

California Association of Health and Education Linked Professions,
Joint Powers Authority (CAHELP, JPA)
DESERT MOUNTAIN SELPA STEERING and FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING
August 22, 2025 – 9:00 a.m.
Virtually via Zoom

MINUTES

DESERT MOUNTAIN SELPA MEMBERS PRESENT:

Present via Zoom: Academy of Academic Excellence/Norton Sciences and Language Academy – Toni Preciado, Apple Valley Unified SD – David Wheeler, Barstow Unified SD – Dr. Heather Reid, Bear Valley Unified SD – Leigh Anne Drake, Desert Mountain Operations – Dr. Penny Tharpe, Excelsior Charter Schools – Dr. Oscar Torres, Health Sciences HS, Middle, and Collete – Grecia Ortega-Rivas, Helendale SD – Viviana Bravo (9:44 am), Hesperia Unified SD – Eric Land, Lucerne Valley Unified SD – Vici Miller, Needles Unified SD – Jamie Wiesner (9:19 am), Oro Grande SD – Scott Heitman, Silver Valley Unified SD – Dr. Cheri Rigdon, Snowline Joint Unified SD – Pam DeRenard (9:30 am), Trona Joint Unified SD – Nicole Yeager, Victor Valley Union High SD – Larry Brunson

GUESTS PRESENT:

Present via Zoom: Nichole Delgado and Lisa Lamb – Apple Valley Unified School District, Cristian Castellanos - Desert Mountain Operations, DeAnna Crocker – Excelsior Charter Schools, Shannon Garibay and Shannon Wrath – Hesperia Unified School District, Dr. Elaine Nelson - Lucerne Valley Unified School District, Morgan Daugherty - Oro Grande School District, Katherine Henson and Alissa Mogan, Rebecca Workman - Trona Joint Unified School District, Krystal Kerns – Victor Valley Union High SD

CAHELP, DM SELPA, AND DMCC STAFF PRESENT:

Present via Zoom: Pam Bender, Linda Llamas, Deborah Sarkesian, Heidi Chavez, Kayla Gewirtz, Dr. Peggy Dunn, Agustina Garcia, Codi Andersen, Colette Garland, Danielle Côté, Isaac Medina, Iván Campos, Jennifer Rountree, Dr. Karina Quezada, Linda Rodriguez, 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 am, virtually via Zoom.

2.0 ROLL CALL

Following roll call, a quorum was confirmed to be present for the meeting.

Cory Lopez, Office Specialist III, has taken on the role and responsibilities of Lisa Nash. She can be reached at Cory.Lopez@cahelp.org.

Tony Preciado was introduced as the Student Services Interim Director for Academy Academic Excellence.

Dr. Elaine Nelson was introduced as the new Director of Special Education Services for Lucerne Valley Unified School District.

Dr. Viviana Bravo was announced as the new Director of Educational Services for Helendale School District.

3.0 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

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4.0 ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

- 4.1 **BE IT RESOLVED** that a motion was made by Leigh Anne Drake, seconded by Dr. Cheri Rigdon, to approve August 22, 2025, Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee Meeting Agenda as presented. The motion carried on the following vote: 13:0:0. Ayes: Toni Preciado, David Wheeler, Dr. Heather Reid, Leigh Anne Drake, Dr. Penny Tharpe, Dr. Oscar Torres, Grecia Ortega-Rivas, Eric Land, Vici Miller, Scott Heitman, Dr. Cheri Rigdon, Nicole Yeager, and Larry Brunson. Nays: None. Abstentions: None.

5.0 CONSENT ITEMS

It is recommended that the Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee consider approving 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.

BE IT RESOLVED that a motion was made by Leigh Anne Drake, seconded by David Wheeler, to approve the following Consent Item as presented. The motion carried on the following vote: 13:0:0. Ayes: Toni Preciado, David Wheeler, Dr. Heather Reid, Leigh Anne Drake, Dr. Penny Tharpe, Dr. Oscar Torres, Grecia Ortega-Rivas, Eric Land, Vici Miller, Scott Heitman, Dr. Cheri Rigdon, Nicole Yeager, and Larry Brunson. Nays: None. Abstentions: None

- 5.1.1 June 13, 2025, Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes.

6.0 FINANCIAL COMMITTEE ITEMS

- 6.1 2025-26 DM SELPA Advanced Apportionment Revenue Distribution

The 2025-26 AB602 apportionment amounts LEAs will receive for SpEd dollars was provided and does not include federal dollars. The P2 ADA is based off of the P2 ADA numbers as well as the P2 off-the-top adjustments which include purchase services, preschool assessments, small school protection, the NPSs, NPAs, and X-POT.

The purchased services include SELPA related services and education support, intensive therapeutic services, DMCC mental health services, county operated services, served by/for other districts, and preschool assessments.

Updates on pupil counts and ADA projections to be communicated to Kayla Gewirtz who plans to send revenue distributions more often.

7.0 CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER AND STAFF REPORTS

- 7.1 Legislative Update

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- AB560 (Addis) Special Education – Establishing a work group to ultimately pass a maximum recommendation of adult-to-pupil ratio by July of 2027. LEAs are asked to work with their unions and work within their districts to come up with a plan to move forward. There was never a caseload for SDC, the numbers for speech are not caseload amounts but an average, SELPA-wide RSP has 28 per caseload. Status: referred to the suspense file. Hearings are held on August 29th, when it will be decided whether or not it is moves forward to the Governor.
- AB606 (Quirk-Silva) Alternative measures for those with out-of-state credentials with a specialization in pupil personnel services. The credential would be valid for 2 years and eligible for renewal. Status: referred to the suspense file.

Suspense files are also those bills that may cost about \$150,000 or more to implement. The bills are looked at and then it is decided whether the bills move forward.

- AB1224 (Valencia) Teacher credentialing; substitute teachers; days of service. Changing to 60-day teacher substitutes instead of 30-days. State SELPA and the California Association of Superintendents are supporting it. Status: referred to the suspense file.
- AB1009 (Blanca Rubio) Administrative credentialing: Provides an opportunity for Occupational and Physical Therapists with a valid license who can verify meeting the basic skills requirement and 3 years of experience as a school-based OT or PT satisfying the requirements to apply for a preliminary services credential with a specialization in Administrative Services. In the past, it has been vetoed by the Governor as he felt that it was a CCTC decision, not a legislative decision. Status: referred to the suspense file.
- H.R. 2333 (Mannion) Protecting Students with Disabilities Act: making sure that funds are not eliminated when the restructuring of the Department of Education takes effect. Makes sure that it does not reduce any funding for any of the programs under IDEA. Status: referred to the House.
- H.R. 2598 (Huffman & Van Hollen) Full Funding Act: asking for full federal funding for the Federal Funding of IDEA. This has never been fully funded. Status: moving forward.
- AJR-7 (Addis) Special Education Funding: would make the President of the United States and Congress ensure that services and funding for students with disabilities are uninterrupted. Status: in the Senate, it was a unanimous bipartisan vote. It does not have to go to the Governor.

Everybody came back to the legislature on August 18. August 29th is the last day for any fiscal committees to meet and report on bills that are going to the floor. September 5th is the last day to make any amendments to any of the bills that have been brought forward. September 12th, deadline for all bills in both Senate and Assembly. October 12th is the last day for the Governor to either approve or veto any of the bills passed by legislature.

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

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7.2.1 DMCC Client Reports

The LEA's point of contact received the DMCC client and client services reports via encrypted email from Keri Downing. As students return to schools, there may be changes with students either entering with ERHMS on their IEPs or leaving schools. If there are any updates to the client services report or if there are any questions, contact Linda Llamas at Linda.Llamas@cahelp.org.

7.2.2 DMCC Data Points

For the 2024-2025 fiscal year, 7,000 referrals were received averaging 600 referrals per month; 31,000 children were served. There were 30 total days of critical incidents debriefings. The Outreach Program has the highest number of children reached followed by the Student Assistance Program (SAP) and the School-Age Treatment Services (SATS). The Outreach program provides school-wide activities such as bullying presentations for groups or individuals.

7.2.3 DMCC Article: Extreme Heat and Connection to Mental Health

A review of Mental Health article "*Extreme Heat and Connection to Mental Health*," was provided. The article focuses on the connection between extreme heat and the mental health of children and adolescents. Extreme heat is not just tough on kids' bodies; it is also a mental health concern. Children heat up faster, they have trouble cooling down quickly, and may not always say when they are struggling, and sometimes do not know that they are struggling. This makes them more prone to anxiety, mood swings, poor sleep, and even emergency mental health visits. It affects their focus, their memory, and their learning. Solutions include educating adults to spot heat-related mental health symptoms, expanding access to cooling spaces and green areas and continuing to research the impacts. [Mental Health Articles](#) are available on the DMCC website.

At 9:20 am, Jamie Wiesner from Needles Joint USD joined the meeting via Zoom.

7.3 [Professional Learning Opportunities](#) Updates

7.3.1 Professional Learning Summary

For the year 2024-2025, there were 8,298 participants in CAHELP led trainings, workshops or committees. Of those, 5,136 were on-site trainings and 3,162 were regional trainings. Behavioral supports led the way all year with 33% of all participants attending a behavioral supports training.

7.3.2 Flyer – Community Advisory Committee Save The Dates.

The representative meeting is from 4:30 pm to 5:00 pm, including 1 staff representative from the LEA and 1 parent or community member. The presentation is from 5:00 pm to 6:00 pm.

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September 18, 2025, meeting is titled *IEP Basics Empowering Parents to Support Their Child* presented by Dr. Karina Quezada. The November 13, 2025, meeting will be an autism topic presented by Melissa DeSilva and Agustina Garcia. The February 19, 2026 meeting title is *Keeping the Peace* presented by Danielle Côté, Melissa Jacobo, and Miya Narvaiz-Ward. April 16, 2026, meeting will be on life skills.

7.3.3 Flyer – Special Education Directors’ Training Save the Dates

These trainings are for Directors and anyone director’s feel should attend based on the topic. October 17th, 2025, training will be presented by Kendra Eaton, Senior Counsel with Lozano Smith on *Navigating Severe Behaviors, Legal Guidance for Special Education Leaders*. February 20, 2026, training topic has not been decided. April 17, 2026, E.B. Bell, Atkinson, Andelson, Loya, Ruud and Romo partner will present *Special Education Legal Updates*.

At 9:30 am, Pam DeRenard from Snowline Joint USD joined the meeting via Zoom.

7.3.4 Flyer – Facilitated IEP Meeting for Educators Training of Trainers

Partnering with Pathways to Partnership for the training of trainers two-day in person training on September 23-24, 2026, from 8:30 am to 3:00 at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center in Apple Valley. Space is limited to 40 participants and lunch will be provided. There is no virtual option. May be offered in the Spring too,

7.3.5 Upcoming Events

A list of upcoming trainings was provided in the material packet.

7.4 Resolution Support Services Summary and Update

7.4.1 Due Process Summary

There have been 5 filings this year.

7.4.2 Due Process Activity Summary

There are 4 open cases from last year.

7.5 Compliance Update

Compliance and Improvement Monitoring (CIM) Progress Reports are due January 10, 2026, covering July 1st through December 31st. It will be the last progress report until the next annual determination letter comes out in early 2026.

Intensive LEAs Progress Reports are due October 10, 2025 covering July 1, 2025, through September 30, 2025.

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Cycle A is part of the cyclical monitoring for small LEAs. CDE trainings will be held in the Fall of 2026 and will be comprised of policy and procedure review, student record review, and educational benefit review.

For the Cyclical monitoring Cycle B that began in 2024, the corrective action and follow up prong II review is in process. LEAs will have to correct the noncompliance and review two additional student files for the item(s) reported as noncompliant.

All those in Cycle C will be completing the IEP implementation.

7.6 Non-Public Schools Update

As of July, there are a total of 134 students in an NPS placement including residential and foster placed students. There is a struggle for placement. A fourth NPS, Inspire Academy, has officially opened.

Desert View has no principal at this time; the school counselor is serving as the interim principal while the organization conducts a search for a permanent replacement. Referrals, IEPs, and other documents are delayed or incomplete. It is near capacity.

Dynamic Hope has experienced a near total staff turnover contributing to ongoing challenges. They are at capacity and are not accepting students.

Learn Academy does not have any major changes. They are at capacity and not accepting students.

Inspire Academy were recently granted a contract. The staffing largely mirrors that of Dynamic Hope. The counselor, behavior specialist, office staff, and ownership are tied directly to Dynamic Hope through family connections. There are concerns with site security. CDE has granted them a permit to operate.

At 9:44 am, Viviana Bravo from Helendale SD joined the meeting via Zoom.

The alternative programming meeting members will be discussing the overall cost for students who are in non-public schools.

There are no secure residential facilities in California at this time.

7.7 California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) Update

We met our 1st Certification on July 25th; everyone was certified. The 2025-2026 CALPADS transactions cannot be sent up until after September 9th when CALPADS books close.

Report 16.21 provides current data on overdue meetings. CDE looks at this report. There must be valid reasons for late plan reviews, re-evaluations, and IEPs. The delay reason, code 90, is reviewed by CDE. Pending records with delay reasons need to be followed-up on. Report 16.25 provides current data on timelines and should be reviewed frequently.

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7.8 Special Education Information System (SEIS) Update

Service code 350, Individual/Small Group Instruction Meeting Delay Reason has been removed. Delay reasons code 15, Exceptional Family Circumstances and code 25, Late Referral to Part C have been added.

Service Location codes 205, Home/Community-based (infants/preschool age) on IEP/IFSP was added. Codes 310 – Head Start Program, 320 – Child Development, and 570 – Charter School have been removed. The State SELPA recognizes charter schools as public schools. Colette will email the definitions to the codes.

Degree of Supports is found on the CALPADS Student page. It went into effect and is needed as of July 1, 2025. If the meeting is held before Census Day, October 1, 2025, the Degree of Support can be entered during the meeting. If the meeting will not be held before Census Day, an Amendment must be added. This can be done through a non-meeting amendment with n/a on the parent signature line allowing it to be recorded through CALPADS.

SEIS Dashboard should be reviewed often in particular, the unaffirmed IEPs, unaffirmed amendments, unsigned IEPs, and electronic signatures. Following up on the SEIS Sign or DocuSign is important as they are transactions that need to be sent to CALPADS.

The SEIS affirm screen revisions were reviewed. Training videos will be updated to reflect the changes. The updated date validations pm the SEIS Information Eligibility page were reviewed.

Next meetings:

- August 26, 2025, SEIS Training 9:00 am – 1:00 pm
- August 27, 2025, Translators Group 2:00 – 3:00 pm
- August 28, 2025, Open Forum 9:00 – 11:00 am.

A discussion about whether or not a student needs transition goals from 8th to 9th grade took place. The law says that they have to have transition plans by the time they turn 16. Colette will get clarification on how SEIS has programmed this in the system.

7.9 Career Readiness & Employment Services (CRES) Updates

7.9.1 Flyer – TPP Annual Professional Learning and Collaboration

September 25, 2025, at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center 8:30 am to 1:00 pm. For TPP staff and teachers to meet and make plans for the upcoming year.

Each TPP teacher has been allotted \$500 this year to order instructional supplies and materials. The deadline is October 31, 2025.

7.9.2 Flyer – WIOA Youth Forward Program

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WIOA San Bernardino County Youth Forward is currently enrolling for all pathways for out of school youth. Isaac Medina is the contact and can be reached at (760) 646-8000, extension 360 or Isaac.Medina@cahelp.org.

Previously, the program's name was CTE. There were phone calls about the traditional CTE pathways like welding, baking, culinary, etc. Reflecting on what the program provides, the team renamed it Career Readiness and Employment Services (CRES).

DOR provides a lot of the same services and CRES partners with DOR. We are allotted so many slots to help place students and work with them. The TPP program provides technicians who go into the classrooms and provide 6 workshops to students in addition to the paid work experience and placing them at job sites. This is a backdoor into DOR for high school students that are set up through TPP making them a part of DOR. The TPP requirements help feed students into the WIOA program. Once they graduate high school, they can continue to have those support services. WIOA is geared for out-of-school youth; having a disability or IEP is one of the barriers for WIOA.

7.10 Prevention and Intervention (P&I) Updates

7.10.1 Dedicated Hours & Training Report July-June 2025

For the 2024-25 school year, there were 3 Trauma-Informed Supports trainings, 6 Social Emotional Supports trainings, 3 Climate and Culture trainings, 10 Targeted Behavioral Supports trainings, and 18 PBIS Framework trainings. There were 425 hours spent on coaching, 427 hours spent on Collaboration in-person meetings, and 121 hours of observations.

7.10.2 CA-ISP Grant July-June 2025 Year-End Report

The two-year grant process for each school. Year 1 focuses on the culturally relevant and sustaining practices; year 2 focuses on social-emotional learning and trauma-informed practices. Cohort 1 finished, and Cohort 2 is starting their last year.

7.10.3 Flyer – 10th Annual CAHELP Recognition

The 10th annual CAHELP recognition event will be held on September 17, 2025, from 5:00 pm to 7:00 pm at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center in Apple Valley. Invitations will be going out soon.

7.10.4 Flyer – Empowering Educators: A Pathway to Mental Health Well-Being

This Regional training is a Hybrid course with Canva and 6 in-person courses held at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center in Apple Valley starting on September 25, 2025.

7.10.5 Flyer – PBIS Bootcamp

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The PBIS Bootcamp will be held on September 26, 2025 from 8:30 am to 3:30 pm at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center in Apple Valley.

7.10.6 Flyer – Prevent-Teach-Reinforce Module – First Semester

The Tier 3 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Prevent-Teach-Reinforce (PTR) Module is a new Pathway is a mandatory 4-day in-person training with a limit of 4 site teams per semester. Training times are 8:30 am to 2:30 pm at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center in Apple Valley.

7.10.7 Flyer – Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children – First Semester

The Tier 3 Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports: Prevent-Teach-Reinforce for Young Children (PTR-YC) is a mandatory 5-day in-person Pathway with a limit of 4 site teams per semester. Training times are 8:30 am to 2:30 pm at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center in Apple Valley.

7.11 Occupational and Physical Therapy Services Reports and Updates

Occupational Therapist, Juan “Edson” Magaña has been promoted to OT/PT Supervisor. He can be reached at 760-646-8000, ext. 495, Juan.Magana@cahelp.org.

7.11.1 Occupational and Physical Therapy Services Report

For any questions or concerns, please contact Codi Andersen.

Executive Function Skills and Strategies training presented by Kristen Jacobsen, M.S., CCC-SLP will be held September 29, 2025 from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Desert Mountain Educational Service Center in Apple Valley.

8.0 INFORMATION / ACTION ITEMS

8.1 CAHELP and Desert Mountain Children’s Center Website Updates

The new CAHELP website is coming in September.

8.2 In May of 2025, San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools notified Bear Valley Unified School District of their intent to transfer the SLP program back to Bear Valley Unified School District to be implemented in July of 2026.

In June of 2025, Victor Valley Union High School District notified San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools of plans to take back students in the county operated programs located at Cobalt Institute of Math and Sciences Lakeview Leadership Academy, and Victor Valley High School beginning with the 2026-27 school year.

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8.3 Flyer – The Data Advantage: Season 6

This training is led by Corey Stacy, Consultant, LCS on November 13th 2025, March 12, 2026, and May 14, 2026, from 9:00 am to 11:00 am.

8.4 Flyer – Language Assessment of African American Students from Diverse Sociocultural & Linguistic Backgrounds.

The State SELPA virtual on-line conference presented by Toya Wyatt, Ph.D., CCC-SLP will take place on October 24, 2025, from 8:30 am to 2:30 pm.

Special Ed Connection subscription is forthcoming. An End User Agreement has been emailed to both DMCS and DM SELPA. Once they are all received, they will be submitted and log in information will be distributed.

The New Behavior Emergency Report approved in May is available on the CAHELP website. Both the fillable and print versions are available; the fillable version is expandable. Directions will be provided on how to access the BER in SEIS with a redirection to the CAHELP website. Completed BERs will continue to go to Colette Galrland.

9.0 STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS' COMMENTS / REPORTS

It was asked that when Pam meets with the legislative committee, to advocate for districts. She mentioned that as districts are waiting to be fully funded, there is a significant increase in the special education populations. While \$4 million in ELOP funding is appreciated, she would rather have \$4 million in special education funding, even if it was restricted funds that could only be used for Special Education and related services. Pam was asked to advocate for districts if the state would consider, even if it is restricted funds for a 5- or 10-year period, so districts could invest in building programs and sustaining them. VALA is full, the NPSs are full. If districts had the funding, they could build programs and capacity within districts keeping students in districts.

A discussion took place about using AI for IEP meeting notes transcription. AALRR has a webinar today and next week for AI in special education. The information will be sent to the group after the meeting.

10.0 CEO COMMENTS

We are excited about this new year coming up. There are AI and funding challenges that we are looking at. There are parental situations going on where the complaints that are coming in are outside of special education. Some complaints that have gone to CDE or OAH appear to be generated by ChatGPT. It is not always accurate and often cites Ed Codes and laws that have nothing to do with the complaint or a California case.

11.0 MATTERS BROUGHT BY THE PUBLIC

There were no matters brought by the public.

12.0 ADJOURNMENT

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Quote by Margaret Cousins: *Appreciation can make a day, even change a life. Your willingness to put it into words is all that is necessary.*

Congratulation to Vici Miller on her retirement. She will be missed. We are excited to have Dr. Elaine Nelson on board as the new Director for Lucerne Valley Unified School District.

BE IT RESOLVED that the meeting of the Desert Mountain SELPA Steering and Finance Committee Meeting was adjourned by Chairperson Pam Bender at 10:46 am.

The next regular meeting of the Desert Mountain SELPA Steering Committee will be held on Friday, September 19, 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.