

# SHARING THE COMMITMENT

## An Exceptional Student Education Advisory Committee

### Meeting Minutes September 19, 2006



**ESE Advisory Members Present:** Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Karen Stelmacki, Bob Spano, Dr. Katrina Nedley, Jennifer Smith, Idel Altenburg, Tricia Salvestrini, Wilbur Hawke, Christine Barbuto

**ESE Advisory Members Absent:** Debbie Tihen, Dave Burgess, Beth McBride, Myra Shapiro, Dr. Douglas Carothers, Sherry Francis, Sylvia Delgado

**ESE Advisory Guests:** Peg Sullivan, Barb Southwick, Allman Todd, Joyce Austin

#### Welcome and Introductions

ESE Director, Dr. Victoria Sartorio, welcomed all members and guests to the Sharing The Commitment ESE Advisory Committee meeting. Participants were invited to bring forth topics/issues to the Advisory which focus on services for students with disabilities. Individual student concerns are not appropriate for discussion at the Advisory meeting.

- Dr. Sartorio stated that the ESE Advisory Bylaws require specific members on the committee and highlighted the community representative position that is vacant. Wilbur Hawke reported that he is working with Tom Nurse to identify a local representative from Met Life. Allman Todd suggested that Nancy La Chance, a Publix Recruiter and Partner in Transition, may have interest in participating in the Advisory and will make contact with Nancy to confirm her interest.
- Dr. Sartorio reviewed the Advisory meeting schedule for the 2006-07 school year. Sharing The Commitment ESE Advisory Committee will meet from 10 AM – 12 PM on: November 14, 2006 January 16, 2007; March 20, 2007; and May 15, 2007.

#### Review and Approval of Agenda

A consensus agreement was reached to approve the agenda as presented.

#### Review and Approval of May 16, 2006 Minutes

A consensus agreement was reached to approve the minutes as presented with one correction:

- Page 1, ESE Advisory Member, Christine Barbuto, was in attendance.

#### Old Business

- **Transition Task Force** - Allman Todd reported that a 20 member Transition Task Force has been formed and the next meeting is scheduled for October 2, 2006. Allie reviewed the three goals that were established for Collier County as documented in the May 16, 2006 meeting minutes. Christine Barbuto volunteered to participate in the Transition Task Force as a middle school representative.
  - Transition Tool Boxes offering a variety of appropriate resources on transition will be designed and distributed to middle and high schools who agree to host a Sharing The Commitment parent workshop. Schools will have the opportunity to choose from an array of workshop topics and custom design it to meet their school's needs.

Peg Sullivan indicated that she will forward to Allie and Wilbur the PDP website link that has multiple transition resources. Upon completion of the Tool Box, North Naples Middle School and Golden Gate High will receive copies as these schools previously sponsored a parent workshop. These schools will also receive a parent library. Dr. Sartorio will make arrangements for delivery and asks that the ESE Program Specialist return any resource book that is not appropriate for their age group.

- Allie stated that Co-STEP staff and ESE Program Specialists are the point persons with regards to Transition services for our students with disabilities and indicated that the Transition Task Force will extend invitation to LWIT/Project Explore staff and Voc Rehab to participate in the Task Force and Transition IEP meetings prior to 12<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **P.E.T.E. Action Plan for 2006-2007 – PEER Parent**, Idel Altenburg, reported that Adella Spinella is currently developing a training schedule and is making contact with schools who have expressed interest in hosting a parent workshop. The first training is scheduled on October 11, 2006 at Lake Park Elementary School. Barb Southwick stated that Pelican Marsh Elementary has expressed interest in hosting a meeting and obtaining a library and reminded Advisory members that Laurel Oak Elementary school expressed the same in Spring 2006. Idel stated that parent workshops are also being scheduled at Pine Crest Elementary, The Learning Center, Highlands Elementary, and Immokalee High School. Dr. Sartorio reminded Wilbur that Golden Gate Middle School principal, Mary Murray, expressed interest in hosting a parent workshop with focus on: middle to high school transition and high school programming opportunities with same age peers. Jennifer Smith shared that FDLRS offers a Getting Acquainted workshop for parents that is structured as a panel presentation with question and answer opportunities for parents. Mr. Spano emphasized the importance of providing students with disabilities an opportunity to visit (currently students are provided an opportunity to participate in an Orientation) at the high school prior to 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Members expressed concern that there are limited opportunities for students with disabilities to experience/visit the high schools prior to transition from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade.
- **Parent Libraries/Library Task Force** – Dr. Sartorio reported that there are nine (9) libraries ready for dissemination and will forward a library to North Naples Middle and Golden Gate High School. Barb Southwick reported that the Task Force met prior to today's meeting and will work with Allman Todd to identify appropriate resources for the Transition Tool Box. Barb questioned how many additional libraries can be purchased and what funds were available for purchasing resources for the Transition Tool Box. Dr. Sartorio requested that the Library Task Force and Transition Task Force Facilitator, Allman Todd, work together to identify the resources and projected costs.
- **Family Network on Disabilities Updates** - Wilbur Hawke extended an invitation to agencies to forward a list of their parent presentation / workshop options to him if they are willing to offer parent workshops. Wilbur stated that he is developing a master list that can be given to principals when they are making their selection for a parent workshop. Dr. Sartorio will prepare a letter to principals notifying them of the parent workshop offerings and the parent library offering. Wilbur stated that no one was awarded the South Florida Parent Training Information (PTI) center. As of Sept 1, the South Florida PTI will be provided through several contracted agencies serving the Southwest Region. Family Network on Disabilities (FND) is anticipating that it will serve Southwest Florida area until the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) re-opens the grant submission period. Wilbur shared that FND is actively building a father's network and information is available on the FND website.
- **Collaborative Partners Update from FDLRS:** FDLRS Parent Specialist, Jennifer Smith, shared that during the summer she conducted an It Takes Two to Talk 6-week workshop, with follow-up home visits with six (6) families in the Golden Gate Elementary area. She also mentioned that she conducted an introduction ESE training with the Guardian Ad Litem group for the purpose of enhancing the pool of available surrogate parents. Training with

this same group in Collier County has been scheduled for October, 2006. FDLRS has a menu of training opportunities and welcomes any additional ideas. Jennifer shared that Lee County Schools ESE Department is enhancing their parent involvement through a program similar to Collier's Sharing The Commitment PEER Parents. Jennifer stated that FDLRS trainings are being tailored to school and parent requests and will send Dr. Sartorio a list of these workshops. Dr. Sartorio stated that the School District is targeting training/resources/technical assistance and support to schools that did not make AYP and schools that are in restructuring (includes Immokalee High School and Pinecrest Elementary School). Peg Sullivan mentioned that she and Dr. Katrina Nedley, SEDNET Manager, recently visited with Manny Touran and provided an overview of their services to support student outcomes.

- **Collaborative Partners Update from PEERS:** Wilbur stated that three PEER Parents are back on staff with FND: Idel Altenburg, Adella Spinella, and Sherry Francis. Idel mentioned that her focus is the Immokalee schools. Wilbur expressed concern about the increase parent requests for parent liaison services for parents who speak Spanish. Wilbur requested consideration be given to PEER parent participation in IEP meetings via conference call when parents require a Spanish speaking liaison serves. Dr. Sartorio stated that although direct (face-to-face) participation is preferred, PEER parent participation is acceptable when Wilbur Hawke is also a participant. Karen Stelmacki requests that the ESE Program Specialist be given prior notice, at least 2 days prior to the scheduled meeting (allows for set-up), that they will participate via conference call. Wilbur reported that the ESE Program Specialist will receive notice and a signed parent release of information prior to the IEP meeting.
- **Collaborative Partners Update from SEDNET:** SEDNET Manager, Dr. Katrina Nedley, disseminated a copy of concerns consistently expressed by youth and families during visits held with parent groups (NAMI, Federation of Families, Parent Support Groups) in Florida related to mental health services. Dr. Nedley highlighted that the new Medicaid limits on the number of therapy sessions and limited choice of providers is of great concern to families. Medicaid is now going to a managed care, HMO system of care and that the capitation on treatment and the availability of providers to offer mental health services is of great concern. Dr. Nedley disseminated a *Summary of SEDNET Services* report and provided an overview of the 2005-06 activities.

### New Business

- **Family as Faculty** – Peg Sullivan from FGCU PDP, disseminated information on Family as Faculty and explained that family members who have/had a student with disability are being recruited to speak with university students who are seeking a degree in education (including health care providers/therapists). The intent of the program is to provide the university student an awareness of family friendly practices when working with a child with a disability. Barb Southwick shared that she is a Family as Faculty member. Peg shared the results of a survey that PDP conducted on family friendly practices and reported that students who participated in courses with Family as Faculty had a stronger belief about family friendly practices. Peg invited Sharing The Commitment participants to share with her the names / contact information of a family in our region who would be a good voice/participant in the Family as Faculty program. There is a significant interest in obtaining referrals of Hispanic families. Peg stated that it is her goal to provide 25 presentations. The survey included 10 questions about their beliefs about the level of parent involvement in education and additional questions about their actual practices with parent involvement in education. A higher level of agreement was seen with a stronger belief in family friendly practices. For additional information about this program or to refer a name of a parent to Peg, call (239) 590-7747.
- **Local Education Agency (LEA) 2006 Profile** – Dr. Sartorio disseminated copy of the LEA 2006 profile and highlighted the following:
  - Number of students with disabilities meeting all graduation requirements has improved. .

- Dropout rate percentages reported for students identified as EH/SED and SLD have decreased.
- Number of students with disabilities and students identified as gifted has shown an increase in post school outcomes - employed and/or continuing education.
- Percentage of students with disabilities participating in regular class has increased from 65 to 67%.
- Percentage of students identified as EMH in separate class placement has decreased from 76 – 70%
- Larger percentage of black students in the disabled population than in the total population (disproportionate representation).
- Lower percentage of black students in the gifted population than in the total population (disproportionate representation).
- Larger percentage of EMH black students than in the total black population.
- Overall, Collier is continuing to make progress.
- **McKay Scholarship New Provisions** – Karen Stelmacki highlighted recent changes in the John M. McKay Scholarship for Students with Disabilities Program. These include:
  - 4 year old students with disabilities who are enrolled in a Florida public school and in attendance during the October and February FTE Surveys and have a current IEP are now eligible;
  - students with disabilities participating in a Department of Juvenile Justice (DJJ) program under contract with the public school and funded by FTE;
  - parents must be informed of the McKay Scholarship Program Option within 10 days after the annual IEP meeting, in addition to, the Superintendent’s notice/letter to all parents of students with disabilities enrolled in Collier County School District.

**Next Meeting Date: November 14, 2006 from 10 AM – 12 PM at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Administration Center, Conference Room 1-103.**