



Collegiate Academies

CA's Special Education Advisory Council 24-25 Report

Under Act 274 (SB 158) of the 2019 session, Collegiate Academies created a Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) starting in the 19-20 school year. The purpose of SEAC is to improve educational opportunities for students with disabilities, working together in a collaborative relationship. To provide a forum for parents and staff to share ideas, identify concerns, and advise the network to improve services for children with disabilities.

Formation:

To solicit applications for the Council, the network released [a notice and survey](#), which were posted on the website and disseminated to network leaders through network-wide communication and school leaders. In addition, Emma Gambaro, this year's council chair, reached out to families directly after receiving recommendations from school leadership. We ultimately received 15 applications.

Eleven members were selected, as follows:

Emma Gambaro, Collegiate Academies Manager of Student Support
Katie Duym, Manager of Intervention and Compliance at Opportunities Academy
Ashley Garner, REACH Teaching Assistant at Walter L. Cohen
Wesley Johnson, Essential Skills Teaching Assistant at Walter L. Cohen
Kelly Murray, ABA Therapist Collegiate Academies*
Michele White, Parent of OA scholar and former ASA scholar*
Penny Curran, Parent of OA scholar
Monique Dorsey Hall, Parent of OA scholar and former LCA scholar
Tonya Jones, Parent of CBR scholar
Charles Mamon, Parent of ASA scholar
Lakisha Mamon, Parent of ASA scholar and Child Psychiatrist

Emma Gambaro was selected as the Chair of the Advisory Council.

*denotes returning council member



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Proposed Meeting Dates/Times/Topics:

What	When	Objective(s)
Kick-off + Goals	3/26 at 5pm via Zoom	Council will share successes and areas of growth in CA special education programming in S1. Council will be shared on the objectives for the following meetings and request additional topics.
Transition Planning + Agency Support	4/16 at 5pm via Zoom	Council will review the TOP + AD and LEAP Connect graduation pathways and the post-secondary options in the city aligned with each diploma Council will learn about the MHSD enrollment process and the benefits it can offer students with disabilities and their families.
Accommodations and AT	5/14 at 5pm via Zoom	Council will review accommodations list and AT checklist from SER to understand the in-class and assessment supports available to their scholars.

Meetings Held:

The first meeting took place on Wednesday, March 26th, from 5:00 to 6:00 pm on Zoom. The council discussed both successes and areas for improvement based on their scholars' experience at CA in semester 1. Families of scholars with more complex physical needs shared a desire to increase mobility and endurance in the classroom setting. Additionally, families shared that CA is a place where they feel their children are wanted and valued, both as learners and as individuals. At the end of this meeting, the council proposed spending time at the end of the following meeting drafting out an ideal day for a scholar in REACH, ES, and at Opportunities Academy.

Council members present:

- Emma Gambaro, Collegiate Academies Manager of Student Support
- Katie Duym, Manager of Intervention and Compliance at Opportunities Academy
- Ashley Garner, REACH Teaching Assistant at Walter L. Cohen
- Michele White, Parent of OA scholar and former ASA scholar*
- Penny Curran, Parent of OA scholar
- Monique Dorsey Hall, Parent of OA scholar and former LCA scholar
- Charles Mamon, Parent of ASA scholar
- Lakisha Mamon, Parent of ASA scholar and Child Psychiatrist



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Meetings Held:

The second meeting took place on Monday, April 28th, from 4:45 to 5:45 pm on Zoom. The council discussed and reviewed resources available to them through Metropolitan Rehabilitation Services (MHSD) and Louisiana Disability Rights (LDR). We then drafted up questions to send to MHSD and LDR before agency representatives join our May meeting. Additionally, we spent time drafting ideal days for scholars in our specialized programs (Essential Skills, REACH, and Opportunities Academy), which included communication, transition, behavioral, and physical supports that can be spiraled throughout the day.

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- Emma Gambaro, Collegiate Academies Manager of Student Support
- Katie Duym, Manager of Intervention and Compliance at Opportunities Academy
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- Michele White, Parent of OA scholar and former ASA scholar*
- Penny Curran, Parent of OA scholar
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- Wesley Johnson, Essential Skills Teaching Assistant at Walter L. Cohen
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