

California Association of Health and Education Linked Professions,
Joint Powers Authority (CAHELP, JPA)
DESERT MOUNTAIN SELPA STEERING and FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
February 21, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.
Desert Mountain Educational Service Center, 17800 Highway 18, Apple Valley CA 92307

MINUTES

DESERT MOUNTAIN SELPA MEMBERS PRESENT:

Academy of Academic Excellence/Norton Sciences and language Academy – Marcelo Congo, Adelanto Elementary SD – Dr. Amber Best, Apple Valley Unified SD – David Wheeler, Barstow Unified SD – Heather Reid (9:18), Bear Valley Unified SD – Leigh Anne Drake, Desert Mountain Operations – Stephanie Hedberg, Excelsior Charter Schools – Oscar Torres, Health Sciences High School & Middle College – Bryan Dale via zoom, Helendale SD – Dr. Chantell Butler, Hesperia Unified SD – Shannon Garibay, Lucerne Valley Unified SD – Vici Miller, Needles Unified SD – Jamie Wiesner via zoom, Silver Valley Unified SD – Cheri Rigdon via zoom, Snowline Joint Unified SD – Pam De Renard, Victor Elementary SD – Dr. Tanya Benitez (9:22), Victor Valley Union High SD – Krystal Kerns (9:22)

GUESTS PRESENT:

Annie Perez – Adelanto Elementary SD, Priscilla Avila - Apple Valley Unified SD, Dr. Penny Tharpe –Desert Mountain Operations, Richard Frederick -- Desert Mountain Operations, Cristian Castellanos – Desert Mountain Operations, Nancy Cruz – SBCSS Senior Manager (9:25), Rebecca Workman via zoom - Trona Joint USD

CAHELP, DM SELPA, AND DMCC STAFF PRESENT:

Pam Bender, Kayla Gewirtz, Linda Llamas, Heidi Chavez, Dr. Peggy Dunn, Colette Garland, Deborah Sarkesian, Codi Andersen, Agustina Garcia, Annette Rego, Bobbie Taylor, Danielle Côté, Guille Robles-Burgos, Iván Campos, Jennifer Rountree, Jennifer Sutton, Linda Rodriguez, Lisa Nash, Maurica Manibusan, Misty Ubina, Miya Narvaiz-Ward, Rory Hazen, Veronica Rousseau

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The regular meeting of the California Association of Health and Education Linked Professions, Joint Powers Authority (CAHELP, JPA) Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee Meeting was called to order by Chairperson Pam Bender at 9:04 a.m., at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center, Apple Valley CA.

2.0 ROLL CALL

2.1 **BE IT RESOLVED** that a motion was made by Pam De Renard, seconded by Vici Miller to approve Cheri Rigdon joining the meeting via teleconference due to an emergency circumstance. The motion carried on the following vote: 12:0:0 Marcelo Congo, Dr. Amber Best, David Wheeler, Leigh Anne Drake, Stephanie Hedberg, Oscar Torres, Bryan Dale, Dr. Chantell Butler, Shannon Garibay, Vici Miller, Jamie Wiesner, Pam De Renard. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

3.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4.0 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

At 9:18 Heather Reid joined the meeting.

4.1 **BE IT RESOLVED** that a motion was made by Leigh Anne Drake, seconded by Vici Miller to remove agenda item 8.3 Charter School Risk Pool Flow Chart from the February 21, 2025, Desert Mountain

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SELPA Steering and Finance Committee Meeting Agenda. The motion carried on the following vote: 14:0:0 Marcelo Congo, Dr. Amber Best, David Wheeler, Heather Reid, Leigh Anne Drake, Stephanie Hedberg, Oscar Torres, Bryan Dale, Dr. Chantell Butler, Shannon Garibay, Vici Miller, Jamie Wiesner, Cheri Rigdon, Pam De Renard.

- 4.2 **BE IT RESOLVED** that a motion was made by Leigh Anne Drake, seconded by Dr. Amber Best , to approve the amended February 21, 2025, Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee Meeting Agenda with the removal of agenda item 8.3. The motion carried on the following vote: 14:0:0. Ayes: Marcelo Congo, Dr. Amber Best, David Wheeler, Heather Reid, Leigh Anne Drake, Stephanie Hedberg, Oscar Torres, Bryan Dale, Dr. Chantell Butler, Shannon Garibay, Vici Miller, Jamie Wiesner, Cheri Rigdon, and Pam De Renard. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

5.0 CONSENT ITEMS

At 9:22 Tanya Benitez and Krystal Kerns joined the meeting.

It is recommended that the Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee consider approving several Agenda items as a Consent list. Consent Items are routine in nature and can be enacted in one motion without further discussion. Consent items may be called up by any Committee Member at the meeting for clarification, discussion, or change.

- 5.1 **BE IT RESOLVED** that a motion was made by David Wheeler, seconded by Dr. Amber Best, to approve the following Consent Item as presented. The motion carried on the following vote: 16:0:0. Ayes: Marcelo Congo, Dr. Amber Best, David Wheeler, Heather Reid, Leigh Anne Drake, Stephanie Hedberg, Oscar Torres, Bryan Dale, Dr. Chantell Butler, Shannon Garibay, Vici Miller, Jamie Wiesner, Cheri Rigdon, Pam De Renard, Dr. Tanya Benitez, and Krystal Kerns. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

5.1.1 January 17, 2025, Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

6.0 PRESENTATIONS

- 6.1 SBCSS State Preschool Program

Nancy Cruz, SBCSS Senior Manager presented the State Preschool Program. There is a big push with CDE to enroll children with exceptional needs into State Preschool Programs. There is now a categorical eligibility process. State Preschool Programs need to save 5% of enrollment slots for children with exceptional needs. There are 122 total slots saved for these children; currently there are 85 students enrolled with 31 in the Desert Mountain region, 23 in the West region, and 22 in the East region. Those who qualify for one of those slots do not need to meet the income eligibility guidelines. Families will receive an invitation to complete an intake packet that is used to determine which eligibility category they fall into. If they fall under exceptional needs, they can complete a self-certification. A copy of an IEP is required. Children with all disabilities are welcome. Children do not have to be potty trained.

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The challenge with State Preschool Teachers attending IEPs is that the program is monitored by Community Care Licensing requiring the maintenance of ratios and supervision at all times. Attending IEP meetings is not in the job duties of State Preschool Teachers. They can complete any district forms that the district needs providing feedback as well as providing copies of student assessments and portfolios. For additional information or questions, reach out to Nancy Cruz at Nancy.Cruz@sbcss.net.

7.0 FINANCIAL COMMITTEE ITEMS

7.1 2024-25 2nd Projections with Prior Year Comparisons

The projecting ending balance is approximately 20 million with the out of home services. There are plans for that

7.2 2024 Fall Pupil Count

The grand total is 17,856. The meeting materials breaks it down by each LEA.

P-1 was certified yesterday, February 20, 2025. An AB602 projection will be sent out.

7.3 2024-25 Low Incidence Fund

Monthly reports are sent to districts. As of January 2025, DM SELPA owes Apple Valley Unified SD, Hesperia Unified SD, and Snowline Joint Unified SD.

The projected ending fund balance is \$1,344,091.

8.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND STAFF REPORTS

8.1 Budget Process

The State Budget Process was reviewed highlighting the following:

- January – Senate and Assembly have overviews
- Winter/Spring – Senate and Assembly have subcommittee hearing
- Late May - Senate and Assembly have final subcommittee hearings and decisions
- Early June - Full Senate and Assembly budget hearing of subcommittee reports
- June – Legislative leaders negotiate with the Governor
- June – Final 2025-26 State Budget enacts

8.2 Legislative Updates

Federal Education Platform:

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- End teacher tenure, adopt merit pay, allow various publicly supported educational models
- Universal school choice in every state
- Emphasize education to prepare students for great jobs and careers, supporting project-based learning and schools that offer meaningful work experience
- Overhauling standards on school discipline, advocating for immediate suspension of violent students, and support hardening schools to help keep violence away.
- Restore parental rights in education, and enforce our Civil Rights Laws to stop schools from discriminating on the basis of race
- Defund schools that engage in inappropriate political indoctrination of children
- Support schools that teach America’s founding principles and western civilization
- Champion the First Amendment right to pray and read the bible in school
- Close the Department of Education

Federal Legislation:

- S. 5384 (Rounds) Returning education to our states has been read twice and has been referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. It would look at all functions, programs, and authorities of education under IDEA and would transfer to the Department of Health and Human Services.
- H.R. 899 (Massie) To terminate the Department of Education has been referred to the House Committee on Education and Workforce.

California Legislation:

- SB48 (Gonzalez) Immigration Enforcement for school sites to prohibit access on sharing information and law enforcement collaboration.
- SB98 (Perez) Elementary, secondary, and post-secondary education regarding immigration enforcement and notification. There has to be a Federal injunction paperwork provided to schools in order for them to come on campuses.
- AB49 (Muratsuchi) School sites and day care centers having entry requirements and immigration enforcement.
- SB64 (Grove) Education expenses with School Choice Flex Account Act of 2025 where funds going to private schools for educating students with disabilities instead of SELPAs.
- AB277 (Alanis) Autism Behavioral Technician Certification looking to establish a certification process for behavioral technicians to include qualified autism support service providers. Also requires a criminal background check.
- AB322 (Ward) Pupil Health School-Based Health Services and School-Based Mental Health Services where the current law requires encouraging and assisting school districts to improve and monitor the health of their pupils and school districts.

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State SELPA Sponsored Bills:

- Staffing: Extending the amount of time a long-term substitute teacher could be in place to 60 – 90 days.
- Infant Services: Updating the funding formula and the policy clean up. Looking to find an author that will work with us, Regional Center, Department of Developmental Services to develop a timeline for initial eligibility.
- Handicapping Category Language Changes: Changing “Hearing Impairment” to “Hard of Hearing” and changing “Visual Impairment” to “Low Vision.”

A discussion took place regarding preschool students in special education being more integrated within general education.

8.3 Removed from the agenda – Charter School Risk Pool Flow Chart

8.4 Credentials Bridge Authorization Update

There have been 4 bridge authorization trainings with a total of 85 participants; 7 from Adelanto Elementary SD, 42 from Apple Valley USD, 3 from Bear Valley USD, 3 from Excelsior, 4 from Health Sciences, 2 from Helendale SD, 4 from the Lewis Center, 7 from Silver Valley USD, 3 from Victor Valley USD, and 10 from Southern California Flex Academy and Aveson.

Heidi asks for support from directors to work with their HR departments to ensure that they are passing out the flyer to only those who qualify and that they only share the zoom link to those who qualify.

Trainings are limited to 35 participants to be able to guarantee that they are actively participating while managing the chat, managing questions, and presenting while monitoring the virtual participants.

8.5 Desert Mountain Children’s Center Client Services Reports and Updates

Districts receiving DMCC services will have client service and referral reports sent via encrypted email by Keri Downing to the district point of contact. For any questions about these reports, contact Linda Llamas at Linda.Llamas@cahelp.org.

A review of the article Natural Disasters Effect on Youth was provided. The frequency and duration of natural disasters is increasing significantly, having a profound effect on our youth. Exposure to wildfire smoke can cause respiratory issues, weaken immune systems, and even affects cognitive function. Emotional health also significantly affects youth facing increased risk of anxiety, depression, PTSD, and behavioral changes. There are long-lasting effects. As a school community, we can help by providing safe spaces, maintaining routines, and offering emotional support. We can help students regain their stability and resilience. Small actions like checking in with the struggling students, offering flexibility, and simply being a reassuring presence.

A chart of DMCC Programs and Services offered was reviewed. Referrals are based on age and then

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are filtered by appropriate programs.

DMCC provides Critical Incident Debriefings on top of the individual and group services DMCC already provides. From July 1, 2024, through December 31, 2024, DMCC served 392 students and adults through their critical incidents and debriefings. Of those 392 individuals, there were 5 referrals with 2 following through for assessments. Over 11 days, 49 staff members provided Critical Incident Debriefings at 6 school sites throughout that time period. This service is done outside of the regular daily activities; staff volunteer to provide this service in addition to their current caseloads.

Flyers of Kaiser Permanente free resources were shared.

- Empathy Quest: Grades 3-5; Mental Health Resilience Program
- Ghosted: Grades 8-10, Using storytelling to teach students that getting help for mental health challenges is normal and healthy.

8.6 [Professional Learning Opportunities](#)

In January, 652 participants attended a CAHELP led trainings, workshops, or committees, 362 attended on-sites, and 290 participated in regional trainings. For the year, 5,007 staff have participated in trainings, with 3,296 attending on-sites and 1,711 attending regional trainings. Year to date 5,675 participated in trainings, workshops, or committees; 3,658 of those attended on-sites and 2,017 attended regional trainings.

Michelle Brown will be presenting “Compliance and Data Leading Through an Equity Lens” at the Director’s Training today, February 21, 2025, from 12:00 pm to 2:00pm. It is offered virtual to accommodate districts that are further away.

The Community Advisory Committee meeting held yesterday, February 20, 2025, presented by Lindsey Yslas, was not well attended. Districts were reminded of their responsibility to provide a representative as well as a parent or community member to attend. The next CAC presentation by CAHELP Outreach and SELPA teams “Boost Your Child’s Social Emotional Skills” is on April 17, 2025, from 4:30 to 5:00 pm.

8.7 Resolution Support Services Summary and Update

There have been 38 filings for this school year so far with 5 filings in January highlighting the effectiveness of ADR. Lisa Nash’s was acknowledged for her hard work behind the scenes to keep us in compliance procedurally.

There were 17 ADR requests, 6 of which were duplicative meaning that the IEP continued as a part 2, part 3, or part 4. The Program Specialist were commended for their work with Districts to resolve these issues. There were 4 SELPA facilitated IEPs and 7 LEA facilitated IEPs with SELPA support. The reporting issues were as follows:

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- Resolutions Reached
 - Review Assessments
 - IEP Disagreement
 - Failure to implement services
 - Communication failure
 - Request changes to IEP
 - Disagree with Assessments
 - Transportation Issues
 - LRE: Class Placement
 - Bullying
- Resolutions Not Reached
 - DNQ
 - Advocate Present

Parents have initiated 9 ADR services and LEAs initiated 2. Previously LEA's initiated ADRs more often than parents.

Districts were reminded of the [ADR brochure](#) on our website. It is in English and Spanish.

Districts were reminded to have a proactive frame of mind and encouraged to create a systemic approach and practice.

- Staff are proactive in identifying and responding timely to parents' concerns
 - A system is used for identifying Unsigned IEPs and addressing parent concerns and requests
 - A protocol is in place for reaching out to parents and resolving conflict at the lowest level of leadership
 - Case-Carrier
 - Site Administrator
 - District administrator
- Professional Learning Pathways or Individual Training – ADR
 - IEP Forms & Facts (SEIS)
 - Collaborative IEP: Aligning the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars
 - The Art of Facilitating IEP Meetings
 - Meaningful Parent Participation

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- Legally Compliant IEP Notetaking (Request)

When CDE performed record reviews, one of the compliance issues found was the lack of a General Education teachers attending IEPs. A reminder was provided for IEP teams to complete and acquire parent signature on the Excusal of IEP Team Member form (D/M64), specifically when a General Education Teacher has been excused from attending an IEP. A verbal consent is not enough, especially when talking about placement.

Further discussion took place regarding general education teachers attending IEPs.

A break took place from 10:20 to 10:35 am

8.8 Compliance Update

There are a lot of questions regarding the Annual Determination Letters that look different than in past years. We are working on answering all district questions like what data was sought and which student records were reviewed. The CALPAD website provides some explanations. The handouts provided at the Roadshow was sent to districts providing additional information.

CDE Monitoring Roadshows are coming up. On March 5, 2025, a virtual option is available. A room at DMESC has been reserved for those who would like to join virtually. East Valley added one on April 8, 2025, from 9:00 am to 11:00 pm. Directors were encouraged to attend a Roadshow.

Additional discussion took place on the data CDE collected and corrective actions.

At 10:50 Dr. Amber Best and Annie Perez left the meeting.

8.9 Non-Public Schools Update

Currently there are 126 students placed in either a non-public school or residential center.

An update was provided from the discussion at the last meeting regarding non-public schools. Pam and Peggy will meet with non-public schools quarterly to discuss how we can support them. A meeting is scheduled for February 25, 2025, from 12:00 to 1:00 pm. Directors are encouraged to attend; a zoom link will be provided. Visitations are increasing.

8.10 California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) Update

Fall Pupil Count submission has been certified for both SELPAs.

8.11 Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) Update

DRDP submission has been completed for both SELPAs. A reminder was provided to have those facilitating DRDP to go to the www.dracces.org website and sign up, create an account, and go through the trainings. The trainings only have to be completed once. If new trainings are added those will need

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to be completed.

8.12 Special Education Information System (SEIS) Update

February 21, 2025, is the SEIS Training for Directors. Open Forums are open to everyone.

8.13 Prevention and intervention (P&I) Updates

From July to November, 79 hours were spent coaching participating LEAs and school staff. From November to February, that increased to 139 hours for a total of 219 hours spent coaching participating LEAs and school staff. Total training hours dropped from 106 during the beginning of the year to 84 hours from November to February. The Prevention and Intervention team is not here to just facilitate training, but are also here to coach, help with action planning and making sure that your MTSS systems are in place and are working to fidelity. If tier 1 is solid, tiers 2 and 3 are not going to overload the system.

We also collaborate with our Program Specialists to make sure that we provide the best services to LEAs and schools.

8.14 Occupational and Physical Therapy Services Reports and Updates

A reminder was provided regarding DM SELPA Occupational Therapists and Physical Therapists.

- Cannot provide OI services
- Are licensed medical professionals
- Are not educators and do not have credentials
- Do not have SEID numbers

OI is now a component for all three Bridge Credentialing.

The next PT Professional Learning Collaboration is January 21, 2025, from 2:30 to 4:00 pm. The next OT Professional Learning Collaborative is May 3, 2025, from 2:30 to 4:00 pm.

8.15 SBCSS 114 – Dyslexia Screening Mandate

How to adopt a risk screener by June 30, 2025, and the implementation steps was shared. Districts were encouraged to take this information back to Student Services as it is required for all students.

9.0 INFORMATION / ACTION ITEMS

9.1 Upcoming Trainings

Trainings in the meeting materials were shared.

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10.0 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS / REPORTS

SBCSS shared that district transportation is taking longer to set up than it has in the past and asked for assistance from the directors. Further discussion took place regarding the transportation challenges.

The individualized intensive services, fading plans, annual testing, predetermination of those services, and IEP notes capturing the service was discussed.

At 11:13 Cheri Rigdon left the meeting.

11.0 CEO COMMENTS

Concerns with non-public schools and creating a subcommittee to discuss other options or additional supports was brought forward again. Pam will put together some dates and send them out to the directors.

12.0 MATTERS BROUGHT BY THE PUBLIC

There were no matters brought by the public.

13.0 ADJOURNMENT

BE IT RESOLVED that a motion was made by David Wheeler, seconded by Leigh Anne Drake to adjourn the Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee Meeting at 11:20 am. The motion carried on the following vote: 12:0:0. Ayes: Marcelo Congo, David Wheeler, Leigh Anne Drake, Sephanie Hedberg, Oscar Torres, Bryan Dale, Dr. Chantell Butler, Vici Miller, Jamie Wiesner, Pam De Renard, Dr. Tanya Benitez, Krystal Kerns. Nays: None. Abstentions: None

The next regular meeting of the Desert Mountain SELPA Steering Committee will be held on Friday, March 21, 2025, at 9:00 a.m., at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center, 17800 Highway 18, Apple Valley, CA 92307.

Individuals requiring special accommodation(s) for disabilities are requested to contact Cindy Quan at (760) 955-3555, at least seven days prior to the date of this meeting.