

Poway Unified School District
Community Advisory Committee
Minutes for February 26, 2019

Meeting was called to order by chair Karen Harkins Slocomb at 6:30pm, after establishing quorum.

Attendance:

Present: Shelly Wright, Karen Harkins Slocomb, Cheryl Hernandez, Heather Plotzke, Alexandra Sparks, David Choi, Tiffany King, Gina Zanolini, Bernard Larsen, Frida Brunzell (arrived late), and Rosabel Agbayani (arrived late).

District Liaison: Greg Mizel.

Not present: Etis Fathy, Sheila Keesling, Melissa Lazaro, Anna Quint, and Lisa Dreyer (district liaison)

Karen Harkins Slocomb welcomed members of the public and asked if the committee would agree to move the District Liaison report to the top of the meeting agenda. Cheryl moved to take the report out of order. Gina Zanolini seconded the motion. The motion carried.

District Liaison Report:

Greg Mizel thanked parents for their participation in the LCAP process. Greg explained that the Issues & Policies committee had been disbanded, but the district will be working to establish a new committee that will include special education and general education teachers for the purpose of reviewing and revising the Local Plan.

After December 2018, the Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) will be taking a break so the district can focus its efforts on pushing forward with the SAI (specialized academic instruction) plans for inclusion. The likely plan is to have a smaller committee/group, to include diverse populations, which will then work on issues related to the district's inclusion goals.

SEAC conducted a survey regarding SAI, which recommended a smaller committee going forward and identified/suggested goals and priorities for the district to address. The SEAC survey results will be shared with the CAC in the future, as well as with those who participated in SEAC when the district announces the model schools.

A key goal identified was behavior intervention for both general education and special education students because behavior is impacting education. The district is in conversations now regarding how to grow the behavior team and encourage more professionals to get BCBA/ABA certification. Currently the district has four positions for behavior management, with three people managing the workload. This number is insufficient for a district our size.

The district entered a MOU (memorandum of understanding) with PFT and PSEA (the unions) jointly related to the district's SAI goals and movement. A small group of personnel will support SAI as it is implemented in model schools.

The district has not announced the model schools for SAI/inclusion pilots, but it has tentatively selected three: one elementary school, one middle school, and one high school. There were 10 initial submissions, and one school withdrew, so the district selected from among the 9 remaining applicant schools. The tentatively-selected schools are currently negotiating with the district regarding their vision and what resources they would like to ensure the district can provide the necessary support for success in the pilot programs. Greg anticipates announcing the schools in the next few weeks, once it's finalized. Faculty and staff from all 10 schools have been invited to participate in SAI learning and training regarding inclusive practices. Megan Gross is leading the TLC learning program related to this professional development, and several teachers from across the district were being released for a training at D39 on Wednesday, February 27, 2019. This training will continue until June 2019.

Greg envisions the committee that will replace SEAC meeting two or three times a year, with a broader focus related to Special Education, not just the SAI programming.

Greg reported that he met with Alex Sparks regarding the parent handbook and district communication of that information on its website. Before their meeting, Alex went through the parent handbook, the special education procedural handbook, and meeting notes from the CAC subcommittee working on the project. Alex went through the materials to update and correct them, she reorganized the materials and merged the information. Greg's team is consolidating the information to bring to the CAC for review, suggestions and questions. From there, Alex plans to work on a one-pager that can be distributed in hard copy, as well as a version of the document that can be included on the webpage with active/hot links directing people seeking information to it.

Greg reported that 18 elementary and 2 middle school teachers would be receiving week-long Orton-Gillingham training next week, which means there will be one trained, lead teacher at each elementary and middle school (and D39) district-wide who has received the formal, week-long training.

Public Comments

Member of the public David Koch offered his services as a behavior analyst and clinical social worker to the district. He also asked if there was a subcommittee within the CAC that studies evidence-based, best practices in special education.

Member of the public Eileen has a second grade student with ASD and expressed concern about lack of training among staff members who fill the ESS positions.

Minutes from January

Karen shared an email from Anna, asking for a correction to the minutes from January to say that Anna says she would meet with Mark Exley (Special Education Foundation President) to determine how the CAC might be able to assist him. Members in attendance said their recollection was NOT that Anna would represent the CAC in a meeting with Mark. Karen offered to simply add the information to the February minutes to reflect the conflicting information (because it was not recorded in January).

In connection with this, Anna asked Karen to report that she sent Mark Exley (Special Education Foundation President) several emails attempting to have a meeting with him. Mark responded that he would meet, and Anna checked back with him, but they did not meet. Anna plans to continue to follow up with Mark.

Subcommittee reports

Events Subcommittee

Cheryl and Rosabel will be leading the Excellence event. They have created a google document for nominations and will work with the district to have the forms distributed districtwide electronically. They also agreed to reach out to Renee Tompkins and the transition program at Abraxas to have some hard copy versions made and sent to students at Valley and Garden Road, as well as to have a Spanish version available.

No one had anything to report regarding the March parent information night. The members in attendance thought that perhaps Sheila and Etis were taking the lead on that event. The CAC agreed that the topic would be transitions (from high school to after high school), and agreed to postpone the event from the originally-scheduled March 12 time. The group tentatively set Monday, April 8 as the new date for the transition program. Karen will follow up with Sheila and Etis to see if they had a speaker already in mind. Tiffany King also agreed to provide support in developing this event.

External Communication Subcommittee

David reported that the Support and External subcommittees were combining because they were developing overlapping programming and had shared goals.

David explained they would continue to develop an FAQ document (and work with Alex on this).

David raised the issue of how best to distribute CAC material. There was discussion about whether this could be done at each IEP meeting, or whether it should be done at initials or triennials. The general consensus was that it was necessary more frequently than just an initial IEP, but no decision was reached as to whether it

should be distributed at each IEP meeting or triennially. The group also discussed who should have the responsibility of distributing information about the CAC, and Tiffany King suggested it could be a responsibility handled by administrators or school psychologists. There is a psychologist at every initial and triennial IEP. The district office will consider the logistics, and CAC will check back in at the next CAC meeting.

David expressed some concerns about the though exchange program used by the district for the LSAP data collection. He specifically identified comments on the Turtleback Elementary though exchange forum that singled out a specific student on campus with ASD who was written about very negatively. The group discussed what the district responsibility should be in terms of moderating comments, and whether it was safe to have this type of information so broadly public.

The group also discussed how these comments may reflect a broader attitude of the general education public, and the CAC expressed concern about how this attitude might impact the district goal of inclusion in the coming school year. Tiffany explained that the district understand the transition to a more inclusive model needs to occur slowly so that consensus can be built among staff and the culture at the pilot schools can change. As those schools develop inclusive cultures, they can become models for other schools. The CAC suggested the district and those schools need to include parent education – general education parent education into the plan.

David also raised the issue of ability awareness as a program that could be adopted district wide and asked whose responsibility that should be as the district moves toward a more inclusive educational model.

Membership subcommittee – nothing new to report.

Governance subcommittee

Karen explained that the subcommittee looked at the Education Code and determined that it laid out very specifically what needs to be in the Local Plan. She explained that the Local Plan is supposed to be developed by a committee that includes general and special education teachers, as well as parents, which is not currently in place. She shared the information with the district office, and the district office is planning to develop this group (perhaps it will be the smaller SEAC committee that Greg mentioned in his report) for review and development of the Local Plan. The Local Plan must be updated by 2020, and then reviewed at least every 3 years. The district plans to meet this deadline.

The CAC finished reviewing the governance sections it had tasked itself with, including a couple additions to the membership section, as reflected on the document attached to the minutes. Karen raised two items that seemed confusing, as mentioned on that document – one was that the CAC is supposed to provide annual priority recommendations for the Local Plan. This does not make sense

because the Local Plan is not updated annually. Moreover, it is a governance document, so the priorities should be more about implementation of policy.

The CAC will look at the entirety of the governance subcommittee's recommendations at the March meeting, with an eye toward approving the CAC-developed parts in April or May for use by the newly established committee next year. The group will revisit the issue of whether there should be a maximum number of committee members and what that should be in March. Also in March, the governance subcommittee will collect information about which schools CAC members attend and what qualifying disabilities are represented on the CAC to aid in membership and selection going forward. This information will not be posted publicly beyond sharing it in the CAC meeting.

Recap of things for the March meeting:

- District liaison will report on status of model school selection and share SEAC survey results in connection with that announcement.
- District will report back regarding logistics for distributing CAC brochure materials.
- Karen will check in with Etis and Sheila to make sure they work with Tiffany on transition program for parent information night.
- Cheryl will set up collection for Kitchen Vacation for those who want to contribute to it. More on that in March.
- Everyone will review the governance subcommittee recommendations and bring questions (and recommendations re membership numbers) to the March meeting.

Karen adjourned the meeting at 8:00pm.