

July 18, 2018

To: Collaborative Members and Associates

From: Lauren Katzman, Executive Director

Subject: Fall 2018 Member Meeting, *Inclusive Practices: Belonging, Embracing, Sharing, and Celebrating!* – Invitation to Participate and Submit a Presentation Proposal

Invitation to Participate

[Registration is now open](#) for our Fall 2018 Member Meeting hosted by Broward County Public Schools in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. The meeting will be held at The Westin Beach Resort Fort Lauderdale from November 14-16. The theme for this meeting is *Inclusive Practices: Belonging, Embracing, Sharing, and Celebrating!*

We know that inclusive practices work. Research, legal guidance, and the experiences of many students, families, and educators confirm the benefits of educating students with disabilities with their non-disabled peers. In fact, research finds that inclusive practices benefit both students with and without disabilities and there is no evidence that fully self-contained placements provide positive outcomes. Inclusive practices are even a focus, as seen in UNESCO's Salamanca Statement signed by 92 countries and 25 organizations stating that that "those with special educational needs must have access to regular schools."

Even with what we know, there remains a significant need to implement the practice of educating students in their least restrictive environment, and the need is more pronounced for students in culturally and linguistically diverse populations. There is also pushback on inclusive practices in the wake of incidents of school violence. As leaders in special education, what can we share with each other to help increase the practice and improve the quality of inclusive practices?

Call for Presentations: *Inclusive Practices: Belonging, Embracing, Sharing, and Celebrating!*

This call for presentations focuses on a variety of potential presenters (leaders, teaching and learning staff, professional learning communities, family & communities) with the meeting themes (inclusive practices: belonging, embracing, sharing, and celebrating).

District presentations for this meeting will focus on inclusive practices, including what has worked and what are the barriers. We need to learn from each other's successes and challenges, so please do not think that your district needs to have everything figured out to present! Engage your colleagues in finding solutions by [submitting your presentation here](#).

Presentations for *Inclusive Practices: Belonging, Embracing, Sharing, and Celebrating!* might address some of the following questions. We hope that these help to guide members and broaden the scope of what may be presented.



Leadership

- *Belonging* – How do your district's inclusive practices allow students with disabilities and special education staff to feel that they belong to their peer group, the school, district, and/or the community? How has an inclusive mindset changed your leadership structures?
- *Embracing* – What work has your district leadership done to embrace the need to focus on mitigating the disproportionate representation of linguistically and culturally diverse students populations in inclusive settings? How do your district's inclusive practices allow students without disabilities and all staff to embrace the idea of inclusiveness as a positive aspect of their peer group, school, district, and/or community? How are students with more significant disabilities included and embraced by the district and school community?
- *Sharing* – How does your district leadership collaborate across departments within the district to share the work of providing inclusive special education supports and services?
- *Celebrating* – How does your district leadership celebrate inclusive practices?

Systems Change

- *Belonging* – How have you created systems where special education and general education practices and related staff belong together? How are you ensuring that inclusion is about high quality learning for all students by all teachers?
- *Embracing* – Do your systems incorporate and embrace the notion of universal design for learning? How has your system embraced family engagement opportunities in order to make them more inclusive and representative of families consisting of people with disabilities?
- *Sharing* – How does your district share its focus on eliminating disproportionate representation of culturally and linguistically diverse student populations? How does your district share its knowledge of implementing effective inclusive services across all schools for students with high- and low-incidence disabilities? How does your district share its knowledge of supporting students needing social and emotional supports? English language learners?
- *Celebrating* – What has your district done to celebrate and embrace the difference between the ideas of equal and equity or "equality does not mean the same"? What about the difference between learning a second language and having a disability?

Teaching and Learning

- *Belonging* – Has implementing the UDL framework created a sense of belonging for students with and without disabilities? How have your district's inclusive practices allowed students with disabilities and special education staff to feel that they belong to their peer group, the school, district, and/or the community? Is this the case for students with cognitive disabilities? Emotional and behavioral disabilities? English language learners?
- *Embracing* – What have teachers in your district done to help students and staff embrace the difference between the ideas of equal and equity or "equality does not mean the same"?
- *Sharing* – How do teachers and related service provider share in reducing the disproportionate representation of classifying linguistically and culturally diverse students, placing them in more segregated settings, and the overuse of disciplinary actions? How has the district shared in the inclusive education of students with more significant disabilities? What professional development activities are shared with and provided by your professional learning communities?



- *Celebrating* – What have teachers in your district done to celebrate and embrace the difference between the ideas of equal and equity or "equality does not mean the same"?

Family and Community engagement

- *Belonging* – How has your district helped families to share in the belief that all students belong together? Have you applied the UDL framework to family engagement approaches? Do families of English language learners belong to the school community? What about families of students with social and emotional needs?
- *Embracing* – Have your family and communities embraced the fact that there is disproportionate representation in non-inclusive settings and are working with the district to address?
- *Sharing* – In what ways has the district shared their current data on inclusive practices and collaborated on its vision to move forward with families and the community?
- *Celebrating* – How have you working with your families and communities to celebrate their children's successes?

At the meeting, you will have opportunities to share with other participants how you develop and support your staff in the management of effective and inclusive special education practices through shared decision making. We also encourage you to invite your colleagues to attend—both those with whom you already collaborate on decision making and those with whom you hope to do so.

Additional meeting details are included with the preliminary agenda, session descriptions, registration form, and travel policy found below. We look forward to seeing you in the fall!

Looking forward to seeing you all in November!

Lauren

SPRING 2018 MEMBER MEETING INFORMATION

Please read below for information on the following:

- Preliminary Agenda
- Session Descriptions
- Registration and Travel Information
- Frequently Asked Questions

If you have any questions, please contact Pilar Miranda, Member and Partner Manager at 617-618-2447 or PMiranda@edc.org.

PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Fall 2018 Member Meeting • November 14-16, 2018 • Fort Lauderdale, FL
Inclusive Practices: Belonging, Embracing, Sharing, and Celebrating!

Wednesday, November 14

9 AM – 12 PM	Host District Showcase and/or School Visits
1:30 PM – 1:45 PM	Welcome from Collaborative and Host District’s Leadership
1:45 PM – 3:30 PM	Keynote Address
3:45 PM – 5 PM	Size-Alike Session
5:30 PM – 7 PM	Reception

Thursday, November 15

7:30 AM – 4:30 PM	Partner and Sponsor Expo
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Breakfast (provided)
8:30 AM – 9:30 AM	Partner Focus Groups
9:45 AM – 10:45 AM	Concurrent Presentations
10:45 AM – 11:15 AM	Expo Designated Time
11:15 AM – 12:15 PM	Concurrent Presentations
12:15 PM – 1:15 PM	Lunch (provided)
1:30 PM – 4 PM	Consultancy Sessions
4:15 PM – 5:15 PM	Town Hall

Friday, November 16

7:30 AM – 12:15 PM	Partner and Sponsor Expo
7:30 AM – 8:30 AM	Breakfast (provided)
8:30 AM – 9:30 AM	Partner Focus Groups
9:45 AM – 10:45 AM	Concurrent Presentations
11 AM – 12 PM	Concurrent Presentations
12:15 PM – 1:45 PM	Lunch (provided)
2 – 3 PM	World Café

SESSION DESCRIPTIONS

Keynote Speaker: Dan Habib

Our keynote speaker is Dan Habib, a father of an amazing child with a disability and a documentary film director who has created award winning films on disability-related topics including *Who Cares About Kelsey?*, *Including Samuel*, *Restraint and Seclusion: Hear Our Stories*. Dan is out with a new and powerful film; *Intelligent Lives*. See a [preview here](#). To learn more about Dan, read below:

- [Dan Habib: The label 'intellectual disability' still means isolation for too many in America](#)
- [Dan Habib Interview with Dr. Cheryl Jorgensen on Inclusive Education](#)

Size-Alike Session

This session will provide an opportunity for representatives from our large, medium, and small school districts to meet in groups according to district size. Groups will participate in a facilitated conversation regarding a contemporary issue in urban special education and discuss technical skills used to overcome challenges around that issue.

Partner/Sponsor Expo

During this time our partners and sponsors showcase their products. We are proud of our vendors and every company that supports the Collaborative is promoting a service or product that we believe is useful to our members. Speak with the representatives during this time and learn what they have to offer. Ask them to develop what you need. Take advantage of the time they are here to make these connections.

Partner Focus Groups

Our partners conduct focus groups to introduce participants to their products and services, while concurrently collecting feedback from school district leaders on the effectiveness of their products and services. These sessions are designed to showcase our partners' expertise as well as for participants to discuss their needs.

Concurrent Presentations

Colleagues in our member districts will present on *Inclusive Practices: Belonging, Embracing, Sharing, and Celebrating*. These sessions are designed as an opportunity learn more about each other's successes and challenges and to start the conversations for future collaboration.

Consultancy Sessions with Broward County Public Schools

These sessions will provide us with an opportunity to serve as consultants or "critical friends" to our colleagues in Broward County. We have invited leadership from our host district to present a dilemma that they would like our participants to consider and on which to share their experience and expertise. We will be guiding participants through a facilitated protocol where district leaders might learn how others would advise they respond to the specific areas of need. At the same time that we are supporting our colleagues, we believe that all participants benefit from the sharing and bring home new strategies and ideas.

Town Hall

Town hall meetings present an opportunity to come together to build our knowledge and discuss with colleagues' issues affecting the larger educational contexts in general, and in particular, special education. Topics in the past have included disproportionate representation, immigration, restraint and seclusion, and gun violence.

World Café

We devote this session to the theme of our Spring 2019 Member Meeting in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, hosted by Pittsburgh Public Schools. Using the World Café protocol (www.theworldcafe.com), the World Café provides an opportunity for meeting participants to divide into smaller groups to converse, share challenges, and explore questions that will help frame the theme for our upcoming meeting.

REGISTRATION AND TRAVEL INFORMATION

Step 1: Register

Please register at our [Eventbrite registration page](#). Please register **before 5:00 PM EST, October 22, 2018**. Upon receipt of your registration, an email confirmation will be sent to your email address. For more information, please see the [step-by-step instructions](#).

ALL member districts will receive **one free registration** to the meeting. All subsequent registrations will be charged \$200 if attendees register **before October 22, 2018**. Beginning 5:00 PM EST on October 22, 2018, there will be a charge of \$300 per registration. Registration fees cover participant materials, breaks, reception, and lunches. If a district is selected as a concurrent presenter, an additional registration will be waived. Registration fees are **non-refundable after 5:00 PM EST, October 22**.

Step 2: Make your hotel reservation

The conference will be held at The Westin Beach Resort Fort Lauderdale. Please make your hotel reservations as soon as possible to ensure availability at the reduced group rate. You may make your reservations at The Westin Beach Resort Fort Lauderdale at the negotiated group rate of \$179.00 per night by [booking your hotel online](#). Please note: You will need a credit card to guarantee your reservation. You may also call 888-627-7108. Mention you are calling for the Urban Collaborative Fall Member Meeting for the negotiated group rates.

Step 3: Book your flight

Contact Stewart International Travel at 1-800-738-1575 by **5:00 PM EST, October 22, 2018** and ask for Claire to reserve your flights and book your ticket. For fast and efficient service when calling, please state that you are with the Urban Collaborative Fall Meeting and have the preferred dates and times of travel ready. Unless there is an emergency please call between 9 AM – 5 PM EST.

IMPORTANT: Before booking your ticket, please make sure that you are have district approval and are committed to attending the meeting.

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: How many registrations are included with membership?

A: ALL member districts, regardless of size, will receive one free registration for the meeting. Any subsequent registrations will be charged \$200 per participant if registered **before October 22, 2018**. **Beginning 5:00 PM EST, October 22**, there will be a charge of \$300 per registration. Registration fees cover participant materials, breaks, reception, and Friday luncheon.

Q: Can I send additional representatives from my district?

A: Yes. Member districts are encouraged to register additional participants. The Member or Associate from the district is not required to attend. You may send any district staff to the meeting.

Does the Collaborative pay for my airfare?

A: One of the benefits of membership in the Collaborative is paid airfare to our semi-annual meetings. The number of airline tickets paid for by the Collaborative is dependent upon your school district's size:

- If you are a **small** school district with enrollment of less than 15,000 students, your membership fee pays for **one (1) participant's airfare per meeting**.
- If you are a **medium** school district with enrollment of between 15,000 and 50,000 students, your membership fee pays for **two (2) participants' airfare per meeting**.
- If you are a **large** school district with enrollment of more than 50,000 students, your membership fee pays for **three (3) participants' airfare per meeting**.

You must make your flight reservations before 5:00 PM EST, October 22, if you would like the Collaborative to pay for your airfare. All participants are responsible for baggage fees, ground transportation, and incidentals.

Q: Can I choose the flight I want?

A: Please help the Collaborative stay within budget by **making your reservations early**. The Collaborative and Stewart International Travel will try our best to accommodate your travel preferences. We will seek out the most reasonable airfare at the time of booking, but please be aware that *you may be required to book an itinerary with a connecting flight*.

IMPORTANT: Before booking your ticket, please make sure that you have district approval and are committed to attending the meeting. Unused tickets result in lost money for the Collaborative and risk our ability to continue offering airfare as a benefit. Please note that airfare is not refundable or transferable to another person.

Q: What if I live locally and do not need to fly to the meeting?

A: For members that do not require airline travel, the district can substitute their airline cost benefit for extra participant registration fees. As with airline tickets, the number of registration fees paid for by the Collaborative depends upon your district's size. That is:

- For **small** districts, instead of paying for one (1) participant's airfare, the Collaborative will waive the registration fee for one extra participant for a total of two registrants at no cost.
- For **medium** districts, instead of paying for two (2) participants' airfare, the Collaborative will waive the registration fees for two extra participants for a total of three registrants at no cost.



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- For **large** districts, instead of paying for three (3) participants' airfare, the Collaborative will waive the registration fees for three extra participants for a total of four registrants at no cost.

Q: What if I need to make changes or cancel?

A: Please email Pilar Miranda at PMiranda@edc.org to inform us of a cancellation. For all cancellations made after **October 22, 2018**, registration fees are non-refundable and participants will be held responsible for that fee. However, if a registered participant cannot attend and would like to send another individual in their place, no additional charge will be incurred. Please contact Pilar Miranda regarding any changes.

Once an airline ticket has been issued, **the ticket holder is responsible for all costs associated with any changes**. Change fees may include a \$200 airline fee and the difference in airfare. Again, to avoid these extra fees and to help the Collaborative, ***please be sure that you are able to attend the meeting before booking your airline ticket.***