



evanston citizens for
appropriate special education

January 2009 Newsletter

Happy New Year to all the members of Evanston CASE. This is the first newsletter of 2009. I want to start by thanking you for your support since our founding in March, 2008. We have a lot to be proud of and many plans for the coming year.

There are two important events coming up that I want to call your attention to.

The **Strategic Planning Committee** is scheduled to meet on **Thursday, January 8th at 5:30 at the Joseph Hill Administration Building** to discuss a final draft of the 5-year Strategic Plan. CASE has been actively involved in educating the committee about the importance of including special education goals in the plan. We presented at each of the four town hall meetings held in October, and communicated frequently with board members about issues of concern to our organization. The current draft of the plan includes several of our recommendations. Visit the CASE website to read our Strategic Plan Recommendations report. We are pleased to have achieved some important goals and are grateful to the committee for seriously considering our suggestions.

Here is a link to the current draft.

http://www.d65.k12.il.us/media/EDocs/District_65_Strategic_Plan_Draft_124.pdf

The changes suggested at the town hall meetings are written in violet and you will see a number of CASE's recommendations noted there. We are especially pleased that a goal to introduce a disability awareness curriculum K-8 was included. The meeting on the 8th is open to the public, but only to observe. Comments from the public will not be invited. If you have an opinion about the draft plan, please email the school board members at schoolboard@district65.net. The board will have the final vote on the plan, so their opinions count the most. The strategic plan guides the district's priorities over the next 5 years and will give us an opportunity to hold the administration accountable for some concrete commitments.

SAVE THE DATE!!

CASE is excited to announce the screening of an important film entitled, "Including Samuel." On February 8th from 7-9 pm at the Levy Center in Evanston, we will present an hour long documentary film about the inclusion of children with special needs in general education classrooms. It is an internationally acclaimed film by Dan Habib whose son has cerebral palsy. He tells the story of his son and four other families who struggle to find appropriate services for their children in school. It is an inspiring and informative film and I highly recommend that you attend. I have attached a flyer describing the event. Please feel free to share it with anyone you think

would be interested in coming. We expect a large turn-out, so call early to reserve your ticket, at (847) 556-8676. If you would like more information about the Including Samuel Project, visit www.includingsamuel.com. Hope to see you there.

I want to thank all of you who responded to our appeal for information about your experiences in District 65. We received information that will be critical in our effort to advocate for changes. We plan to compile the information into a report to present to the school board prior to the May school board meeting in which special education will be the focus. If you have not responded yet, there is still plenty of time. If you would rather call than write an email, contact us at (847) 556-8676.

We also have a new mailing address:

Evanston CASE
2859 Central St. #263
Evanston, IL 60201

We plan to seek non-profit status this year so that we can raise funds to expand our efforts to improve special education services for students in District 65. If anyone has time to volunteer to help us with the paperwork, we would really appreciate it.

Sincerely,

Cari Levin, LCSW
Founding Director, Evanston CASE
www.evanstoncase.org