

South Plains Closing the Gaps P-16 Coalition
Hosted by South Plains College, Levelland Campus
Thursday, January 25, 2007

Minutes

The meeting was called to order by Dr. Sheryl Santos at 12:05 p.m. She and Stephen John, Vice President for Institutional Advancement for South Plains College welcomed all the attendees. VP John stated that this meeting was the first of more regional meetings of the coalition planned outside of the Lubbock area in the hopes of engaging more partners. Dr. Santos distributed a letter to the coalition identifying changes contemplated by the State Board for Educator Certification (SBEC). She is planning to send a letter to SBEC urging caution and dialogue before making changes to the middle level certification process. A copy of the letter she distributed is attached. She asked coalition partners for a show of hands in support of her letter to SBEC. The majority of participants raised their hands. Dr. Santos indicated that more information would be sent out via the email list of participants and urged partners to send letters under their own institution voicing their concerns.

Mr. David Vasquez, co-chair of the coalition updated the participants with regard to coalition updates specifically the following:
Coalition Meeting with Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board in Austin on September 26th. Commissioner Paredes was very impressed with coalition efforts in our region and wrote a letter of support to the coalition. Copies were distributed to participants. Mr. Vasquez reported that coalition efforts were very much in line with the THECB initiatives. He reported that Mayor David Miller of Lubbock had facilitated a strategic planning session during the Closing the Gaps Education Summit held in November. The vision, mission and goals of the coalition were addressed with the following outcomes:

Vision

Calling people to their highest purpose

Mission

Improving the quality of life through education

Goals

1. Engage new and existing partners in the vision and mission of the coalition
2. Emphasize early childhood education as the foundation for learning
3. Identify and promote best practices that insure successful transitions from one level of learning to the next, P-16.

Activities where partner participation was needed were addressed:

A. Region 17 Conference for High School Seniors - Holly Lee from Region 17 invited partners to assist with the program content for the conference planned on April 17-18. Already about 200 seniors are expected to attend. Holly distributed a sign up form. Partners may design a session, participate in an information fair, assist with lunch costs or just help monitor the students since very few school personnel will be on hand to accompany the students. Various partners signed up and gave Holly their forms. If

anyone is interested in helping, please contact Holly Lee. Her email is listed on the attached list.

B. Fall Education Summit for 2007 is being planned. Janie Ramirez reported that Sarah Allen, the regional P-16 Coordinator for the THECB, would be chairing the Programming Subcommittee and asked for coalition partners to sign up to serve on that committee. Raiders Rojos and FBLA students from Lubbock High School will coordinate the fundraising, exhibitor and decorations committees. Interested partners that want to serve on the Steering Committee or any subcommittees for the Education Summit are encouraged to contact Janie Ramirez. Programming Subcommittee meetings will be held in Feb, April, June, Aug, Sept, Sept, and October.

C. Groundhog Shadow Day - Jill Berset reported that over 1500 students were signed up to participate in the Feb 1 annual event coordinated by South Plains TechPrep. This is a tremendous mentoring opportunity for students and Jill thanked coalition partners that assist with the program every year.

Dr. Santos introduced the Spotlight program called STEP₂, a program funded by a grant from The CH Foundation. Here is a copy of her comments: *In 2004, when the Associates of Arts in Teaching Program was approved by the coordinating board, Texas Tech and South Plains College embarked on a collaboration to create a pipeline for students wanting to become teachers through the signing of an articulation agreement.*

Recognizing that students from a community college setting might face special challenges in transferring to a university setting, the College of Education proactively sought out private funding to meet the needs of the students. Our development officer for the college of Education, Dr. Judy Simpson, successfully obtained a grant from the CH Foundation for a pilot program aptly named STEP 2. The grant specifically serves transfer students from South Plains College that have completed their AAT degree. The first cohort of SPC students entered the Teacher Education Program in the College of Education in Fall 2005 and this semester are completing the final stage of the program with the completion of their Student Teaching component. STEP 2 has provided these students with support services as well as financial benefits to assist them in their preparation to pass the state certification exams. Many of them have already taken and passed their state certification exams. Additionally, through the Helen Devitt Jones Foundation, our development officer has secured funds for a scholarship endowment totaling one million dollars for scholarships earmarked for transfer students. The first awards from this endowment were awarded this past fall. The coordinator of STEP 2 is Janie Ramirez.

Janie presented Annette Smith, the AAT Faculty Instructor from SPC with a display banner and literature rack for use at South Plains College to help promote the AAT and College of Education partnership for teacher preparation. She reported that transfer students from the AAT held a higher GPA than traditional students. AAT and STEP 2 Brochures and teacher degree plans for EC-4 Bilingual, ESL, Special Education, 4-8 Math/Science and Language Arts as well as TTU literature from the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid will also be included in the rack to assist with recruitment to TTU and specifically into the AAT program. Mrs. Smith thanked all the SPC and TTU representatives that have helped get the AAT program off the ground. Over thirty

SPC and TTU representatives were in attendance to recognize the spotlight program. The TTU Office of Admissions is on the SPC campus every week and observes office hours in the Counseling Center from 10:00 a.m.-1:00 p.m. every Monday and Tuesday. The TTU Student Financial Aid office also observes these hours every other week on Monday and Tuesday.

Following announcements from coalition partners, Janie asked partners to suggest and perhaps offer to host future meetings of the coalition. Wayland Baptist has offered to host the next meeting sometime in March. More information will be provided as soon as details are finalized. Frenship ISD in Wolfforth and South Plains TechPrep at the Reese Center are also interested in hosting a meeting. If any other partners with offices in surrounding communities would like to host a coalition meeting and invite agencies from those communities to become partners, this is how we will achieve goal number 1 and expand our field of reach as well as our clout in Austin. Interested partners should contact Janie Ramirez to get on the calendar for the year. Meetings are slated for the following months with special attention to avoid major scheduling conflicts. If you know of any major scheduling conflicts coming up in March (besides Spring break) May, July, September and November, please let Janie know.

The meeting adjourned at 1:15 p.m.