

COOR Intermediate School District will be the collaborative model for excellence in educational services and programs promoting lifelong learning for the local school districts and the communities we serve.

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## COOR ISD Looks to the Future of Special Education

COOR ISD is embarking on a semester long process to determine the future of special education services among its constituent districts. Special Ed. Director Ruggero Dozzi would like to develop a strategic plan for the ISD that would plot out a direction for the next several years. This legacy plan would provide direction in times of administrative and other personnel changes at both the Local and ISD levels.

In addition to providing a blue print for the future, the development of the plan is intended to engage all of the stakeholders in a thoughtful and probing discussion about the delivery of special education services in the 21st century. Much has changed in the field of Special Education over the past couple of decades with many more changes to come in the future.

The stakes and pressures are rising as the State and Federal governments place more accountability demands on school districts. Coupled with the formal demands with the changes in demographics and funding our past structures, which served special education well in the past, will no longer work in the future. To successfully survive in the future, the Districts of COOR ISD must prepare themselves by effectively planning for the future.

## You Are Invited

Each local District is asked to send two representatives to attend and participate in the process. These representatives should include a special ed. teacher and an administrator.

In addition to these representatives other representatives will be sought out as well, including parents and students.

The Goal is to have a well rounded group with

all stakeholder groups represented..

Please send your Representatives names to Rug Dozzi at COOR ISD on or before March 6th, 2012

# About the process To Be Used

*Guided Dialogue is an incredibly democratic process. Every voice is heard and given proper respect.*

**Guided Dialogue** utilizes a set of principles that insures that all participants have an opportunity for meaningful input, that sufficient time is allotted to develop full understanding of the suggestions, that voting occurs in an orderly structured manner leading to a viable conclusion. The Cogniscope II software guides the process to help insure process integrity. At the end of the process participants know where the group needs to go next. More importantly the group knows how it arrived at that final point and fully supports the conclusion.

Traditional group facilitation falls victim to a variety of pitfalls including brainstorm overload, "Big Talker" domination or never getting to the plan. Too often the brainstorming phase overwhelms the process thus paralyzing the group into inaction. So many ideas are generated that the group cannot see the 'forest for the trees' to make a decision. Being overwhelmed the group fails to take action.

If the brainstorming does not confound the group then the "Big Talkers" take control of the process. Big Talkers are the persuasive articulate members of the group who can dominate the conversation with their verbal prowess. Because the Big Talkers dominate the conversation to the point where their ideas become the main focus of the discussion and to the exclusion of other equally viable ideas.

Finally, traditional group facilitation frequently results in never getting to the plan. How many times have participants arrived at the voting stage of a facilitation only to vote and never do anything with the results. One favorite example: "How many times have you put the green sticky dots on the chart paper suggestions, which are taped to the wall, only to walk away without knowing what the actual next step would be?" The meeting ends with the participants walking away not knowing the next step. This ambiguity causes confusion which translates into a lack of support for any future plan.

Every activity in the Guided Dialogue Process has a purpose and a science behind it.

**Guided Dialogue**, the Woodview Learning Strategists' (WLS) incarnation of Structured Dialogic Design or SDD, is designed to help groups completely think through problems and situations in a democratic and thoughtful manner. WLS is a licensee of 21st Century Agoras and is fully utilizing the Cogniscope II software in its work.

# What Will You be Doing?

Guided Dialogue is an intense process that has many layers. Each layer is scientifically designed to promote dialogue and deeper understanding.

The COOR ISD process will utilize the Virtual Co-Laboratory process. The Co-Lab Process includes both face to face and virtual participation components.

The process begins with a **Triggering Question** which focuses

all future work.

The **Face to Face** components of the process will consist of 3-5 large group meetings. During these meeting training in the GD process will be given, ideas and issues will be explored.

The **Virtual Component** will consist of deeper exploration of ideas and concepts in a specially designed WIKI. The purpose of the wiki is to give participants

ample time and opportunity to think ideas through thoroughly. The virtual phase of the project is also designed to show respect for your busy schedules by offering you a means of participation that you can control.

The final Face to Face meeting will consist of several rounds of prioritizing and voting which is facilitated by the Cogniscope Software.

## COOR Triggering Question

***What prevents COOR Intermediate School Districts and its constituent local districts from creating a seamless delivery system for all students, especially special education students?***

The above question will be the driver for all of the discussion in the process. The design of the question is such that it will bring out all possible side of the issue

## Time Line

**March 6, 2012** Identification of Participants

**March 12, 2012** First General Meeting (required). Half Day Meeting  
Work in WIKI

**March 23, 2012** Second General Meeting. Half Day Meeting  
Work in Wiki

**April 27, 2012** Third General Meeting (optional)> Half day meeting  
Work in Wiki (optional)

**May 11, 2012** Final Meeting(required). **Full day meeting**

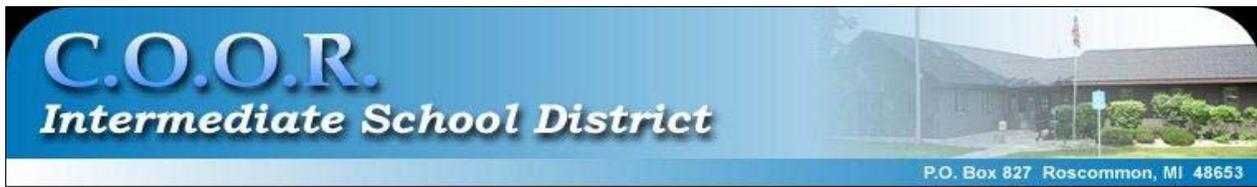
While it is understood that you are all busy participation in all phases of

the project is critical for its success.

As indicated the March 12, 23 and April 27 meetings are half day morning sessions

Depending on the progress of the group the April 27 meeting may be eliminated. A determination will be made at least one week before the 27th

The May 11 session is a full day. The nature of business for the May 11 requires a full day to adequately address all of the issues.



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## COOR Partners with WLS to Develop Plan

COOR ISD has partnered with Woodview Learning Strategists to lead its strategic planning process.

WLS has successfully completed Guide Dialogue sessions with:

- Pere Marquette District Library.
- Clare County Enterprise Zone Committee.
- Mason County Eastern Schools
- Houghton Lake Community School Special Ed. Department.

Jim Mishler is a retired Special Education Administrator with 35 years of experience in public education. His educational experience includes working in a residential facility for delinquent teens, teaching at the elementary level,

adjunct teaching at the university level and as an administrator for 20 years. He has authored several articles, and has presented at numerous state, national and international conferences.

Jim is currently a faculty member with the William Glasser Institute for **Choice Theory** and **Reality Therapy** where he focuses on training and teaching the concepts of the personal psychology of choice. He has been involved with **Choice Theory** and **Reality Therapy** since 1977 and was among the first in Michigan to embrace these concepts.

Over his years of experience he has facilitated many different groups including school related, church and community groups. As a result of his experience in facilitation he has become affiliated

with Agora's for the 21st Century which is dedicated to promoting democratic dialogue. The primary vehicle for this promotion is a piece of software known as Cogniscope II developed by Dr. Alexander Christakis and others. This software enhances the decision making process by promoting deeper understanding and clarity of the ideas presented by all participants. In accomplishing its goal the **Guided Dialogue** Process promotes dialogue with civility and respect for all of those participating.

In 2008 Jim founded Woodview Learning Strategists LLC with the goal of helping individuals and organizations build "internal capacity". Translated, building internal capacity means to help individuals and organizations develop