

# SHARING THE COMMITMENT

## An Exceptional Student Education Advisory Committee

### MEETING MINUTES

March 20, 2007



#### ESE ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Wilbur Hawke, Elizabeth McBride, Karen Stelmacki, Debbie Tihen, Jennifer Smith, Sherry Francis, Dr. Douglass Carothers, Bob Spano, Adella Spinella, Tina Clawson

#### ESE ADVISORY MEMBERS ABSENT

Idel Altenburg, Dave Burgess, Myra Shapiro, Sylvia Delgado

#### ESE ADVISORY GUESTS

Barb Southwick, Allman Todd, Joyce Austin, Peg Sullivan, Stan Wesser, Rosa Martinez, Elida Ramirez, Sue Palmer

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

A consensus agreement was reached to approve the agenda as presented with two additions:

- Old Business – Sensitivity Awareness Subcommittee Report
- New Business – Special Olympics Collier County

Dr. Sartorio distributed copy of the January 16, 2007 Sharing The Commitment Meeting Minutes and the 2007-08 meeting schedule.

#### OLD BUSINESS

- **Collier's Partners in Transition (PIT)**

Allman Todd shared the contents of the Transition Tool Kit being disseminated to middle and high school principals and encouraged participants to examine the array of resource books and agency information at today's meeting.

Sharing The Commitment members and guests were encouraged to consider participating on one of Collier's Partners in Transition subcommittees (resource data base, corporate certification, and summary of performance). If interested, please submit your name to Allman Todd at [ToddAI@collier.k12.fl.us](mailto:ToddAI@collier.k12.fl.us). A representative from FDLRS was encouraged to participate in Collier's PIT.

- **Parent Libraries** (report from Sherry Francis)

Naples High School recently received a library after hosting a parent training. Five libraries remain in stock at the ESE Department for schools hosting such an event. The Immokalee High School parent workshop needs to rescheduled. Gulf View Middle School recently hosted a Transition parent workshop. Other schools who have expressed an interest in hosting a training include: Naples Park Elementary, Vineyards Elementary, Lake Trafford Elementary, Oakridge Middle, Calusa Park Elementary, Laurel Oak Elementary and Big Cypress Elementary; scheduling is pending. Training sessions are generally 1.5 hours in length. Information flyers will notice parents that child care services are available.

- **Family Network on Disabilities (FND)**

Wilbur Hawke was recently appointed to participate in Florida's Performance Plan team and attended the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) regulations implementation meetings in Kansas City.

"Dia del Nino", the second annual conference for families of migrant farm workers is scheduled on Saturday, April 21, 2007 from 10 AM-4 PM at Immokalee Charter School. Child care services will be provided, food will served and a variety of training opportunities, including training by FND and FDLRS, will be available for parents of children ages 6-13. Sharing The Commitment/ESE will donating children's story books for the conference.

The Southern Regional Conference is scheduled during the first week in November 2007 in Broward County. More details are to come. OSEP has donated \$10,000 for this event.

- **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)**

Debbie Tihen reported that Pam Pometti was recently recommended for hire by FDLRS to fill the .5 Child Find Specialist position in Collier County. There are 1.5 Specialists assigned to Collier to conduct screenings for 3-5 years old.

FDLRS has two additional trainers available for Standing Up For Me and Transition 101 to assist Collier with its teacher professional development. Collier was recently awarded a Southwest Professional Development Partnership (PDP) Demonstration Grant which will pay for 10 educators to participate in the Florida Department of Education (DOE) Train-The-Trainer Standing Up For Me and Self-Determination Training on April 17 & 18, 2007 in Daytona Beach, FL.

Four FDLRS staff members recently participated in the Train-The-Trainer Positive Beginnings workshop at Edison College in Fort Myers and are working on a community training implementation plan with Collier and Lee. Four Collier County Public Schools Prekindergarten staff members participated in this Train-The-Trainer event and will be planning on how to provide this training to all Pre-K Head Start and ESE teachers and assistants and community early childhood providers.

- **Sensitivity Awareness Task Force**

Jennifer Smith, Task Force Chair, reviewed the options considered by the committee:

- 1) utilize the FL DOE *More Alike Than Different* program available through the Clearinghouse
- 2) develop our own sensitivity awareness program
- 3) accept the proposal from Lisa Cronin-Miller with the Sensitivity Awareness Workshop of Southwest Florida, Inc., a Florida 503(c) 3 nonprofit charity at \$1,600 a day per school (4<sup>th</sup> grade students) for a minimum of 25 elementary schools.

Members agreed that the final option was cost prohibitive and this did not assist the district in building the capacity of trainers. The Task Force will reconvene to discuss the utilization of the DOE product, *More Alike Than Different*, and identify the staffing needs for training implementation. The sensitivity training will focus on staff and students in 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade at a minimum. A stipend will be paid to trainers as well as to the parents who will be an integral component of the training. PDP will support stipends for parents.

- **Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)**

Dr. Doug Carothers reported that Tim Ferguson, principal of Veterans Memorial Elementary School, and Dr. Jan Messer, principal of Parkside Elementary School, are collaborating with the FGCU Education Department to provide training opportunities for its students.

- **SW Florida Professional Development Partnership (PDP)**

Peg Sullivan provided the PDP update. Train-The-Trainer Positive Beginnings sponsored by the Early Childhood Committee focused on building long-term trainer capacity across the region. Thirty-one trainers participated and are making training implementation plans for their region.

PDP in collaboration with Deveraux, is offering course work for Behavior Analysts, the first in the region since national certification requirements changed. Training begins March 31<sup>st</sup> at FGCU; over 25+ registrants.

Four PDP demonstration project proposals were submitted to PDP. Collier County Public Schools' two proposal submissions were approved: ESE's Train-The-Trainer Standing Up For Me proposal and Veteran Memorial Elementary's Kagan Cooperative Learning training for staff.

PDP continues to seek para-professionals who are interested in participating in a teacher education program at FGCU. Tuition funds are available through PDP for assistants interested in becoming special educators. This information will be disseminated at the ESE Para-Educator training in Collier.

PDP continues to work with the university and school districts in recruitment/retention within the critical shortage areas (e.g., SLP and HI Interpreters).

- **Florida Inclusion Network (FIN)**

Stan Wesser reported that FIN focuses on collaborative teaching and differentiated instruction professional development with the public and private schools in the region. Train-The-Trainer presentations on the Product Development Division FACT Folio materials, is scheduled for parents on May 3<sup>rd</sup>. Stan also participated in the Train-The-Trainer Positive Beginnings four-day training. FIN offers a variety of training opportunities. School administrators are encouraged to request training for staff and/or parents. FIN was recently involved in a multi-district network to develop research-based best practices for curriculum and access to general education, for students with significant disabilities. Stan distributed free FACT Folio materials to meeting participants.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Special Olympics**

Sue Palmer stated that there is a calendar of Special Olympics sports events scheduled throughout the year for children and adults. This community based program is funded solely through contributions. There is one paid staff member in this volunteer 503 (c) 3 nonprofit organization. This sports organization follows regular rules and regulations and offers a second level of competition broken down into skills level. Groups are also organized by ability to give every athlete an opportunity to compete and become winners. Special Olympics sports build self esteem through community interactions and input in the national level athlete council where athletes are trained to be advocates and employees e.g., global messenger with a speech coach. The Special Olympics offers a healthy athlete program with varying free screenings (e.g., vision screenings and glasses) and over 200 persons are projected to participate. Volunteer physicians come into the school system to conduct medicals for the students; this was recently conducted at

Golden Gate Middle School. An area Special Olympics competition is scheduled to take place on Saturday, March 24<sup>th</sup> at Golden Gate High School with the opening ceremony starting at 10 AM. Collier County Public Schools is donating buses/drivers for this event. 450 students are anticipated to participate. Alberto Nieves, a student at Gulf Coast High School, was recently selected to represent the National Special Olympics (tennis) in China. Sue indicated that she participates in transition meetings at high schools and will provide Allman Todd with a Special Olympics file for the Transition Tool Box. Special Olympics also has a unified basketball team comprised of three students with disabilities and two typically developing peers. Children, age 6, may begin training and complete at age 8. There is no age limit. Golden Gate High School principal, Bob Spano, stated that the Special Olympics event on Saturday is the finest form of sensitivity awareness for the school's community of students, staff and parents. 200 general education students have volunteered to participate.

- **Florida Department of Education (DOE) Focused Monitoring Visit**

DOE recently completed its focused monitoring visit in Collier County and preliminary reports are very positive. The monitoring team stated that overall, schools are friendly and are doing a great job with providing quality specialized instruction to exceptional students. They interviewed school- and district-based administrators and instructional staff (general ed and special ed teachers) at schools. Two student focus groups (10 Students on Standard Diploma and 10 Students on Special Diploma track) were conducted and students were very communicative about their educational program, talking openly about their future plans. A written report from DOE will be forthcoming. Information from parents is solicited through the FL DOE Parent Surveys.

- **Suggestions for Parent Services Grant Funds**

Suggestions for parent services (Sharing The Commitment) grant funds will be solicited from members/guests at the next meeting. Suggestions from today's meeting included funds to be set aside for teacher stipends for Sensitivity Training and for support to the Special Olympics organization.

- **Response to Intervention (RtI)**

The article distributed at the January meeting and again today will be discussed at the next meeting. All members/guests are encouraged to read this article.

**Next meeting - May 15, 2007**

*Meeting adjourned 12:00 PM*