

# SHARING THE COMMITMENT

## An Exceptional Student Education Advisory Committee

### MEETING MINUTES

November 14, 2006



#### ESE ADVISORY MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Victoria Sartorio, Wilbur Hawke, Elizabeth McBride, Karen Stelmacki, Debbie Tihen, Jennifer Smith, Sherry Francis, Tricia Salvestrini, Dr. Katrina Nedley, Dr. Douglass Carothers

#### ESE ADVISORY MEMBERS ABSENT

Idel Altenburg, Bob Spano, Dave Burgess, Myra Shapiro, Sylvia Delgado

#### ESE ADVISORY GUESTS

Barb Southwick, Sheryl Alvies, Allman Todd, Joyce Austin, Peg Sullivan

#### APPROVAL OF AGENDA

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

#### APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Minutes were disseminated with copy of today's agenda via electronic mail to all Advisory members and posted on the Family Network on Disabilities website. Barb Southwick and Peg Sullivan will be added to the e-mail group to receive the agenda and meeting minutes.

A consensus agreement was reached to approve the September 19, 2006 meeting minutes as presented.

#### OLD BUSINESS

- **Transition Task Force** – Allie Todd, Chairperson of the Transition Task Force, submitted a list of suggested "Transition Tool Box" resources for the Advisory members to consider for purchase. A consensus agreement was reached to approve the proposed "Transition Tool Box" resource materials (projected cost \$491.00) and to order one box of materials for each secondary school (20), as well as, for Family Network on Disabilities (FND) and Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) and the District ESE Library. Wilbur commented that the FND Transition/Independent Living/Employment/Support (TILES) menu of workshop Power Point presentations will be provided on CDs and added to the Transition Tool Box. The purpose of this presentation is to help participants have a better understanding of the transition process, how to effectively participate, and how to access follow-up supports. FDLRS and FND agreed to offer transition parent workshops at the secondary level to support the materials in the Transition Tool Box.
- **Parent Libraries/Library Task Force** – Barb Southwick, Chairperson of the Parent Library Task Force, reported that a Positive Behavior Support (PBS) parent workshop is scheduled for Thursday, November 16<sup>th</sup> at Corkscrew Elementary School (CES). CES is hosting this workshop for Sabal Palm Elementary (SPE) School who has already received their parent library resource materials from Sharing The Commitment. Parent workshop opportunities

will continue to be offered to all schools, including secondary level schools, and parent libraries will be awarded to schools sponsoring one of the workshops from FDLRS or FND. Barb stated that she received and sorted all free parent resource materials for each parent library. Barb indicated that she has already given these materials to both CES and SPE. Barb will bring these materials to the ESE Department for storage with the other libraries that will be sent to schools after they sponsor a parent training. Wilbur Hawke commented that several principals, who already sponsored a parent training, have indicated that they are ready and willing to host other parent trainings in the future.

- **Family Network on Disabilities Updates** – Wilbur Hawke reported that the state level FND is reorganizing and that currently the parent organization is contracting for Parent Training and Information (PTI) services for the area. Wilbur stated that FND recently submitted a revised PTI grant proposal for consideration.

### **Collaborative Partners Updates**

- **Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)** – FDLRS Island Coast Coordinator, Debbie Tihen, reported that FDLRS Child Find identified and screened 100 children, age 3-5, during a three-month period (July, August, September) in Collier and Lee Counties. Both Lee and Collier are seeing increased numbers of children being referred for evaluation to determine if the child has a disability. Lee is planning to open three (3) new PK special classes in January. Debbie indicated that awareness outreach opportunities to insure the public and parents are given information and milestones as to the approximate age when a child should perform certain developmental skills are a component of FDLRS function. In collaboration with Early Steps, recent outreach activities included Child Find awareness discussions with pediatricians in both Collier and Lee. Karen stated that children transitioning from Part C (Early Steps) to the Part B Preschool Disabilities Program are evidencing more significant delays in development and identifiable disabilities. A concern has been expressed that Part C children who are now receiving a “touch and learn” transdisciplinary service delivery model may not be evidencing the same positive child outcomes as with the previous developmental Part C model. A concern has also been noted that several children transitioning have not received services as a result of late identification and referral and/or a lack of service providers in the community. Karen shared that the PK Coordinators who participate in the regional TATS group are sharing a similar concern with the lack of service delivery model provision, e.g., inclusive early childhood programs in the school and quality early childhood program opportunities in the community.

Debbie reported that FDLRS staff recently participated in Transition 101 training/development and will be ready and willing to offer this training to parents and school staff at the secondary level. Debbie believes this training will meet Collier’s training needs of Transition awareness and will compliment the Transition Tool Box resources. Information on this training will be shared with the ESE Program Specialists.

- **Parent Educator Resource Support (PEERS)** – PEER parent, Sherry Francis, reported that principals of Avalon Elementary, Calusa Park Elementary, Lely Elementary, Laurel Oak Elementary, Pinecrest Elementary, Lake Trafford Elementary, Oakridge Middle, Naples High, Immokalee High and Golden Gate High have expressed interest in hosting a parent workshop at their school. Wilbur added that the principal of NPE has also expressed interest in hosting a workshop. Sherry and Idel are working to schedule these events. An FND Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) parent workshop was recently conducted at Pelican Marsh Elementary School; 15 persons (staff and parents) participated. Training opportunities include offerings from FDLRS and FND.

- **Severely Emotionally Disturbed Network (SEDNET)** - SEDNET Manager, Dr. Katrina Nedley, stated that Sarasota SEDNET, in collaboration with its county government, was recently awarded a sizable mental health grant to provide services to the birth-age eight populations. Katrina will be obtaining more information about their proposed activities and will report back to this group. Katrina announced that she recently arranged for psychiatrist, Dr. Michael Fox, to present a workshop on Differential Diagnosis/Tourette Syndrome to the CCPS ESE Program Specialists and School Psychologists. She is arranging this same training in Lee County next month.
- **SW Florida Professional Development Partnership (PDP)** – FGCU/PDP Project Coordinator, Peg Sullivan, reported that the PDP grant is designed to address the need for qualified personnel, including special education, related services personnel and leadership personnel. Peg stated that PDP is partnering with the Early Learning Coalition to sponsor a “Docs for Tots” workshop for early childhood educators on January 10<sup>th</sup> at the Three Oaks Conference Center and a dinner, by invitation only, for local physicians. Dr. George Askew, a pediatrician who leads a national advocacy group, will be the guest speaker for each event.

Peg announced that FGCU PDP has also partnered with agencies to bring Dr. Batsche to the area to talk with educators about Problem-Solving and Response to Intervention (RtI) on December 1<sup>st</sup> from 4-7 PM at FGCU. RtI uses problem-solving steps to determine and evaluate levels of instruction/interventions and focuses on frequent use of data for data-based decision making.

- Dr. Sartorio indicated that she will bring an article for parents describing the RtI model. She explained that the focus of RtI is on the responsibility of general education PRIOR to consideration for any exceptional education programs. A lack of instruction in math and/or reading would not mean eligibility for special education and that we must demonstrate that a student has the characteristics of the disability and the need for the services to be eligible for exceptional education programs. This model is characterized by the problem-solving process to describe levels of intervention and response to intervention as seen in the PBS tiered model of school supports. She indicated that Collier has an infrastructure in place to make the transition to RtI – the Child Adolescent Support Team (CAST) and Positive Behavior Support (PBS). Disproportionality is viewed as one outcome of an ineffective intervention process.

Peg talked about reaching out to paraprofessionals for the COPE program (assisting paraprofessionals with obtaining a teaching degree) in each District and trying to coordinate a meeting to do that. She also discussed the need to contact the District regarding the teacher support program (mentors available on request of the teacher). Dr. Sartorio suggested that she contact Debbie Terry in our Human Resources Department regarding this SW FL PDP opportunity.

- **Florida Gulf Coast University (FGCU)** – Education Professor, Dr. Doug Carothers, reported that the Department of Education at FGCU, including the special education department at the university, is sustainable now for an additional seven (7) years. Three (3) graduate level students are exiting the FGCU educational program in December and all have secured positions. There are 15 students projected to graduate from the Bachelors Degree program in May 2007. All special education undergraduates will have

completed special education coursework as well as ESOL courses and are being encouraged to take the test for certification in regular education.

Doug announced that there is space available in the online Exceptional Student Education Certification Endorsement course for severe or profound disabilities. Peg added that this is also true for the endorsement courses for prekindergarten children with disabilities and autism.

**Collier's Positive Behavior Supports (PBS) – Collier's** PBS Coordinator, Sherry Alvies, reported that 17 schools are currently participating in PBS and that of the state's 39 model PBS schools, Collier had 5 model schools. Sherry indicated that training is scheduled for June and that four (4) schools have expressed an interest in being trained. Two schools have confirmed that they intend to participate in the PBS training. In addition, the Transportation Department has committed to being a PBS transportation system and will participate in training. Collier currently has no PBS middle or high school participating in this process. Concern was noted by participants as this is the level where we see the most significant disciplinary referrals.

Schools implementing PBS with fidelity are now eligible for the next level, targeted group training. Each school will be invited to send 3 to 4 persons to be trained on specific behavioral programs. Training will focus on 3-5 programs (Skills Streaming, 1-2 Bullying Programs, Aggression Control, and BEP Check-In/Check-Out) and each person attending will receive a copy of the programs with the exception of the Aggression Control (a \$1,000 program). This training will be free to each school invited to attend. Additionally, training will be provided to Behavior Specialists targeting Person Centered Plans and Facilitated Behavior Plans. A one-day PBS Booster training will also be conducted. Participants will use data online to assist them in targeting one area of concern.

- Peg and Debbie also shared information on the Positive Beginnings Institute (for ages 1.5 to 5 years) which correlates with Positive Behavior Supports. The last Positive Beginnings Institute (PBI) was held in June 2006 with 30 early childhood providers and was very successful. In collaboration with the Center for Autism and Related Disabilities (CARD), Early Learning Coalition and the SW FL PDP, plans are being made to conduct a Train-the-Trainer PBI in February or March of 2007. Each school district and child care center will be invited to send 2-4 teachers who are interested in becoming trainers. The intent would be that these trainers would then conduct a Positive Beginnings Institute in summer 2007, which could potentially reach 300 or more, early childhood educators. Sherry Alvies stated that one of Collier's model PBS schools was The Learning Center in Immokalee which exclusively serves children ages 3 – 5.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

- **Sharing The Commitment Membership Roster:** Dr. Sartorio announced the resignation of Sharing The Commitment Advisory Board Member, Christine Barbuto, ESE Program Specialist at North Naples Middle School. Appreciation is expressed to Christine for her years of service and to Tricia Salvestrini, ESE Program Specialist at Immokalee High School who continues to serve as the "teacher" representative on the Advisory. Members were asked to consider the recommendation of replacing the "teacher" Advisory member vacancy with a representative from the elementary level. Tina Clawson, ESE Program Specialist at Big Cypress Elementary, was brought forward as a recommendation and Advisory members supported this recommendation.
- **New Transition Opportunities for Students with Disabilities in Immokalee:** Tricia Salvestrini talked about the exciting transition opportunity that is being planned for the

Immokalee area – a new vocational training center. Tricia stated that after graduating, students are challenged with accessibility to current vocational programs; lack of transportation. Of most recent, students are being able to participate in ACE programs during the school day at Lorenzo Walker Institute. The majority of 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students are working hard to obtain standard diplomas. Tricia announced that a new elementary school will open in August 2007. Dr. Sartorio stated that the University of Florida has been actively involved with Para-educator training with staff at Immokalee High School, a school that is under corrective action.

- **Inclusive Schools Week** – Dr. Sartorio announced that Inclusive Schools Week is December 4<sup>th</sup> through 8<sup>th</sup>. This year, ESE will be sending a copy of two inclusive schools resource tools: Successful Transition Planning for all Students and Celebration Ideas. These resources are available online. [www.inclusiveschools.org](http://www.inclusiveschools.org). Additionally, Dr. Sartorio will be sending Teaching Kids with Learning Disabilities in the Regular Classroom and its accompanying CD to ESE Inclusion teachers at all school sites.

Barb Southwick reported that Corkscrew Elementary School is sponsoring a one-hour Sensitivity Awareness Training on December 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> for all 4 and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Barb indicated that staff has already participated in this training. Barb stated that all principals are being invited to attend. If you would like more information on this training, please contact Barb at [bsouth@swfla.rr.com](mailto:bsouth@swfla.rr.com) .

- **District Academic Council** – Dr. Sartorio stated that the District’s Academic Council has included Sharing The Commitment as one of the District’s Advisory groups. Advisory members may be solicited by the District Academic Council to provide input on a topic as it pertains to students with disabilities. Dr. Sartorio will be asking Advisory members to give input on special education teacher recruiting and retention.

#### **OPEN**

- Dr. Sartorio made available Sharing The Commitment pins to today’s participants and welcomed all to take a pin to give to someone else that may have an interest in participating.
- **Next Sharing The Commitment Meeting: January 16, 2007**