

**FOLSOM CORDOVA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT SPECIAL EDUCATION
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
Boardroom at Education Services Center
1965 Birkmont Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95742**

The goal of the CAC is to empower and assist parents of students with special needs to become effective team members in their child’s education. The CAC advises and works collaboratively with the FCUSD on special education policies, procedures, programs, and parent education in the Special Education Local Area (SELPA) as mandated by the California Education Code.

September 18, 2024

BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

6:40 P.M.

In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, all meetings are held in locations which allow disability-related accommodations.

CALL MEETING TO ORDER: Nicole McCarthy called the CAC meeting to order at 6:40 p.m.

CAC MEMBERS	MEMBERS PRESENT	MEMBERS ARRIVING LATE	MEMBERS LEAVING EARLY	MEMBERS ABSENT
Nicole McCarthy, CAC Chairperson	X			
Jennifer Taylor, CAC Vice Chairperson	X			
Lilia Neal, CAC Secretary	X			
Betty Jo Wessinger	X			
Elaine Linn	X			
Jennifer Wong	X			
Laura Wasco-Kenrow				X
Lucinda Winward				X
Roland Becht	X			
Shelly Simas	X			

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Public Comment for Items Not on the Agenda (The CAC may not discuss or take any action on any item raised during this public comment section, except to decide whether to place the matter on the agenda of a future meeting (Government Code Sections 11125, 11125.7(a)). Issues raised by the

public may be referred to a future meeting agenda for the CAC discussion. Please limit comments to three minutes per individual.

Nicole McCarthy, CAC Chairperson provided instructions and information regarding Public Comment. No Public Comment was made.

1. STAFF REPORTS:

1.1 SELPA and District

Betty Jo Wessinger, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education, provided updates on SELPA and the District. The updates highlighted several areas of glows and challenges within the program. At the start of the year, there are 169 teachers and special education programs serving students from age 3 to 22. All teacher positions are filled except for one classroom, which is currently staffed by a substitute teacher at Oak Chan Elementary School. Additionally, there are 385 instructional assistant positions supporting these programs, with 330 currently filled. Of the 55 open positions, 42 are covered by behavior support aides, certificated teacher substitutes, and agency aides, leaving 13 positions uncovered. The team is actively onboarding 20 new staff members, which will help ensure all positions are covered shortly, and they continue to interview candidates on a weekly basis.

Betty Jo Wessinger shared information on the Neighborhood Schools Model which has been very beneficial as it allowed students to remain at their home school, making transitions less disruptive for families. There is a clear opportunity to enhance mainstreaming and inclusion across the site, allowing for flexibility in moving students between different educational settings without requiring a change of site. The collaboration with Sam Drazin on inclusion goals is also underway, which helps the teaching staff to understand the Neighborhood Schools Model and support its implementation.

However, there are ongoing challenges to address. Concerns have been raised about the quality of academic instruction due to the combination of multiple grade levels (K/1/3/5) in one classroom, which has led to a reliance on aide-run instruction. Managing breaks and lunch schedules for students across different grade levels is complex, leading to inconsistencies in coverage and timing.

Support for new staff is another area needing attention. Staffing shortages, particularly with paraeducators after recent transitions, complicate coverage and consistency. While some staff receive valuable training, there is a need for broader awareness and professional development for all staff regarding the Neighborhood Schools Model implementation. Lastly, Principals reported in their feedback that the effectiveness of collaboration sessions could be improved, as discussion questions may not be as helpful as direct conversations among similar teachers, indicating a need for more structured and meaningful agenda topics.

2. CONSENT/ACTION ITEMS:

2.1 Jennifer Wong moved to approve Minutes from the Regular CAC Meeting held on April 17, 2024. It was seconded by Jennifer Taylor and carried as follows:

Ayes: 8
Noes: 0
Abstain: 0

2.2 Approve new CAC Members: the CAC membership for April Philips was anonymously approved and carried as follows:

Ayes: 8
Noes: 0
Abstain: 0

3. INFORMATION/DISCUSSION ITEMS:

3.1 Legislative Update: none

3.2 Update on the Adapted Toy Project and the Wonderland event

Dana Arce and Gabriel Plaza-Garcia, FCUSD Staff, presented information about the “Adapted Toy Wonderland” and sought support from the CAC for both the Wonderland event and the project. The vision is to provide adapted holiday activities and toys, ensuring that every child can enjoy play regardless of their abilities. By purchasing these toys and modifying them with the help of Cordova High School (CHS) students, the project aims to offer adapted toys for the Wonderland event during the winter holidays, specifically for students with disabilities.

The “Adapted Toy Wonderland” event is scheduled for December 12, 2024, from 5-7 p.m. at Mangini Ranch Elementary School, and will feature activities such as snowball throwing, coloring, gift wrapping, and holiday photo opportunities, with each family taking home an adapted toy. So far, over \$800 has been raised, with additional pledges expected. The CHS Engineering students will begin adapting toys in October, using both open-source files and their own designs. Several volunteers have also expressed interest in helping with the event.

However, there are several challenges related to securing a non-profit organization to support this project and manage the donations. Multiple options were discussed, including collaboration with PTA/PTOs and other non-profit organizations or chapters. Follow-up actions are needed on this item, including scheduling a meeting with Assistant Superintendent of Special Education Betty Jo Wessinger, Chief Communications & Community Engagement Officer Angela Griffin, and their administrative assistants. Additionally, Lilia Neal, CAC Secretary, will follow up with the local non-profit organization “WeEmbrace” to seek support for this project. Jennifer Wong, CAC Member, will reach out to Vista del Lago non-profit to seek their support as well.

4. MEMBER COMMENTS:

Jennifer Wong, CAC Member, raised concerns about a 3-year-old student with disabilities spending 1.5 hours on the bus.

Roland Becht, CAC Member, shared experiences of staffing issues with transportation attendants, which have resulted in delayed bus arrivals due to behavioral issues and a lack of staff.

Jennifer Taylor, CAC Vice Chairperson, shared her experience observing students actively participate in the "Touch of Understanding" training at Blanche Sprentz Elementary School. The CAC Members highlighted the importance of disability awareness in fostering empathy and understanding among students, helping to create a more inclusive environment.

REQUEST FOR AGENDA ITEMS:

- Update on Transportation
- Update on the “Adapted Toy Wonderland”

Future Agenda Topics: Approval of new CAC Members

Jennifer Wong moved to adjourn the meeting. It was seconded by Jennifer Taylor and carried as follows:

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING:

Ayes: 8

Noes: 0

Abstain: 0

Meeting Adjourned: 7:28 p.m.

SUBMITTED: Lilia Neal/CAC Secretary

APPROVED: Nicole McCarthy/CAC Chairperson