



A.P.P.L.E.

Advancing Parent Professional Leadership in Education

The A.P.P.L.E. Institute - May 2007

We had another successful Institute. The Advancing Parent/Professional Leadership in Education (APPLE) Project. It was held at the Holiday Inn, Marlboro, MA. There were four school districts attending the 3 day Leadership Development Institute. The teams of parents all have children on IEPs. There were also Special Education Professionals from each school district participating. The school districts who participated were: Foxboro Regional Charter, Harvard, Milton & Pentucket Regional.

We had our usual faculty, Rich Robison, Executive Director of the Federation for Children with Special Needs, and co-director of the APPLE project; Barbara Popper, the co-director of APPLE; and Marilyn Gutierrez-Wilson of the Federation's PTI and APPLE projects. We also had Roberto Chene of New Mexico whose specialty is conflict resolution; Kathleen Osta, of North Carolina, who specializes in communication strategies, and Cassie Johnston of PAVE, the Washington state PTI who is a Certified Facilitator in True Colors™, a method of helping individuals find their learning styles.

The participants filled out an evaluation form for the Federation's use. The team members worked on action planning, working together as a group to enhance collaboration and gaining motivation.

The Special Education Directors & the parents discussed the barriers and looking towards changes, goal setting and getting to know each other. Here are a few of the comments the participants wrote:

- 🍎 Meeting other parents that deal with difficulties of disability.
- 🍎 Great food, meeting people & multicultural piece
- 🍎 True Colors, Respectful conversations
- 🍎 All of it!

- 🍎 Completing our PAC vision, learning our strengths & weaknesses, it showed how important it is to have all "colors" represented to effectively work together
- 🍎 Respectful conversations Part 1
- 🍎 Knowing our PAC does have great qualities
- 🍎 Meeting the APPLE staff, hearing different positions/perspectives & humanizing our SPED Director
- 🍎 The commitment of the facilitators to support our intentions
- 🍎 Having some fun & learning to work together
- 🍎 Working with team
- 🍎 Starting the team
- 🍎 Meeting other parents from different districts
- 🍎 Hearing/sharing experiences with other teams
- 🍎 Having the guidance through the process steps 1-4
- 🍎 Teams collaborating & planning

The APPLE project has sent the school district teams their finalized Team Action Plans to help them increase parent involvement in their PACs over the next year. We will be available to work with the district teams during that time and will incorporate their ideas into future Institutes. We will have the following districts for our October 2007 Institute: Cohasset, Wilbraham/Hampden, Tewksbury, Northboro/Southboro and Sandwich.

If you would like to share your ideas, stories, an article, or wish to join our new listserv, please call or email

Marilyn Gutierrez-Wilson at (800) 493-2338 x. 351 or marilyng@fcsn.org. Check out our website for more details: www.fcsn.org/APPLE

