

Voting Members

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

General Meeting Minutes Thursday, September 19, 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 6:02pm 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: Jennifer O'Maley, SELPA Director

Motion to approve meeting minutes from May 23, 2024.

First: Heena Shah
Second: Sandra Albers
Motion passes.

Motion to adopt the September 19, 2024 CAC Meeting Agenda as corrected.

Discussion: IATP students will not be presenting
First: Heena Shah
Second: Angie Foster
Motion passes.

There were no public comments presented.

SELPA Executive Director Report by Jennifer O'Malley introduced special education staff. She shared that a new class has been added at Solis Elementary K-8. She continued with the legislative update on bill AB 2173; allows districts to use emotional disability instead of emotional disturbance. The label has a negative stigma, it doesn't change federal categories of disabilities but it does allow us in our reporting and when talking with students, to use that term now. Gave an update on work that staff did over the summer; training was provided for both special ed and gen ed teachers. Provided training on reading intervention, training on curriculum for our students in our practical classes, there were other trainings on assistive technology and augmentative communication. Training occurred for both special and general education teachers as part of the inclusion work on navigating challenging behaviors. The team continues to work with new special education teachers on IEP best practices and goal writing. For the first time, a training on IAs was provided; on behavior strategies and working with small groups.

Lisa T. Elementary Director shared a video regarding inclusion practices and IUSD commitment on inclusion. A short video was played featuring the District Superintendent Terry and various School Principals on the culture of inclusion; pairing up students in different classroom activities. Staff from the special education department attended the Chapman University Summit which focused on networking and connecting with the community and focused on inclusive practices. One example continuously improving practices is the annual Abilities Awareness event, this is the 4th year. It continues to grow thanks to the collaboration between the district administration, special education department, CAC, PTA and community partners. Lisa also announced that the district applied for a Supporting Inclusive Practices (SIP) Grant and was awarded the grant. Some of the fundamental stages will allow staff to connect with other professionals that have that focus. Staff conducted a series of training sessions on behavioral strategies for both special education and general education teachers.

Allison R., Secondary Director shared that at the secondary level the focus on instruction and looking at how students are being supported in the least restrictive environment. During this month's three days of training 90

teachers (both general and special education teachers) focus on inclusive practices, planning together, and looked at Universal Design for Learning (UDL), collaboration and co-teaching. Another area of focus was rather than pulling students out of the classroom, how can support be pushed into the classroom, and how can the general education and special education teachers work together in partnership to support the learning needs of all students. The teachers had the opportunity to co-plan and utilize UDL in order to meet diverse learning needs of all students. The next step of this is to push out support to school sites to move their instruction forward. The special education department is consulting with 2Teach to provide teachers with additional resources and guidance around inclusive practices within their classroom. In addition there was a teacher panel where teachers were able to ask questions of other teachers that have been participating in co-teaching over the last couple years and hear about its benefits for students and staff.

Allison also gave an update on the Alternate Pathways to a High School Diploma for students in extensive support needs programming, or students that qualify for the California Alternate Assessment (CAA). Those students that qualify for the CAA are eligible for this Alternate Pathway if they meet the graduation requirements of 130 credits, and those credits are in specific content areas as outlined in the California Department of Education. It is focused on the essential standards, but it is modified to students' instructional level. The state, county and district have been navigating how to create instruction that is tied to essential standards, measurable and modified to the students instructional level in the class (courses like political science, algebra, etc). There are essential standards that need to be met within the instruction, and then looking at how to scaffold it for each student. A lot of deep work is being done. Teachers are excited about the opportunity to access a diploma, and we want to ensure it's a valuable curriculum.

Lauren Brooks, Board Member shared about her involvement in advocacy and legislation in the district; since 2007 the IUSD has collaborated with IUCPTA who sponsors students from each of the high schools to participate in panel discussion sessions to select and prioritize specific issues that are of interest to them and have them prepare to raise these issues with elected officials in Sacramento. Last year several students advocated for expanding inclusion practices and mental health for all students. The application process will start soon and more information will be shared at the next meeting. There was a question on board policy on inclusion. Lauren said that the school board does have policies on inclusion and the Continuous Improvement Efforts are focused on equity, excellence, diversity and inclusion, so it absolutely is a focus of the entire district, at each one of our schools, and teachers are constantly evaluating goal-setting around these areas. She reminded all that board member contact information is on the district website.

Katie Pernic, Alternative Dispute Resolution Director introduced herself and gave an overview of the Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR). It's a process that allows for creative resolutions whenever there may be some disputes or disagreements with special education issues; such as differences of opinions between the team and the family about services or placement. ADR offers a smaller, confidential space to talk to come up with ideas and solutions with an emphasis on restoring relationships and finding quality ways for teams to move forward. She went on to share about her professional background, ADR experience and what she brings to IUSD; school psychologist, coordinator of services at the North Orange County multi-district SELPA, leading the ADR practices for the six LEAs, as a neutral facilitation partner, with focus on identifying the needs of both sides and finding solutions. Since coming to IUSD, I have been working with a coordinator who leads a lot of our sessions. I want to bring a practice called conflict coaching, in order to help individuals before the ADR, to explore what is important to them, and help prepare them for the conversation during an ADR.

Angie, Outreach Coordinator gave a summary of the summer activities starting with Makapo's Ohana Day where individuals with disabilities experience paddling in Newport Aquatic Center with the support of PTs, OTs, and other volunteers. Ohana means family, so it's really a family coming together. In August around 21 families met at the Summer Parent Social for a casual evening of fun and to meet other parents. The monthly coffee meet-ups have been scheduled for the fourth Friday of September, October, November, January, February, March and May. The September Coffee Meet-up is on the 27th at Broken Yolk.

Carlene, Meeting Coordinator, reminded parents that if childcare is a barrier, don't let it be since the school district provides child care for the evening general meetings. By completing the Accommodations form, staff can better prepare to support you and your child. Interpretation devices through Instant Language Assistant (ILA) are available at every meeting and it supports over 100 languages.

Ilaria Education Engagement Coordinator shared the parent education calendar. The calendar covers a variety of topics of interest based on the 2024 survey results with both morning and evening times, in-person with livestream and via zoom, and the powerpoint presentations will be uploaded to the district website after each presentation.

Motion to adopt the 2024-2025 Parent Presentation Calendar as presented.

First: Ilaria Superti

Second: Heena Shah

Motion passes.

Elise, Abilities Awareness Event Coordinator shared that IATP in addition to hosting the CAC meeting is hosting the 2nd Community Come Together Event, which is a partnership with Orange County Fire Authority, Irvine Police Department City, City of Irvine Police Department, City of Irvine Disability Services with 143 families in attendance. We are hoping to continue this partnership and other agencies to make it bigger. The 4th - Abilities Awareness Event is currently in the planning stages with a tentative date of April 30th and will be looking to create two subcommittees of volunteers to support the planning stages and during the event.

Motion to allow the Abilities Awareness Coordinator to recruit volunteers, report and create two planning subcommittees assigned for the event planning and event participation of the fourth Annual Abilities Awareness Event.

First: Elise Green

Second: Carlene Curry

Motion passes.

Sandra, Legislative Advocacy Coordinator spoke about the importance of inclusive classrooms and the value of the SIP Grant for professional development. We all want to advocate not just for our child, but for other kids and parents. Based on the "Building Inclusive Schools" book, Inclusive Education to me means: "Students with disabilities are supported members of age appropriate general education classes in their home schools receiving specialized instruction delineated by their IEPs within the context of the core curriculum." School districts can bring students who have historically been in self-contained special education classrooms into a general education classroom in a way that allows them to feel successful and also like they belong. It can be a struggle, socially, for students with disabilities in a general education classroom if those students don't know how to interact with that child. If there were more students with disabilities in the general education classrooms, then the normal would be educating these students together and recognize that we all have differences. In addition the California State SELPA and the California State PTA have resolutions on inclusive education. The SELPA "Resolution on the Urgency of Inclusive Education for Students with Disabilities in California Schools" states that California's rates of inclusion of students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment are among the lowest in the nation. Also, here is an excerpt from a document by the California PTA called *Inclusive Education for Students with Cognitive Disabilities*:

"Parents/Caregivers/Guardians can use their rights under IDEA to access inclusive placements on an ad hoc basis. Without a system of support, inclusion one child at a time is often stressful for students, parents, and school professionals. We need systemic change to make inclusion for children with cognitive disabilities the norm in our schools." It is great to hear about all of the efforts and collaboration toward inclusion the district is working on. As parents we will continue to advocate for inclusive classrooms (general education classrooms) as an option for students and to streamline the process for parents. Sandra shared her personal experience with UDL happening at her son's school; His current general education teacher is wonderful and has a great reputation at our school as being a teacher who really gets to know his students. He actually asked me to send him videos of Miles speaking when he is comfortable, and so he could see his verbal ability. I have never been asked for that by a teacher and was just so grateful. I wanted to share that because it's a great example of a teacher who cares about getting to know the individual student, and allows it to inform his approach to my son's education.

Sunny, Site Support Coordinator shared about the collaboration with IUCPTA during their PTA Unit training, the CAC offered the Campus Representative Orientation and was part of the participating community partner in the vendor fair. Campus Representatives have been busy planning coffee meet ups at their schools. At University High School the advocacy efforts by the campus representative have resulted in the special education students being able to swim and do water aerobics as part of Unified P.E. Class. At Westpark 35 parents attended the coffee meet-up.

Heena, Community Partners Coordinator is working to connect the 2025 Irvine Jr. Games committee to bring more information about the Adaptive Games division. Will also be reaching out to the City of Irvine Disability Services to get more information about Camp Connect. The camps are held at Sweet Shade on Monday, Wednesday and Friday from 8-12, there are two levels; one is for younger kids and one for older kids, with different themes and activities such as going to the Irvine Spectrum, Disneyland, Dave and Busters, and the beach, building independence and transition skills as they learn from other caretakers and volunteers. The camp falls under the recreational services funded by the Regional Center.

Esther, Communications Coordinator reviewed the resources available in the district website; updated brochure, calendars, links to the ADR process, parent handbook, by-laws, IDEA information, and encouraged all to go to the CAC page for the most current information. As of yesterday, there are 102 subscribers to the mailing list, who receive the monthly newsletter with upcoming events and presentations, as well as resources for parents.

Andrea, Committee Goals Coordinator, reviewed each of the committee goals; (1) provide parent training concerning the special education process - the change to stand-alone presentations have allowed more topic and time options based on the annual survey, goal (2) provide formal and informal opportunities to support parents - with community outreach, having over 100 parents sign up to the mailing list, the informal monthly coffee meet-ups are a safe place for parents to talk, the newsletter gives a variety of information and resources, goal (3) is supporting inclusive practices and activities at school sites and district events - as presented today the district actively working on inclusion practices and parents like Sandra can be a great asset with supporting inclusion, the Abilities Awareness event attendance grows every year, school site participation grows for the Abilities Awareness Week during March and April, goal (4) is to support member training and attendance at Legislative Advocacy Day - at least 2 CAC members attend each year, members advocate for current issues that support school districts and students, in May 2024 both Heena and Sandra attended and advocated for AB 2173, save the date for April 30, 2025.

Andrea will continue to monitor and make note of areas for the committee to continue to work on and set new goals. Transportation continues to affect students and families in various ways; long travel times another area is the summer programs available open to some but still hold restrictions for others, limited 1:1 support.

The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 14th at 9:30 a.m. at Creekside Learning Center.

Motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:24pm.

First: Andrea

Second: Ilaria

Motion passes

Sandra Albers, Secretary