



# A.P.P.L.E.

*Advancing Parent Professional Leadership in Education*

**In May 2008 the A.P.P.L.E. Institute** – had another Institute. This Institute was just as successful as the prior ones. The Advancing Parent/Professional Leadership in Education (APPLE) Institute was held at the Holiday Inn, Marlboro, MA. Six school districts participated in the 3 day Leadership Institute. The participants all have children on IEPs. We also had Special Education Professionals participate from each school district. The school districts who attended were: **Blackstone/Millville, Braintree, Brockton, Monson, Quincy & Wellesley.**

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 expertise is in 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 completed an evaluation. The team members developed an action plan, worked together as a group. The Special Education Directors & the parents discussed the obstacles and wanting to make changes for the better, they set goals and enjoyed getting to know each other. Here are a few comments the participants wrote:

- Respectful conversations
- The entire process
- Working with the SPED Director & a NEW parent was great
- Working together as a team
- True Colors & Team planning
- Collaboration with team members
- The idea of having interaction during the seminar
- Building a partnership with everyone. Understanding the administration.
- Well rounded. Covered an array of activities touching on many aspects of SPED admin/SPED parent relationship.
- Putting together a solid plan
- Leadership skill building
- Hearing the "stories" of each participant, excellent materials that can be used to support effective communication between/among parents & school staff

Each school district received the team action plan they had developed at the Institute. Their finalized team action plans will help them increase parent involvement in their PACs over the next year.

The Federation will be available to work with the district teams during that time. 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 ([marilyng@fcsn.org](mailto:marilyng@fcsn.org)) or call (800) 493-2338 x 351. Check out our website for more details: [www.fcsn.org/APPLE](http://www.fcsn.org/APPLE).