the school's interest in this training.
 5. **Parent Libraries** – Parent training has been planned for Manatee Elementary on January 4th, East Naples Middle on February 11th, Corkscrew Middle on November 19th, and Barron Collier/Gulf Coast High School on November 18th. A library was given to Manatee Middle School after a parent training earlier this school year. Lake Trafford Elementary and Golden Gate Elementary Schools are the only elementary schools that do not have a parent library. Contact with the administrators at each of these schools has been made.
 6. **Family Network on Disabilities (FND)** – FND plans to conduct a statewide conference in February, 2010.
 7. **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)** – The Florida Department of Education (DOE) recently asked FDLRS to host an Algebra Success Train-the-Trainer training in Collier. Plans are underway for this event. Debbie Tihen announced that FDLRS, in collaboration with FND, will soon release an online course on Differentiated Instruction (10 inservice points). This course, projected to be available in Spring 2010, will be a facilitated session. Debbie also indicated that FDLRS is working on an alternate delivery system for presentations, specifically voice over power point training. FDLRS announced that their full-time Child Find Specialist in Collier is presently on leave and that they are looking at an open-ended substitute to fill the position.

Jennifer Smith reported that the ParaEducator training on behavior at Immokalee Middle School (IMS) drew a large group. Additionally, FDLRS offered an *Opening Doors* training at IMS and MMS. Jennifer stated that in October 2009, a parent from Lee County hosted an Autism Conference in Estero and that the conference was well attended by Collier parents. Jennifer reported that FDLRS and CCPS Pre-K ESE, in collaboration with Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) are working together in a Recognition and Response project. Jennifer provided a Hanen Training, *It Takes Two To Talk*, for 4 RCMA staff members and ongoing staff mentoring on implementation of Hanen language strategies. Twenty (20) three- and four-year olds are involved in the project; each child was assessed at the beginning of the project and will continue to be periodically assessed to ensure ongoing progress.

8. **Collier Partners in Transition (PIT)** – Allman Todd reported that he recently attended a meeting in Ft. Lauderdale with Project 10 which is responsible for coordinating most transition services in Florida. Monitoring efforts of the State Performance Plan (SPP) 13,

Transition Services, are being emphasized by the state. The Project 10 website has been recently updated, offering a gateway to transition services – a “one-stop shop” website. Kirk Hall, was recently hired by the state for Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab). Voc Rehab is moving in the direction to become involved with our students earlier than 12th grade. The next PIT meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, November 18th from 1-3 PM at the Administration Center, Room 4-167.

9. **Family Inclusion Network (FIN)** – Stan Wesser reported that he recently returned from the DOE FIN staff meeting. FIN is in the process of assisting the state with the revision of the Course Code Directory (CCD), emphasizing teacher certification and highly qualified status for ESE teachers in content areas. Additionally, Stan reported that FIN is developing online modules to provide extensive support to modified curriculum teachers on inclusive opportunities; modules are scheduled for piloting in January, 2010. FIN has recently upgraded their website to include research articles and other additional materials. All products are accessible online and available for download. Stan reported that FIN continues to work with staff at Sabal Palm Elementary; has had contact with Lely Elementary School principal; and made a visit to Lake Trafford Elementary School last month. FIN continues to support teachers in follow-up to the Co-Teach training.
10. **SEDNET Project** – Dr. Katrina Nedley reported that she recently attended the SEDNET quarterly meeting. She reported that she is presently chairing a system of care forum committee and that the committee is examining contracts with mental health agencies. SEDNET is actively involved in providing assistance and support to individual students and parents in Collier, as well as, working with staff at E/BD cluster schools. She is presently working with staff at Lely High School on classroom organization and management as the school is actively planning to reform its program. Dr. Nedley indicated that she has involved Dr. Rick Casey, Project 10 Transition consultant with this project. Additionally, she reported that she is working with Dr. Brent Lovett to schedule a training for staff.

OPEN

- Nancy Ross reported that the Children’s Museum of Naples is expected to open November, 2011. Sharing The Commitment members are invited to participate in a hard-hat tour of the site; Nancy will notify members of a date and time for this walk-through opportunity.

Next Meeting

Tuesday, January 12, 2010 from 10 AM – 12 PM at the Administration Center, Room 4-167.