YUBA COUNTY SPECIAL EDUCATION LOCAL PLAN AREA

SPECIAL MEETING OF THE OPERATION'S COUNCIL

November 20, 2024

Chairperson: Lora Gonzalez

Members in Attendance: Patrick Brose
Chris Mahurin
Jennifer Nelson
Rusty Gordon
Toni Vernier
Lauren Link
Dr. Kristen Nottle-Powell

Visitors in Attendance: Carolyn Sasaki and Rob Gregor

Minutes

1.0 Call to Order

Lora called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. She also led the council in the pledge of allegiance.

2.0 Roll Call of Members of the Operation's Council

2.1 Voting representatives for Operation's Council:

Jennifer Nelson – California Montessori Project
Patrick Brose – Camptonville Union Elementary School District
Chris Mahurin for Kimberly BentonWolfgram – CORE Charter School
Rusty Gordon – Marysville Joint Unified School District
Toni Vernier – Plumas Lake Elementary School District
Lauren Link – Wheatland Union High School District
Rob Gregor – Yuba County Office of Education

Absent:
Kimberly BentonWolfgram – CORE Charter
Angela Gouker – Wheatland School District
Eve Domingo – YES Charter Academy

2.2 Recognition of Visitors

Lora welcomed Carolyn Sasaki and Rob Gregor as visitors to the meeting.

3.0 Consent Agenda

3.1 Approve Agenda of the November 20, 2024, Special Meeting of the Operation's Council

Lauren Link moved to approve the agenda. Superintendent Patrick Brose seconded the motion to approve the agenda of the Special Meeting of the Operation's Council. The motion was carried unanimously.

4.0 Introduction of New Special Ed. Administrator

4.1 Jennifer Nelson – California Montessori Project

Lora welcomed Jennifer Nelson as the Special Education Director for California Montessori Project. Jennifer shared information about her prior experience in the field of education. She has been involved with Special Education for 20+ years.

5.0 Low Incidence Budget and Requests

The October 2024 low incidence budget and requests were linked to the agenda. Lora discussed the low incidence items that were requested, pointing out that there are insufficient funds to cover the cost of all the requested items. She was asked to provide additional information (description and model numbers) so that the council could make an informed decision regarding the approval of the low incidence requests.

Kristen Nottle-Powell Ed.D, shared that the Minispeak devices are requested for students with cerebral palsy. The devices will allow the students to communicate via head movement and eye gaze. These devices are modern technology and are from a niche market and there aren't other vendors for these devices. The devices are affixed to their wheelchairs and designed to give the students a voice where they would not otherwise have one.

Carolyn Sasaki spoke to the fact that current devices that the students have been using are seven years old and produce a yellow screen and blurry picture. They no longer produce a comfortable view for students. She mentioned it was time to upgrade the devices. This device is technology that she has field tested with the California School for the Blind. The DaVinci Pro has a distance camera as well as a near vision camera built into it. It is designed for students with low vision. This device allows the student to access their education by enlarging the information that is on their screen. The YCOE V.I. team has compared the DaVinci Pro device with other devices on the market and have determined that this item is best suited for their students. The main reason they landed on choosing this device was because it is stable and does not break.

Carolyn then discussed the Magnilink S Premium II. This item is for an older student who is moving from classroom to classroom, and it is not feasible to move a DaVinci Pro Magnifier device. This item is like the DaVinci, but is more portable. It allows the student to see what is being taught on a whiteboard or on their screen and can project what the teacher is doing in real time.

Patrick asked if there are alternatives to consider for these items, specifically for the language Minispeak. Toni responded that she does not think there are alternatives. Dr. Nottle-Powell shared that the students access the Minispeak with head movements. She clarified that the student uses switches with their head linked to technology in the student's iPad to communicate. Toni Vernier strongly encouraged the superintendents' council to visit Virginia School so they can see how the specialized equipment assists the students.

Lauren Link inquired about the dates of when items were requested. Lora shared that the date that is noted on the packet denotes when the LEA filled out the form. It does not reflect when the request was received. Lauren stated that it would be helpful to see the packets that contain the information about the items and the reasons why the students need them. She also noted that the historical practice of approving items on a "first come, first serve" basis is not a viable practice moving forward. Lora responded that the reason they do not link the packets to the agenda is for confidentiality purposes as the Operation's Council meetings are public meetings. In the future they will redact the names to protect confidentiality.

Lora agreed that the way items are to be approved needs to be revisited. Chris Mahurin suggested that the funding for equipment be shifted to a percentage base to fund the items once the Operation's Council has approved them.

Superintendent Patrick Brose agreed that in order to equitably fund the requested items moving forward, it would be beneficial that they be funded at 75% and the remaining 25% be paid for by the districts. Lauren also reemphasized the need to move away from the first come first serve model. Rusty Gordon shared the importance of first looking at how many students generate funding from each LEA. Once the CALPADS Fall 1 data is certified, then the council can project potential funding for the 2025-26 school year. Rusty then suggested that the council look at creating a cost pool "base amount" per LEA to equitably ensure all LEAs have access to funding for L.I. equipment. Lauren Link advocated that if an LEA's pool was not fully expended, that they can put the remaining funds towards their billback for excess costs. Rusty responded and stated that he would like the remaining funds that are not expended to be put back in the pool and equitably distributed to LEAs who may have overspent their allocated amount to ensure that equipment costs are not a burden to LEAs.

Jennifer Nelson asked if there was any excess (surplus) equipment being stored for those students who may have moved away. Carolyn Sasaki stated that YCOE's practice has been to only keep the equipment if a student proves to no longer need it anymore and then to reuse it when there are other students who may need it.

Following further discussion, Superintendent Patrick Brose put forth an official motion to fund all current and existing L.I. equipment requests at the rate of 75% using the Low Incidence funds and that the remaining 25% be paid for by the requesting LEAs to refund the SELPA for the balance due. Rusty seconded the motion. The motion was carried unanimously.

Superintendent Patrick Brose then recommended that the council create recommendations for a new allocation model and bring those recommendations to the next Superintendents' Governance Council meeting in January.

Superintendent Rob Gregor emphasized the importance of SPED Directors communicating with their Superintendent about their ideas regarding changes to the low incidence funding model to support the governance council in making an informed decision.

6.0 NPS/NPA Master Contracts

Lora shared that historically the role of the SELPA is to take on the role of creating the master contract with vendors that are operating within and across the Yuba County SELPA. Member LEAs are to manage the individual service agreements (ISAs). Toni Vernier shared her experience with the Sonoma County SELPA and Placer County SELPA that when those SELPAs worked as a group to negotiate rates, it was more powerful than when individual LEAs tried to negotiate on their own. Toni inquired if it would it be beneficial to give the process of developing annual master contracts with vendors back to the SELPA. Lora shared that all SELPA Administrators in the Sacramento (Capitol Services Region) are meeting next month to compare their contract numbers. They will develop a unified front in negotiating with the NPA/NPS's as a region. She stated that now is a good time to shift the practice from LEA's doing their own master contracts to the SELPA. The council agreed that next year would be a suitable time to make the change. Rob Gregor echoed that larger groups have more bargaining power.

7.0 IEE Local Assessors List

Lora pointed out that there is not an approved Individual Educational Evaluation (IEE) provider list at the local level. Toni Vernier noted that it would be beneficial to create the list to help LEAs know which providers should be on the approved list and who should not be included. The council agreed. Lora stated

that she will work with the Operation's Council on this project and will simultaneously update the cost containment list. She asked for volunteers to work with sub committees to discuss rates and adjust them accordingly. Jennifer Nelson, Rusty Gordon and Toni Vernier will work with Lora on developing the list.

8.0 CDE Monitoring Due Dates

The CDE monitoring due dates were linked to the agenda. Lora commended the LEAs who are doing cyclical monitoring, pointing out that they are making phenomenal progress to date in completing their review tasks prior to the February 28th deadline.

9.0 Adjournment

Kristen Nottle-Powell, Ed.D made the motion to adjourn the meeting. Superintendent Patrick Brose seconded the motion. The meeting adjourned at 10:31.

NEXT MEETING:

Joint Superintendents'/Operations Council Meeting

January 22, 2025, at 10:30 a.m. – Plumas Lake Elementary School District Office – Board Room.

Respectfully submitted,
Rebekah Edlefsen
SELPA Secretary III, Yuba County Office of Education