

6/16/08

Higher Education Task Force Meeting

Agenda: see attached

primary subject: Preparation for Summer Institute

Attendees: Dolores Burton  
Darrah Pace  
John Kappenberg  
Kathleen Feeley  
Lynn Burke  
Joan Penrose  
Janice  
Helene Fallon  
Elfreda  
Harry Dean  
Carole Sherwood  
Sarah McPherson

Meeting was called to order at 10:00 a.m.

Minutes from last meeting were not available (i.e. person who served as Recording Secretary at that meeting was not in attendance.) Lynn Burke reminded the group that we had agreed, at the previous meeting, to email minutes to every committee member prior to the next meeting. The group agreed. Lynn Burke was asked to be recording secretary.

Carol Sherwood was presented with a Retirement gift from the Higher Education Task Force: LI Region. Regrets were expressed about her loss to the Committee.

We were reminded of the next meeting, which is the last planning meeting prior to the Summer Institute, scheduled for July 10 at 10 a.m. at NYIT Library, 3rd Floor Conference Room.

There was some discussion about the number of attendees that could be accommodated at the Institute. We are planning for 25 enrollees from districts, including 10 pre-service teachers to be invited by Task Force members. Some members felt that 25 seemed like too low a number, given the enormity of mandated Long Island-wide implementation of Rtl. The Chairs responded that the designated available site could not accommodate more than 25 attendees, and reminded the members that others could have found a larger site. Kathleen Feeley felt that she might, in fact, be able to provide a larger venue, but questioned whether, in fact, it is too late to begin changing things at this point. The Chairs then noted that we were in agreement as the planning committee for the Institute that a "hands-on" activity is an

essential component of each session throughout the Institute and that becomes difficult to manage with more than 25 people. Although some disagreement about the number of attendees remained among committee members, it was ultimately decided to stay with holding this year's Institute at NYIT in Central Islip because advertising has already been distributed and the Institute is too near to begin to change things at this point. We will consider perhaps relocating to another larger site for next year.

When we looked at actual enrollment numbers, we are currently in receipt of 5 teacher registrants from Freeport and 2 administrator registrants from Babylon.

Attention returned to the specific agenda items.

Darrah Pace stated that the Institute needs to begin with **background information**, explaining to the attendees why we decided to have the Institute focus on Rtl this year. She will share with them that the Administrators' Symposium, held in April, had served as an introduction to Rtl; and that both committee members and Symposium attendees were in agreement that the Summer Institute be planned as a follow-up for teachers about Rtl. Darrah then noted that the Institute must include an engaging speaker who can do justice to the subject of **progress monitoring**.

Harry Dean commented that we need to explain why we need progress monitoring and how progress monitoring is to be used.

Kathleen Feeley, an expert on single variable progress monitoring, outlined that approach, including, initial measurement as a baseline, with a minimum of five subsequent measurements of progress, enabling the teacher to see a possible functional trend. She stated that she would explain the methodology on Day 1 of the Institute and provide attendees with an opportunity to actually produce a graph of progress using data which Kathleen will provide. She needs between 60 and 90 minutes for such a presentation.

There was some discussion of the fact that the New York State Education Department is still developing statewide Technical Assistance Centers to help with Rtl implementation. It was noted that many districts are moving toward the use of computer-dependent progress monitoring programs, such as AIMS-Web and DIBELS. Dolores commented that some districts currently lack the technological sophistication that would permit them to use a computer-dependent program. Darrah further remarked that she has found that academic groups with which she interacts tend to become much less resistant to the idea of implementing the progress monitoring aspect of Rtl when there is no dependence on product-based materials. Elfreda reminded the group that at the last meeting we had discussed the possible inclusion of \_\_\_\_\_ to address progress monitoring during the Institute. Dolores responded that, because of the gentleman's affiliation with \_\_\_\_\_, and despite the fact that he likely could/would address progress monitoring without advocating utilization of a particular product, his alliance with a specific product precludes his inclusion at this year's

Institute. Darrah reminded us that through our efforts as a Task Force, we are attempting to catalyze a **paradigm shift in thinking** among participants and that is often more successfully accomplished when there is not a “required/recommended” product component. Committee members clearly understood the direction in which we are trying to move the educational system and were in agreement that we are, at this point, well-advised to stay away from any product advocacy.

We returned to specific agenda items and Dolores presented a tentative outline and schedule for each day of the Summer Institute. We reviewed Day 1 and Day 2 rather readily, and began on Day 3. A tremendous amount of discussion was provoked when mention was made of the need for a “wrap-up” aspect of the Institute and how best to address that need. This included a review of the overall design for implementation of Rtl, as per New York State Department of Education regulations: initial **mainstream, whole class instruction**; to be followed by **strategic intervention** for students who fail to demonstrate adequate acquisition of the particular content/behavior on which attention is being focused. Continued failure to demonstrate adequate growth/progress will, in turn, be addressed through the use of **intensive intervention** and continued monitoring. Further failure to demonstrate adequate progress/learning will then result in **referral for further diagnostic assessment** in an effort to determine what intervention should, subsequently, be attempted; again, with continued progress monitoring. It is only after each of these instructional/intervention efforts has been exhausted that a student may be considered for possible inclusion in/access to special education instructional services.

Of the task force members, the following have committed to attend the Institute: Sarah McPherson, Darra Pace, Harry Dean, Helene Fallon, Janice, Joan Penrose, Lynn Burke, Kathleen Feeley, Dolores Burton, Howard Weiner.

The cost to attend the Institute is \$50 per registrant.

Kathleen Feeley asked if Steve Berman’s replacement knows about the Institute. Eileen Taylor is serving as interim Lead Regional Associate. Helene Fallon said that she would take care of notifying Steve’s replacement.

Dolores and Darra assumed responsibility for writing the program for the Institute.

Wednesday’s program will be about Literacy. Sarah McPherson, Lynn Burke, and Liz DeFazio-Rodriguez will be the presenters; and each will include a hands-on piece for participants.

Dolores will cover Math on Thursday.

Harry stated that the wrap-up each day should be reflective and focused on “how to” apply all that they’re learning. Darra suggested that on the last day we might have a panel presentation addressing “Where Do We Go From Here?” We can also ask the participants about what they feel they need more information. Dolores thought that each attendee might be able to develop a personalized plan on how to use the

information to which they will have been exposed. Principals could focus on “how will I implement this” and teachers could focus on “how will I use this.” When the subject of time allocation was raised, it was felt that about one half hour could be devoted to this discussion.

Carol said that it is often helpful to have participants “give back to you” what they’ve learned. She also felt that everyone should be provided a list of available resources.

Helene reminded the group that we had not yet discussed the role of parents in the implementation of RTI. Parents should have a large, instrumental role in the process. This led to a tremendous amount of discussion about programmatic changes, both in terms of topics to be covered during the Institute as well as the allocation of time. John said that the active involvement of parents is, in fact, an important aspect of the paradigm shift we are attempting to catalyze among participants. Helene spoke about the importance of involving every stakeholder in the process. She cited her expertise in the areas of conflict resolution and collaborative problem solving; and further stated that this can all be accomplished without becoming an adversarial team. There was considerable discussion about the parents’ role with regard to educational policy as opposed to classroom practice. Joan stressed that collaboration is the vital ingredient; and that collaboration means each stakeholder taking all other stakeholders as seriously as they take their own stake in resolving the problem. Darra reminded the group that RTI evolved from parent groups saying that they wanted something besides a “wait to fail” model. In the end, it was decided that Helene and John Kappenberg will jointly present on the subject of effective parent involvement.

Sarah suggested that, perhaps, the wrap-up would need to be longer on the third day of the Institute.

Janice asked if there was a possibility for the offering of “testimonials” during the last wrap up session. She gave the example of “I thought this was working . . . then I learned about keeping data following an intervention . . . and my practice improved . . .” She suggested that generalists tend to think “This is the recipe . . . my family likes it . . . everyone will like it . . .” The response from the group was that it was a good idea; but, there was considerable concern that we may be trying to cram too much into a finite amount of time.

Harry said that he will talk with Dr. Joe LaMelza, Director of Pupil Personnel Services in Lindenhurst.

Joan told us about the American Academy of Special Education Professionals website. It’s very good and includes an excellent piece about Rtl.

Dolores reminded us that she has reimbursement forms from nine committee members. The others can give them to her at the Institute.

Carol remarked that we got such good feedback about the Administrators’ Symposium that perhaps we should do a Fall and Spring one next year. Darra feared that it would lead to “overkill.” It was decided that we would look at the date Elfreda had compiled from the last Symposium. That, in combination with the feedback we get during and following the Institute, should help us decide how best to proceed.

Sarah suggested that we might benefit from having a place to share information, experiences technologically.

John is going to videotape the Institute. He told us about and showed a product booklet from another project in Conn with which he was involved. It becomes a permanent resource that can be sold for about \$25. That group also made a DVD to sell. DVD's are very inexpensive to make and they can be edited to clearly reflect what we are intending to convey. Both resources are very usable to districts for faculty meetings. John suggested that we produce this type of thing as a resource. He would be open to suggestions as to how to structure it. Such a product also becomes kind of an "executive summary."

John's idea was very well received by everyone. Dolores reminded us, however, that this year's budget does not permit us to do that type of project. We can plan on it for next year. Further discussion resulted in the decision to edit the total content down to a 2 hour DVD, which we will produce this year. Next year, we will plan to also produce a written version.

Wrap up decisions: Dara would email Carol and Lynn district contacts who have not yet responded. Dolores would email Kathleen the preservice teacher form. Dolores and Darra would work on the program. Darra would "clean up" the program draft and email it to everyone. We were reminded to contact anyone we may know in the targeted districts in an effort to stimulate registration. Elfreda volunteered to again compile feedback from the Institute's evaluation forms. Dolores and Darra were to provide her with previously used versions.

Harry told us that he will be unable to attend out next meeting, which is scheduled for July 10 at 10 a.m. at NYIT.

Joan congratulated Dolores, Darra, and the entire Task Force for all that we've done.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:50 a.m.