

Dream Day Event turns Frustration into Hope

“Marietta City School staffers struggle to get parents to believe that their students with disabilities can and will achieve, and that parents need to be a part of the education process,” said Marietta City Parent Mentor Nancy Grabe.

Realizing the need, the system decided to really focus efforts this year on State Performance Plan goal 2 -- Increasing the graduation rate for SWD (students with disabilities).



“Our superintendent hosts community meetings and only one or two parents show up,” said Grabe and so, the system began its search for new ways to engage parents. This year they may have dreamed up a way to do just that. “Our Dream Day is my brain child to reach out to the parents of students with developmental disabilities and get them to dream about becoming a part of the bigger picture. I also wanted to engage the teachers who are starting to give up hope and let parents see what could be possible,” Grabe said.

Grabe describes the process of creating Dream Day: “I started meeting with the teachers at their schools. I needed their input and expertise. Initially, only two speech therapists and three special education teachers got on board. But by the time we met for the third time, there was a bigger group of staff who were interested. I brought snacks and we brainstormed. We picked a date and a location at a local school for our Dream Day.

We planned to have a keynote speaker to inspire us - **Debbie Currere**, Georgia Department of Education’s Family Outreach Coach for the Georgia Parent Mentor Partnership. She also works on the State Personnel Development Grant for Drop Out Prevention. We also invited her son Chris (featured on this website – **Journey to the Olympics**,) who has completed his PATH (future’s planning strategy) and is working and participating in social activities – offering proof to worried parents of how a good late transition plan can work.

The planning group decided to break into small groups and rotate discussion about : Life Skills, Medicaid Waivers and how to set up parent groups. They also provided child care. Grabe reports that the group of parents who attended this fall’s first ever Dream Day was smaller than she had hoped, but the parents’ feedback was great. “And I told them to spread the word.” Marietta City Schools will present Dream Day again next year.

OUR PLAN TO GET PARENTS ENGAGED:

1. High School Self Contained class would design and print the invitations
2. Send out a save the date in student book bags, mail an invitation to every family, and send a

reminder two days before Dream Day in backpacks

3. Each teacher would call the families directly (6 to 12 per class) to personally invite them and let them know why they needed to come.
4. We would provide child care for all children who accompanied their parents.
5. We would give out Door Prizes to entice parents to come and reward those that made it.
6. We would serve breakfast foods.
7. The invitation would be put on the School Website and an e-connect call would be made by each school.

Click here to view [The Dream Day](#) article that Nancy wrote for the Marietta City School DSS (Dept of Special Services) Newsletter.

