

On April 17, 2013, Board Member Karen Brill asked the following questions regarding Board Agenda Item PSE 4 - Randee Gabriel - Professional Services Agreement Amendment. A response was prepared by the Division of Curriculum and Learning Support and the CAO.

QUESTIONS:

The Parents as Liaisons are providing families with information and guidance on how to access educational and community services.ensuring families have access to information, etc., yet no input into the PALS' evaluations come from the parents and families they serve. I understand the PALS also attend IEP meetings and they will not provide information to parents that the District does not want them to have - specifically, how to advocate for supports and accommodations the District does not want to provide. Further, I am told that the PALS will not assist the families in obtaining information they do not agree with philosophically. Please explain. Over the past two years, I received a plethora of complaints from parents in South County and western Boynton Beach and Lake Worth regarding their assigned PAL. Many of the countywide complaints come from the very entities listed as collaborative partners. Please explain the process utilized for hiring of the PALS and the requirements each PAL must meet. I particularly like Ms. Gabriel; however, I do not believe, based upon the continuous comments and complaints I receive, that this model for parent services has the effectiveness and objective outreach intended. Separate but related, please explain the role of the Florida Inclusion Network currently within the District.

Question

The Parents as Liaisons are providing families with information and guidance on how to access educational and community services. Ensuring families have access to information, etc., yet no input into the PALS' evaluations come from the parents and families they serve.

Response

The Department of ESE is in agreement and will create a parent survey that will evaluate the support provided by the PALS.

Question

I am told that the PALS will not assist the families in obtaining information they do not agree with philosophically. Please explain.

Response

The functions of the PALS are to build collaborative partnerships between parents and schools. Information on trainings, resources, consultations and attendance at IEP meetings are supports provided to parents. The PAL provides assistance to parents in the area of self advocacy in order to empower them to assist their children in accordance with IDEA requirements and the Procedural Safeguards afforded parents of students with disabilities. This enables to be equal participants in the IEP process.

Question

Please explain the process used for hiring of the PALS and the requirements that each PAL must meet?

Response

The position of PALS are advertised on the District website under the Department of ESE Parent Information and the FDLRS Parent Services Website. An automated robo call was also sent to all parents of children with disabilities advertising openings for the position of PAL. Applicants were directed to Marsha Kufel, Program Planners, FDLRS for questions and to schedule an interview.

The requirements for the position of PALS are that the applicant must be a parent of a child with a disability. Applicants were also required to have oral and written communication skills, written application responses and presentation during the interview process.

All parents who applied were interviewed by a team comprised of Marsha Kufel, Marla Phillips, District Resource Teacher and Randee Gabriel, Lead PAL. Uniform questions and rating scale was utilized with every applicant.

Question

Separate but related, please explain the role of the Florida Inclusion Network currently within the District.

Response

Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) is a FDOE Discretionary Statewide Project that has been supporting school districts for the past 15 years providing professional learning opportunities, consultation, information and support to instructional staff, administrators, para-professionals, families, and community members in order to promote inclusive practices for students with disabilities. Attached, please find additional information regarding the Florida Inclusion Network Services and Resources.

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