



NORTH COASTAL CONSORTIUM FOR SPECIAL
EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
PRIORITIES REPORT

Summary of 2023–2024 Priorities

PRIORITY 1. ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

- 1.1. Access to academic inclusion
- 1.2. Access to social inclusion
- 1.3. Ability awareness activities
- 1.4. School-wide and personal safety
- 1.5. Inclusive education training for general and special educators (including paraprofessionals), families and students

PRIORITY 2. SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS - PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

**** This was a new priority last year, determined by parent feedback and interest in workshops. Again this year, parents and staff have identified mental health as a priority. ****

- 2.1 Educate Staff, students, and parents on Mental Health supports available on campus and off-campus
- 2.2 Teach student self-advocacy to identify personal Mental Health needs

PRIORITY 3. SELF DETERMINATION AND SELF-ADVOCACY

- 3.1. Self-advocacy, choice-making, and self-determination best practices training for general and special educators (Including paraprofessionals, administrators, families, and students)
- 3.2. Meaningful student self-advocacy and participation in their education planning meetings
- 3.3. Leadership and Campus Opportunities for special education students

PRIORITY 4. COMMUNICATION/ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- 4.1. Parent outreach
- 4.2. District-home communication
- 4.3. Parent/School communication for parents of limited English proficiency

PRIORITY 5. POST SECONDARY TRANSITION PRACTICES - PREPARATION FOR ADULTHOOD

- 5.1 Post-Secondary Planning and Support

Note: Input from high school and transition age students is printed in *italic blue*

PRIORITY 1. ACADEMIC AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Accept every student as a general education student first. Promote the successful social and academic inclusion of all students with disabilities, including those with significant disabilities and those with behavioral issues, within the whole school community. Ensure that students are safe in all settings, including classrooms and unstructured times.

Data shows social and academic inclusion are not exclusive occurrences - when students are included socially in general education classrooms and campus activities, both social and academic learning are enhanced for all students

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>1.1 - Academic Inclusion- Access to academic inclusion for all students ages 3-22, including students with significant disabilities and those with behavioral concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Appoint special education staff to general education committees. ● Offer high school elective credit for peer classroom participation in a peer/mentor curriculum. ● Teachers and paraprofessionals receive ongoing training on strategies that will best support students with autism. ● Create shared document systems to provide resource access for all teams and staff. ● Train families for assistive technology use at home and include website resource www.assistivetechologyguide.org. ● Co-teaching (SPED staff and gen ed staff) for core subjects and elective courses. ● Focus on strength-based IEPs, learning style strengths, personality strengths and interest/passions. Students will participate by providing input in these sections. ● Implement SCIA process with established prompt hierarchy and steps to independence. ● Create course profile to define mainstreamed classes for Certificate bound/Modified curriculum. ● Create a new District Staff position: Teacher on Special Assignment specifically for Intervention, Inclusion and Outreach. ● Create a systemic digital framework for Modified Academic criteria to enable Gen Ed teachers to grade in consideration of specific IEP goals, e.g. History class may be graded on a participation goal not just subject matter. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Need support for challenges with printer, Wi-Fi, and sound features.</i> 2. <i>Students want access to more, faster, and better-performing technology.</i> 3. <i>Use technology instead of textbooks - more technology-based classes.</i>

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>1.2 Social Inclusion-Access to social inclusion for all students ages 3-22, including students with significant disabilities and those with behavioral concerns</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Implement a district-wide plan to ensure participation for all students in field trips and other campus activities, including leadership programs (ASB) and student-led school tours. ● Incorporate structured and adult-supported peer-to-peer social supports - include support for unstructured times (lunch, breaks) like “buddy benches”, peer mentoring programs (e.g., SOAR, Best Buddies), a Social Ambassadors program, or Acts of Kindness program. ● Encourage PTA at all school sites to appoint a Special Education parent to foster inclusion with all PTA projects. ● Schedule after school meetings and on Saturdays with typical peers. ● Inclusive Recess - Establish a Recess Committee to offer a “Recess Lounge”. Ideas: Keep Libraries open and staffed each recess to offer a quiet indoor option. Offerings included: games, art projects. Offering Student Designed clubs like: Star Wars club, Lego club, all students welcome. And/or offering structured outdoor field games offered at recess. Adult facilitated. ● Provide fliers and keep PTAs informed on Special Ed support to be provided at upcoming events. ● Provide “Sensory Bags” e.g., available through Kulture City for families and students at school events. ● Initiate Inclusive events and programs: Inclusive Athletic Tournament (basketball), Student Led school businesses, Dolphin Designs (logo art), Falcon Eatery (on- campus café) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Need support for challenges with printer, Wi-Fi, and sound features.</i> 2. <i>Students want access to more, faster, and better-performing technology.</i> 3. <i>Use technology instead of textbooks – more technology-based classes.</i>

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>1.3 Ability awareness activities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sponsor Programs like “Best Buddies” program - all levels of education and a Compassion Day. ● Increase teacher knowledge of instructional and non-instructional strategies that support inclusion, UDL, and Co-teaching. ● Incorporate Student led activities whenever possible (Innovate 8 Novel written by student to support inclusive practices). ● Ability awareness day/week at school to possibly include school wide video presentation, parent night presentation, student led stories and presentations. ● Share inspiring stories of successes and achievements of students overcoming challenges with students and staff. ● Initiate programs such as the “Design Thinking Project” (emphasizes empathy, understanding with ability to predict future design and impact for the students with disabilities) or an “Everyone Has Strengths” program. ● Create a Google Drive for sharing activities by grade level and by subject area (e.g., VI, DHH). ● Provide training and funding for teacher stipends and materials for activities. ● Utilize library and media centers to promote community and special ed programs on campus. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Students in high school SEAS (Social Emotional Academic Support) class asked for ability awareness “so people could understand.”</i>

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>1.4 Inclusive Campus Environments - ensuring Physical and Emotional Safety</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reinforce school-wide anti-bullying strategies and harassment protocols specific to protection of special education students. ● Include special education students in all fire and lockdown drills including adaptive maps, medication protocols, visuals, and ADA access routes. ● Train all staff on campus in behavior intervention strategies for de-escalation, impulsivity, elopement, self-injury, and social skills. ● Update Transportation services and staff to educate drivers and aides on safety procedures and behavioral strategies. ● Encourage “No Place for Hate Campaign.” ● Staff Equity training provided by San Diego County Office of Education to increase inclusivity and awareness to ensure a welcoming and safe culture. ● Establish a School Crisis Plan/Team for emergency situations. ● Encourage school guidance support with credentialed counselors. ● Present social relationships/sex education at upper elementary, middle, high school, and transition levels for all students, including those with disabilities that are more significant. Also, provide parent guides and online reference. ● CPI training for general education teachers, administrative personnel, special education teachers, paraprofessionals, and service providers. ● Share behavioral systems and protocols with parents for continuity at home. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Cameras and security staff make me feel safe.</i> 2. <i>Students want everyone to treat each other with respect.</i> 3. <i>Anti-bullying assemblies are not enough – handle bullying as it happens.</i> 4. <i>At middle school, each grade had a separate lunchtime and sat by class. This helped people to know each other and fewer opportunities to bully younger kids.</i>

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>1.5 Inclusion Training- Inclusive education training for general and special educators (including paraprofessionals, administrators, families, and students.)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Train and support general education professionals on Universal Design for Learning (UDL), co-teaching and adaptations/modifications. ● Provide virtual Parent Training on Universal Design for Learning. ● Utilize NCCSE Assistive Technology (AT) specialists provide training for paraprofessionals on Universal Design and AT Tools. ● District-Wide training on Strengths-Based and Student-Led IEPs. ● Create a series of online training modules for paraprofessionals working in non-academic settings (noon duties, lunch workers, crossing guards, bus drivers, etc.) ● Create an online resource center of tools and information for general education teachers. ● Implement a district wide behavioral and Social Emotional Learning (SEL) continuum that includes a Universal Screener and Social Emotional Learning Curriculum. ● Conduct District-wide surveys to tailor staff training. ● Continue to inform all staff of the various NCCSE workshops, including administrators and paraprofessionals. ● Sponsor Parent Educational workshops - acknowledge the best attendance and easier access, consider offering childcare and after work hours. ● Promote collaboration and observations with the teams at different schools within the district. ● Provide paraprofessionals training specifically for mainstream opportunities including binder and data collection, adaptive work strategies, and training modules. ● Directly involve parents in programming for inclusion practices. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Treat us like our own age - the same as other students.</i> 2. <i>We need respectful support (not to do it for us). Know who we are.</i> 3. <i>We like after school tutoring, extra time for tests, showing different ways to learn, help to stay on task and get things done</i>

PRIORITY 2. SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL WELLNESS - PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT

Provide support for our students and families through district support and utilizing the current community mental health resources available to assist in what is being referred to as a “crisis in mental health” for children and adolescents.

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>2.1 Educate Staff, students and parents on Mental Health support available on campus and off-campus.</p>	<p><u>Suggestions:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Provide mental health presentations (inform parents of (NCCSE offerings) from school and local professionals for parents, teachers, and students to address depression and anxiety. ● Provide Parent training in social emotional communication. ● Establish parent liaisons to aid parents and students in finding resources. ● Educate IEP teams, teachers, and families to identify stressors and triggers for students struggling with mental health. ● Provide an anonymous phone/text line to seek help. This could be unique to the school site to address specific needs and challenges. ● Create a Crisis Intervention team for mental health emergencies on campus. ● Provide adult facilitated “lunch bunch” and before/after school meet-up times for discussion groups and check-ins. ● Increase mental health staffing and district resources - counselors, psychologists. ● Work to secure funding for Social/Emotional Learning and identify specific teachers to procure Social/Emotional curriculum and lesson plans (e.g., CASEL, SEL framework). ● Identify a (SEL) trained, dedicated teacher per site to co-teach and push-in to classrooms. Make SEL lessons adaptable to each grade level and adaptable to sudden, occurring needs on campus. 	

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>2.2 Teach student self-advocacy to identify Mental Health needs</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster resilience through support programs and peer to peer involvement. Promote “Positive Growth Mindset” by implementing tools and techniques to support healthy thoughts. ● Create a “phone a friend” opportunity, perhaps with peer volunteers, to be a shoulder at the moment to provide support through a crisis moment. Support the volunteers to know when to escalate to an adult (counselor, teacher, etc.) ● Create opportunities for kids to “pop in” as needed for anxiety. ● Teach Mental Health management as a life skill. ● Raise awareness - Educate students to identify when to seek help from professionals through assemblies, presentations, and counselor check- ins. 	

PRIORITY 3. SELF DETERMINATION AND SELF-ADVOCACY

Support the life-long success, independence, and leadership skills of students who receive special education services by explicitly teaching how to self-advocate, along with providing opportunities to practice self-advocacy skills at all age levels.

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>3.1 Self-advocacy, choice-making, and self-determination best practices training for general and special educators (including paraprofessionals), administrators, families, and students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create an IEP goal to target the student’s participation in the IEP process. ● Lead staff to prioritize students’ overall independence in decision-making. (e.g., reduce prompt dependency, reliance on token economy system). ● Share information via staff meetings and website links for teachers at all grade levels, like “I’m Determined” (www.imdetermined.org- Virginia). ● Increase home communication by providing information on parent workshops and assemblies for students about effective choice making and participation in planning. ● Teacher led training and collaboration on strategies to include students in IEP. 	

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
<p>3.2 Meaningful student self-advocacy and participation in their IEP and educational planning meetings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop a one-page self-advocacy reference with the student to share at their IEP.) ● Create a student portfolio with samples of work, journal entries, and surveys. ● Assist the student in creating a personal video with interviews, or PowerPoint presentation to share their ideas. Ask: what are you proud of? What helps you? What are your goals for the next level of schooling? ● Create Google Drive with verbal script and templates for students to easily modify to prepare. ● Prepare for student-facilitated IEP meetings: have a “pilot” IEP meeting where the child can prepare an item and practice sharing. ● Interview the student using a standard list of questions approximately three times a year to show a timeline of student progress. ● Make it mandatory for case managers to include students in IEP to participate to the best of their ability and adapt for age appropriateness. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Explain the purpose and steps of the meeting, set goals, rehearse, prioritize items with the teacher before the IEP meeting.</i> 2. <i>Students appreciate the opportunity to make choices about their school programs, course selection, and IEP goals. They participate in discussions as well as plan for college and how to get help after high school.</i> 3. <i>Bring in the teachers where we are doing well, not just the teachers where we are struggling.</i> 4. <i>Opportunity to meet and preferably to get to know the people who will attend at least a week or two before the meeting.</i> 5. <i>Students dislike when teachers cannot attend/stay for meetings, bring up negative history, aren't aware there's a problem until the meeting, have relevant goals, make assumptions and unilateral decisions, are too crowded, not making progress.</i>

Priority	Recommendation and Examples	Student Voices
3.3 Leadership and Campus Opportunities for special education students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Find meaningful opportunities for student leadership roles at school. ● Consider student participation and/ or presentations at CAC meetings. ● Adapt student led activities during and after school to allow for inclusive student participation, e.g., Dance Committees, Student Council, lunch programs. 	

PRIORITY 4. COMMUNICATION/ACCESS TO INFORMATION

Continue to increase communication and collaboration among the NCCSE, school districts, the CAC, and families with the purpose of building trusting partnerships and increasing meaningful participation that support students. Diminish barriers for families and students whose primary language is other than English to enable meaningful and informed participation in their child’s education and IEP process.

Priority	Recommendation and Examples
<p>4.1 Parent Outreach</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Initiate comprehensive Social Media Management to utilize social media and applications like “Blackboard” (learning management system) to share resources & information. ● Districts appoint CAC members who reflect the diversity of families within the district. ● Employ a TOSA dedicated to Outreach, Inclusion, and Communication for the district. ● Gather input through parent interest surveys to determine the focus and direction of Special Education programs and needs. ● Parent/ Guardian Partner Panel (PGPP) is a consultative group of parents working with campus Special Education administrators, teachers, and service providers. Also called a parent advisory committee (Site-Based) in some districts. ● Push notification and easy website navigation/access for the calendar list of events. ● Consider unstructured meetings with Special Education parents like “Coffee with the Director.” ● Promote NCCSE CAC offerings - workshops and public presentations and provide information with Procedural Safeguards at all the Assessment Plan meetings, IEPs, and all meetings throughout the school year. ● Enhance Special Education section on district website with Introductions to staff, resource links-NCCSE, how to videos, IEP 101, Special Education data, and flow charts. Also, create a section to share positive news and showcase successes and improvements. ● Create a Welcome Packet for families new to Special Education and include parent survey, contact info for parent liaison, NCCSE information, and a Behavior Newsletter for Parents/ Guardians. Minimize jargon and acronym use. (Provide in English/Spanish). ● Publicize and encourage participation for Special Education parents as site representatives for PTA, site council, or Superintendent’s advisory committee. ● Develop a parent resource center and events to connect with other parents and CAC representatives. ● Conduct parent forum meetings with directors in English and Spanish, including newsletters. Include links and teacher highlights on district and school websites. ● Consider creation of a Special Education Foundation for additional funding for students, teachers, and parent programs.

Priority	Recommendation and Examples
<p>4.2 District-Home Communication</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Welcome Packets created with QR codes to access SPED sections of the website. ● Send instructional videos to parents for training on IEPs via “Infinite Campus.” ● Design and maintain a website so the “Resources” page for Special Education parents is on the landing page, easy to find and showing most current information. Include: NCCSE/CAC link. ● Offer Parent Support Classes through NCCSE or district hosted with local resource information and childcare whenever possible. ● Schedule site tours, making both Gen-Ed and Special Education staff available. ● Develop consistent communication utilizing all-calls, online parent surveys, weekly emails, and flier distribution. ● Implement new ways to contact parents (Remind APP/Dojo App.) ● Coordinate parent events each quarter to educate on the IEP process, inclusive practices, transition process, strength-based IEP training. ● Consider program data being accessible electronically, like a digital grade book. ● Create a Director Newsletter to promote familiarity and trust with SPED leadership. ● Create a separate website for Adult Transition Programs, both district and community based. Also, provide a site-specific section for parents of Adult students.

Priority	Recommendation and Examples
<p>4.3 Communication for Parents who are limited English proficient.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Establish, implement and maintain a Language Access Plan (LAP) in service of the District's current population of parents/guardians who are speakers of diverse languages. Examples of high leverage LAP activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ All district buildings will display a language access poster, translated in the language(s) spoken by the parents/guardians of District-enrolled students, to notify parents/guardians of their right to translation and interpretation services, provided by the District free of charge to the student and parents/guardians. ○ When requested by parents, ensure timely translation of assessment reports and IEP documents ○ All interpretation and translation are provided by competent and fluent speakers of that language, as demonstrated by a combination of assessment and training. ○ Identify and disseminate translations of vital documents which are distributed to all or most parents/guardians and which contain important information regarding a student's education. ○ Conduct parent forum meetings with directors in English and Spanish, including newsletters. Include links and teacher highlights on district and school websites. ● Establish meaningful, two-way communication between the District, SELPA, and parents who are limited English proficient and promote access for such parents to the programs, services, and activities of the District. Examples of high leverage activities include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Provide translation of (English & Spanish) for all materials ○ Ensure Website offerings are accessible in multiple languages. ○ Create a Welcome Packet for families new to Special Education and include parent survey, contact info for parent liaison, NCCSE information, and a Behavior Newsletter for Parents/ Guardians. Minimize jargon and acronym use. (Provide in English/Spanish). ○ Direct Spanish-speaking families to NCCSE Spanish language support to include: All CAC meetings and parent workshops to include Spanish interpretation; hotline of upcoming workshops/events in Spanish: CAC and workshop materials in Spanish; bilingual telephone support; and family portion of the website in Spanish.

PRIORITY 5. TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

***This is a new priority based on parent feedback and new district initiatives.

Priority	Recommendation and Examples
5.1 Post-Secondary Planning and Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Host or encourage attendance at College and Career events specifically for SDRC families and students in Modified programs.● Provide a resource or website with a comprehensive overview of post-secondary resources education options, inter-agency coordination, alternative day programs.● Adopt programs of Alternate Diploma Pathways and other diploma options.● Create strong Partnership with district Adult Transition Program, San Diego Regional Center, and Department of Rehabilitation to increase direct-hire opportunities with community partners.● Ensure all students have a written Individualized Transition Plan (ITP) meeting at 16 years old.● Have students and families attend annual Adult Transition Fairs at NCCSE.● Encourage families to begin planning post-secondary employment and adult living plans at 16 years of age.● Make Transition Fairs sensory-friendly (e.g., sensory bags, quiet rooms) to encourage more student attendance.● Encourage all families to start attending Adult Transition Fairs in middle school and early high school years.● Create a parent flyer that shows an “educational timeline” for students with IEPs to give parents an idea of transition planning.

It is the intent of the CAC, through the priorities process and its other activities, to support the Mission Statement of the NCCSE and the NCCSE member school districts.

NCCSE Mission Statement

The North Coastal Consortium for Special Education (NCCSE) is a dynamic, regional, collaborative special education local planning area whose purpose is to support local school districts as they provide for the needs of special education students. NCCSE provides and supports districts with:

- Staff Development activities and parent education
- Program Specialist services
- Help when responding to needs of parents and special education students
- Unification of common needs
- Helping to identify unique needs within local school districts
- Legal and technical assistance
- Awareness and dissemination of current best practices
- Creating forums for problem-solving

PROCESS

The NCCSE Community Advisory Committee collected input for the priorities by survey and dialog between NCCSE Directors of Special Education, CAC representatives and students. Common, recurring themes were identified, discussed by the CAC membership, and are presented in this document.

The Community Advisory Committee appreciates the support of the Board of Governors as they take these recommendations under advisement in the development of programs and services for the upcoming year.



[Katrina Bell \(May 11, 2023 11:58 PDT\)](#)

Katrina Bell, Chairperson

Community Advisory Committee

Date