

Voting Members

Andrea Matolo
Angie Foster
Carlene McCurry
Elise Green
Esther Morales
Heena Shah
Ilaria Superti
Sandra Albers
Suhnyoung Yoon

General Meeting Minutes
Thursday, May 23, 2024, 6:00 p.m.

Irvine Unified School District
Special Education Local Plan Area
Community Advisory Committee
Irvine Adult Transition Program
MPR - 311 W Yale Loop, Irvine

The meeting was called to order at 6:09pm by the committee chair.

Members Present; Andrea Matolo, Angie Foster, Carlene McCurry, Elise Green, Esther Morales, Heena Shah, Ilaria Superti, Sandra Albers, Suhnyoung Yoon
Advisor: Melanie Hertig, SELPA Director

Karina Gibbs, IATP Director shared that the program serves students 18-22 years of age. One of the community partners IATP collaborates closely with is the Irvine PD, Seals Program and the Return Home Registry Program. Once per month students participate in safety education including; calling 911, what to say, when to call, and families are encouraged to register their students to sign up for the RHR program. She also encouraged all families who have students that will be attending IATP to obtain a California ID.

Two IATP students shared their experiences at the program; they have gained life skills, participated in new learning opportunities and participated in a wide variety of program activities during the school year. This includes managing the coffee cart, participating in the farmers market, a print screening business producing hats and t-shirts, creating and selling flower bouquets, and spreading kindness by hiding ducks as part of Josiah's Duck Hunt. The first speaker/ student also participated in the Coastline College Culinary program.

School Board Member Lauren Brooks spoke about the growth she has seen over 30 years. Four out of five of the school board members have had a child with an IEP and fully support this committee. The Abilities Awareness Event and the community partnership the Irvine Junior Games are an example of this growth and direction of the committee. Lauren would like to be part of the committee's legislative advocacy efforts as this is her passion.

Lauren congratulated the new members for taking on a leadership role. She thanked Melanie for a decade of leadership in inclusive practices for all students. She welcomed and congratulated Jennifer O'Malley in her new role. Parents were reminded to contact school boards members at any time, go to iusd.org to find the contact information.

Members received a copy of the February 22, 2024 general meeting minutes via email.

Motion made by Esther M.

Seconded by Ilaria S.

Motion approved by majority vote.

Motion to correct the agenda; change adopt bylaws to bylaws update and add parent presentations to the member updates.

Motion made by Sandra A.

Second by Heenah S.

Motion approved by a majority vote.

One public comment card was received for a non-agendized item;

Robin Cowan: First I would like to say congratulations to all of you who have been elected as members. I would like to go on record and say unlike other IUSD advisory committees, I feel that this one is really special. We have a really diverse population,

and we represent a lot of different people. We all have different experiences, because some students are in general ed, and others are in different placement classes. I want to encourage the membership at large to go to your committee members to make sure that you're represented because they're going to do their best but there's only so much they can do. And just like other advisory boards, those people's responsibility is to go to the public and make sure that the public has been heard. I know you're all volunteering your time and I really appreciate it.

SELPA Director Mrs. Hertig congratulated the new CAC membership and introduced the Special Education staff, and attorney Jeff Frey with AALRR. She briefly reviewed the steps taken to the selection of the nine members approved by the school board. Peers reviewed the interest forms submitted and selected the current voting members of the CAC. She also acknowledged the work of past officers (including Robin Cowan) who grew the membership to 180 plus, and how recently questions were raised on the intention of the CAC, so the district moved forward with a new election process that included soliciting interest of parents and a review process. She also thanked the incoming members for their commitment, including the two staff members

On May 1st, two officers, along with Melanie, participated in this year's Legislative Day at the state capitol. The keynote speaker was Jessica Chandler, who had to overcome challenges early in life, had an IEP with a diagnosis of Emotional Disturbance. She spoke about how that label affected her, but she rose up and moved past those challenges and now is a public speaker. Assembly Bill 2173, changes the language from emotional disturbance to emotional disability, and that was one of the bills we advocated for, and was met with bipartisan support. Heena Shah, Sandra Albers and Melanie met with Assemblywoman Cottie Petrie-Norris and a staffer from Senator Minh's office. AB 2026. was the other bill, which supports person-first language and reframes the language in documents from "disabled child" to "child with disability". Different feelings about that were voiced by the disability community, so , so the bill was dropped.

IUSD applied for a preschool program grant for early education inclusion program grant with the intention is to support preschool settings to enhance facilities and training to support inclusive practices. The district was awarded 1.2 million dollars, and it will be used to modify bathrooms, update the playground and for staff training and support. However, this grant is one of the items that is being considered to not be funded this year, advocacy efforts are being worked on and staff will keep you posted on that.

Draft copies of the 2024/27 Local Plan were made available to all attendees. Revisions to the local plan are every 3 years, it describes the services and plan for direct services provided by IUSD, as well as those provided via contracts with NPS and with the OCDE. As a single SELPA, the local plan generally does not change. She discussed that the purpose of the Local Plan is to address how school districts will be in compliance with the IDEA, and the district uses a template provided by the state. There is one major revision in Section B; effective next school year the Chinese Immersion Academy has requested to be part of the charter SELPA. The budget plan is a forecast for expenditures for the next school year; numbers are still being fine tuned even on a weekly basis. The contribution from the federal government is now 4%, state contribution is 28% and the district general funds cover 66% of the cost of special education services and programs and this is a challenge for the school district. The Annual Service Plan provides a list of types of service codes. These codes and definitions are provided by the State. The Service Plan includes the services provided by the district and other providers such as non-public schools. The last page shows the NPS codes. The Annual budget plan lists revenue and expenses codes such as mental health, certificated (teachers, therapies, etc), classified (OT, SLP, BCBA) and cost of operating expenses. The majority of dollars is for certificated staff salaries. And the classified salaries (OTs, PTs, mental health providers) There's a shortage of staffing shortage, especially with our instructional assistants and behavior interventionist. When we're not able to fill those positions, the district has contract agencies to fill those positions.

After the last general meeting, the officers were invited to participate in a review of the local plan with district staff. Proposed changes have been redlined in the copy members and attendees received today, further comments and suggestions may be submitted within the next 30 days.

Melanie announced her new role at state level as part of a committee that supports early childhood education. A one time funding from the California Department of Education turned into a permanent position to improve early childhood practices across the state. Some districts in the state struggle with finding inclusive opportunities for preschool students, so this project focuses on improving that. She will continue to be involved in IUSD. As of July 1st, Jennifer O'Malley will be the new SELPA

Director and will continue supporting the CAC. She spearheaded the Facilitated IEP process, and took the lead on a lot of the district's inclusion training.

Andrea Motola discussed the update to the bylaws. Early this year a committee was created to update the bylaws, those who served are parents of IUSD students with disabilities, and they gave time and worked diligently to follow the CA Ed Code and SELPA Guidelines and finalized recommendations to present to the newly appointed members, so they can serve parents and students in the community. Motion to disband the Bylaws Committee and for the committee members to review the draft recommendations and continue working with the SELPA.

Motion made by Andrea M.

Seconded by Angie F.

Motion approved by majority vote.

As part of her new role Andrea presented the committee annual priorities and goals as follows;

1. provide parent training concerning the special education process
2. provide informal and formal opportunities to support parents
3. support inclusive practices and activities at school sites and district event(s)
4. support member training and attendance to the legislative advocacy day

Andrea stated that these can be amended or added to over time, but we want to make sure we start the year with these goals.

Motion to adopt the committee goals as presented.

Motion made by Andrea M.

Seconded by Heena S.

Motion approved by majority vote.

Motion to approve the selection of the 24/25 officer with Esther Morales as chair, Heena Shah as Vice-Chair and Sandra Albers as Secretary.

Motion made by Angie F.

Seconded by Ilaria S.

Motion approved by majority vote.

Angie Foster spoke about the coordinator positions and their work. Bringing more presentations on both the IEP process and other services that affect our families continues to be a priority, Instagram was added, started a monthly newsletter, expanded school participation in the Abilities Awareness Week, connected with different community partners in order to enhance opportunities for the students, provide guidance to school special education campus reps, and with staff support the webpage stays current with resources and presentation videos or slides. And let's not forget the annual Abilities Awareness event that just keeps growing year after year. This is the time to not only continue this work but build on it.

Motion to approve the selection of Coordinators as follows:

- Committee Goals Andrea M
- Outreach Angie F
- General Meetings Carlene M
- Ability Awareness Elise G
- Communications Esther M
- Community Partners Heena S
- Education Engagement Ilaria S
- Legislative Advocacy Sandra A
- Site Support Sunny Y

Motion made by Angie F.

Seconded by Andrea M.

Motion approved by majority vote.

Motion to adopt the 2024/25 general meeting calendar as presented.

Motion made by Elise G.

Seconded by Esther M.

Motion approved by majority vote.

Sandra shared about her experience as a parent attending Legislative Day for the first time. She was grateful to attend the event, be in the same room with SELPA directors and other parents, to meet with legislators to advocate for important special education laws and to also share her personal story advocating for her son, and about the importance of inclusive practices. She also thanked Melanie for being a great host and for the min-tour she provided of the inside of the capitol building.

Heenah also spoke about her experience at Legislative Day. She shared that we rarely have a whole day to spend with our SELPA director and get to know each other. She thanked Melanie for her leadership and for the chance to connect with her. She also got to share her own story and that of her immigrant parents with assemblywoman Petrie-Norris. She also shared that Irvine Jr. Games were a success for the APE students, and this was the first year that twenty-three students applied and participated, thanks to word of mouth by parents. Heena made the goodie bags for each of the kids and delivered it to them. She said there were some ups and downs and we are learning what can be improved for next time. She spoke about the pride that the athletes feel when they see their parents cheering them on. Heena thanked all the parents who attended and said that the goal is to make it as convenient as possible for more parents to join next year. She was also invited to be part of the Irvine Jr. Games Committee.

Elise provided an update on Abilities Awareness Event at Woodbridge High School. She stated that in line with the district's efforts toward equity, excellence, diversity and inclusion, we held the third annual Abilities Awareness Event last month. She thanked Woodbridge staff, the PTA Council, Northwood PTSA, Woodbridge PTSA for their support, and the community partners and vendors who participated. There were a variety of student performances which were well-received by our community. In collaboration with special ed parents, PTA units, and school staff over half of the IUSD schools participated in Abilities Awareness Activities at their sites. Activities included; guest speakers and different disability simulations activities.

Ilaria reported that in collaboration with special education staff this year twelve coffee and connections presentations were offered to parents. Planning for the next school year will start soon and will be working on bringing more parent education presentations every month. The last presentation of the year will be next week Tuesday, May 28 at 5:30pm at the ECLC. Parents of newly diagnosed or students with an IEP or 504 plan, will learn about the transition into and out of ECLC from staff and a parent panel.

Esther stated that although the membership was reduced, the commitment and will from each of the members continues. Ten percent of the school population are students with an IEP or 504 plan. As a diverse group of parents we understand our peers and will be working in supporting parents so they can be their child's best advocate. The committee will be calling on parents to volunteer and support the efforts and activities on behalf of students with exceptional needs.

The next CAC General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 19, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at IATP - MPR.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:36pm.

Motion made by Elise G.

Seconded by Heena S.

Motion approved by majority vote.

Sandra Albers, Secretary