

# SHARING THE COMMITMENT

## An Exceptional Student Education Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES  
September 8, 2009



**Call to Order** – 10 AM at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administration Center, the Sharing The Commitment Meeting was called to order by Co-Chair, Wilbur Hawke.

**Member Attendance:** Wilbur Hawke, Karen Stelmacki, Dr. Elizabeth McBride, Barb Southwick, Adella Spinella, Dr. Katrina Nedley, Debbie Tihen, Jennifer Smith, Peg Sullivan, Debby Ramassini, Rosa Martinez

**Member Absence:** Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Robert Spano, Ken Fairbanks, Lisa Nieto, Judith Evans, Myra Shapiro, Dr. Lynn Wilder

**Guest Attendance:** Dr. Sheryl Alvies, Estella Lozano, Nina D'Agostino; and Sergeant Dan McDonald; Allman Todd

**Review of Agenda** – ESE Advisory Committee Members approved the September 8, 2009 meeting agenda as proposed.

**Review of Meeting Minutes** – Members approved the May 12, 2009 meeting minutes as presented with one correction. Peg Sullivan stated that SW Florida Personnel Development Partnership (PDP) continues to operate as a support to paraprofessionals completing a degree in special education. This is the Para-to-Teacher Program.

Sharing The Commitment meeting minutes are posted at <http://www.collierstc.com/eseadvisory.html>.

**Review of Operating Procedures** – Copies of the Sharing The Commitment Bylaws were disseminated and reviewed by Karen Stelmacki with ESE Advisory members and guests. The Bylaws are posted at <http://www.collierstc.com/>. Sharing The Commitment provides a forum for parents to meaningfully participate in all aspects of the special education process and it serves as a resource for the ESE Executive Director and school principals in matters pertaining to ESE programs and services. Ideas, concepts, and project activities benefitting children with disabilities and reports from sub-committees are considered. The ESE Executive Director, Dr. Victoria Sartorio, co-chairs Sharing The Commitment with the Parent Liaison/PTI Director, Wilbur Hawke. Dr. Sartorio selects members of the Advisory Committee in accordance with its Bylaws, and accepts and implements, declines, or directs for modifications of the ideas set forth by the Advisory Committee.

The Sharing The Commitment roster was reviewed and a consensus agreement was reached to suggest the following changes in membership to Dr. Sartorio for consideration:

1. Replace non-active required board members representing the community at Sharing The Commitment
  - Judith Evans, NAMI, no longer resides in the area.
  - Dr. Lynn Wilder, FGCU, is no longer available on Tuesdays (teaching at FGCU).

- Myra Shapiro is a non-active member.

Jennifer Smith suggested Jessica and/or Ray Stewart, owners of Dinosaur Playground as a potential community member on the Advisory. Dinosaur Playground recently hosted and provided child care for Collier parents attending a *More Than Words - The Hanen Program for Parents of Children with Autism*.

Sergeant Dan McDonald suggested making contact with Lieutenant George Welch with the Collier County Sheriff's Office. Lt. Welch is the Crisis Intervention Team Coordinator for the Sheriff's Office and works closely with National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) and Youth Relations Deputies (YRDs). Sergeant McDonald expressed interest in being an Advisory Board member.

2. Continue to encourage community agency/organization participation at meetings regardless of membership status.

### **Guest Presentation**

Sergeant Dan McDonald with the Crime Prevention Section of the Collier County Sheriff's Office presented information and a 20-minute DVD on Law Enforcement's Interaction with Autism Training. Anyone wishing more information, please contact [Daniel.McDonald@colliersheriff.org](mailto:Daniel.McDonald@colliersheriff.org) or (239) 252-0703. Sharing The Commitment members and guests were complementary, inspired and most appreciative of Collier County's Sheriff's Office prevention training and involvement with Autism awareness.

### **Old Business**

1. The 2009-2010 Sharing The Commitment Meeting Dates are scheduled on Tuesday's from 10 AM – 12 PM on November 10<sup>th</sup>, January 12<sup>th</sup>, March 9<sup>th</sup>, and May 11<sup>th</sup>. The location for all meetings will be the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administration Center in Room 4-136, with the exception of the March 9<sup>th</sup> meeting which will be held at Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) in Immokalee.

### **New Business**

1. ESE Parent Survey Results – Dr. Sheryl Alvies reported the results of the 2008-2009 Parent Survey. Parents were provided a paper survey immediately following every IEP/EP meeting; surveys were provided in English, Spanish, and Creole. The survey was comprised of 15 questions with focus on three (3) areas: communication; the IEP/EP meeting; and the benefits of special education. A likert scale using a 1-to-5 rating scale (1 strongly disagree-to-5 strongly agree) was used by the parent as the method to rate a response to each question. 438/4181 responses were received for a rate of 11% response rate. Ratings for "Communication" (questions 1-4) evidenced 86% of the parents strongly agreed that they were satisfied. Ratings for "The Meeting" (questions 5-11) evidenced 87% of the parents strongly agreed that they were satisfied, and ratings for "Benefit of Special Education" (questions 12-15) evidenced 81% of the parents strongly agreed that their child received educational benefit from special education and related services. To increase the response rate for 2009-2010, parents will be given the option to complete an online survey at the school, from their home, or via the paper format. Information dissemination regarding the online survey will be distributed to schools.
2. Dr. Alvies shared information about students with disabilities meeting adequate yearly progress (AYP) criteria in 2008-2009 for combined Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) and Florida Alternate Assessment (FAA). Data sets for both reading and math, combined (FCAT and FAA) reveal a trend - an increase each school year from 2007-2008, 2008-2009, and 2009-2010 is reported. Using the FCAT results only, students with disabilities show increase scores in both reading and math. The majority of students with disabilities participate in the FCAT and as required by IDEA, they are involved in general education curriculum.

### 3. Collaborative Partners Updates

- a. **Family Network on Disabilities** (<http://www.fndfl.org/>) - Wilbur shared information about a special edition of *Education News Parents Can Use* called, *America Goes Back to School: A National Town Hall Meeting* with U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan, airing on Tuesday, September 15, 2009 from 8—9 PM. Arne Duncan is traveling throughout the country to engage a broad group of stakeholders, including parents, in an open conversation about federal education policy in anticipation of the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. To learn more, visit [www.ed.gov/edtv](http://www.ed.gov/edtv). Additionally, Secretary Duncan recently addressed Parent Training and Information Centers with focus on grant opportunities for State Education Agency (SEA) and Local Education Agency (LEA) collaboration with parents, similar to what we are doing in Collier through Sharing The Commitment ESE Advisory and the Train-the-Trainer model. Wilbur emphasized that Collier Sharing The Commitment is a national model to other SEAs and LEAs, and reported that Hawaii is moving forward to adopt our model as their state model.

Mark your calendar! The Family Network on Disabilities (FND) Parent Education Network Project is happy to announce that its regional conference will be held on September 26, 2009 at LaBelle High School at 4050 East Cowboy Way, LaBelle, FL. A full day of workshops from early childhood through transition into adulthood available in English, Spanish and Creole will be available to parents/families, advocates, agencies, providers, and professionals. For more information, please contact Colleen Whiman 561-451-2330 or Margarita Montalvo 305-378-1336. Peg Sullivan reported that during the FND regional conference a training series called Positive Solutions for Families of young children will be initiated. This training is focused on young children with challenging behaviors and will limited to 20.

- b. **Parent Educator Exceptional Resource (PEER) Parents** – PEERs provide up-to-date information, resources and support to parents of children with disabilities, facilitate partnerships between families and the school district, help parents gain access to accurate information and support services and provide referrals to community, state and federal resources. The PEER teams are collaboratively sponsored through the ESE Department, FDLRS, and FND to serve all schools in the county. Wilbur Hawke ([Wilbur@fndfl.org](mailto:Wilbur@fndfl.org)) serves as the Parent Liaison and PEER parents include: Adella Spinella, ([Adella@fndfl.org](mailto:Adella@fndfl.org)); Barb Southwick ([barb@fndfl.org](mailto:barb@fndfl.org)); and Lisa Nieto ([lisa@fndfl.org](mailto:lisa@fndfl.org)).

- Barb reported that FND training is scheduled on September 24, 2009 at North Naples Methodist with the Autism Speaks parent support group.
- Parent Workshops/Libraries – Collier public schools are the recipients of an extensive parent and staff resource library on topics related to students with disabilities. To qualify for a library, funded through the IDEA, Part B Grant, each school hosts a parent information session on topics of interest (e.g., It's a Great IDEA, IEP, Positive Behavior Support, Transition and Collaborative Communication). For more information or to schedule a workshop, visit <http://www.collierstc.com/libraries.html>. Barb stated that the PEERs are busy contacting school administrators and scheduling parent workshops.
- Sensitivity Awareness Training – Training was created through the Sharing The Commitment and is presented free of charge to Collier public schools. It is a 60-minute, interactive, fun workshop designed for 4<sup>th</sup> grade students to experience various disabilities in an effort to promote empathy and understanding. Workshops have been presented at several elementary schools since the creation of the training in 2008-2009. For more information or to schedule a training, contact Jennifer Smith at 239-337-8162 or [Jenniferasm@leeschools.net](mailto:Jenniferasm@leeschools.net). The

2009-2010 trainers are: Barb Southwick, Trish Wilkenson, and Nina D'Agostino. Barb reported that contact has been made with several schools, providing administrators information on the Sensitivity Awareness Workshop. Jennifer Smith will contact Stan Wesser to verify the number of kits to be funded by Florida Inclusion Network.

Barb indicated that she received a call from Kiwanis. Kiwanis' focus this year is children with disabilities and they expressed interest in funding Sensitivity Awareness Kits. Barb also reported that she recently conducted a training with staff at the non-profit housing organization in Immokalee.

- c. **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)** serving Collier and Lee County (<http://leeschools.net/orgs/fdlrs/>) – Debbie Tihen disseminated copy of the 2009-2010 FDLRS Island Coast training opportunities. She also stated that FDLRS will be working with Florida's Differentiated Accountability (DA) Teams and other discretionary grantees (e.g., FDLRS, FIN, PDP) to showcase their trainings. DOE has asked discretionary grantees to identify trainings to support low performing schools. To give input on this topic, please contact Debbie Tihen at 239-337-8127 or [DebbieLT@leeschools.net](mailto:DebbieLT@leeschools.net).

Jennifer Smith reported that a series of Hanen in Words workshops were completed with 10 Collier parents at the Dinosaurs Playground during Summer 2009 and that the parent ratings/evaluations were exemplary. Jennifer also reported that parents expressed interest in Sibshop Curriculum-Workshops for siblings of children with special needs. Jennifer will research this idea further and report back to the Advisory.

- d. **SW Florida Personnel Development Partnership** and SERVS/FGCU at <http://www.assistedu.org/about/> - The Personnel Development Partnership (PDP) at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) continues to collaborate with school districts on recruiting, retaining and training ESE staff, including the TEACH program.

Mark your calendar! Promising Pathways, a community sponsored national conference for physicians, parents and educators addressing autism spectrum disorders, at no charge, is scheduled for April 10, 2009 at FGCU.

- e. **Collier's Partners in Transition (PIT)**. To obtain more information about Collier PIT, contact Allman Todd at (239) 377-0120 or [Toddal@collier.k12.fl.us](mailto:Toddal@collier.k12.fl.us). Collier PIT's five areas of need identified are as follows:
- Student Directed Summary of Performance,
  - Discovery, (an evaluation process that takes place in the community for students with significant disabilities)
  - Mentoring,
  - Community Based Instruction for Middle School, and
  - Community Participation.

PIT is scheduled to meet on September 23, 2009 to develop an Action Plan.

- f. **SEDNET Project** is a multi-agency network for students with emotional disabilities. For more information, contact Dr. Katrina Nedley, Project Manager/District 8B at (239) 377-

0131 or email [Nedleyka@collier.k12.fl.us](mailto:Nedleyka@collier.k12.fl.us) or you may learn more about SEDNET by visiting <http://collier.k12.fl.us/ease/sednet.htm>.

- g. **Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA)** <http://www.rcma.org/>. – Rosa Martinez reported that the Migrant Head Start is preparing to open as many families are returning. She also stated that the Guadalupe Center will soon be operating an Early Head Start Program (32 slots).

### **Open**

- Barb Southwick reported that there is a grand opening of the new Boundless™ playground scheduled for September 26, 2009 at Corkscrew Elementary School from 10 am – 1 pm. For more information, call 238-348-1994.
- A copy of the revised ESE Brochure and the Sharing The Commitment brochure was distributed.

Meeting Ended at 12 PM. The next meeting is scheduled for November 12, 2009 from 10 AM – 12 PM at the Administration Center, Room 4-167.