

Special Education Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
IUSD Virtual General Meeting, September 23, 2021, 6:04pm

MINUTES

Call to Order: Chair- Bernadette Ah-Hing

Welcome to Guests Attendance

Introductions/Roll Call: Chair- Bernadette Ah-Hing

Attendance: 42 Non-Voting and 16 Voting Members Present

- **CAC Chairs:** Chair- Bernadette Ah-Hing; Vice Chair- Angie Foster; Secretary- Andrea Matolo
- **District Office:** Melanie Hertig, Allison Robbins, Amy Ochoa, Jennifer O'Malley, Lisa Torkzadeh, Sean Viney, Stacy Kredel, Taryn Dreifus, Christina Reyes; Libby Kelly, Angela Weedn, Isabel Vu, Bryan Lamb, Meghan Sparling
- **IUSD School Board:** Paul Bokota

Approval of the Agenda: Moved by: Bernadette Ah-Hing Seconded by: Angie Foster Vote: 11 Aye 0 Nay

Approval of Minutes of May 2021 General Meeting:

Moved by: Bernadette Ah-Hing Seconded by: Angie Foster Vote: 9 Aye

Public Comments

Anonymous, read by Bernadette Ah-Hing: Registration process, which requires a first name, last name, and email, may or may not violate the Brown Act allowing for anonymity. Is there a way to facilitate anonymity with CAC Zoom meetings accordingly? Is there a way to change the process to not require first and last name, minimally?

Maryam: My son is at ECLC and has an IEP plan. She is nervous as to whether her son will be able to continue in school if he is not up to date on vaccinations. Does anyone know how that works? Her nurse mentioned that it may be different at each school.

Anonymous, read by Angie Foster: My son started going to an IUSD elementary school last month as a 1st grader. This Monday, 9/20, my daughter and he played at the school playground right after school was dismissed. My husband was with them at that time. After about ten minutes, he found my son was punched repeatedly by two kids. Later we found that one was his classmate and the other was another 1st grader from a different room. They ran away when they saw my husband coming. We left the playground right after since we had to go somewhere else. My son kept saying he was in pain. We had to bring him to urgent care to have a doctor check on him and have an x-ray taken. Luckily he didn't have any bone fractures. Only bruises and tenderness on the chest area. He was traumatized by the whole incident and didn't want to go back to school. We then called Child Protective Services. The

person on the phone asked us to document it and meet with the school principal directly first thing in the morning. The protocol was to ask him to ensure my son's safety and ask for a temporary aide for 30 days to accompany my son. The principal should be able to provide that. It turned out we didn't get anything at all.

My husband documented what happened and all the incidents related to and possibly related to bullying since school started. We then met with the principal the next morning. The principal started by saying the incident happened after school. He is not responsible for it even though it was just ten minutes after school dismissal. Many students, staff, and faculty were still on campus. Playground was packed at that time. He then questioned the consistency and accuracy of all the incidents my husband documented. I was quite emotional and started talking about what school could have done differently. The principal was not happy. He said that we all talked negatively and discredited all the hard work his wonderful team has been doing. We then started bringing up what the social worker asked us to ask. He said repeatedly at least five times that he could not ensure my son's safety when he returns to school. In fact, no one could, even we as parents could not. We were shocked to hear that. He also said that he could not provide any 1:1 aide. We then asked if he could ask teachers and staff to pay more attention to my son whenever or wherever my son is there. He also said he could not. That would mean 1:1 attention. We need to find a 1:1 aide. General education is for everyone. My son could not get any special attention. Over the whole meeting, we didn't feel any of his sympathy for our situation. He did not offer a single bit of help at all. He asked us to go through the process to apply for a 1:1 aide. That is the only thing he can do. He also promised to do an investigation on all the documented incidents before this.

The next day, Wednesday, he got back to us with the investigation result. He found no evidence of bullying. But all the statements are from staff and teachers. He didn't talk to any kids at all. As for the Monday incident, it was after school. School is not responsible for it, so no action is taken about it. His action plan is education/daily reinforcement to the whole class, asking playground assistants to carefully watch my son at lunch and recess, and letting my son know who to report any problems. Essentially it is self-advocacy. We know education does not work. It was done when my husband reported verbal abuses to my son less than a week after school started. My son still got bullied by at least two classmates after that. Self-advocacy will not work for my son, either, with his current Autism diagnosis. His neurologist wrote to us about this yesterday saying it is like asking someone who is in a wheelchair to get up and run. The whole experience is very frustrating. We felt very helpless.

We then contacted districts about this. We had a meeting with Ms. Lisa Torkzadeh and Ms. Stacy Kredel yesterday, 9/22. Ms. Torkzadeh later got Mr. Stan Machesky in our case. The current advice from Mr. Machesky is to have my son back to school. But it is very hard to convince him to do that. And I am very worried about his emotional well-being even if he doesn't get hurt again. Plus, I don't want to risk his life/well-being by accepting this arrangement especially after the principal cannot ensure his safety in school. He gave me that warning multiple times during our meeting. I don't understand why the school is so inflexible and rigid that they cannot even move staff around for a short period of time.

Doaa Hussein: Can we have more details about the inclusion process?!

Amberly Blevins: What is the process for asking for 1:1 aide? And do you get the option to request someone that knows sign language?

Shana Villoria: Bring your kids to Jiu Jitsu to help prevent certain situations, it can really help. We train all ages and levels, including kids with various needs.

Mitra Ordibehesht: My son goes to ECLC. Could Music Therapy be part of an IEP?

Andrea Matolo: This was a truly alarming story that was just shared by the anonymous parent earlier today and I look forward to hearing from the district on how this was handled or will be handled when they are able to give an update. The safety of our children is top of mind and critical for our families. I hear stories of children being bullied so it is really important that when children speak up to their parent and parents speak up to the district that they are heard and not dismissed. Thank you to that parent.

Heena Shah: Is also interested in what the School District has to say as it could be both with typical peers and within classrooms of special needs kids that there could be aggressive behaviors towards one another. When parents get a note of an incident happening, it can be tough to grasp. She is also interested in hearing about the district's response to bullying and how things can be rectified

Bernadette Ah-Hing: Thank you for your comments. This is a really heavy topic. We are all hoping for a positive outcome.

Parent: Regarding the bullying. What about the "Speak up We Care?" There was a speaker at CAC in past about bullying from Karate for All.

Sandhya Dasari : Hi, My son is new to IUSD district and has an IEP, he is into regular classroom with a special needs teacher. I would like to know, how could I get a regular update daily on how my son is doing. I inquired with the school, but I was told that teacher updating parents on kid's performance daily depends completely on teacher. It is not mandatory it seems and he has not been hearing any updates from teachers for the past 4 days. They might only get a one word answer to questions. Is there a way to get more information?

Milenka Galvez: Hi! Can we please bring up the issue of IVA sessions for our children who are mobile, and how can we have either 1:1 instructions or none at all? From what she has seen, a teacher is presenting in-video session and the child is required to stay in the chair. How can we require 1:1 sessions? Milenka sees that it is better to have a physical interaction, rather than that on the screen.

Sina Shekarchi: My son has developmental delays and requires extensive Physical and Occupational therapies. He is part of CCS and have therapies there, but he needs to have therapies at school. Is it possible to include goals for Physical and Occupational therapy at his IEP?

Milenka Galvez: Can we also please bring in the agenda the unmasking of our children? I'd really like to bring this up if possible.

Alicia Acosta: Last year my daughter had small group instructional assistance. She is wondering whether these accommodations might be able to be reinstated as she continues with IVA.

Committee Chair Report

1. CAC General Meeting Calendar Dates:

- a. November 18, 2021, at 6:00pm
- b. February 17, 2022, at 6:00pm
- c. May 12, 2022, at 6:00pm

2. Local Area Plan & Budget

These have already been approved and signed off on in June by the board.

Executive director met with and presented to School Board our goals, what we are working on, how we are intending to increase membership, promote inclusivity, etc.

CAC notes to SELPA on plan:

Section (b) The box was not checked off, but should have been. It has now been checked off.

We had asked to have our children at home schools instead of being bussed across the district. The language was changed, stating that the districts makes decisions with the intent to keep children as close to their home schools as possible. For those students that don't have services at their home school, bussing is available. No changes were made, but the wording was updated.

Section (g) The guidelines regarding dyslexia and transportation, we were asking to add guidelines to the Local Area plan. The district responded that the district is revising their manual. This would be more appropriately addressed in the manual on the district website.

We asked them to update SELPA beliefs. They were good beliefs, but we wanted them more appropriate to our children. It was updated.

We asked them to add language regarding inclusion. Some wording was added by the district

We referenced section (c) regarding BICM vs. BCBA. The term and requirements regarding BICM are no longer applicable.

Budget: We suggested adding an inclusion specialist to Irvine School District. The response was that this is currently a duty of a TOSA. Inclusion and Support is important to the district as a whole. We will continue adding support for this area. In lieu of an inclusion specialist, the district was able to add another TOSA to the team.

The OC Superintendent of Schools reviewed and provided consent for the plan.

I will be signing the Local Area Plan and am honored to be doing so given all of the hard work put into creating it.

3. CAC Bylaws update – They are nearing being finished. If anyone wants to participate, you are welcome to join.
4. Resources:
 - a. October Workshop: Special Needs Trusts & Conservatorship. Date: 10/ 21 /2021 @ 6:00pm to 8:00pm
 - b. Abilities Week: Fall 2021/Spring 2022. We asked the schools to hold an abilities week to bring awareness. For IVA, we are going to have an abilities week as well.

CAC GOALS:

Bernadette spoke to 3 of the CAC goals having been achieved.

- Create a thriving CAC community and board partnership as evidenced by increased membership and collaboration opportunities such as Zoom Call or Web X for meeting
- Connie Stone, IUSD PTA Council, had appointed Esther Morales (a CAC member) as our PTA Special Committees Chair. She will also be a CAC liaison.
- We look to have the PTA events appropriate and applicable to Special Education children and families.
- Esther Morales introduced herself and shared a little about her family and excitement to serve. The CAC is excited to be working together with Esther and wants to offer Esther a huge congratulations.

Committee Vice Chair Report

- Congratulations to Esther – We are excited for the bridge between CAC and PTA. A lot of individuals received an email from the PTA regarding our meeting today.
1. Parent Handbook Update
This is a guide for people who may be unsure of the next step or where to go for assistance once the child is given an IEP.
 - The final draft was given to the district to review. The PTA will also include this with their handbook.
 2. Summer Parent Social – July 16, 2021
 - About 17 families participated, socialized, networked, and shared resources with one another.
 - We discussed things that Special Needs families could do along with General Ed families.
 3. CAC Special Ed Campus Rep
 - This is an opportunity for a Special Ed Parent rep at we hope each campus to introduce themselves to principal, education specialist, School psychologist, basically whole IEP team to see if they could partner with us to do events to make sure that this community does not feel alone.

- If you are interested, please reach out and we can get you into a training or orientation in order to become a rep.
4. Save the Dates:
 - a. Monthly Morning Parent Meet Ups – Every 4th Friday of the month at Panera Bread on Barranca Pkwy at 9:00AM.
 - This is a time to meet, socialize, and connect with other parents
 - b. Holiday Social – Dec 4, 2021
 - This will likely be held at Hangar 24
 - c. Monthly Evening Parent Socials – TBD
 5. Facebook Page. We are working on creating an Irvine Special Education Parents page for those families that prefer connecting that way. This will not be run by the CAC.

Staff Presentation/Information

Special Ed. Executive Director Report: Melanie Hertig

- Melanie thanked the CAC Chairs for all of their hard work.
 - She introduced the district employees who were present.
 - Paul Bokota: Thanked everyone for allowing him to be a participant and a part of the committee. It is near and dear to his heart.
 - Those public comments that were particular to a child's case, the district will follow up with that individual on each case.
 - Thanked the parent for sharing about a situation that may involve bullying. The district takes matters of bullying seriously. We always have concerns, especially when an incident involves a child who is nonverbal or cannot understand completely.
 - We continue to experience difficulty filling some positions, especially IA positions. If you know anyone who is interested, please look at our website.
 - CA Dyslexia guidelines, adopted in 2017 have been a resource for our school staff. A link will be included in our procedural manual.
 - Inclusion: Continues to be important to parents and staff. TOSAs, Program Specialists and Coordinators all play a role in inclusion.
 - We are developing a survey as to what inclusion looks like for you and will update you.
 - We will continue to support the CAC in sharing resources with parents.
 - A parent had raised an issue with some signage outside of an office. There are a limited number of offices that have rooms specifically labeled as to what kinds of services are offered. We discussed how some students may have a negative response when accessing these services with school psychologists. We will work to share these concerns with the other school site administrators as well.
 - The State SELPA administration is working with those who are on an alternative diploma track for those that this may be appropriate.
1. Legislative updates
 - SB639 – Addresses minimum wage for people with disabilities

- AB313 – Sets State hiring goals for people with disabilities

2. School Board updates

The Board has been fabulous in supporting our initiatives.

3. District updates: Masking

- All COVID 19 guidelines and protocols are listed on our website. They are the same for Special Ed students. The exception is the face mask policy. The district understands that there are those that may not be able to wear a mask all day. There is now a Doctor's note required to be obtained.
- We understand that there was a concern that not everyone is aware that not everyone can wear a mask. We have worked through those individual conversations and believe that all specific concerns have been addressed.

4. COVID Response Summer Program feedback

- We are thankful that IUSD offered in-person instruction when other districts were not able to.
- The impact on various students of virtual learning has been varied.
- We are partners on this with students and parents. We all want the same outcome for students.
 - (a) ESSER Funds: 1x dollars that will be given for this 2 year period. The Special Ed department is being given \$7.2M in additional support. We have invested in a lot of additional staff: 3 additional school psychologists, Speech, Occupational, Physical, Mental Health, therapists, etc. These are here to help identify gaps of students.
 - (b) Jennifer O'Malley: Learning loss grant: 1x grant to be used by the end of June 2023. \$1.9M to provide social and emotional support, direct in person, Child Find, and assessments as a result of COVID.
- We will provide additional trainings to staff. Hoping to create "calm corners", and to purchase additional teaching materials. Also for materials to address executive functioning.
- We hope to complete assessments
 - (c) Alternative Dispute Resolution funds – 1x, approximately \$430,000. To be used on early intervention and advance our Facilitated IEP process.
 - Opportunity to hire someone as a parent partner to collaborate with our families. Working with CAC, Family empowerment centers, etc.

Lisa Torkzadeh: Wants you to know that there are resources available at each school site. October is anti-bullying month. Our administration takes all bullying issues seriously. If you believe that your child is being bullied, please notify site principal or administrator. Administrator investigates and takes appropriate actions based on findings. <https://iusd.org/about/departments/education-services/student-support-services/student-services/bullying-cyber>.
<https://iusd.org/about/departments/education-services/student-support-services/mental-health-and-wellness/speak-we>

Adjourn Business Meeting at 7:30PM: Moved by Angie Foster Seconded by Andrea Matolo Aye: 10
Nay: 0

Presentation: Understanding IUSD Special Ed Dept. Services

Q&A

Draft