



Network for Inclusive Schooling

Creating positive change towards inclusive education for All.

MISSION & ACTION PLAN

2003 – 2004

December 3, 2003

Executive Committee: Jeffrey Cohen, Jan Colliton, Michael Peterson

Steering Committee: Sharon Berke (Berkley); Carolyn Das (Everyone Together Project), Ben Fox (Bagley Elementary, Detroit); Julie Grodin (Farmington), Mishael Hittie (Southfield), Marta Hampel (Plymouth-Canton), Norma Hernandez (Detroit), Caryn Ivey (Detroit), Laurie Lavins (Grosse Pointe), Mark Morawski (Farmington), Kathy Obrizak (Farmington), Sasha Roberts-Levi (Detroit), Lynne Tamor (West Bloomfield), Vitas Underys (Farmington), Julie Woodhams (Plymouth-Canton),

MISSION

- 1. We seek to promote inclusive schooling and teaching in Michigan.** By inclusive schooling we mean schools that include ALL children in heterogeneous classes learning together – students with mild to severe and multiple disabilities, gifted students, children from a wide range of racial and cultural backgrounds, and more. We commit to truly include all children together in effective learning.
- 2. Use the Whole Schooling frame work to guide our efforts so that inclusive schooling becomes part of the culture of the school, an integral part of all school improvement efforts.** The Five Principles of Whole Schooling describe a culture of schooling, a framework for organizing school improvement efforts, that puts inclusive schooling and teaching at the center of all school improvement efforts.
- 3. We seek to learn together by linking schools, teachers, principals, parents, and others.** We all have a long distance to go to have truly inclusive schools. To complete that journey, we need support and partnerships with one another. We commit to learning together to develop truly inclusive schools.

ACTION PLAN & PROGRESS NOTES

GOAL 1. IMPROVE INCLUSIVE SCHOOLING PRACTICES IN SCHOOLS.

Work to facilitate each school in the Network identifying goals for improving their practice related to inclusive schooling organized by the Five Principles of Whole Schooling. Identify and capture work in process in each school. This allows us to know and take credit for what we are doing as well as connect the work of individuals schools, teachers, and parents to the overall network. Known targeted objectives include the following.

1.1. Inclusive Schooling Development: work to increase inclusive schooling practices in schools and districts associated with the Network.

- a) **Plymouth – Canton.** Julie Woodhams and colleagues has formed an Inclusion Task Force to look at inclusive schooling in her district. Several elementary schools have been identified who are willing to work towards inclusive schooling.
- b) **Farmington.** Much work continues in the move towards inclusive schooling in this district. At William Grace Elementary, staff are continuing in efforts to include students with severe disabilities in classes, coordinate efforts of special education teachers, use reading and writing workshop to facilitate multi-level teaching, and have started 3 multi-age classes. Kenbrook Elementary is seeking to strengthen inclusive education in their building for the 2003-2004 school year. In many other schools in the district continued conversations and planning efforts are underway.
- c) **Detroit.** Bagley Elementary School in Detroit has committed to being an inclusive school and has a working committee of teachers with the support of the principal. Pershing High School is implementing inclusion of students with cognitive impairments as part of their new 9th Grade Academy being implemented as part of a Smaller Learning Communities grant. Cynthia King is a special education teacher who has helped facilitate this as part of the planning committee.
- d) **Network of inclusive educators of students with severe disabilities.** Vitas Underys of William Grace Elementary is working to form a group of teachers educating students with severe disabilities in general education classes.
- e) **Lincoln Consolidated.** Principal Carol McCoy and some of her teachers are interested in being involved to connect their school, Bessie Hoffman Elementary, a multi-age, fully inclusive school, to the work of the Network.

1.2. Innovations Network: facilitate networking and member to member consultation. The Network has established a goal that all members of the Steering Committee function as consultants related to inclusive schooling and the Six Principles of Whole Schooling to other schools. We also seek to stimulate sharing and learning visitations teacher to teacher, principal to principal across schools for learning purposes.

During 2004, Michael Peterson and Jeffrey Cohen will collaborate in develop a more systematic process for facilitating Networking that involves (1) capacity analysis within and across schools (where individuals and entire schools identify capacities, gifts, skills, or resources they have they would be willing to share with others; (2) documentation in a resource directory; and (3) making this available to people within and outside of the Network to facilitate sharing.

1.3 Membership Expansion: build and expand membership and involvement in the Network. Work to expand the Network to many other interested schools and school districts. Strategies include:

- a) Members contact and invite personally parents, teachers, and principals from other schools who may be interested.
- b) Invite students in classes at Wayne State University to participate in Network.
- c) Send a letter to all superintendents and special education directors in Michigan inviting them to be part of the Network and to engage in collaborative planning at a working ;/ learning meeting (see 2.1b below). Jeffrey Cohen and Jan Colliton.

1.4 Whole Schooling Renewal Work Group: organize a working group of individuals interested in using the principles of Whole Schooling to facilitate school reform.

Given the requirements of existing structures for schools (NCA, NCLB, Education YES!) There is a need to explore how Whole Schooling can be used to respond to structures that are required of schools. We are proposing a working group that can further develop the articulated process for Whole Schooling and directly connect it to these existing requirements.

Working committee: Jan Colliton, Michael Peterson, Katherine Obrizak, Mark Morawski, Lynne Tamor, Sasha Roberts-Levi, Norma Hernandez, Pat Williams, Pat Brumback, Jeffrey Cohen, and others.

Update: Decision has been made to delay the formation of this separate group and to incorporate discussion of these issues into Steering Committee meetings.

GOAL 2. FACILITATE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

2.1 Workshops and Conferences: provide a series of workshops and seminars related to inclusive schooling. We have provided numerous workshops and conferences . The following are presently planned for 2003- 2004. *We need an ongoing committee to develop and organize plans for these events.*

- a) **Reading and writing our way to mathematical understanding: *Strategies for teaching children of diverse abilities well together*** David and Phyllis Whitin, Wayne State University. [Farmington Training Center](#), October 9, 2003. This even t occurred with some 40 participants and was well received.

- b) **Inclusive Schooling Conference.** April 24th hold annual inclusive education conference with a focus on school administrators, and leadership to move towards inclusive schooling.

2.2 Professional Conference Presentations: members of the Network submit presentations to state and national conferences to share experiences in schools and information about the Network.

- a) **TASH (The Association of Persons with Severe Handicaps), 2003, Chicago.** Michael Peterson, Lynne Tamor, Jan Colliton, Mark Morawski, and others will present a one-day preconference on Whole Schooling. Other presentations are planned.
- b) **MEMPSPA (Michigan Elementary and Middle Schools Principals Association).** Mark Morawski. Mark made this presentation which was well received. Some 10 principles indicated an interest in exploring the Whole Schooling philosophy for their schools.
- c) **Michigan Council for Exceptional Children.**
- d) **Council for Exceptional Children.**

2.3 TASH: Group of Network members attend the TASH conference (www.tash.org) in Chicago, December 10 – 13, 2003.

GOAL 3. PARTNER WITH PARENTS.

3.1 Coordinating Initiatives: develop relationships with initiatives designed to support parents in being partners in change efforts towards inclusive schooling.

- a) **Coordinate and collaborate with the Everyone Together project.** This project funded by the Michigan Developmental Disabilities Council is to establish parent-based networks for inclusive education in the state to facilitate systems change towards inclusive schooling. Carolyn Das is the Steering Committee liaison for this project.

3.2 Individual Parent Support: provide support and networking for individual parents seeking inclusive education for their children. Chair: Jeffrey Cohen and others to be determined.

GOAL 4. DEVELOP AND SHARE INFORMATION.

The Network will continue to develop information and resources useful in promoting inclusive schooling. Strategies include the following:

4.1 Website: continue to build website for the Network and the Whole Schooling Consortium. The website will be further developed, new publications added, video clips added over the coming year.

4.2 Member contributions. Encourage teachers, parents, and others to document their experiences and learning and share these with others, including publishing on the website.

GOAL 5. EXPAND FOCUS ON INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITY TEACHER EDUCATION.

We will work to improve opportunities for teacher education students to understand inclusive schooling and teaching.

5.1 Student observations: university students engage in observations in Network schools. Students in courses taught by Michael Peterson will visit schools in the Network.

5.2 Course presentations: Network members make course presentations and engage in collaborative teaching with university faculty.

GOAL 6: ADVOCATE FOR EFFECTIVE EDUCATIONAL POLICIES.

Given problematic changes in IDEA and associated problems occurring with the No Child Left Behind Act there is a great need to take a stand for good practices based on the principles of Whole Schooling. In addition, we need to work with the state board and Michigan Department of Education to more effectively incorporate inclusive education into policies and school reform initiatives.

6.1 State Board of Education presentation on inclusive education. Lynne Tamor is working with a group that will make a presentation to the State Board on June 26, 2003.

6.2 Universal Education Task Force. In September of 2003, Superintendent of Schools, Tom Watkins, issued a memorandum directing the formation of a Universal Education Task Force to develop a report and present to the State Board of Education. Some members of the Network will be serving on this Task Force.

Respectfully submitted: Michael Peterson