



SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

September 16, 2025

Community Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes

A. Call to Order

This meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m.

B. Member Roll Call

Members present: Ryan Digman, James Moraga, David Martasian, Kimber Rice, Lisa Sotelo, Tanya Morgan, Emily Getz, Cordelia Haines, Nicole Harrigan, Sean Owens, David Burbridge, Makenzie Guye. Daniel Hicks

Members absent: Lacey Martinez, Kaylin Boyce, Luc Taylor, Heather Taylor

C. Board Remarks

Ben Avey welcomed the new committee members and reviewed the expectations for the group, emphasizing the importance of maintaining positive, transparent, and respectful dialogue and engaging in solution-oriented discussions. Mr. Avey noted that while aligning with state law is important, it may not always reflect the district's specific goals and values, and encouraged the committee to consider the long-term implications of policies. He also expressed appreciation for the continued partnership and collaboration between the CAC and the Board of Education.

D. Visitor Comments

Marsha Hesch, parent representative, expressed appreciation for the CAC and for Ryan's leadership as Chair. She echoed the value of maintaining positive and collaborative conversations, especially at the start of the school year. Ms. Hesch also shared concerns regarding transparency and communication, referencing an email sent to supervisors in April. She noted feeling uncomfortable and that her character had been unfairly questioned during that time.

Polly Kleinberg shared that she has had children attend San Juan Unified and currently has a grandson at Mariemont Elementary. She noted her previous experience as a Board Member and recent attendance at the Curriculum and Standards Committee meeting. Ms. Kleinberg commented on the importance of aligning with state law, particularly regarding the role of high school counselors in the waiver system. She expressed concern that counselors have limited time and that their primary role has historically focused on preparing students for college and career readiness. She emphasized that counselors should be supported in providing assistance to all students and that additional responsibilities may impact their ability to fulfill core duties.

Tiffany Hart, parent of students in San Juan Unified, shared concerns regarding the district's transportation system. She reported that buses have been arriving late in the mornings and that the situation appears to be worsening. Ms. Hart emphasized the lack of consistency, information, and communication surrounding transportation schedules and highlighted the need for greater reliability and routine to support students and families.

Caroline Digman, parent of a student and a teacher in the district, spoke about the importance of screening students for reading difficulties and dyslexia. She expressed a desire to see a reduction in the number of students identified as at risk across schools in California. Ms. Digman shared her perspective both as a parent and an educator, emphasizing that the next step in advancing



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structured literacy is to support school districts in implementing effective practices faster.

Dina Gray, parent of a student who previously attended San Juan Unified, shared concerns regarding safety protocols and the implementation of her child's IEP while enrolled in the district. She explained that she homeschooled her son for a period of time and that he now attends California Montessori Project (CMP) in Orangevale. Ms. Gray expressed that her son is now in an environment where his accommodations are effectively implemented and where the school staff demonstrate strong commitment to his success. She encouraged San Juan Unified schools to learn from the positive practices she has observed at her son's current school.

Patrick and Amanda Salman, new parents in the San Juan Unified School District, shared that their experience thus far has been challenging, citing a lack of consistent communication between the school, program specialist, and parents. They expressed concern that their child's IEP may not be fully implemented and shared their hope for improved collaboration and communication moving forward.

Member comments:

Daniel Hicks shared concerns regarding reading instruction at Del Campo High School, specifically related to communication about the English program in general education settings without appropriate accommodations. Mr. Hicks urged leadership to take prompt action, emphasizing that students cannot be expected to succeed without necessary resources and support.

Ryan Digman noted that hearing recurring concerns such as safety issues and noncompliance indicates the presence of common themes across the district. He emphasized that there are significant safety concerns impacting students, as well as ongoing inconsistencies in communication.

Tanya Morgan responded to comments regarding CMP, noting that there are differing experiences and inconsistencies among families. She acknowledged that school transitions can be challenging and expressed appreciation for the opportunity to connect with parents, adding that she can see and understand their concerns.

Lisa Sotelo, parent of an 8-year-old student at Mariemont Elementary, shared her family's experience with special education services. She highlighted that success is most evident when general education teachers are engaged and collaborative, leading to productive and supportive conversations. Ms. Sotelo emphasized the importance of fostering a culture of inclusivity across all areas of the school community.

Nicole Harrigan shared her and her student's experiences within San Juan Unified School District. She expressed concern about ingrained ableism and stigma affecting students who are undiagnosed or who may not outwardly display a disability. Ms. Harrigan emphasized that these systemic issues need to be addressed to ensure that all students receive the support and understanding they deserve.

E. Overview of CAC - Purpose and Requirements (D)

Ryan Digman provided an overview of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC), explaining that the Education Code requires each SELPA to have a CAC. He noted that members are appointed by the Board of Education, with four additional members appointed by the Superintendent, and that



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bylaws have recently been updated. Mr. Digman shared that the CAC's purpose is to review the SELPA Local Plan annually and to support ongoing improvements in special education, including efforts to enhance the IEP process, strengthen communication, and promote collaboration. He emphasized that the CAC's role is to listen, advise, and provide input on matters related to special education programs and services.

F. 2025-26 Nominations: Chairperson, Vice Chair, Membership Officer, Engagement Officer (A)

Chairperson - Kimber Rice

Vice Chair - James Moraga

Membership Officer - Ryan Digman

Engagement Officer - Makenzie Guye

- Member Discussion: None.
- Public Comment: None.

G. Staff Update: Rebecca Foster, SELPA Director; Sandra Butorac, SPED Director I (R)

Rebecca Foster, SELPA Director, provided updates from the Special Education Department. She shared that the department has published new IEP manuals for both practitioners and administrators to support consistent and effective practices. Ms. Foster also announced the creation of an IEP Meeting Exit Survey, which will be used to collect data, identify patterns, and inform future training for special education service providers and leaders. Additionally, she reported that there has been a Board policy update regarding the pathway to graduation, and shared information on Assembly Bill 1224, which would reinstate a pandemic-era provision allowing substitute teachers to remain in a classroom for up to 60 days. This extension would apply specifically to special education classrooms, increasing the current limit from 20 to 60 days.

- Member Discussion:

Lisa Sotelo requested clarification regarding the Secondary Resource Program Service Model Work Group, specifically asking about members and composition of the group. Rebecca Foster responded that the department intends to include students and parents as part of the work group to ensure different perspectives and meaningful input.

James Moraga inquired about the newly developed IEP Practitioner Manual, specifically regarding efforts to frontload the IEP process and create additional resources for parents. Rebecca Foster shared that the department is focused on enhancing parent resources and requested that the subcommittee, including Lisa Sotelo and Heather Taylor, review and provide final revisions to the manual before publication.

Kimber expressed appreciation for the work of the Special Education Department and the CAC. She shared gratitude for the opportunity to provide feedback on ongoing changes and noted that she values the department's responsiveness and reflective approach to continuous improvement.



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- Public Comment:

A parent asked for data about the RSP service model and wanted to better understand why the district is making these changes and moving in this direction.

H. Committee Business

1. Approval of Minutes: April 23, 2025 (A)

It was moved by Lisa Sotelo, seconded by Sean Owens, that the minutes of the April 23, 2025 meeting be approved. Ayes: all members; opposed: none.

2. Subcommittee Updates (A)

Subcommittees were created for the 2025-26 school year.

IEP Workgroup

Legislative Sharing Day

You Light the Way

Community Outreach

- Member Discussion: None.

- Public Comment:

Kirsten Fanning expressed appreciation for the team who attended her student's first IEP meeting of the school year. She specifically thanked Ali Lerch, Assistant Director, and the team for their participation and support.

H. Events of Interest (D)

An opportunity for committee members or staff to share information on upcoming events that may be of interest to the committee or special education community.

Community Care Hub

Thursday, Sept. 18

3 - 4:30 p.m.

Ralph Richardson Center

4848 Cottage Way, Carmichael

Navigating Special Education and Your IEP

Tuesday, Sept. 30

6-7:30 p.m.

San Juan Unified Board Room

Saturday September 20th - Gigi's Playhouse Educator Symposium. Virtual presentation.

I. Future Agenda Items (D)

Transportation update and conversations

ECE

RSP model in secondary education



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Graduation requirements
Transition between elementary, middle and high school

J. With there being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 p.m.