

Meeting Notes
LD@LAB
Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Attending: Lee Bloom, Colleen Grogan, Chris Nippert-Eng, Linda Projansky, Nancia Shawver, Mary Silver, Melissa Weber, Arlene Mays-Johnson, Martha Baggetto, Cathy Feldman, Alan Kasper, Marie Winters, Mumtaz Champsi, Julie Marie Lemon, and Paula Worthington

Paula welcomed new and returning parents and thanked Cathy Feldman, high school principal, for attending. No one volunteered to take notes, so Paula agreed to produce from memory after the fact (!).

Paula and Julie Marie summarized their August 25 meeting with David Magill, Carla Young, Beverly Biggs, Alexis Wright, Cathy Feldman, and Catie Bell. The meeting went well and offered a chance for our group and the administration to get acquainted. After the summary, there was some group discussion about the school's approach to serving students with learning differences.

Julie Marie and Cathy Feldman then discussed the high school learning consultant's position vacancy. Ms. Feldman stated that the job opening has been (or will shortly be) posted to the University's employment webpage and that though Lab wants to fill the position quickly, the school believes this is an important position and will wait for the right person. In the interim, the designated guidance counselor (by first letter of last name), is handling communication with teachers regarding accommodations. Any concerns can be taken to C. Feldman.

Paula and Julie briefly discussed the group's sample web page (put together by Paula and Irene Sherr). We will aim to get it revised and posted by our next meeting.

Melissa Weber presented and discussed a first draft of a "resources guide" which, when complete, can be distributed either online or in print to interested families. Sample items included in the guide were websites on learning issues; organizations; books; and so on. The group had a lively discussion about whether and/or how to include names of specific individual therapists, tutors, etc., as several people expressed concerns about the ethical, legal, and confidentiality issues raised if a resource guide "lists names" in any way, with or without any specific judgements attached. The group agreed that this issue was complex and could not be settled at present; consequently, the next draft of the document will not include the names of individual tutors, therapists, etc. Melissa encouraged all present to forward any items to her.

Julie gave a report on the PA meeting of September 12. She stated that Mr. Magill had mentioned meeting with our group in August and indicated that he welcomed the formation of this group. She also learned more about how our group can use the current PA structure to communicate with the school, post our webpage, and the like.

Paula next discussed possible future programs. For October, Paula stated that Irene Sherr and Mari Egan have agreed to contact Laura Thompson, social worker at the Hyde Park Day School, about coming to speak to our group. Ms. Thompson was involved with the start-up of a parent group at HPDS, and she is willing to share some of her expertise and experience with us. We will aim for an October date. For November, we would like to invite Carla Young, principal of the Nursery School/Kindergarten at Lab, to speak about the school's use of Mel Levine's *Schools Attuned* program. Melissa Weber and Chris Nippert-Eng agreed to contact Ms. Young to arrange

program format and dates. Marie Winters suggested another future discussion topic may be what other schools do in terms of serving students with learning differences. The group agreed that would be a useful topic, perhaps one to arrange for a winter meeting.

Chris Nippert-Eng led a discussion of the “alternative brochure” she and Colleen Grogan drafted. The draft is a response to the Lab school’s official brochure summarizing its policies and procedures for accommodating students with learning disabilities. After some discussion of how best to build on the draft, it was suggested that the draft be reworked so as to become a template for our own group’s vision of how the Lab school should serve LD students. Chris and Colleen agreed to tweak and edit with that aim in mind and will distribute a new draft when it is finished.

Other matters: Linda Projansky suggested that parents could use some practical “how-to” tips, such as “how to interview a prospective tutor or therapist,” or “what to expect from a staffing,” etc. The group agreed that some of these questions may be easily addressed in a simple “FAQ” format on line, while others might be good topics to discuss in future meetings. Colleen Grogan raised the issue of the University’s policy of tuition remission: in brief, faculty and staff receive a 50% tuition remission for children attending Lab, with the University paying Lab school the difference. The tuition remission is not portable to other schools, and some faculty and staff find their children do not thrive at Lab, especially (?) students with LD issues. The group agreed that this was a big issue but one that should not be discussed in the larger group meetings. People interested in this issue may contact Paula or Julie to be included in future discussions.

The group agreed to meet twice more this fall, tentatively on October 25 and November 29. These dates may change as we respond to scheduling conflicts for our programs.

Notes prepared by Paula Worthington.