

Southeast Regional School Psychologists

Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2013

Hosted by Chris Franz in Borderland SD

1. During the morning, Dr. Karen Pain presented her work with the *PAX Good Behavior Game*, a whole-classroom group contingency program. She referred to this as a push-in model of service delivery. Some teachers were skeptical at first, but the very powerful and positive results changed their minds. It was used in a very disruptive classroom. In about 5 months, the program significantly reduced the number of “Spleems” or interruptions in the classroom. The program teaches children self-regulation in a fun and rewarding manner. This has later benefits for reducing other mental health issues as students get older. This is a great system for new teachers who want to master classroom management. The program reduces interruptions or disruptions by teaching and motivating appropriate self-regulation skills and responsible social skills (collectively referred to as “Good PAX”). The PAX Game requires that a few posters be displayed (e.g., Initial *spleem* counts & monthly progress, toddles, etc.) to provide feedback, and a reward box with fun back-up rewards be available. The class is divided into 4 or 5 teams who compete against each other for PAX stickers and back-up rewards. Three times a day, the teacher blows a harmonica, which signals a brief activity reward time (e.g., dancing to their favourite music, having a marsh-mellow throwing battle, etc.) for the team who had the fewest *spleems* prior to that time for that day. Karen also showed us some great videos and interviews with a few kids.
2. Maxine Mutcher presented the ideas in a book entitled *The Dyslexia Empowerment Plan*, by Ben Foss. This book for parents tries to downplay the idea that people with dyslexia are flawed and handicapped. They need not be handicapped in today’s world. The book is very valuable in showcasing the technological accommodations (e.g., Kerzweil 3000, ipad apps, e-readers, etc.) that are available for people with dyslexia. The only downside might be that legislators use information like this to justify why we don’t need expensive remedial programming for younger kids who have dyslexia. For example, Dr. Sally Shawitz has shown that with appropriate remedial instruction, the brains of those with dyslexia can approach normalization of function. Still, it is important to offer people encouragement and hope, and knowledge of effective accommodations is vital.
3. Michelle shared news from Manitoba Education and MASP. For example, the bullying initiative will continue, although the education minister has changed. There are some new documents they’ve been working on (e.g., a booklet for the Blind & Visually Impaired, with Multiple Disabilities, Learning Disabilities, Wrap Around for Youth, Strengths-based Counselling, etc.). Manitoba Education has also changed its name to Manitoba Education and Advanced Education. Michele shared the new *GoToMeeting* option for video-conferencing. She also encouraged people to join MASP, and respond to questions in the MASP newsletter. She also proposed a

PLC for our regional group (e.g., reading and discussing a book together), writing a book review for MASP, etc.

4. Chris Franz briefly went over some ideas and recommended books to assess and adapt for difficulties in executive functioning. He also talked about *Hale's Cognitive Hypothesis-Testing* model, and he reminded us that we can use Dawn Flanagan's software to implement Hale's *Concordance-Discordance Model* to diagnose specific learning disabilities.