

6-27-14

To: Employment First stakeholders
From: Statewide Employment First Coordinator Mike Maley
Re: Employment First: Educator Institute on Networking and Transition
(Please forward to your local partners & stakeholders)

Oregon Department of Education (ODE) held a series of trainings for teachers in the last two weeks of June. Titled the “Educator Institute on Networking and Transition,” the trainings aimed to provide an overview on the Governor’s Executive Order 13-04, the Employment First initiative, and related-employment services for students with intellectual and developmental disabilities (I/DD).

Trainings were held in Baker City, Salem, Springfield, Ashland, Oregon City, and Redmond. An additional make-up session for people who couldn’t make the other trainings will happen Aug. 7 in Seaside. Trainings were open to middle school and high school special education teachers and transition teachers and specialists. All trainings provided a basic overview of agencies that assist with the transition from school to employment or post-secondary education. All trainings included presentations from Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) and the Office of Developmental Disabilities Services (ODDS), as well as parent advocacy resources and transition-related curriculum.



Roberta Dunn of FACT Oregon gives a presentation to educators at the ODE Educator Institute on Networking and Transition.

(Photo: Lightflies)

At least one member of the Employment First team attended all the trainings. This message highlights the training held June 19 in Salem.

Sarah Drinkwater, assistant superintendent of ODE’s Office of Learning, opened with remarks reflecting on the importance of the Employment First initiative, and the new collaborations resulting

from the Memorandum of Understanding between ODE, ODDS, VR and the Oregon Council on Developmental Disabilities.

Next, Noelle Sisk, a parent and advocate who works with FACT Oregon, gave the keynote speech, followed by a presentation by Martha Dodsworth and Alan Roberts on “Vocational Rehabilitation 101.”

One of the presentations of the day was an overview of programs and services for families provided by Roberta Dunn, executive director of Family and Community Together (FACT). Dunn gave an inspiring talk that highlighted the important advocacy work that FACT conducts on behalf of parents and families around the state. Dunn stressed the importance of educators working with families to remove what she called “the scarlet D.”

“The medical model is deficits-based, and from an early age we focus on what is wrong with our children, what they can’t do,” she said. “FACT is about strengths-based parenting that refrains from a deficit-based message by instead focusing on what works for our children. We ask instead, what are their strengths, their passions, their gifts and talents?”

Dunn went on to outline some of the programs FACT offers, including the trainings and support it offers to families as Oregon’s federally-funded Parent Training and Information Center, the support it provides to families as Oregon’s state-funded Family Network in the tri-county Portland metro area, the Parent to Parent mentoring program (where parents can find help with issues and mentor one another), and other services available to families, such as Person-Centered Planning. For more information on FACT, go to <http://factoregon.org/>.

The training ended with an overview of ODDS services by Dana VanHaverbeke, and a curriculum review by Sally Simich and Heather Lindsey of ODE.

Thank you all for your continued involvement, support, and advocacy for services to individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities in Oregon. If you have comments or other questions, please email them to employment.first@state.or.us.

~ Mike

- A slideshow of photos from the Salem ODE training is available at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/dhsoregon/sets/72157645275782586/>