

CAC

Community Advisory Committee For Special Education

Advising The Board of Education
San Diego Unified School District

General Membership Meeting Minutes

Date: Thursday, December 8, 2011
Time: 6:30 – 9:00 pm
Location: Lindbergh-Schweitzer Elementary – West Auditorium, 4133 Mt. Albertine Ave. (92111)

WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS:

Meeting called to order at 7:15pm.

The Chairperson, Moira Allbritton, welcomed attendees and introduced CAC members, district staff and administrators, and acknowledged parents. The Chair reviewed the agenda, meeting format and structure, and process for providing public comment.

NOTE: This meeting had an atypical start-time of 6:30pm to allow for a holiday social and networking party that was held before the official meeting began. Refreshments were available for all in attendance.

ROLL CALL/MEMBER ATTENDANCE:

Present: Moira Allbritton, Mary Conroy, Teresa Michel, Mina Kern, Joyce Clark, Dorene Dias Pesta, Belquis Anders, Raylene Dickinson, Meghann Hughes, Christy Scadden, Teresa Hilleary, Ellen Herroon, Nancy Stevenson, Chris Pikus.

Absent: Bill Cary, Michelle Crisci, Pam McKinney.

Ex-Officio: Dr. Joe Fulcher – Chief Student Services Officer. Susan Martinez – Executive Director of Special Education.

Quorum established.

PUBLIC INPUT:

Q: Can you tell us how to become a member?

A: (Moira) You must attend 3 meetings in 5 months or 7 in an academic year.

Q: (Caroline Kelner & Karen Vincent) La Jolla high school has a continuing trend of non-compliance, with IEP's and not following the law. They are changing placements and not allowing students to take standardized tests. We are seeking an end to this illegal, discriminatory actions and asking the district to put a stop to it.

A: (Joe Fulcher) A site visit is imminent. The area superintendent will also be brought in so we can see exactly what is going on and address these issues. I was not aware till just now; Laura Keller will provide some more specifics.

Q: (Terry Pesta 4th grade gen ed teacher) The new principal at our school was asked by a student what her plan was for working with special needs students. The 4th grade student came up with this question on his own. I was very proud.

Q: There is a tiny closet that has a changing bed in it used to change kids, this room does not have an exhaust fan. How long is it going to take to get a fan in and what laws are being violated since there is no fan?

A: Have you filed a claim? – Yes but the guy that came out to fill the work order said that things are backed up he didn't know how long it would take but he couldn't do it any time soon. This was filed through the new ADA system.

A: (Joe) There is a law that requires a fan be in place for rooms of a certain size, though I am not sure of the exact regulation. If you send me an email I can look into the timeline to getting this completed.

Q: Can you find out how many students are placed in non-public schools and when they were placed?

A: We know how many, but we would have to research when. We have really worked on developing appropriate settings keeping kids in the district.

Q: (Translator) We are having a problem with transportation that we feel is discriminatory. There was a specific incident that occurred on the bus, my son was out of his harness. The bus drivers' are refusing to drive our son because of the harness. In the summertime, our pickup spot was changed to less accessible location.

A: (Susan) Did you include the name of your school? – Yes. We need that information to talk to the program manager about those issues. If a harness was decided by team to be needed to transportation, we will provide that. We will look into that and get back to you.

Q: What about summer school? We did not receive any information about that.

A: By Monday we will have one of the program managers get back to you.

Q: I have emails to show you.

A: Please show them to us, attach it to your form.

Q: (Moirra) If the parent has a problem with the length of how far they must travel to get their child from their home to the assigned bus stop, is that also an IEP decision?

A: (Susan) Parts of it are dependent on the route, but it is all open for discussion.

Q: (Christy) If a student already received vision itinerant services, can they also qualify for mobility and orientation? And if they don't, how are those services determined?

A: (Susan) I don't think they automatically qualify. I am observing one tomorrow. It's my understanding they are accessed independently. It's possible that a student could receive one or both.

Q: Is it written down somewhere? What the qualifications are for that?

A: I think the VI program has that.

Q: They don't.

A: Please turn your question in and I will look into it.

DISTRICT UPDATES:

(Susan) There are about 14 new principals in the district. Susan spoke to the new principals institute this morning for about an hour. She gave them a big picture of special ed services and how our division would be supporting them.

Q: New principals as of this year?

A: Yes.

Q: Why do we have so many new principals?

A: (Susan) I'll have to research that.

(Joe) The district has been consumed with the budget the last few years. The cut this year the Board is asking us to make it about \$3 million. There is some pressure to get some specifics by Tuesday.

Q: Is there a choice to move forward with these cuts?

A: The Board will make a final decision around March. Depending on what happens at the state and district level, we may not have to make cuts.

Q: (Dorene) Do you think if a lot of parents/teachers etc showed up at the Board meeting on Tuesday would help influence the Board in these decisions?

A: You know better than anyone that that would help. It never hurts and we can do more of.

Q: 3 million is what percentage of the budget this year?

A: Our budget this year was about \$250 million.

Q: So it's not that much. So this budget will have an impact on the 2012/13. Is the fiscal year June to June?

A: You are correct.

Q: How can the cuts affect this year?

A: The district is considering making mid-year cuts. The Board is looking to cut vacant positions, unless it is critical/essential position.

Q: Will you be providing the Board members with a copy of federal/state laws so they will know what can and can't be cut?

A: We will be covering some of those federal mandates and talking about "encroachment" and also maintenance of effort.

Q: Can you stack books in front of them and say "if you read this, you'll see?"

A: I could but I won't.

Q: The maintenance of effort question... are you explaining the waiver? Where is that now and can you explain that to everyone now?

A: MoE - You need to spend as much this year as you did in previous years. As long as we stay within \$7 million range we are fine. If a large number of employees voluntarily leave the district (ie retire), that savings can be used to lower your MoE. Also if a high cost program was eliminated, it lowers your MoE. Also a large number of students enrolled declines. The feds have decided to relax some of the rules for MoE, so if a reduction was made 2 years ago, you could reduce your budget. It's a complicated formula and concept, it will be covered in our presentation to the Board on Tuesday.

Q: Do you know what time you will be addressing the Board on Tuesday?

A: 9:30 in room 2226 at the Ed Center.

Q: What did you mean about voluntary?

A: Either retirement, transfer another district.

Q: The district gave a "golden handshake" to a number of teachers several years ago, but those positions are still needed. How does that affect our MoE?

A: Sometimes districts manipulate numbers to get needed positions filled.

EXTENDED ANNOUNCEMENTS:

(Joyce) Fiesta Educativa occurred in October 2011.

Feb 10 & 11 - Speech and Language Development Seminar. 10th for the professionals, 11th for parents. This will be held at UCSD, keynote speaker will be Libby Kunich.

March 17th IEP Day at the Handeraly Hotel in Mission Valley from 8:30am – 4pm. There are 3 different breakouts each with 5 choices of workshops. There will be a transitioning workshop available.

Q: Will there be translators?

A: Yes, SDUSD has graciously provided them.

Also, in order for the Regional Center to pay for this conference it must be specified in your IPP.

Q: Your IPP must say specify the IEP Day?

A: Yes it has to specify the workshop and have a list of the summary of the workshop. It must be submitted at least 60 days before the workshop.

Q: What is an IPP and will there be childcare?

A: There will not be childcare because of liability issues. Students are also not allowed to attend. IPP is an individual planning program.

Q: Is there a grant to cover childcare?

A: Yes, there is. That information is on our Facebook page. There is a \$300 cap per year available, but it is a one-time use only. So choose wisely which conference you request payment for.

Q: (Translator) - Can parents go to the IEP day?

A: Yes, that is who the day is meant for. We have Spanish translations available and also a specific workshop conducted in Spanish.

Q: (Translator) Where can we find more information on this conference?

A: Iepday.org and on the CAC Facebook page.

Q: There is interest in the Foundation Grant available to go to conferences.

A: I will do research and get back to you at the next meeting.

Q: If you don't have access to a computer, is there a contact and phone number?

A: 858-296-2969.

The speech and language program is sponsoring parents who want to attend a language or academic development conference for their child.

Michelle Garcia Winters (“guru” of social thinking) is coming in February. They are hoping to send 20 parents for free, but they can't have attended before. Contact CAC if you require more information or contact Susan Martinez's office 619-725-7650.

Q: Can the district look at their calendar to make sure it doesn't conflict? The last time this was held over half the parents that attended had to leave because it was a parent/teacher conference day.

A: We try to check calendars and a lot depends on the availability of the presenters.

Family Assistance Clinic - the first one is January 12, the next one is February 2. Make an appointment to address educational, regional center issues, IHSS, Medi-Cal etc. 10am-Noon is a workshop on those days, then come back from 1-5pm to have your questions answered.

There is a parent support group for military members and potluck.

The speech department has scholarships available as well.

Sibshops are available.

COMMITTEE BUSINESS:

Joyce motions to approve the general meeting minutes from November; Mary seconds. Dorene commented and corrected. Aye:12 Nay:0 Abstain:0. Motions carries.

Chair report:

FYI the Chair has been contacted by several reporters in regards to MoE, SELPA and charter schools.

Mina Kern, and Teresa Michel applications were approved at the Executive Meeting.

Next meeting Superintendent Kowba will be here, January 12th at 7pm.

6:15 – 6:45 all members will participate in subcommittee meetings.

We have data on most schools SAI settings. We have received all the data on due process and have been given a projected 2011/12 enrollment number.

The Executive committee reviewed the cost cutting suggestions submitted by Susan Martinez, these questions arose...

Q: What's the purpose of the literacy project resource teacher position?

A: This position is held by Donna Marriott. One of the reasons children are referred to special ed is because of reading difficulties. We are hoping that with extra training that Donna provides, we would have fewer kids referred to special ed just for reading difficulties.

Q: What is happening with the learning centers visa vie the child's home school in regards to LRE?

A: We have 3 learning centers in the district. Some children travel quite far to access these learning centers. Fast Forward now has individual licenses so we can put that program in the students' school rather than bus them to the learning center.

Q: Are we going to give adequate training to prior to implementing these new Fast Forward licenses?

A: We are developing a set of on-going training that is on-the-job (at the site).

Q: Will there be shadow training? So there is an experienced person training the teacher?

A: We have not worked out all the details.

Q: I shadowed my son at a learning center. If a child is absent, then the one-on-ones just sit around. If they were placed at a school, they would be better utilized.

A: We are constantly reviewing each of the services to achieve the outcomes that we want, in this case our focus is on improved student reading levels.

Q: (Translator) How long a time does it take for a child to go to the learning center? Can she accelerate the process for her son to get accepted to the learning center?

A: Please fill out a form.

Q: The word monitor was used 4 times. What do you mean by using the word "monitor?"

A: We need to review that we are using staff effectively and efficiently.

Q: Is there a cost associated with that monitoring?

A: Just program manager and resource time.

Q: Are you encroaching on the IEP team decision making process?

A: Having a one on one is very restrictive. We want students to have the support they need, and we want the schools to have the staff they need. But they are not the same thing. We are asking for the schedules of the staff, to make sure they are servicing the needs of the students.

Q: This happened at my son's school. They kept switching aides on him; it seems that the needs of the school took precedence over the student.

A: That should be part of the consideration during scheduling.

Q: Isn't there already a law that says how a triennial should be conducted?

A: Yes, there are laws. Our guidelines would streamline that.

Q: Is it more of a training on triennial assessments or is it more about making policy off a law that already exists?

A: We base our training off what the law says. The guidelines tend to be more explicit instructions for staff.

Q: Do you plan on making principals accountable for this new process?

A: We do not hold principals personally accountable.

Q: How do we make them responsible?

A: (Moira) You show up at Board meetings and ask those people to make them accountable.

Q: Are you going to use records review as "streamline" review?

A: That was not the intention.

Q: What are the costs of ADR? When will it be implemented?

A: I don't have those numbers. We don't want the teams to be overwhelmed, but we also need to market the teams. That's the next step.

Q: Can you make the principals attend those ADR meetings?

A: We can't mandate that principals do anything.

Q: What if the problem is with the principal?

A: We would have to figure out how to work around that. We will be discussing that in detail with you tomorrow.

Q: What is the age of majority form? What is it exactly? When should they sign?

A: It's the IEP before their 18th birthday. It goes over the students' rights; what can they expect now that they are responsible for their own IEP.

Q: Can you get a grand total for the last 5 years of cost of lawsuits so the Board can see those numbers at Tuesday's meetings?

A: We've asked Patrick Frost in legal to go over this.

The Chair brings the issue of possibly delaying the CAC BoE presentation until next month. Dorene moves we postpone our presentation till January's meeting. Mary seconds. Members discuss. Aye:2, Nay:8, Abstain:2. The motion fails.

Christie motions to adjourn; Mary: seconds.

MEETING ADJOURNED AT 8:53PM.

Respectfully submitted by,
Mina Kern - Secretary