

SHARING THE COMMITMENT

An Exceptional Student Education Advisory Committee

MEETING MINUTES

DATE: Tuesday, March 11, 2008
TIME: 10 AM – 12 PM



ESE ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Wilbur Hawke, Peg Sullivan, Karen Stelmacki, Sherry Francis, Adella Spinella, Pamela Bruening, Dr. Beth McBride, Jennifer Smith, Debbie Tihen, Myra Shapiro,

ESE ADVISORY MEMBERS ABSENT

Tina Clawson, Dr. Katrina Nedley, Stan Weser, Dr. Linda Ray, Idel Altenburg, Dave Burgess, Bob Spano, Rosa Martinez, Myra Shapiro

ESE ADVISORY GUESTS

Dr. Sheryl Alvies, Barb Southwick, Allman Todd, Carolyn Gischel, Marissa Pendley, Joyce Austin

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 January 8, 2008 meeting minutes were approved by committee members.

Old Business

1. **Special Olympics** – Joyce Austin reported that this year’s Special Olympics sports and athletic event took place at Golden Gate High School on February 29th. To ensure active participation of all 500+ students, including students with significant intellectual and/or physical disabilities, Arts for All was incorporated into the day’s activities. Students participated in a cumulative art project design, chalk art, t-shirt painting, and other art activities. Students with disabilities were supported by volunteers, including high school students; parents; staff including occupational and physical therapists; and community. Joyce extended a very special thank you to William Saladino, Poinciana Elementary School Art Teacher, and to Sharing The Commitment for supporting the costs of materials and student transportation. Arts for All equipment/kits, previously purchased by Sharing The Commitment, are currently located at Poinciana Elementary School and are available to schools for check-out.
2. **Sensitivity Awareness Subcommittee** – Jennifer Smith reported that Sensitivity Awareness training is scheduled at Golden Terrace Elementary in April and Lake Trafford and Veterans Memorial Elementary in May. Trainers, Beth Overholt, Barb Southwick, and Tricia Wilkinson have all necessary materials for these events. The “Small Differences” VHS tapes, ten copies, were approved and ordered by ESE. Jennifer recommended a stipend to be paid to the three (3) parent trainers. A consensus agreement was reached by the advisory board to pay a \$200 stipend per person for each training day. Committee members discussed school-based sustainability and agreed that this was clearly Sharing The Commitment’s goal. Dr. Sartorio approved the recommended stipend expenditure for this year and will also write this into the 2008-09 IDEA grant. Jennifer Smith will forward

parent information (name, address, social) to ESE and a purchase order will be prepared for each of the three trainers.

3. Collaborative Partners Updates

- **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)** – Debbie Tihen reported that the PDA-ESE Foundations of ESE course is now available to staff and administrators. Jennifer Smith reported that 35 parents and 4 staff attended the February 22nd Dr. Robert Naseef workshop in Naples. Jennifer extended a special thanks to Sharing The Commitment ESE Advisory, parents, staff, and community for their support of this event.
- **SW Personnel Development Partnership (PDP)** – Peg Sullivan reported that the alliance comprised of PDP members (DOE Discretionary Project representatives and ESE directors) in the Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU) and University of South Florida (USF) regions met on February 26th. The alliance’s focus is personnel/ professional development. The focus of this first meeting was the State Performance Plan (SPP) and identifying what’s working/what’s not on each SPP indicator. The new website, www.florida-ese.org/personneldevelopment offers information to both teachers and administrators, including a list of each discretionary project supporting personnel development. Peg also mentioned two conferences addressing autism spectrum disorders that are being hosted at Florida Gulf Coast University. The first event, Promising Pathways, will be held on Saturday, April 19th from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. and physicians, parents and educators are invited. Reservations are required by April 10 to ensure your seat; space is limited. Call 992-4680 ext. 202 or www.fgcu.edu/events/promisingpathways to register. The second event, Autism and Co-existing Mental Health Disorders will be held on Friday, May 9th from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.
- **Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)** – Carol Gischel reported that Dr. Doug Carouthers, a former member of the Sharing The Commitment ESE Advisory, will be returning in August to FGCU faculty. It is anticipated that Dr. Lynn Wilder will be recommended for hire as the new C&I professor and responsibilities will include teaching special ed courses at FGCU. Dr. Wilder’s experiences include Emotional/Behaviorally Disturbed (E/BD) and she has a passion for working with families, low SES and homeless. Carol stated that Virtual ESE programs (for staff seeking certification in Autism, Preschool Disabilities, and Severe/Profound) are continuing, however, it is unsure which summer courses will be offered. FGCU has a federal TEACH grant which provides a “forgivable loan” of \$4,000 for undergraduates and \$8,000 for graduates taking courses in critical shortage/high needs area with a 4-year year teaching commitment in high needs schools. FGCU is also making available an Ed Specialist degree program this fall. Carol added that the Masters Degree Program in Special Education focuses on inclusive services for students with disabilities.
- **Collier’s Partners in Transition (PIT)** – Allman Todd reported that the first focus group, comprised of 12 high school graduates, is scheduled on Thursday, March 13th. Sue Ham from FDLRS will facilitate the group discussion in identifying the barriers toward transition.
- **Family Network on Disabilities (FND)** – Wilbur Hawke reported that the 2008 Southern Regional Conference is scheduled to occur on Saturday, Sept 13th at Lely High School. Wilbur petitioned members to consider providing a workshop at this event, e.g., a sensitivity awareness session; access points; highlight site-based co-teach teams (GTE). Roger Mills from OSEP has agreed to present. Wilbur announced the FND Executive Director, Rich Labelle, was recently appointed to the Governor’s Autism Task Force. He also reported that a training was recently presented to the SAC committee members at Cypress Palm Middle School. Sharing The Commitment has provided a parent library to the school for sponsoring this workshop. To date, 23 libraries have been disseminated across the district; six this year. Immokalee RCMA preschool staff has been trained to co-

present with the IDEA information. Wilbur reported that FND has placed a PC at the RCMA preschool and provided a copy of the FND training CD. RCMA co-teach teams have been provided training and are ready to inform and support families. Also Wilbur reported that “Dia del Nino” is scheduled for Saturday, April 12, 2008 from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m. at Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) Immokalee Community School. This 3rd annual event specifically targets migrant families. Sharing The Commitment will again provide books for all children attending. Last year, 500 books were distributed to children in attendance. Joyce Austin reported that three (3) Occupational Therapists/Physical Therapists have volunteered to conduct Arts for All activities on the “Dia del Nino”. Volunteers are needed for this event. If interested, please contact Rosa Martinez at RCMA or Wilbur Hawke.

New Business

1. **Parent Library Addition Recommendation** – Pam Bruening brought forth a recommendation to add “A Special Education: One Family’s Journey Through the Maze of Learning Disabilities”, authored by Dana Buchman, to existing school-based parent libraries. Sharing The Commitment members supported this purchase. Dr. Sartorio will order copies.
2. **Annual Parent Survey** – Dr. Sartorio reported that parents of students with Disabilities, PK-12, will be receiving a parent survey from the Florida Department of Education (DOE). This survey will be mailed directly to parents by DOE.

Open

- Joyce reported that she recently attended a regional workshop, Brain Injury Association of Florida sponsored by the Florida Department of Education, and will present the district’s action plan at the May Advisory meeting.
- Wilbur reminded members to email upcoming events for posting on the Sharing The Commitment site.
- Debbie reported that FDLRS will be conducting a workshop on March 20th at Veterans Memorial Elementary on transition from Early Steps. Flyers have been provided to all Early Steps families with children turning three within six months. FDLRS will also be conducting a Collaborative Communication training this Saturday in Collier.
- Peg reminded members to send agency information for the PDP “News You Can Use” Newsletter to her by the 20th of each month.
- Sherry Francis reported FND is planning a Special Needs Trust workshop at Naples High School.
- Wilbur expressed concern about the need for business partners in Sharing The Commitment.
- Dr. Sartorio stated that No Child Left Behind (NCLB) requires districts to ensure highly qualified teachers to provide instruction to all students. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA 2004) establish goals for the performance of children with disabilities (same as the state’s definition of adequate yearly progress) including all children participating in general state and district-wide assessment programs. There is a clear blending of NCLB and IDEA. IDEA 2004 is designed to provide students access to high expectations and to the general education curriculum in the regular classroom, to the maximum extent possible, to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment and independent living. The district’s increased inclusion teacher staffing supports our students with disabilities in the general education curriculum (Florida’s Sunshine State Standards) and will enable students to increase independent functioning within the regular education classroom. We recognize that the reduction of assistants in these inclusive settings is a sensitive issue with parents. Certified, qualified

teachers are responsible for instruction. Building principals and Assistant Principals will be more involved in the responsibilities and accountability for students with disabilities.

- Dr. McBride reported that the district adopts textbooks on a cycle and this year is reading. The district has adopted the MacMillan Reading Treasures and Triumphs series for 2008-09. Teachers will receive a full series including level readers that standards are based. The series provides differentiated instructional interventions as well as parallel materials for students who are reading two or more levels below their grade.
- Pam Bruening reported that Golden Terrace Elementary is sponsoring a coffee hour for parents with focus on “Homework Tips” this Friday. The co-teach team at Golden Terrace will be using the FND power point and facilitate group conversation participatory activities in Spanish and English to brainstorm homework tips with parents.
- Allie reported that, as the Project Connect Transition Contact for the District, he recently participated in a regional conference which focused on secondary transition planning and services available in all districts. Overall, Florida’s school districts struggle with measurable postsecondary goals and transition services. Collier’s Partners in Transition has begun to bridge collaborative relationships between school and community partners e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation (Voc Rehab). Collier has five (5) employment liaisons assisting students/schools with appropriate referrals to Voc Rehab.
- Dr. Alvies reported that we are moving forward with Florida’s Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) Project, increasing the capacity of Collier’s schools to address problem behavior using positive behavior supports. Currently, there are 25 schools in addition to the transportation department who have implemented school-wide/universal procedures and processes with all schools implementing with 70% or better fidelity. Florida’s PBS Project will be providing training up to 10 additional schools. Dr. Sartorio commended the great leadership that Sherry has provided this project.
- Dr. Sartorio reported that revisions will soon be seen on the ESE Department quick link to the District website.

**Next Meeting – May 13, 2008 from 10 AM – 12 PM, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.
Administration**