

SHARING THE COMMITMENT

An Exceptional Student Education Advisory Committee

January 17, 2006

Members Attended:

Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Wilbur Hawke, Karen Stelmacki, Debbie Tihen, Jennifer Smith, Lynn Clarke, Tricia Salvestrini, Idel Altenburg, Robert Spano, Dave Burgess

Members Absent:

Christine Barbuto, Elizabeth McBride, Dr. Marci Greene, Myra Shapiro, Dr. Katrina Nedley, Sherry Francis

Guests:

Barb Southwick, Kerri Geach, Heather O'Connell, Carla Fisher, Richard Brimer, Susan Anderson

Approval of Agenda

Advisory Co-Chair, Dr. Victoria Sartorio called the meeting to order at 10:05 AM. Introductions were made and participants were welcomed. A consensus agreement was reached to approve the agenda.

Approval of Minutes – November 15, 2005

A consensus agreement was reached to approve the minutes from November 15, 2005.

Old Business

1) Parent Libraries – Dr. Sartorio

The parent library books are continuing to come in. As soon as all resource materials are received, the parent committee will be contacted to assist ESE in compiling materials for the schools that have received training. Corkscrew Elementary is hosting an IDEA training in Spanish for its families and also Estates Elementary and Sabal Palm Elementary Schools on Feb 16, 2006. Child care provided. For more information, contact Barb Southwick. Proposed training date for Poinciana is February 14, 2006 at their Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) meeting. Training has already been conducted at SLE. Wilbur Hawke will compile a list of websites for the family libraries. Barb Southwick will work with ESE to place orders from DOE.

2) Private School Meeting – Karen Stelmacki, Wilbur Hawke

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) 2004 requires that the district conduct timely and meaningful consultation that seeks input from private school representatives with regard to the Child Find process, the determination of the proportionate share of IDEA funds to serve parentally placed private school children with disabilities, and how, where and by whom the ESE and related services will be provided for private school students. The ESE Department conducted its first consultation with private school representatives on November 29, 2005. Meeting invitations were sent to 25 private schools. Representatives from St. Ann School, St. Elizabeth Seton, Naples Christian Academy and Royal Palm Academy participated. Each private school representative received a resource kit from ESE on differentiated instruction. Additional meeting participants included, a Collier parent representative from Family Network on

Disabilities, FDLRS, and Student Services. Larry Ruble from Student Services discussed the referral/evaluation process. Debbie Tihen from FDLRS discussed the Child Find process. The district must spend a proportionate share of their federal special education dollars on the overall pool of disabled children who have been parentally placed at private schools. The student count on December 1st indicates that there are 23 PK and 15 K-12 parentally placed private school students with disabilities receiving services set forth in a services plan. McKay Scholarship private school students with disabilities may be eligible to access special education services via a services plans, however, there were no McKay students identified during the December 1st count. Upon receipt of the IDEA Part B grant award for 2006-07, we will calculate the proportionate share (for parentally placed private school students with disabilities on Services Plans) and conduct a 2nd consultation with the private school representatives, identifying the specifics of how much services will be apportioned. Debbie Tihen announced today that a part-time Child Find Specialist will be starting in Collier next week and will be visiting the private schools who did not participate in this meeting to ensure their understanding of this consultation process.

McKay Scholarship – In accordance with the Florida Statute, a student is eligible for a McKay scholarship if the student is identified as a K-12 student with a disability and has a current individual education plan (IEP); student was enrolled and reported for attendance during the October and February FTE surveys the year preceding the request for scholarship. Parents who want their child to participate in the McKay Scholarship participating private school program must file their intent by one of the four deadlines (www.opportunitieschools.org); seek out enrollment in a participating private school, and notify the school district of the request for a scholarship at least 60 days prior to the enrollment. The parents' responsibilities include transportation to the private school and may include tuition and fess if greater than the scholarship "voucher". The scholarship remains in effect until the student returns to public school or graduates from high school.

Parents who want their child to participate in the McKay Scholarship "another public school" in the same county must file their letter of intent with the ESE Office by July 1st. Notice to parents regarding this program is sent to parents in May. Parents seeking more information about this McKay School Choice option are encouraged to talk with their school's ESE Program Specialist. This school choice option is approved based on school and classroom space availability and building allocation and staffing. The scholarship remains in effect until the student is dismissed from ESE or graduates from high school. The district is responsible for transportation. Parents who want their child to participate in the McKay Scholarship "another public school" in an adjacent county must file their intent with the ESE Office in Collier and adjacent county of choice by July 1st. The parents' responsibilities include seeking McKay acceptance from the adjacent county, transportation to the adjacent county school, and notice to the Collier public schools.

Parents may seek **Out-of-Zone / School Choice** requests by contacting Lisa Roa at Student Services or by going to <http://collier.k12.fl.us/parents/zoninginfo.asp> . Parent responsibilities include transportation to the approved out-of-zone or school choice.

3) Family Network on Disabilities – Grant Proposal; Grant Changes: PTI- Wilbur Hawke

The Parent Training Information (PTI) center is funded under Part D of the IDEA. This year, the state will be divided into three parent information centers. The competitive grants are five year increments. For the next 9 months, FND will continue to serve as the parent information center as their 5 year grant ends in September. The Transition/Independent Living/Empowerment/Support (TILES), Parent Empowerment Through Education (PETE), and Sharing The Commitment projects will continue. How the PTI will continue will be determined by who is awarded the grant(s). If FND is awarded the grant, it would be housed at Redlands Christian Migrant Association (RCMA) in Immokalee and Wilbur Hawke would be the Director of South FL. FND has existing staff to provide support to the South Florida region. Three other groups – FND, Broward FND and Family Café – have submitted grant proposals. FND submitted a grant proposal for all three regions. Notice of grant award is due July 2006. For 20 years PTI has been a competitive grant and FND has been the organization that has been awarded that grant in Florida in all three regions for the last 20 years.

4) Collaborative Partners Updates: FDLRS, PEERS and P.E.T.E.

FDLRS Update

- Debbie Tihen announced that Jessica vonArx is the new part-time Child Find Specialist assigned to Collier County. Jessica will be on assignment next week.
- Jennifer Smith disseminated information about the Surrogate Parent Program and explained students in need of a surrogate. Presently, Collier has no student in need of a surrogate. Invitation was extended to FDLRS to come to the February 23, 2006 ESE Program Specialist meeting to share the Surrogate Parent Program. Additionally, Dr. Sartorio provided Jennifer with contact information on the District's homeless liaison – Karen Morgan.
- Jennifer announced that skills packets are being given out to parents of children who are referred for evaluation. The skills packets target areas of need identified in the screening and provide parents with ideas to support their child's development. Jennifer stated that FDLRS is currently offering a meeting in Lee County with parents who are referred for evaluation to explain the referral/evaluation process. Upon receipt of referral to the Pre-K Assessment Team in Collier, the ESE Pre-K Home School Intervention Counselor, Mike Plummer, schedules an intake appointment with the parent to explain the referral/evaluation/eligibility process.
- PEERS and P. E.T.E. – Wilbur stated no new announcements. He did take the opportunity to thank everyone in the room for their participation in Sharing The Commitment. Wilbur stated that he will soon be traveling to Washington D.C. to talk about our collaborative project (Sharing The Commitment) and that it has fostered effective partnerships between parents, schools, and the community. Wilbur shared his appreciation of the leadership of the ESE Department.

New Business

1) Serve Your Own – Next Steps – Dr. Sartorio

Dr. Sartorio shared that inclusive school initiatives started four+ years ago with the support of the fully inclusive schools – Osceola, Calusa Park, and Shadowlawn

Elementary Schools. She indicated that initiatives were taken to move students with disabilities served in VE and EMH classes back to their zone schools. Approximately 250-300 students returned to their residence zone schools. This year, the district is looking at moving EH students (max 15 students to be affected) back to their zone schools and we are hopeful in starting a new cluster site for TMH students. For some students (low incidence disabilities) to receive quality services, cluster sites are necessary. As we grow, we will continue to look at spitting the cluster sites.

2) March Meeting Date

The March 21, 2006 Sharing The Commitment meeting is rescheduled to April 4, 2006.

Open

- The Family Café, a non-profit statewide organization offers educational opportunities and information on meaningful topics for individuals with disabilities and their families. Registration for the 8th Annual Family Café Conference will begin February 14, 2 a.m. This year's conference will be held June 2-4, 2006 at the Caribe Ryale Hotel in Orlando. You may register online, mail or fax your registration. Contact information: www.familycafe.net or (850) 224-4670, Toll Free (888) 309-CAFÉ.
- Mr. Burgess expressed appreciation to the ESE Department and Florida Inclusion Network for its Differentiated Instruction (DI) training and support to 20 PES teachers. Dave shared that 12 PES teachers recently presented DI strategies that support all students to his staff at-large. Barbara Southwick shared a similar statement about CES teacher training on 1/5. Mr. Burgess stated that The Inclusion Toolbox and the Differentiated Instruction Kit, disseminated to schools by District ESE, are phenomenal resource materials.
- Mrs. Geach asked about information dissemination with principals. Dr. Sartorio stated that she makes it a point to attend and share information (Serve Your Own, Trainings) at elementary, middle and high school principal meetings. Mr. Burgess and Mr. Spano stated that they also share information with their colleagues, as well as ESE Program Specialists are a point of information dissemination with staff. School representatives were required to participate in Co-teaching Training during spring 2005. Differentiated Instruction was voluntary.
- Lynn Clarke asked that the next agenda include an update on the proposed Florida legislation to delay the start of school until after Labor Day. Lynn expressed concern about a delayed start date on summer camps and ESY and asked about the proposed ESY dates. Proposed ESY Summer 2006 dates are June 19 - July 19.
- Dr. Sartorio stated concern about the proposed federal cuts in IDEA funding and its impact on discretionary grants (e.g., FDLRS, SEDNET).
- Karen Stelmacki mentioned the Voluntary Prekindergarten (VPK) Program and the district's implementation in Summer 2006. All eligible 4 year old (who were 4 by September 1st) students with disabilities are eligible to participate. Federal IDEA requirements are not applicable to Florida's VPK programs as VPK is not considered part of Florida's K-12 educational program. VPK is run by the Early Learning

Coalitions. In collaboration with the school district, the Early Learning Coalition sent a notification about the VPK program to parents of 4 year olds in the district. The district's proposed Summer VPK program is June 7 – August 4, 2006 from 8 AM – 3:10 PM. VPK Round-Up Days are: Feb 9 at Immokalee One Stop from 3-6 p.m.; Feb 11 at Child Care of Southwest Florida from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.; March 9 at Marco Island Library from 4 – 6 p.m.; and March 15 at East Naples Library from 3-6 p.m. If you have further questions, please contact Bonnie Clukey.

- Clarification provided regarding Collier's Spring Break Dates: March 20–24 (Teacher Planning Day March 17th).
- Meeting was adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meetings:

Date: Tuesday, April 4, 2006 and May 16, 2006

Time: 10 a.m. – 12 p.m.

Location: Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administration Center, Room 1-103

If you have a topic that you would like to see added to the next meeting's agenda, please e-mail Dr. Victoria Sartorio at sartorvi@collier.k12.fl.us.