



Welcome to the July Issue of CollabNews!

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CollabNews is a monthly electronic newsletter for members and associates of the Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative, a network of special and general education leaders from the nation's urban school districts.

Member Update

Welcome New Member District

The Collaborative is pleased to welcome our newest member, Jefferson County Public Schools.

Jefferson County is located in Louisville, KY and has a total enrollment of over 98,000 students. Our Member contact is Sharon W. Davis, Executive Director. Please visit www.jcpsky.net for more information.

Fall Member Meeting

Remember that our Fall meeting will be in Denver from October 30 - November 1, 2008. Please see the events section below for details.

Member Exchange

Members Seeking Assistance

Last December we created an area in the Member Exchange section of the Collaborative's website labeled "Members Seeking Assistance." This section serves

as a center for assistance and collaboration among our members. If you have a question about what your colleagues are doing in their districts or are in need of other information or support, you are invited to post your inquiries at the Member Exchange. You will have the benefit of tapping into the knowledge base of our 112 member districts. If you need help retrieving items on the Member Exchange you can contact Ron Felton at rfelton@edc.org.

Resources

Public Policy Fellowships Available to Professional and Parents

Each year the Joseph P. Kennedy, Jr. Foundation brings professionals working in the field of inclusive services and supports for people with mental retardation, intellectual, and developmental disabilities and parents or family members of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities to Washington for a full year, where they actively participate in public policy development in the offices of Members of Congress, congressional committees, or federal agencies. The purpose of the Fellowship is to prepare emerging leaders or experienced professionals to assume leadership in the public policy arena, in their home state and/or nationally. The application deadline for 2009 is August 15, 2008. More information regarding the program and information on how to apply is available at the foundation's website:

<http://www.jpkf.org/>

Look for the links to the Public Policy Fellowships in the left column.

Universal Design For Learning Guidelines (1.0)

In April 2008, The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) issued the first public working draft of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Guidelines to help educators design learning experiences and curricula that are more accessible, effective, and engaging for all students. Building on the premise that, in any classroom, the diversity of student abilities, needs, and learning styles is the norm rather than the exception, these Guidelines will help educators across K-12 and postsecondary evaluate existing or planned curricula and devise ways to better meet the challenge of diversity.

The Guidelines can be read and downloaded at the CAST website by clicking this link:

[Universal Design for Learning \(UDL\) Guidelines](#)

Website of the Month

Edutopia - George Lucas Educational Foundation

The George Lucas Educational Foundation celebrates and encourages innovation in schools. The Foundation documents, disseminates, and advocates for exemplary programs in K-12 public schools to help these practices spread nationwide. The

foundation's online [Web magazine](#) has featured a series of articles on Autism that are available on their website at the following link:

[Special Report: Overcoming Autism](#)

Events

Urban Collaborative Fall Meeting



The topical focus for our Fall Meeting is "Identifying & Meeting the Needs of English Language Learners". Culturally and linguistically diverse students present challenges for school districts in providing appropriate instruction, and educational opportunities. As a result, many of these students have been referred to and ultimately placed in special education programs. English Language Learners (ELL) have a right to services in special education if they do have a disability and many school districts have been working to distinguish between a learning disability and a learning difficulty attributable to linguistic, cultural, and experiential differences.

We are privileged to be having as our keynote speaker, Dr. Alba Ortiz, Director of the Office of Bilingual Education, in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin where she is also a Professor in the Department of Special Education. Her keynote address is titled ***Educating English Language Learners in General and Special Education: Lessons from the Past and Directions for the Future.***

Soliciting Presentations

We are beginning the process of soliciting presentations from our member districts for the concurrent session. If your school district has a program, service, and/or a combination of initiatives that data indicates is working to support and provide appropriate instruction to ELL students, we look forward to hearing from you! The Call for Proposals is available on the Collaborative website at the following link:

<http://www.urbancollaborative.org/fall08meeting.asp>

Collaborative Help Desk

Urban Special Education Leadership Collaborative
Education Development Center, Inc.
55 Chapel Street
Newton, MA 02158

Phone: 617-969-7100 x2447

TTY: 617-964-5448

FAX: 617-969-3440

Email: collaborative@edc.org

Website: www.urbancollaborative.org