

Project for Parents Engaged in Advocating for Change in Education (PEACE)



A six-month project for emerging parent leaders living in Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Fulton, Franklin, Greene, Huntingdon, Indiana, and Somerset Counties

Co-sponsored by **Pennsylvania Deaf-Blind Initiative**

Supported by funds from the State Personnel Development Grant from the Office of Special Education Programs, U.S. Department of Education



The PEAL Center is an organization of parents of children with special health care needs and disabilities reaching out to assist other parents and professionals.

The PEAL Center is actively recruiting parents who are interested in becoming informed collaborators in educational reform at the local and state level. The perspective of family members has played a historical role in creating change in educational programming for children with disabilities. The family voice is critical to insuring that educational reforms proposed at the administrative level are responsive to the needs of children with disabilities and their family's visions for the future. Parents need knowledge of research based information on current educational issues to empower them to become equal partners in discussions and groups addressing this reform agenda.

The goal of the Project for PEACE is to provide parents with the information that they need to be informed and active partners in the educational reform efforts proposed at the state and local levels. PEAL will give you the tools you need to be an active advocate for change in your region.

Participants will:

- Gain knowledge and understanding about educational policy and roles of professionals
- Increase communication and advocacy skills
- Develop leadership skills
- Expand network of colleagues with similar focus
- Plan and collaborate on various PEACE projects

Topics to be covered: In response to the Pennsylvania initiative *Improving Student Results: A Focus on Highly Qualified School Personnel*, the following topics will be covered with a focus on how they impact student participation in the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE):

- Changing school psychologists roles to support students with disabilities in general education

- Rethinking the role of paraeducators
- Preparing education leaders to design schools that welcome students with disabilities and plan for their success.
- Preparing high school special educators to use proven instructional strategies to improve student achievement
- Reforming special education teacher certification so teachers are more effective with the age group they teach
- Ensuring students who are deaf and hard of hearing have interpreters who can skillfully provide access to spoken instruction

Your commitment: You are committing to participate in all training sessions including an overnight retreat in New Stanton and the PEAL Conference in Pittsburgh. Dates and times are listed below. PEAL offers a mileage stipend to cover travel expenses, provides refreshments at the sessions and pays for hotel accommodations (with a shared hotel room) for the retreat and conference.

- Participate in all training sessions detailed in #6 below.
- You are committing to take the knowledge you gain from the project and use your newly learned skills to benefit others.

Who should apply: Parents of children with disabilities who are looking to make a difference in the current educational system. Those who are interested in improving their skills and knowledge to establish partnerships with educators to create systemic change in these state initiatives should apply. Parents who live in Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fayette, Fulton, Franklin, Green, Huntingdon, Indiana, and Somerset counties are invited to apply. Applications from parents from other nearby counties will be considered if there is room.

Project for PEACE Application

1. Personal Information

Name: _____
Address: _____
City/State/Zip: _____
Home phone, including area code: _____
Work phone, including area code: _____
Email: _____

2. Please provide us with some more details about your child.

Your child's age _____

Please check the label(s) that the school district has assigned to your child:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> ADD/ADHD | <input type="checkbox"/> Gifted | <input type="checkbox"/> Specific Learning Disability |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Autism | <input type="checkbox"/> Mental Retardation | <input type="checkbox"/> Speech Language Impairment |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf-Blindness | <input type="checkbox"/> Multiple Disabilities | <input type="checkbox"/> Suspected/Undiagnosed |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Deaf/Hearing Impaired | <input type="checkbox"/> No IDEA Disability | <input type="checkbox"/> Traumatic Brain Injury |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developmental Delay (EC) | <input type="checkbox"/> Orthopedic Impairment (Physical) | <input type="checkbox"/> Visual Impairment (including Blindness) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Emotional Disturbance | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Health Impairment | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

3. What skills and interests do you have that make you a good candidate for the Project for PEACE?

4. Please check topics that are of interest to you, and add your thoughts on possible topics.

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Disability History | <input type="checkbox"/> Organizing for Change | <input type="checkbox"/> Conflict resolution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Changing your personal story into a policy story | <input type="checkbox"/> Healthcare Law | <input type="checkbox"/> Education Law |

Suggestions for additional topics:

5. One of the goals of this project is to provide training to parents to allow them to be active participants in educational reform groups. How do you plan to use your skills after the completion of the project?

6. The Project for PEACE requires full participation in the following activities:

- Two day training in New Stanton, PA; Friday, Oct. 29 (6 to 9 p.m.) and Saturday, Oct. 30 (9 a.m. to 4 p.m.) PEAL will pay for a shared hotel room on Oct. 29 and mileage to and from the hotel for this retreat. PEAL will assign participants a room mate. You can opt to pay for half of you room if you want private accommodations.
- Two 3-hour evening training sessions held in Johnstown Wednesday, Nov. 17 and Wednesday, March 28 from 6 to 9 p.m.
- Two conference calls via telephone connection on Tuesday, Jan. 25 and Tuesday, March 1
- A full-day workshop on Saturday, Feb. 19 from 9 am. to 4 p.m. Johnstown
- Attend the PEAL Inclusive Education conference in Pittsburgh on Monday, April 11 and Tuesday, April 12. PEAL will pay for a shared hotel room on Sunday, April 10 and Monday, April 11. You may request another PEACE participant or PEAL will assign participants to a room mate.
- Continue to utilize the information and leadership skills to be the voice of parents in educational reform beyond the completion of the project.

Are you able to commit to ALL required activities? Yes No

If not, please indicate why the selection committee should still consider your application.

Project for PEACE Application (continued)

7. Please tell us how you heard about this project.

Application must be received by the PEAL Center office by Friday, October 15, 2010

Cut on dotted line and mail this completed application in a separate envelope to:

Melissa Allen
State Personnel Development Grant (SPDG) Coordinator
PEAL Center
1119 Penn Avenue, Suite 400
Pittsburgh, PA 15222-4221

OR email your numbered responses to the application questions to:
mallen@pealcenter.org

Persons requiring accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), please call Melissa Allen, 412-281-4404 x13 or 1-866-950-1040 x13 to discuss needed accommodations.

OR fax the application to 412-281-4408

Selected Applicants will be notified by Wednesday, October 20, 2010 of their acceptance into the project.