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The Navajo

NETWORK NEWS

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This is the first issue of **Navajo Network News**, an informational newsletter about the Comprehensive System of Personnel Development (CSPD) for BIA-funded school staff on the Navajo Nation. CSPD comes in many forms, including ongoing in-service, specialized training, technical assistance and college-level classes. Last winter, the University of New Mexico, Center for Development and Disability, was funded by the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA)/Office of Indian Education Programs (OIEP)/Center for School Improvement (CSI) to be part of a network of colleges and universities nationwide providing professional development in Indian country. We are pleased to be joined by Northern Arizona University/Institute for Human Development, to carry out this work. Last year we began meeting with Education Line Office Staff, CSI, school principals, school board members, Diné Division of Education leaders, and others who wanted to share ideas about how best to support professional development for Navajo Special Educators. Also, we have been asked to provide additional supports to the schools currently in corrective action. At present, we have worked with each of the five Agencies on the Navajo Nation to begin training, or to discuss plans for training this school year. We have established an office at UNM/Gallup, which allows us to be closer to the Navajo Nation and also linked to higher education resources in the area. Contact us...we look forward to hearing your ideas about how to support your work with students on the Navajo Nation.



WHO WE ARE

METTE PEDERSEN is the Director of the Early Childhood and Specialized Personnel Development at the Center for Development and Disability at the University of New Mexico. She has worked in schools on the Navajo Nation as both a special education and elementary education teacher and has facilitated interagency agreements between the Navajo Nation and public school districts on the Reservation, supporting inclusion of young children with disabilities in early childhood settings. She oversees training, technical assistance, research and direct services for young children. She may be contacted at: mpedersen@salud.unm.edu or by phone at: 505/272-1040.

DAISY THOMPSON is the Education and Development Manager for the CSPD Project with the Navajo Nation. A fluent Navajo speaker, Daisy has worked as a teacher, administrator, faculty member, and consultant for educational programs across the Navajo Nation for many years. She has presented internationally about education services for Navajo children with and without disabilities and is sought out for her knowledge of application of federal and state regulations to educational programs, including special education. She may be contacted by phone at: 505/726-6301.

DIANE LENZ, of partnering Institute for Human Development (IHD) at Northern Arizona University, has worked on IHD evaluation teams and in early intervention service and training through 1999. In 2000, a Kennedy Fellowship in public policy, and the opportunity to work for 18 months as a staffer in the United States Senate, influenced her current interest in policy and legislation. Today, Diane works in a variety of capacities at IHD and also provides training and technical assistance expertise to the BIA-funded schools on the Navajo Nation through this CSPD Project. She may be contacted at: Diane.Lenz@NAU.edu or by phone at: 928/523-7040.

TRAINING

The CSPD efforts of UNM/NAU with Bureau-funded schools on the Navajo Nation will expand the Policy Development Academies offered last year in Ft. Defiance and Western Agencies, with another Academy planned for Chinle Agency, this fall. In addition, ongoing training with residential staff from Eastern Agency is scheduled throughout this academic year where participants can earn college credit. Check out our website at: <http://cdd.unm.edu/EC/cspd> for more and continuing information about training opportunities on the Navajo Nation for BIA-funded school staff.



PARENT RIGHTS VIDEO

Together with the Diné Division of Education, the UNM/NAU CSPD Project is disseminating the Navajo language parents' rights video and audio tape to every BIA-funded school on the Navajo Nation. The *Special Educational Rights for Parents of Children with Disabilities* booklet and *Special Education Dispute Resolution Packet*, both produced by BIA/OIEP/CSI, will accompany the video. Look for a copy of the video, audio tape, and booklets coming to your school. Contact us at (505) 272-6988 if you would like or need additional copies. Also, the Navajo language parents' rights video is available on our website at: <http://cdd.unm.edu/EC/cspd>.





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Dr. Robert Pasternack, Assistant Secretary of Education, U.S. Department of Education, Addresses ELO Summer Institute— July 11, 2003

- Obtaining highly qualified teachers who use strong instructional strategies;
- Buying and using sound instructional materials based on what works with children in Indian country;
- Reduction of paperwork requirements; and
- Support for Early Intervention.

Dr. Robert Pasternack visited Albuquerque on July 11 to address the Education Line Office staff from across the country during the ELO Summer Institute on Special Education, sponsored by CSI. Dr. Pasternack's address to the ELO staff included a review of the President's New Freedom Initiative for people with disabilities that includes jobs, home ownership, transportation, assistive technology, and mental health supports. In addition, the Assistant Secretary identified two key indicators (Placement in the Least Restrictive Environment and Exit Information such as graduation and dropout rates) the U.S. Office of Education will be focusing on as it conducts monitoring in the states. As you know, the BIA/OIEP is considered one of the State Education Agencies.

When asked about the unique need to build hope and a future for students in the Bureau system, Pasternack referred to the literature that describes importance of fostering resiliency among the young. Being or finding role models, being that caring adult in a child's life, and communicating clear messages of "You are someone", "We have high standards", and "We are compassionate" were Dr. Pasternack's final words to the group.

In responding to questions from the audience, Dr. Pasternack said the top priorities or ideas for the Bureau include:

For more information about the New Freedom Initiative, log on to:
<http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/freedominitiative>

For more information about the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services, log on to:
<http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/>

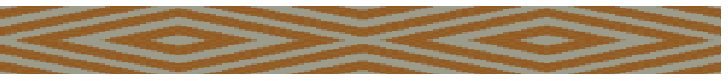
Functional Assessment and Behavior Problems Mette Pedersen

objectivity and approach a problem behavior systematically rather than just reacting.

Challenging behaviors among students can come in many forms that interfere with learning for that student or those around him. Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBA) provides a variety of ways to look at the behavior itself as well as the environment in which it is occurring, the first steps before considering interventions. Ryan, Halsy and Matthews, in *Using Functional Assessment to Promote Desirable Student Behavior in Schools* (**Teaching Exceptional Children**, May/June 2003, pp. 8-15), describe FBA and the approach to gathering information about behaviors, assessing the environment in which they occur, and investigating the functions the behavior might serve (getting something desirable; escaping or avoiding the undesirable). Several states now mandate use of FBA before trying a significant behavioral intervention.

For more information about this, and other information about functional assessment and behavioral disorders, check out the May/June 2003 issue of **Teaching Exceptional Children**, or contact Mette (505/272-1040; mpedersen@salud.unm.edu) or Daisy (505/726-6301) for a copy.

FBA leads to exploration of solutions and evaluation of results, critical to designing successful interventions. Ryan, et.al., provide guidance in conducting a Functional Behavioral Analysis, including questions to ask as a team, and criteria for a good operational definition. FBA helps focus on the behavior and what we can change within the learning environment rather than attributing behavioral and academic difficulties to something within the student. It helps one maintain



American Indian Parent Network

The PACER Center (www.pacer.org), an organization for parent training and information about disabilities and located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, has launched the American Indian Parent Network, for Indian parents of children and adolescents with or at-risk for Emotional or Behavioral Disorders.

Parents and others are invited to receive PACER's newsletter and to join the American Indian mailing list. For more information, log on to www.pacer.org or call 1-952-838-9000 (Voice); 1-952-838-0190 (TTY), or write to:

*American Indian Parent Network
PACER Center, Inc.
8161 Normandale Boulevard
Minneapolis, MN 55437-1044*

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