

SHARING THE COMMITMENT

An Exceptional Student Education Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES



DATE: Tuesday, May 13, 2008

TIME: 10 AM – 12 PM

ESE ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Wilbur Hawke, Peg Sullivan, Karen Stelmacki, Adella Spinella, Pamela Bruening, Dr. Beth McBride, Jennifer Smith, Debbie Tihen, Bob Spano, Stan Weser, Rosa Martinez

ESE ADVISORY MEMBERS ABSENT

Tina Clawson, Dr. Katrina Nedley, Dr. Linda Ray, Idel Altenburg, Dave Burgess, Myra Shapiro, Sherry Francis

ESE ADVISORY GUESTS

Marissa Pendley, Joyce Austin, Merrylee Kandell, Judy Burns, Maryellen Maresca, Becky Newell, Annamaria Seward

Welcome and Introductions

Members and guests were welcomed and introductions were made.

Review and Approval of Agenda

The agenda was approved by committee members as presented.

Approval of Meeting Minutes

The March 11, 2008 meeting minutes were approved by committee members as presented.

Old Business

1. Sensitivity Awareness Training

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Parent Services Specialist, Jennifer Smith, reported that the Sensitivity Awareness team completed three trainings this school year. This pilot project/training was conducted at Corkscrew Elementary; Golden Terrace Elementary; and Veterans Memorial Elementary. The three-parent training team worked with parent and staff volunteers at each school to provide 4th and 5th grade students the opportunity to participate in 10 simulation (sensitivity awareness) centers. The team has received a request for this initial training from the administrator at Lake Trafford Elementary. Sharing The Commitment ESE Advisory is committed to this project and will include the purchase costs for Sensitivity Awareness Kits (\$500-700 per kit) in its IDEA, Part B Parent Services budget for 2008-09. Committee members agreed that we need to build the capacity of each school through a train-the-trainer model. Jennifer will provide Dr. Sartorio with a list of the resources needed for each kit as well as training materials. She will also talk with the team to determine if any items need to be added to the kit, e.g., action plan to include steps needed for training set-up at a

school. Peg Sullivan from the Personnel Development Partnership (PDP) mentioned a continued desire to align this training with the District's Teacher Academy located at three high schools. Wilbur Hawke, Family Network on Disabilities (FND) / Collier Parent Liaison, expressed interest in having this topic presented at the FND Regional Conference on Sept 13, 2008.

2. Sharing Events

ESE Coordinator, Joyce Austin, presented a slide show from recent events (Special Olympics, Dia del Nino, Community Based Instruction) to Sharing The Commitment members. Members recognized this truly moving experience to watch our students with disabilities perform in the Special Olympics Day in Naples and participate in Dia del Nino. Each day's events included Arts for All activities. Approximately 5 years ago, Sharing the Commitment brought Arts for All to Collier County School District. This program provides special considerations for persons with physical disabilities, visual impairments, cognitive limitations, severe illness, autism, and behavior problems to participate in quality art experiences. Two complete kits (including wheel chair adaptations) were purchased for the district. Kits are located at Poinciana Elementary and are available for use by community organizations. District Occupational and Physical Therapists were trained along with art teachers and select special education teachers and frequently volunteer at these special events. In addition to our partnership with Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) in the Dia del Nino (Day of the Child), Sharing The Commitment purchased over 500 children's books for this 3rd annual event in Immokalee for migrant families and their children. Rosa Martinez from RCMA shared a picture book from the day's events as well.

3. Collaborative Partners Updates

- **Family Network on Disabilities (FND)** – Wilbur Hawke reminder members of the Southern Regional Conference Sept 13, 2008 at Lely High School and encouraged those who were interested in providing a 1-hour session to submit a proposal to him as soon as possible. At present time, there are four tracks with 10 sessions in each that will start at 9:30 AM and end at 4 PM. Wilbur stated that tracks and sessions can be expanded; if interested please contact him to discuss ideas. This is in addition to the keynote opener that will take place in the auditorium at 8:30 AM.
- **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)** – Debbie Tihen, FDLRS Manager, reported that staff continues to support Collier's Partners in Transition (PIT) focus groups by providing both facilitators and recorders for these events. In addition, training in Collier begins in July (every Wednesday evening at Veterans Memorial Elementary) with parents of young children in the autism spectrum – *More Than Words*. Information about these workshops for parents was distributed electronically to all schools; there was a great response from ESE teachers. Debbie reviewed Florida's Department of Education FDLRS priorities for parent services (training and technical assistance for staff and for parents) and elicited suggestions for training from committee members. Sharing The Commitment members expressed appreciation for their involvement, training, and technical assistance to staff and to parents. Suggestions included: information dissemination about Traumatic Brain Injury and where to access help; strategies for parents in dealing with challenging behaviors of middle school students.
- **Personnel Development Partnership (PDP)** – Peg Sullivan with PDP at Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) reminded members that Florida's Personnel Development Partnership activities focus on recruitment, preparation, and professional development of

educators providing special education and related services to children with disabilities. The PDP at FGCU is part of the SW Florida Personnel Development Alliance which includes the University of South Florida PDP, surrounding schools districts and numerous discretionary projects. Peg highlighted three PDP programs: **COPE**, a program for paraprofessionals completing a degree in special education. Participants receive full tuition assistance to complete the final two years of a bachelors degree. This program recently graduated two professionals. The **Family as Faculty** program seeks to bring the perspective of family members to individuals considering a field in special education as well as those in pre-service training. Family as Faculty is currently working with a course at FGCU to design mock individual education plans (IEPs). The **Teacher Education Assistance for College and Higher Education Grant Program (TEACH)** provides grant aid to college students who plan to become teachers, as well as current teachers who pursue graduate degrees. Grant recipients agree to serve as a full-time teacher in a “high need” school and teach a “high need” subject for at least four academic years after finishing the program. PDP focuses on students pursuing to teach in special education.

Peg mentioned that PDP recently co-sponsored two regional conferences: *Autism and Co-Existing Mental Health Disorders* on May 9, 2008 at FGCU. This conference, free of charge to parents, educators, and other agency representatives, was attended by 310 persons. On April 19, 2008, PDP co-sponsored *The Road to Best Practice in Autism Conference* at FGCU; 370 attended.

- **Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)** – Stan Weser reported inclusive education efforts are strong in Collier County Public Schools. He stated that he has been busy coordinating school restructuring at school sites, working with administrators at Highlands Elementary, Lake Trafford Elementary, Sabal Palm Elementary, Avalon Elementary, and Shadowlawn Elementary School. These efforts provide school staff (all staff) an opportunity for reorganizing learning environments to include students with disabilities. Stan’s training and technical assistance support is available, free of cost, to all schools and available upon request by the building principal. FIN supports schools in these efforts through materials/resource purchases for extended learning and discussion in professional learning communities (PLC) at the school. Stan applauded Collier County Public Schools for the wonderful job it is doing in supporting these initiatives both at the district and school level and noted that this is best reflected in the district’s 2008 LEA Profile (educational environments).

Stan reported that FIN has expended its 2008 stipends to send families to *Family Café Annual Conference*, a statewide event designed to meet the informational and networking needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. The 10th annual conference is scheduled for June 13-15, 2008 at Disney’s Coronado Springs Resort in Orlando, FL. He encouraged families to register early next year as funds are limited. Jennifer Smith reported that FDLRS is supporting 22 Collier families this year.

Stan mentioned that there is an Inclusive Secondary Schools conference scheduled July 9 and 10, 2008 in Orlando, FL and that the Florida Council of Exceptional Children (CEC) Conference is in Sarasota October 23 – 25, 2008.

- **Redlands Christian Migrant Association** – Rosa Martinez requested assistance with staff training and technical assistance at East Coast Migrant Association early care center. PDP and FDLRS volunteered to coordinate training for staff, e.g., Teaching Tools for Young Children with Challenging Behaviors (TTYC) and visual strategies. Rosa will contact Jennifer Smith at FDLRS to make these arrangements. Rosa also requested assistance from Collier County Public Schools ESE to update its collaborative agreement for the provision of services to young children with disabilities and their families. Karen Stelmacki will work with Rosa to complete this activity.

New Business

1. 2008 LEA Profile

The LEA profile is provided to districts as a tool for use in planning for systematic improvement in exceptional education programs. Dr. Sartorio highlighted a series of data indicators including measures of educational benefit (*in 02-03 we were at 34%, now 42%*); dropout rate increased 1%; post-school outcome data is down; Collier continues to be above the state and the enrollment group in this indicator); educational environment (*in 04-05 we were at 65%, now 72% - 10% above the state and enrollment group*); Part C to B Transition now 100%; prevalence (*in timely initial evaluations; and racial and ethnic categories mirror district-wide representation in disability categories*); parent involvement (*in 05-06 we were at 10%, now at 33% - above the state and enrollment group*); and information about the district's performance as compared to state level targets in Florida's State Performance Plan (15 of the 19 targets set by the state have been met including FAPE in the LRE and disproportionality. A copy of the LEA profile is available on the Department of Education Web site <http://www.fl DOE.org/ese/datapage.asp> .

2. 2008-09 IDEA Grant/Parent Services

The Florida Department of Education has requested application from the district for the 2008-09 IDEA, Part B entitlement grant. This grant serves students with disabilities ages 3 through 21 (IDEA, Part B) and ages 3 through 5 (IDEA, Part B, Preschool). The grant again includes targeted enhancement for parent services funds to promote parent education and involvement in special education and to pursue positive relationships between parents and families of children with disabilities and schools. The activities must support the State Performance Plan (SPP), specifically Indicator 8. Proposed activities for 2008-09 include: sensitivity awareness training materials, stipends and kits; parent liaison and PEER parents; parent libraries (including Transition Kits); co-training of parents and professionals; Dia del Nino; and Special Olympics.

3. District Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) Plan

Joyce Austin disseminated copies of the district's TBI awareness plan and reviewed the goals and objectives that were submitted to the Florida Department of Education. A major focus has been placed on state- and district-wide awareness in this under identified area (Traumatic Brain Injury). Joyce extended an opportunity to members to provide ideas on how to disseminate this information to the community, parents, and educators. This plan will be added to the district's ESE Web site and information kits will be added to parent libraries. FDLRS will disseminate information to early care providers, and FIN to its customers.

Open

- Wilbur reminded members to contact him as soon as possible to let him know about the trainings that you will be able to offer on September 13th. To date, the following partners have agreed to sponsor trainings: FND (up to 30 trainings including secondary transition); CCPS (traumatic brain injury, response to intervention, section 504, and assistive technology); FIN (inclusion and PATH), Early Steps (Part C to B transition); and an Early Childhood Track (FDLRS and PDP). Joyce suggested the idea of poster sessions. Members agreed that information dissemination (press releases, school newsletters, Web site releases) was essential to the success of this conference and Wilbur reported that peer parent, Adella Spinella, is taking the lead on this activity. Members interested in assisting should contact Adella.

**Exceptional Student Education “Sharing The Commitment” ESE Advisory Committee
2008-09 Meeting Schedule**

Dates: September 9 and November 11, 2008
January 13, March 10 and May 12, 2009

Time: 10 AM – 12 PM

Location: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administration Center, Room 4-167