



Florida CASE Newsletter

Winter 2020

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SEASON'S GREETINGS FLORIDA CASE MEMBERS,



This is a very special time of the year. It provides many of us with some time to enjoy the company of family and friends that is often missing for the rest of the year. This holiday season, let us remember the reason we celebrate. While we take time to remember the love and grace we all are so thankful to receive, we should also take time to remember those less fortunate than us and take this opportunity to give back to our respective communities.

May this holiday season sparkle, shine, and fill your heart and home with many blessings. As another year draws to a close, most of you will be in the midst of preparations for this festive season.

As we prepare for the Winter break, here is A Recipe for a Happy Holiday:
A pinch of kindness

1 tsp. of peace

1 cup of happiness

A dash of joy

2 tbsp. of holiday spirit

Sprinkle with grace and love!

Warm regards,

Dr. Rosalind Hall



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"A Leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be." - Rosalynn Carter

A Special Welcome to Our New ESE Administrators

Laura Fogarty- Student Services Director, Clay
Melanie Saunders ESE Director-Clay
Dr. Martha H Von Mering- ESE Director, Flagler
Jill Rudd- ESE/SS Director- ESE Director, Franklin
Matina Pappalardo- ESE Director, Indian River
Hilary DeLuca- ESE Director, Osceola
Amanda Wiles- ESE Director, Volusia
Sharon Bartels- Wheeless- Student Services, Walton
Stephanie West- ESE Director, Walton
Kristen Markevich, ESE Director, South Tech High
Sabrina Lytle, ESE Director, Taylor
Vivian Bennett, ESE/SS Director, Glades
Michelle Barlow, Student Services, Santa Rosa
Lisa Estevez, ESE Director, Martin
Laura Vesga, ESE Director, PB Charter-KIPP Miami
Mandy Brock, ESE Director, Gilchrist

*As of July 1, 2020

Learning Agility
Empathy
Ability to delegate
Decision Making
Empower
Respect
Self-Awareness
Humility
Influence
Problem Solving



Bureau Chief Retirement



Judy White was with the Florida Department of Education for fourteen years, the last ten in BEESS, where she served in a variety of roles including secondary transition specialist, BRIC director, educational program director, senior director and finally, for the last five months, as chief. Judy has a B.A., a social work degree, and a master's degree in educational administration from Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, where she also worked for several years, leaving as Director of Experiential Education. In her retirement Judy plans to devote more time to Zonta International, an organization that she has been a proud member of for over twenty years, serving in various local, district and international positions, international travel (once safe) and completing two cookbooks she is in the process of writing.



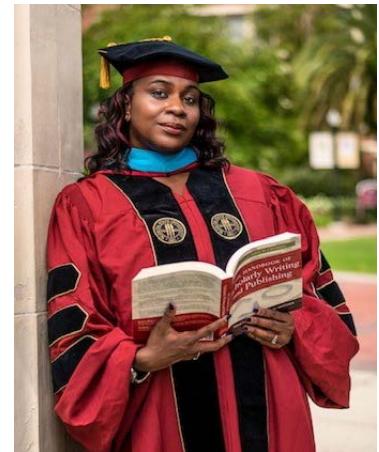
A Special Thank you and Well Wishes to
Judith White, Bureau Chief On Her Retirement

Welcome FDOE Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services New Leadership



Victoria Sears Gaitanis has been identified as the Incoming Bureau Chief for the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services within the Florida Department of Education. Ms. Gaitanis has more than 20 years of experience as a classroom teacher, serving students at every age, grade and ability level in classroom settings ranging from community based instruction to full inclusion. She has served as the state lead for students with sensory impairments; designed and lead state- and district-level trainings; worked with various stakeholders to advise and managed the revision of agency rules; additionally, she served as lead on several national and state boards whose work centered on inclusion, accessibility and continuous improvement. She previously led the Educator Preparation unit with the Bureau of Educator Recruitment, Development and Retention as a senior director. Most recently, she worked as the senior director and section administrator over the Dispute Resolution and Monitoring unit within the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services. Victoria holds a bachelor's degree in English Education and a master's degree in Special Education, Visual Disabilities from Florida State University.

Dr. Erin Sampson is the Deputy Bureau Chief of the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS) at the Florida Department of Education. Previously, Dr. Sampson served as the Senior Educational Program Director for the Instructional Support Services unit within the BEESS. Dr. Sampson's background includes servings as an ESE inclusion teacher and Reading Coach at a Title I school in Florida, a state program specialist with the Career and Adult Education division at the Florida Department of Education, and the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) Liaison for the state of Florida under the Student Support Services project. Dr. Sampson holds a Doctorate of Education in Educational Leadership with a graduate certificate in Program Evaluation and is certified in Elementary Education (K-6), ESE (K-12), ESOL Endorsed, and Reading Endorsed.



"Candy" Bars

Ingredients

$\frac{3}{4}$ C butter
 $\frac{1}{2}$ C brown sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ t salt
1 large egg
 $1 \frac{1}{2}$ t vanilla
2 C all-purpose flour
 $\frac{3}{4}$ C caramel sauce
 $\frac{1}{4}$ C toffee bits
 $\frac{1}{4}$ C broken pretzels
 $\frac{1}{2}$ C toasted coconut
4 oz. bittersweet chocolate

Directions

- Preheat oven to 375. Spray 13X9 inch baking pan with nonstick spray; line pan with foil, then spray foil.
- With mixer, beat butter, brown sugar and salt until creamy. Beat in egg & vanilla. With mixer on low speed, beat in flour. Transfer to prepared pan. Spread into even layer.
- Bake 25-30 minutes until deep golden brown around edges. Let cool.
- Spread crust with caramel sauce. Top with toffee bits, broken pretzels & toasted coconut. Drizzle with melted bittersweet chocolate. Chill to set.



National Council for Exceptional Children Virtual Conference

Welcome to CEC L.I.V.E.



Join us on March 8-13 for CEC's Learning Interactive Virtual Event (L.I.V.E.), featuring 700+ on-demand sessions, 3 keynote presentations, 30 live mainstage sessions, 400 poster videos, a series of pre-conference workshops, and more.

From the comfort and convenience of your home with reduced registration rates and flexible scheduling, CEC L.I.V.E. will bring you:

- Opening Keynote Presentation with Dr. Tyrone Howard, one of the country's premier experts on educational equity and access
- Two more exciting keynote presentations
- 30 live interactive sessions
- More than 700 pre-recorded sessions
- 400 poster videos, 150+ Teacher Slam presentations, and 40+ Research Data Blitz sessions
- Series of pre-conference workshops
- Technology Playground presenting Technology Demonstrations, Technology Implementation, and Make N' Take sessions
- All the FUN you expect from CEC Central and the Expo Hall, including prizes, drawings, swag, games, and more!



Maybe Christmas, he thought, doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas...perhaps...means a little bit more!

District Spotlight

Lake County School District, Lake Hills School

Where we started

Lake Hills School is the Exceptional Student Education Center School for the Lake County School District that serves 200 students with significant cognitive disabilities (SwSCD) in grades Pre-K through 12, as well as transition programs for post-high school students. **Dr. Robin Meyers** has been the school principal since 2008 and under her direction Lake Hills School has been recognized for leading the charge in teaching Access Points to SwSCD through a shared vision, high expectations, dedication, and teamwork of the Lake Hills staff.



**Lake Hills
School**

In 2007 Florida Standards Access Points became the means through which students with a significant cognitive disability could access the general education curriculum and as a result, instruction for SwSCD has been changing at a rapid pace. Before we began our journey to transitioning to teaching academics, we were at a plateau of sorts. Lake Hills School had many well-established routines and rhythms for working with and caring for students with significant disabilities, yet we knew there was something more we could do for our students and more importantly do with our students.

To satisfy the Access Points directives nearly 13 years ago, we developed a comprehensive, long-term plan to transition to teaching academics. We began the change slowly, because it took a lot of work, a lot of creative thought, and a lot of persistence to gain buy-in from everyone in the school. However, once the spark took hold, the new fire spread to where we were ready to change how and what we taught the students.

What changed along the way

The journey began in 2008 with just one goal in mind: how to teach reading to students with significant cognitive disabilities. We did not know where to start and quickly realized that we lacked training on how to teach reading when for so many years our focus was not on teaching academics. Fortunately, we happened upon the research of Diane M. Browder, PhD (Distinguished Professor Emerita of Special Education at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte). Dr. Browder's research became the foundation of our instructional platform for teaching reading and we felt we were ready to start our journey of teaching academics to SwSCD. After some time, we were able to add focused math instruction. Next up--science, social studies, and writing.

We found that even though there is an abundance of educational resources out there, we constantly came up against the same struggle; there are not many resources designed specifically for students with significant cognitive disabilities. We constantly worked to create new materials to present to students that gave them access to the grade level content and standards, but at a level modified to meet their unique and diverse learning needs. We discovered that the use of technology, AAC, and communication is critical in taking student learning to the next level. We have painstakingly created many different curriculum maps, blueprints, and scope and sequences to provide our students with a high quality, standards-based comprehensive curriculum. We have found great materials to use and made our own. We have revised and tried many new things when necessary, and have never been

afraid to start over or try just one more time until we get it right. We have learned that when we finally “get it right”... well that is the time to set our expectations even higher because the learning is never done.



Literacy & Equity

Where we are now

We always want equity for our students. We know literacy is the key to all learning. We are now in a place where we are increasing the intensity and focus of instructing students in literacy- especially reading, writing, and communication.

We have spent countless hours deciding the best curriculum map to follow for our students. However, we realized the need to consider an important element from general education - our district literacy block. By examining this literacy block and tailoring it for our student population, we have been able to evaluate and improve how we are teaching reading and literacy. This has prompted a deep dive into focusing on teaching all the components of reading well, not just the ones that come easily. What came easily and focused upon was reading and listening comprehension. However, gaining information from that text was always in a supported method. It was not teaching students to think critically, read more independently, or write down their own thoughts and responses.

We are currently focusing on strategies to teach phonics and phonemic awareness to students who may not be able to see, hear, or respond verbally. It is a very fine art to do so, because typical methods of interaction in these activities do not work. A student can't always verbally tell you the sound a letter makes, or write a CVC word with a paper and pencil, but they still learn these concepts with the right strategies and thinking outside the box. This creative thinking and the use of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) principles is essential to finding different ways to present knowledge in multisensory ways, and providing multiple methods for students to demonstrate learning. As a school, we have learned and been inspired by Project CORE from UNC Chapel Hill and Comprehensive Literacy for All by Dr. Karen Erickson and Dr. David Koppenhaver.

We are also focusing on strategies to teach students to communicate their thoughts, opinions, and ideas. This comes with an increased push to focus on communication strategies and teaching writing to our students. We are continuously working to help students have access to the alphabet, create writing pieces, and have daily authentic writing opportunities.

Good instruction is just that- good instruction. However, we must be constantly evolving, innovative, and creative on how we use the same instructional principles for our unique population. For example, phonemic awareness and phonics are critical skills to master when learning how to read. How that learning journey looks for typically developing students may be drastically different than the journey for students with significant cognitive disabilities. We need to take the same map for student learning, but get there on a different path or in a different vehicle. We may take a longer route, but ultimately we are heading toward the same destination. Our goal is the same as for any student or any school, which is to give students the tools and skills for literacy. Using the best teaching strategies, patience, and persistence is the key.



LAKE COUNTY SCHOOLS

Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities

What We Are About

Florida Center for Students with
UNIQUE ABILITIES

What is FCSUA and why was it established?

The Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Program Act (FS1004.6495) established Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs (FPCTP), funding for scholarships for students to attend approved programs, FPCTP start-up and enhancement grants, and established the Florida Center for Students with Unique Abilities (FCSUA) at the University of Central Florida. FCSUA is charged with implementation of the Act in three primary ways: (a) facilitate application and approval of their postsecondary education program that serves students with intellectual disabilities as a FPCTP, (b) provide scholarship awards to students attending an institution's approved FPCTP, and (c) provide grant funding to foster new and/or enhance existing postsecondary education programs. Additionally, the Center is responsible for disseminating information to stakeholders, particularly students with disabilities and their families about education programs and resources available at eligible institutions. Each year FCSUA submits an annual report to the state on evaluation information regarding FPCTPs and student outcomes. (2019 - 2020 Annual Report)

What are FPCTPS?

Florida Postsecondary Comprehensive Transition Programs serve students with intellectual disabilities at universities, state colleges and technical colleges. These programs focus on employment outcomes, meaningful credentials, and industry certifications in inclusive settings.

Where are these programs located?

There are over 20 college campuses with FPCTPs in Florida. Currently the programs have over 150 students enrolled. FCSUA will be hosting a FPCTP College Showcase in January. Additional information will be posted on our website.

Universities	State Colleges	Technical Colleges
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Florida Atlantic University – Jupiter and Boca Raton• University of Central Florida – Orlando• Southeastern University – Lakeland• Florida International University – Miami• Florida Gulf Coast University – Ft. Myers• University of South Florida – St. Petersburg	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Tallahassee Community College – Tallahassee• College of the Florida Keys – Key West and Upper Keys• Santa Fe College – Gainesville• Indian River State College – Ft. Peirce and Vero Beach• St. Petersburg College – St. Petersburg• Broward College – Ft. Lauderdale and Coconut Creek	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Robert Morgan Educational Center and Technical College – Miami• McFatter Technical College – Ft. Lauderdale• Sheridan Technical College – Hollywood• Lively Technical College – Tallahassee• Lee County Technical Colleges – Ft. Myers and Cape Coral• Okaloosa Technical College – Ft. Walton Beach• Orange Technical College Westside – Winter Garden

Florida Center for Students with UNIQUE ABILITIES

Why is this important to you, as a CASE member?

Students who enroll in FPCTPs within one year of leaving high school are counted as students who enroll in higher education and will improve your data for Indicator 14! Students and families wanting to pursue further education after FAPE ends have something to set their eyes on! Which in turn assist students to develop meaningful postsecondary goals in their transition plans, Summary of Performance (SOP), and improve district compliance data for Indicator 13. Students are empowered to continue their education and pursue their dreams.

The FCSUA is partnering with secondary education public and private schools serving students in grades 9 -12 to start College and Career Transition (CCT) Clubs. FCSUA provides program resources to support a CCT Club sponsor and club activities. The purpose of CCT Clubs is to increase awareness of FPCTP opportunities and help students with intellectual disabilities prepare for and access these opportunities across Florida. The CCT Clubs are inclusive which means the student membership must adequately represent students with intellectual disabilities (InD), students with disabilities other than InD, and students without disabilities. CCT Clubs prepare all students for inclusive settings in higher education and careers.

The CCT Clubs provide an opportunity for students to explore different careers and how to get there. The clubs are based on achieving student learning outcomes in developing postsecondary education goals. The student learning outcomes include identifying careers, identifying a pathway to achieve the goal, identifying postsecondary institutions that offer programs aligned with the career goals, and self-advocacy skills. Activities supporting these outcomes include exploring career opportunities, attending college fairs, touring colleges that offer FPCTPs and other programs, interviewing skills, completing college applications and FAFSA form.

Local and private schools may apply for CCT Club program supports with FCSUA in the Spring. The application is found on our website, https://fcsua.org/K_clubs.php. To be eligible the school must serve students in grades 9 -12, including students with intellectual disabilities. There must be a designated school administrator to provide oversight as with any other club sponsored or operated by the school. The school principal must approve the application for Program Resources and in so doing assures that the CCT Club will be implemented and managed per all applicable state and local school board rules and regulations.

How can you get involved?

Spread the word! Let parents know of these exciting opportunities for their children with intellectual disabilities. Join us at our first FPCTP College Showcase in January. Additional information will be posted on our website, <https://fcsua.org/index.php>. Help us expand programs in your district. Contact us for more information about the opportunities available and how to get involved in starting a FPCTP at higher education institutions in your community. fcsua@ucf.edu



EQUALITY
FLORIDA
ACTION, INC.



BUILDING SCHOOL CULTURE Respect & Inclusion For All

Ian Siljestrom is the Safe and Healthy Schools Associate Director for Equality Florida. He is responsible for fighting the extensive risk factors, which disproportionately affect our LGBTQ youth in school including: bullying, homelessness, suicide, and HIV transmission. He will be working directly with school districts to assist in the implementation of professional development and comprehensive best practices to ensure the empowerment of all students' identities.

Previous to joining Equality Florida, Ian worked directly with senior leadership in Duval County Public Schools to create an in-depth training for teachers and administrators to ensure they had all the tools and knowledge needed to support their LGBTQ youth. Ian also taught for several years in a Title 1 elementary school in Jacksonville, Florida as a 5th grade science teacher. In his classroom, he was dedicated to creating an inclusive environment for all students, while practicing culturally responsive pedagogy. These efforts resulted in Ian eventually becoming grade level chairperson and co-chair on the school's STEAM committee. He is also a Teach for America alumnus. Ian has presented to School Boards, Superintendents, school districts, organizations across the state. Most recently, Ian presented to our FASA Equity committee and it was an amazing presentation! I subsequently invited Ian to present to my school counselors and it was well received. He will return to present to our school administrators and superintendent.

Equality Florida provides a wealth of free webinars and professional development for educators, administrators, and mental health professionals to be able to understand how to best support LGBTQ+ youth. You can access Equality Florida's full selection of free webinars by visiting eqfl.org/webinar

Ian can be reached at ian@equalityflorida.org if you would like to simply have a conversation and/or invite him to speak in your district.





Please complete CASE Membership Survey
no later than Friday, December 10th.
Your voice Matters!

November Membership Strategy – **50% off a CEC Membership with CASECares!**

The role of administrators in supporting and retaining teachers is so important. One of the best resources for supporting your teachers is helping them become members of CEC. With so many resources, professional development offerings, and networking opportunities, it's a great source of both technical and moral support. Many of us "grew up" with CEC, have been members for years, and know the value of finding your professional home. Through a collaboration with CEC, you can now provide a teacher, or other staff personnel, with a new CEC membership at 50% off! Not only is this a great way to provide them with resources, but it's also a way to show them you are invested in their professional growth. Members who sign up through this opportunity will also receive special outreach from CEC and an invitation for a reduced rate to attend the virtual CEC convention. Use code CASE50 for 50% off any membership category through December 31, 2020.

For more information, please visit: <https://exceptionalchildren.org/CASEcares>

*When you choose joy,
you feel good and when
you feel good, you do
good and when you do
good it reminds others of
what joy feels like and
it just might inspire
them to do the same.*



Save the Date



April 12-14, 2021

FDCDT "Visions" Conference
Lake Buena Vista
Face to Face OR Virtual

May 5-7, 2021

Healthy Minds/Healthy Future –
Sponsored by Florida APSE
Sawgrass Marriott, Ponte Verde

June 7-9, 2021

Florida CASE Summer Institute
Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa,
Bonita Springs

June 9-10, 2021

ISRD Summer Institute
Hyatt Regency Coconut Point Resort and Spa,
Bonita Springs
Face to Face OR Virtual