

Alabama Interagency Autism Coordinating Council (AIACC)

Tuesday, October 19, 2010

Alabama Institute for Training and Development

The AIACC met on Tuesday, October 19, 2010 at the Alabama Institute for Training and Development. The meeting was called to order by Co-chair, Representative Cam Ward. Council members in attendance were as follows: Representative Cam Ward, Co-chair Bama Folsom-Hager, ex-officio member and State Autism Coordinator Caroline Gomez, Melanie Jones, Fred Biasini, Hanes Swingle, John Robins Langlow, III, Kathy Welch, Tristan Dunn, Jim Mercer, Linda Bachus, and John Houston. The following proxies were in attendance as well: Sandy Powell, representing Don Williamson; Teresa Thomas, representing Carol Steckel; Olivia Nettles representing Sandra King Parker; Tonya Lee representing Marquita Davis; Kim Hill representing Cary Boswell, and Teresa Thomas representing Carol Steckel. Also in attendance was DaLee Chambers, representing Elmyra Jones and Joseph Morton.

Co-Chairperson Bama Folsom-Hager read the AIACC Values Statement generated by the Strategic Planning Committee. A copy of the Values Statement with an appendix offering detail for each of the values from the statement was provided to those in attendance. Dr. Hager stated that the Committee hoped to have a finalized Strategic Plan to present to the AIACC for review this winter. It was moved to accept the Values Statement, the move was seconded and the statement was adopted by the AIACC.

Minutes of the last meeting, held July 27, 2010, were presented to the Council for review by e-mail prior to the meeting. A motion was made to approve the minutes, it was seconded and the minutes were accepted.

Chairperson Cam Ward shared how impressed he was with the work being done by the work groups. He encouraged the continuation of the discussions and conversations that have been so productive.

Dr. Bama Hager, speaking as the Policy Advisor for the Autism Society of Alabama, encouraged all to vote in the upcoming election, with issues the Council faces kept in mind. She also mentioned her appreciation for the work done by Caroline Gomez in preparing and presenting the *Committees Progress Report*.

Dr. Gomez explained that the Progress Report was a compilation of the committee and work group activities. She stressed that while the document represented a remarkable collaboration, it serves only as a Progress Report and in no way constitutes policy or final decision making. The Report outlines the activities to date of the Strategic Planning Committee, the Standards of Practice Committee, and the Special Projects Committee. The Progress Report also includes a work plan proposal toward the future Alabama Autism Regional Networks.

The Progress Report will be available on the AIACC web-site. Any questions or concerns are to be sent to Dr. Gomez who will pass those on to the appropriate committee chairs. Dr. Gomez thanked the committee and work group leaders and the many participants who had given freely of their time and expertise to date, and then in advance for the work still to be done.

Alice Widgeon, Standards of Practice Committee chair, presented a brief report of Committee efforts and stated that more detailed information was included in the Progress Report. She then recognized the work group leaders and those who have served on the workgroups present at the Council meeting.

Melanie Jones, Special Projects Committee chair, reported that the Awareness work group is considering activities for World Autism Day on April 2nd 2011 including a "Bubble Blowout" attempting to break a Guinness World Record. She also provided copies of the Autism Society of Alabama Resource Directory to those in attendance. She then recognized the work group leaders and those who have served on the workgroups present at the Council meeting.

Representative Ward related that the Council Bylaws require an Executive Committee be established. He then charged the Bylaws and Membership Committee to meet before the next Council meeting in January and develop a formal process for selecting the Executive Committee. He also requested that the Bylaws and Membership Committee consider an amendment to the Bylaws to include the Chair of the Council (or in the Chair's absence, the Co-chair) be included as a member of the Executive Committee. Representative Ward then thanked the Bylaws and Membership Committee members for their service.

Dr. Gomez introduced the guest speaker, Ann-Marie Stripling, with *College Living Experience* (CLE). The organization has five locations throughout the country to serve special education students who are facing transition into college life. Dr. Gomez asked the Council to consider

infrastructure improvements that are needed (e.g., public transportation availability) if CLE and other programs are to consider Alabama in future location plans.

Ms. Stripling presented information about the *College Living Experience* (CLE), a post-secondary program which offers support in academics, independent living skills, social skills, and career readiness. Students attend CLE Centers from across the nation in five locations (i.e., Austin Texas, Denver Colorado, Monterey California, Ft. Lauderdale Florida and Rockville Maryland). The students enroll in CLE program cities including college, university, and technical schools or in on-line certification or training. Some CLE students start in a community college program and then transition to a four year college. Some pursue vocational certifications with internships and/or job placements.

The CLE Center is used as a home base and is located in the community. As academic support is extensive with CLE, students may go to the Center multiple times a day for tutoring sessions or supervised study halls. In addition, most tutoring sessions include executive functioning training. Quiet individual work rooms with computers are provided for further study. Breaks are also accommodated at the Center and structured, so there is little wasted time. The goal is for the students to use the Center to learn to manage their time and eventually be able to take those skills to the campuses or to their apartments and build structure into their daily routines on their own.

The CLE students live on their own (with Resident Advisors in proximity), in one or two bedroom apartments within vicinity of the Centers. The students must then practice independent living in the real world (e.g., shopping for meals, budgeting money, and doing their own laundry). Because many of the students have roommates, they are also honing skills in problem solving. The Resident Advisor (RA) doesn't supervise the students, but offers support with student issues as they arise. When needed, the RA helps students problem-solve to resolution, but does not solve problems for the students.

CLE students generally attend three to five independent living skills sessions per week, based on need. Being away from home means many students also need to rebuild their social networks. The Centers provide structured and student-driven social activities for the students multiple times per week. In addition, each CLE student has a Master's-level student mentor who is supervised by Center psychologists. The mentors have proven to be very valuable to the CLE students as they navigate the CLE.

After a question and answer period, Representative Ward thanked Ms. Stripling for her presentation.

There were no announcements. The next meeting date and time is to be determined.

Representative Ward adjourned the meeting.

Recording Secretary

_____10/19/2010
C. S. Weldon

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Minutes submitted and approved (Date)

Chairman, Representative Cam Ward