



For Immediate Release

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February 26, 2009

**Martin County School District
Individuals with Disabilities Unite to Hone Advocacy Skills**

The Martin County School District Exceptional Student Education Department, in collaboration with Project Connect (a community transition collaborative), announce an evening seminar, **“Self and System-Wide Advocacy: The Power Of One!** Featured keynote speakers are Angela Van Etten from the Coalition for Independent Living Options, Inc. and Kingsley Ross with Associated Advocates in Tallahassee.

The seminar will be held on Wednesday, April 1, 2009, from 6:30-8:30 P.M. at the Wolf High-Technology Center at Indian River State College Chastain Campus, 2400 SE Salerno Road, Stuart. The event is open to the community, including students and/or adults with disabilities, parents, caregivers, teachers, administrators and agency personnel. Transportation from Indiantown will be available through Community Coach.

The purpose of this informative evening is to improve and hone the advocacy skills of students and adults with disabilities- and their families and caregivers. The seminar will include two important segments- one on self-advocacy and the other on system-wide advocacy. *Self-advocacy* is about people with disabilities speaking up for themselves and taking control of their own lives. It means that although a person with a disability may call upon the support of others, the individual is entitled to be in control of his or her own resources and how those resources are directed. It is about having the right to make life decisions without undue influence or control by others. *System-wide advocacy* is about people working together to change policy and/or laws.

For additional information and to pre-register (required), please contact Donna Hosang, ESE Parent Liaison at hosangd@martin.k12.fl.us or by telephone 772-219-1200 x 30476.