

# SHARING THE COMMITMENT

## An Exceptional Student Education (ESE) Advisory Committee

### MEETING MINUTES

Tuesday, March 9, 2010 from 10 AM – 12 PM

Hosted by Redlands Christian Migrant Association

402 W. Main Street, Immokalee, FL 34142



- I. Members Attended – Karen Stelmacki, Wilbur Hawke, Dr. Beth McBride, Dr. Sheryl Alvies, Rosa Martinez, Dr. Katrina Nedley, Jennifer Smith, Debbie Tihen, Peg Sullivan, Stan Weser, Barb Southwick, and Adella Spinella

Members Absent – Ken Fairbanks, Bob Spano, Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Dr. Lynn Wilder, Nancy Ross

Guests – Carolyn Gischel, Shawn Thomas, Diana Cisneros, Hilda Irizarry, Francisca Curiel, Estela Lozano, Gloria Padilla, Charlene Edwards, Juanita Meza, and Angela Anderson.

- II. Meeting Minutes from January 12, 2010 were approved as presented.

- III. RCMA Program Presentation - *Rosa Martinez*

RCMA opened its doors to opportunities since 1965 and provides quality child care and early education for more than 8,000 young children of farm workers and other rural, working poor families. RCMA offers Early Head Start, Head Start, Voluntary PreK, School Readiness, and Migrant Head Start to children, and two-thirds of its population is infants and toddlers. Rosa provided each member and guest with a folder about the organization and a video was presented. Everyone enjoyed the bakery items and juice, as well as, the fresh vegetables donated by Immokalee growers.

- IV. Old Business

- **ESE Community Forum** – *Wilbur Hawke*. Collier School District conducted its first Open Forum for parents of students with disabilities on Wednesday, January 20, 2010. The panel of speakers provided parents with an overview of special education services, the individual educational plan (IEP) process, psychological services, the role of the required IEP team members, the importance of a collaborative partnership between parents and school, and the importance of communication and active participation in their child’s special education program. To assist parents in understanding special education services and the importance of their role, the school district’s notice to parents about individual educational plan (IEP) meetings now includes the statement: “IEP information, training, and support to parents is available through the Parent Education Network (PEN) of Family Network on Disabilities (FND). For more information, contact the FND Parent Liaison at (239) 417-3636 or an FND Parent Educator Exceptional

Resource (PEER) parent at 774-2080 or 777-0731. You may also want to visit [www.collierstc.com](http://www.collierstc.com).” Everyone celebrated Wilbur’s announcement that Barb Southwick was recently awarded the Florida Volunteer-of-Year, as well as the School District’s Volunteer-of-Year. Congratulations to Barb for her work in strengthening Collier by meeting community and family needs through her volunteerism and community service!

- **Universal Education Project** – *Karen Stelmacki*. Collier School District Exceptional Student Education (ESE) was selected as an exemplar school district by the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) to participate in its Universal Education Project. Collier expressed an interest on increasing the extent of universal education in their district and schools. FDDC’s major grant tasks will culminate in implementation of renewed evidence-based practices in three school district’s, a community of practice network among the participants, and an administrator’s guide and teacher’s manual that will facilitate dissemination of these practices throughout the state. Collier is proposing to begin at the district-level, with a review and analysis of data indicators readily available as part of the Florida statewide database collected from all schools as well as more detailed items specifically related to universal education. We will utilize the universal education instrument, *Best Practices for Inclusive Education: An Assessment and Planning Tool for Systematic Change (BPIE)*, to develop a district-level Strategic Implementation Plan that will address the greatest gaps in universal education at the school and district levels. Participation from members will be requested in the near future.

The Florida Department of Education has shared Collier’s preliminary 2010 LEA Profile data regarding the number of students with disabilities ages 6-21 in regular class. This LEA Profile indicator related to educational environment addresses the extent to which students with disabilities receive special education with their nondisabled peers. In 2009-2010, **82%** of our students with disabilities spend 80% or more of their school week with nondisabled peers. Over the past three years, the district’s comparative data on this indicator was higher than the enrollment group (size-alike districts) and the state level target. The 2010 LEA Profile document will be shared with members when it is made available by the state.

- **Response to Intervention Parent Workshop** – *Dr. Beth McBride*. Corkscrew Elementary School hosted a Response to Intervention (RtI) Parent Workshop on February 3, 2010. Dr. Pamela Bruening shared with parents the essential components of RtI and stressed that RtI is another term for “data-based decision making.” The essential components reviewed, included: (1) integrated data collection/assessment system to inform decisions; (2) a problem-solving method; and (3) multiple tiers of intervention service delivery. Additional RtI Parent Workshops are being planned.
- **Florida Developmental Disabilities Council Book Proposal** – *Karen Stelmacki*. The FDDC awarded Collier with free disability awareness books. The appropriate level book set will be placed in the media center at schools participating in the Sharing The Commitment Sensitivity Awareness Workshops. Sample book sets were on display at today’s meeting.
- **Collaborative Partners Status**

**Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)** – Stan Weser indicated that FIN and Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) developed an online (12 points) introductory course on Differentiated Instruction (DI) for teachers. This course is currently advertised in Collier School District. Stan also reported that he has been contacted by the principals at Lely Elementary and Estates Elementary Schools and will be working with their staff on DI.

**Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)** – Carolyn Gischel, reporting for Dr. Lynn Wilder, stated that FGCU is preparing to offer a Masters cohort in special education this Fall.

**Parent Educators Exceptional Resource (PEER) Parents** – Barb Southwick and Adella Spinella report that there are only six schools, Lake Trafford Elementary, Golden Gate Elementary, Immokalee High School, Everglades School, Golden Gate Middle, and Marco Charter School that do not have a Sharing The Commitment Parent Library. Contact will be made to each principal again in August 2010. A parent training was recently conducted at Laurel Oak Elementary Parent Teacher Association (PTA) on the Great IDEA! A Wills, Trusts, and Guardianship Parent Workshop is being planned for April 28, 2010 at Palmetto Ridge High School. For more information on parent workshops, contact Wilbur Hawke at 417-3636.

**Guadalupe Center** – In collaboration with RCMA, the Guadalupe Center opened a new Early Head Start class for 16 children under three years of age. This is an inclusive early learning program that will use Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) as their screening tool and the Creative Curriculum.

**FDLRS** – Debbie Tihen distributed a FDLRS Island Coast pamphlet on professional development offered to Collier County school personnel and parents. In-services for child care centers in the community are also provided. To learn more about these trainings, contact FDLRS at (239) 377-8127. Debbie also shared that FDLRS is collaborating with Dinosaur Playground to provide free developmental screenings on Autism Awareness Day. Additionally, Jennifer Smith, Parent Services Specialist with FDLRS is providing a workshop at Circles of Care on managing behavior and will be part of a panel discussion on early development and behavior at Promising Pathways on April 10<sup>th</sup>. FDLRS information tables will be on site at these events. Debbie reported that FDLRS is printing an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) *Hop On Board And Learn The Signs* brochure and posters which will soon be distributed to health care professionals, libraries, churches and child care providers in Collier County. Registration is now open for the 12<sup>th</sup> Annual Family Café Summit on Disabilities is being held in Orlando on June 18-20, 2010. Link: <http://familycafe.net/>. FDLRS will fund \$1,000 in scholarships; funds will cover the costs for eight (8) hotel rooms. Priority will be given to families who have not previously attended and are actively involved in their child's special education programming. Debbie also shared, that on February 26, 2010 parties signed (School District of Collier County and Lee County, Early Steps of Southwest Florida, and FDLRS Island Coast) the *Interagency Procedures for Early Childhood Transition* document facilitated by TATS-USF/FGCU Region and Florida's Transition Project.

**Personnel Development Partners (PDP) at FGCU** – Peg Sullivan announced that the PDP Alliance will be piloting a needs assessment for professional development in our region. She also reported that PDP will again offer tuition support for early childhood graduate level courses for ITDS during Summer 2010. PDP continues to offer tuition support to special education paraprofessionals, speech-language pathologists, and to special education teachers seeking the autism spectrum disorder and/or preschool disabilities endorsements. Peg also mentioned Promising Pathways: The Road to Best Practice in Autism - a free community sponsored conference for physicians, parents and educators addressing autism spectrum disorders is being provided at no charge. The conference is being held on Saturday, April 10, 2010 at the FGCU Student Union Ballroom. Contact [pdp@fgcu.edu](mailto:pdp@fgcu.edu) for registration information. (Next year's Promising Pathways date has been set for April 9, 2011.)

**Family Network on Disabilities (FND)** – Wilbur Hawke reported that CCPS/ESE Sharing The Commitment is working with the PACER Center in Minnesota and the School District in Hawaii to write an American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) grant. The focus of this alliance will be on funding full-time PEER parents in each of our schools, while Hawaii will focus on duplicating Sharing The Commitment in their state.

**Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA)** – Rosa Martinez reminded everyone of the upcoming RCMA event – Dia Del Nino on April 10<sup>th</sup> in Immokalee. For the children attending the event, FDLRS is providing book bags and STC/ESE is purchasing story books. If you'd like to volunteer or be a sponsor for this event, contact Rosa at 658-3600 ext. 351. The Annual RCMA Golf Tournament is scheduled for April 24<sup>th</sup>. If you'd like to know more about this tournament, contact Judy Brill at [judy@rcma.org](mailto:judy@rcma.org)

#### V. New Business

- **ESE Compliance Monitoring 2009-2010** – *Karen Stelmacki*. On February 19, 2010, the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services notified the district's ESE Executive Director that they completed the validation phase of the ESE Self-Assessment process for Collier School District, and that no significant discrepancies requiring reassessment were noted. The validation process is when the Bureau conducts reviews of selected student records and matrices to test the accuracy of data obtained from the district's self-assessment. The results of district self-assessments are included in the State's Annual Performance Report (APR) required under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and are used to inform oversight activities, including the selection of districts for on-site monitoring, and the local educational agency (LEA) determinations required under Section 300603, Title 34, Code of Federal Regulations, which result in districts being identified as "meets requirements," "needs assistance," "needs intervention," or "needs substantial intervention."
- **State Parent Survey** – *Karen Stelmacki*. The Florida Department of Education is working with school districts to gather information on how well parents think their child's school is partnering with parents of students with disabilities, and would like parent input. Parent responses will help guide efforts to improve services and results for children and families. The survey is for parents of students with individual educational plans (IEP) receiving special education services

during the 2009-2010 school year. This information is being made public to parents via, our district website, our ESE department website, Sharing The Commitment, a news release, and on The Education Channel, cable 99. Link to the State Parent Survey:

<http://www.esesurvey.com/Login.php>.

The District also has an online survey that is available throughout the year regarding the IEP process at your child's school. Responses to this survey provide important information for the district and schools to plan and monitor improvement activities.

- **High School Related Arts Plan 2010-2011** – *Karen Stelmacki*. A High School Related Arts Plan for Students with Significant Disabilities (e.g., students participating in Modified Curriculum (MC) and Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) special classes) was proposed to principals on March 3, 2010. This suggested plan includes an array of general education related arts elective options for students, taking in consideration individual student's related arts interests and strengths. VSA Arts is working with school district coordinators to deliver a workshop on differentiated instruction in related arts to all secondary level related arts staff on August 18 (middle school) and August 19, 2010 (high school). FDLRS is planning to deliver a workshop for the assistants on the September 14, 2010 early release day.
- **Autism Spectrum Disorder Collaborative and Immokalee Projects** – *Dr. Sheryl Alvies*. On January 23, 2010, a full-day conceptual strategic planning session was convened at Edison College under the leadership of Dr. John J. Iacuone, Executive Director, the Children's Hospital of Southwest Florida. The core objective is to establish a comprehensive, multi-disciplinary medical model for the diagnosis and treatment of autism spectrum disorder, to construct a better support system for the caregivers upon whom they depend, and to partner with existing physical, behavioral, psychological, and academic regional resources. On February 17<sup>th</sup>, staff met with Dr. Amy Wetherby from Florida State University, to learn more about the Immokalee Project focus on early identification of autism spectrum disorder and assessment of children under age three. Dr. Wetherby will be training Early Steps infant and toddler developmental specialists (ITDS) on using the Autism Diagnostic Observation Schedule (ADOS) for Infants and Toddlers to identify and assess young children, specifically at 1.5 – 2 years of age.

**NEXT MEETING:** May 11, 2010 from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administration Center, Room 4-167  
5775 Osceola Trail, Naples, FL