



A.P.P.L.E.

Advancing Parent Professional Leadership in Education

The A.P.P.L.E. Institute – October 2008

We held yet another Institute. The Advancing Parent/Professional Leadership in Education (APPLE) Project which took place at the Holiday Inn, Marlboro, MA. We had five school districts attending the three day Leadership Development Institute: **Cohasset, Wilbraham/Hampden, Tewksbury, Northboro/Southboro and Sandwich**. The participants included 4-6 parents per school district and five Special Education Professionals from each school district.

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 team members worked together as a group and got to know each other as they developed an action plan.

The Special Education Directors & the parents discussed changes they would like to see and discussed goals they wanted to set. Here are comments that were written on the evaluation given to each participant to fill out:

- 🍏 Over all how the facilitators brought out the "right stuff"
- 🍏 Connecting as a group
- 🍏 Great information on PAC planning with my group
- 🍏 Positive interaction between participants & between participants & presenters
- 🍏 Sharing info & learning from each other. Collaboration with our SPED Director
- 🍏 Hearing from the facilitators about their own experiences, what they have done that led to their successes

- 🍏 Creative thinking & openness
- 🍏 Planning our vision
- 🍏 Pulling together a plan to take home. The process was made easier than I had anticipated.
- 🍏 PAC plan –real vision for future activities
- 🍏 A better understanding of the possibilities
- 🍏 Whether this was the intent parents should be able to see
- 🍏 Building an action plan
- 🍏 Developed a good team
- 🍏 The knowledge I received was very valuable
- 🍏 Coming together as a district team
- 🍏 We all left speaking with each other!
- 🍏 The start to forming a viable PAC group with a team is just one or two people
- 🍏 A sense of unity with the administration
- 🍏 Bonding parents & staff
- 🍏 Realizing that we need to maintain what's already in place. Understanding that we are different & learning how to both understand our differences & how they relate to our personal, professional & academic lives

The APPLE project has sent the school districts the action plans the teams developed at the Institute. The action plan will help the district teams get parents more involved. We are now working with the following districts:
Blackstone-Millville, Braintree, Brockton, Monson, Quincy and Wellesley.

If you would like to share your ideas, stories, an article, or wish to join our new listserve, 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