



Community Advisory Committee
April 21, 2026

Opening Procedures

- Call to Order
- Attendance and Verification of Quorum
- Review of Minutes
- Purpose and Agenda Review

SELPA Presentation

Open Seats Review

South County District Highlights

Sweetwater Union High School District

Presentation By District Staff

to

Belonging



The image features a stylized illustration of two hands shaking, symbolizing agreement or partnership. The hands are composed of word clouds. The left hand is primarily blue and purple, while the right hand is primarily red and orange. The words within the clouds are related to communication, collaboration, and community. Prominent words include 'connect', 'serve', 'communicate', 'bridge', 'assist', 'merge', 'expand', 'help out', 'support', 'share', 'team up', 'diversify', 'tolerate', 'respect', 'relate to', 'blend', 'organize', 'share', 'regard', 'cooperate', and 'thank'. The background is a solid dark purple.



Sweetwater District Demographics

7th - 12th Gr (Transition Services to 22 yrs.)

34,282 Students Total

64% SEC

24% English Learners

16% Students w/ Disabilities

*30 Schools Districtwide (middle, high, alternative, separate, day treatment, and continuation schools included)



Alternative Programs

Alta Vista Academy (AVA)

Lifeschool (Day Treatment)

East Hills Academy (EHA)

Palomar High School (PAH)

Launch Virtual Academy (LVA)

Options Secondary (located at Southwestern College)

Pacific View Academy (PVA)

Juvenile Court and Community Schools (JCCS)

Independent Studies (including home hospital) - (IS)

Special Ed Course Alignment

Resource Specialist Program (RSP) - General Ed,
Coteach

Special Day Class (SDC, Fundamentals, Mild/Moderate)

Essentials II (formerly Moderate- MOD)

Essentials I (formerly Moderate/Severe - M/S)

*Essentials I and Essentials II students receive a diploma
and receive transition services until exiting or age 22.

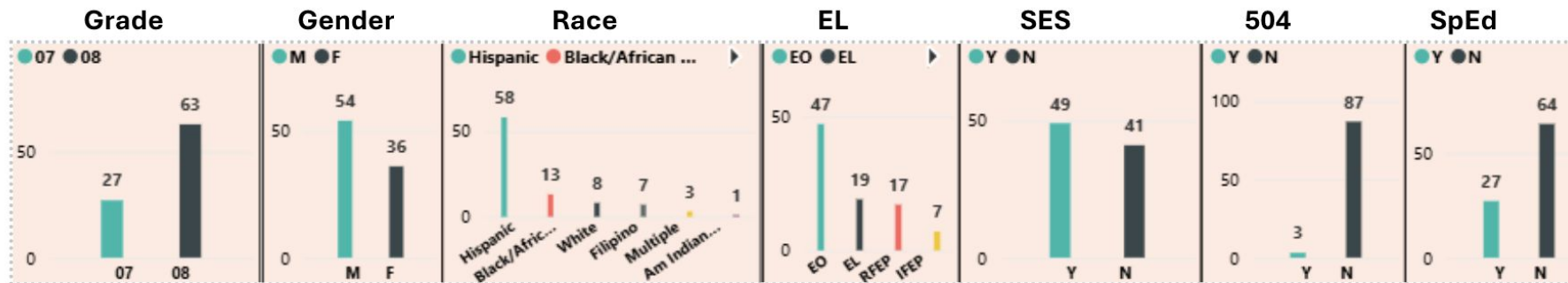


California School DASHBOARD

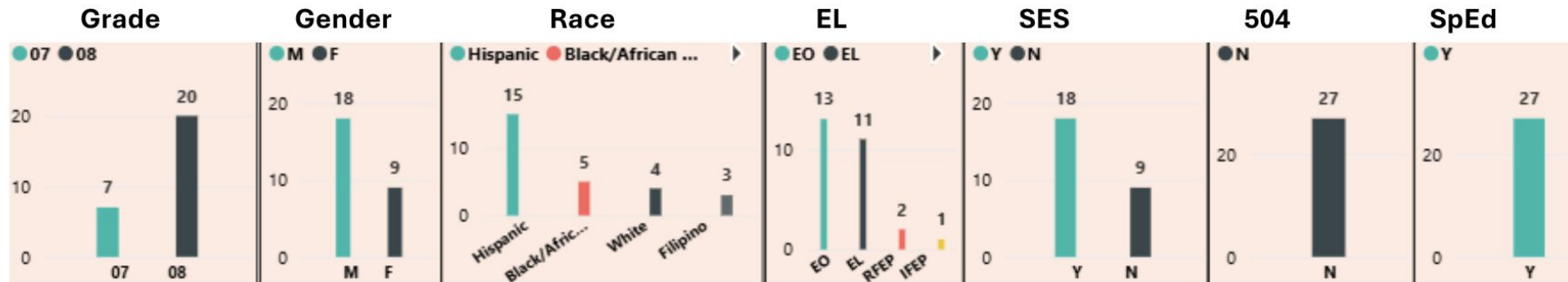


School A - Suspension Risk Ratio

SUSPENSION RATE for School A– ALL STUDENTS 2023-24 (N=1,525). Total Incidents: 110 Total Students: 90



SUSPENSION RATE for School A – SWD 2023-24 (N=240). Total Incidents: 34 Total Students: 27



Risk Ratio Math

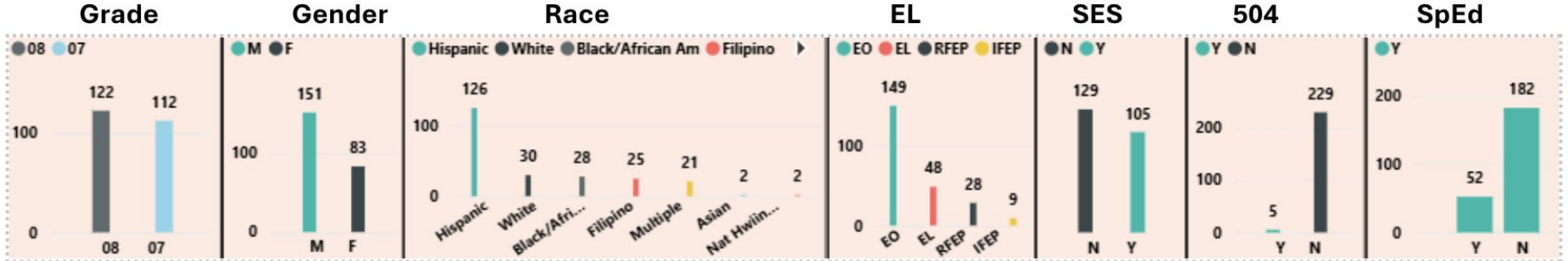
$$\frac{\text{Total \# SW D Suspended}}{\text{Total \# SW D}} \div \frac{\text{Total \# Students Suspended}}{\text{Total \# Students}} = \text{Risk Ratio}$$

Risk Ratio Sentence Starter:

"Students with disabilities are _____ times more likely to be suspended than their peers."

School A - Chronic Absenteeism

CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM for School A - SWD 2023-24



CHRONIC ABSENTEEISM for School A - SWD 2024-25



Chronic Absenteeism Math

1. Note Total # SWD Chronically Absent = (A)
2. Note Total SWD/Total Enrolled = % SWD Enrolled (B)
3. Total # SWD Chronically Absent (A) + Total # Non-Disabled Chronically Absent = Total # Chronically Absent (C)
4. $(B / C) \times 100 =$ % SWD chronically absent (D)

% SWD Enrolled (B) should be proportionate to % SWD Chronically Absent (D)

Solutions

1. **Build Strong Relationships**

- a. Assign a trusted adult “check-in” person each morning to greet the student and set a positive tone for the day.
- b. Celebrate attendance milestones, even small streaks.

2. **Make School Welcoming & Predictable**

- a. Provide a clear daily schedule with visual supports.
- b. Use transition cues so the student knows what to expect

3. **Address Barriers Early**

- a. Identify challenges and connect families with resources.
- b. Collaborate with related service providers

4. **Use Positive Reinforcement**

- a. Offer immediate, specific praise for arriving on time.
- b. Implement low-cost incentives (recognition).

5. **Partner with Families**

- a. Maintain open, proactive communication about attendance.
- b. Share data on the connection between attendance and progress toward goals.

6. **Provide Support for Health & Emotional Needs**

- a. Allow flexible seating or sensory breaks to reduce overwhelm.
- b. Ensure the student feels safe, understood, and included.

"This is one of the most fascinating and important books of the past decade."
—CAROL DWECK, author of *Mindset*

10 to 25

The Science of Motivating Young People



A Groundbreaking Approach
to Leading the Next Generation—
And Making Your Own Life Easier

DAVID YEAGER, PhD

Key concepts from the book

- The "mentor mindset": Instead of the "enforcer mindset" (high standards, low support) or the "protector mindset" (low standards, low support), adults should adopt a "mentor mindset" with both high expectations and high support.
- Challenging incompetence narratives: The book argues that viewing young people as inherently incompetent is a harmful myth. Instead, it emphasizes their potential and advocates for treating them as valuable resources.
- Wise feedback: This technique involves giving constructive criticism by being transparent about intentions, framing feedback positively, and expressing confidence in the young person's ability to improve.
- Transparency: Being open and honest about intentions and decisions builds trust and prevents misunderstandings, which is crucial for motivation.

Lead for Belonging



Special Services



LEFT BRAIN

(counter-clockwise)

**Analytical
Numbers
Linear
Details
Concrete**



RIGHT BRAIN

(clockwise)

**Intuitive
Images
Non-linear
Big Picture
Abstract**

**Just
Like
Me**

I will be sharing things
that bring me joy - if you
feel the same, then say
together...

**Just
like
me!**

Get Puppy-loved



Watch human babies doing weird tiny-human things



Watch people do dumb things, then fail



**Otters sleeping and
hold hands so they
don't lose each other**



**If we stick
together, we got
this, too!**

**Just Like
Me!**

“This person wants to feel respected, appreciated, and competent, just like me. This person has hopes, anxieties, and vulnerabilities, just like me. This person has friends and family, who love them, just like me. This person wishes for peace, joy, and happiness, just like me.”

- ***Paul Santagata,
Head of Industry at
Google***



Inclusion

to

Belonging

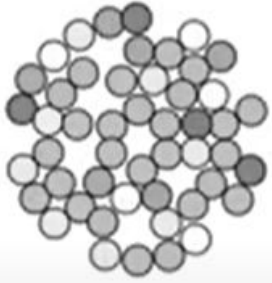
Seen as something we do **to** or **for** a student with a disability.

Student is included in (although still separate from) a community of learners.

Seen as general ed student who contributes to learning.

Student is a valued, indispensable member of the community of learners

School Community Change per IDEA



Exclusion

0% included



Segregation

Evident today in schools (EHA)



Integration

Lunch, passing period, etc.



Inclusion

Allowed to join



Belonging

10 Dimensions

10 Dimensions of Belonging

Inclusion fosters the sense of belonging when classroom environments, educational leaders, and students are encouraged to demonstrate these principles.



ABLEISM: the discrimination and social prejudice against people with disabilities based on the belief that typical abilities are superior. At its heart, ableism is rooted in the assumption that disabled people require “fixing” and defines people by their disability.

Education and Employment	Disabled	Non-disabled
Avg High School Grad Rate (2023)	71%	87%
Attainment of Bachelor's Degree ^ (2023)	21.2%	39%
Labor Force Participation Rate (2022)	22.5%	63.7%

Where do students with disabilities experience the least sense of belonging on campus?

We must move beyond making people aware that some people have disabilities to raising awareness of how our perceptions and society itself disable others.

A Crisis of Student Belonging

Close to 40% of US high school students do not feel connected to school.

Segregated students, especially those from socially stigmatized groups (students with disabilities, English learners, students of color), undermines their sense of belonging.

Awareness of social stigmas and stereotypes intensifies during adolescence impacting students' sense of belonging.



Ethnic studies, particularly for secondary students, have been shown to increase academic outcomes and belonging when the courses center the perspectives of minoritized populations and include reading by and about minoritized populations to convey rigorous academic content.

Special Services Commits to:

Meeting with each school site to scaffold supports

- Providing PD to General Education Teachers in support of building awareness, access, and accountability.
- Providing PD to Instructional Assistants in support of building awareness, access, and accountability.
- Providing guidance and facilitating dialogue at school sites to break down barriers and societal prejudices.

Recommendations to Site Leadership:

- Encourage teachers to attend PD
- When observing in the classroom, look for:
 - ALL students engaged in dialogue;
 - Signs of accommodations implemented;
 - Teacher provides written with a verbal direction; and
 - Modeling.
- Engage educators in a dialogue of what's working and what's a struggle

Leading the Charge for SWD

66.7% of students with disabilities spend more than 80% of their day in Gen Ed.

An overwhelming majority of teachers feel undervalued, in addition, special education teachers feel isolated.
62% of principals struggle to fill positions

Establish a shared vision of high expectations for ALL students - promote a shared responsibility for learning.

Promote authentic family partnerships with parents of students with disabilities by going beyond coffee with principal - parents of students with disabilities would welcome dialogue to feel included with forethought to events like "open house" or "grad night".



Special Services Commits to:

- IAs in general education classrooms at 80% of the RSP FTE with training for IA & teachers
- SpEd teachers \$2,000 / semester; \$100 classroom funds; 9 IEP days; PD & mentorship
- 10 District Parent Outreach (shared for you); Family Leadership, Inc Workshops (6-week Parenting Partners)(4-week Calm and Kind Parenting); Alternative Dispute Resolution for escalating situations

Recommendations to Site Leadership:

- Promote High Expectations for SWD
- Include tips or topics in Newsletters / Announcements related to SWD;
- Introduce yourself to the site Speech Therapist, ERMHS clinician, and ensure a safe space
- Engage SWD and parents in a dialogue about upcoming or year-at-a-glance events to get input for their sense of belonging

**12 weeks into
the school
year...**

Stronger Together with Shared Ownership



Survey Says...

for Students with Disabilities in Inclusive Settings



Students with disabilities make greater academic gains in inclusive settings.

- **Hehir et al. (2016)**, in a comprehensive meta-analysis funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, found that **students with disabilities placed in inclusive classrooms had better performance in reading and math** compared to those in segregated settings.
- **National Center for Educational Restructuring and Inclusion (NCERI)** reported that **students with disabilities in inclusive classrooms had higher rates of assignment completion, improved test scores, and better graduation outcomes.**

Survey Says...

for Non-disabled Students in Inclusive Settings



Students without disabilities also benefit academically.

- A **20-year longitudinal study** (Fisher, Frey, & Pumpian, 2012) showed that **inclusive schools do not compromise the achievement of students without disabilities**—in fact, students without disabilities in inclusive settings often show **improved academic performance and better problem-solving and collaboration skills**.
- **Cole, Waldron & Majd (2004)** found that general education students in inclusive classrooms **performed at equal or higher levels** than their peers in non-inclusive classrooms on standardized tests.

Survey Says...

For Social Emotional Benefits



Inclusive classrooms support social development for all.

- Students with disabilities gain **better communication, self-advocacy, and social skills** in inclusive classrooms (McLeskey et al., 2012).
- Students without disabilities in inclusive settings demonstrate **greater empathy, acceptance, and leadership skills**, often engaging in peer support or cooperative learning (Salend & Duhaney, 1999).

Belonging improves learning outcomes.

- According to research on **school climate and belonging (Goodenow & Grady, 1993; Osterman, 2000)**, a strong sense of belonging—enhanced by inclusion—**directly contributes to student motivation, academic success, and reduced behavior issues.**

Survey Says...

for Long Term and System Impacts



Inclusive education improves long-term outcomes.

- The **OECD (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development)** and **UNESCO** both emphasize that inclusive education improves **equity, life outcomes, and participation in the workforce** for students with disabilities.

Schools that embrace inclusion see positive culture change.

- **Sailor & McCart (2014)** found that schools implementing schoolwide inclusive models (e.g., SWIFT framework) had **stronger academic growth schoolwide, better collaboration among staff, and improved family engagement.**

Read & Reflect: The Goal is Compassion



- **What did I learn yesterday about how I want to show up today?**
- **Who needs extra connection today?**
- **What can I learn from challenges?**
- **How do I care for myself as I support others?**

Schools must embrace three core understandings:

1. **“Normal” is a myth:** All students are different in development, learning, and behavior. Valuing this diversity is essential.
2. **Relationships, belonging, and inclusion are essential:** True relationships take time and consistency. All students should be part of the general education environment to foster belonging.
3. **“Bad” behavior isn’t what it seems:** Challenging behavior is often a response to stress and a call for help. It reflects the brain’s fight, flight, freeze, or faint response.

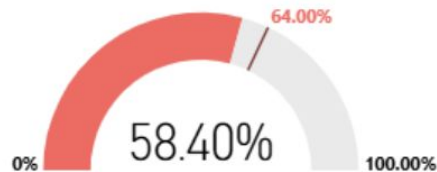
Journey to Belonging: Choice
and Inclusion



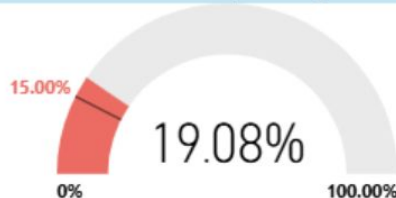
LRE - So what? Now what?

LRE for School A SWD 2023-24

5A - Equal to or Greater than 80 percentage

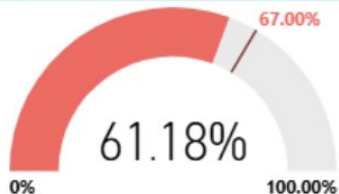


5B - Less than 40 percentage

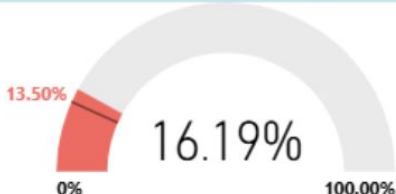


LRE for RDM School A 2024-25

5A - Equal to or Greater than 80 percentage



5B - Less than 40 percentage



- 1) **Equity & Access:** LRE ensures students have access to the same rigorous curriculum, extracurricular opportunities, and social interactions as their peers.
- 2) **Research-Based Benefits:** Studies show inclusive settings promote higher academic achievement, stronger communication skills, and improved social-emotional outcomes for students with disabilities.
- 3) **Positive Peer Impact:** Inclusion fosters empathy, collaboration, and respect, benefiting all students and contributing to a stronger school culture.
- 4) **Legal Compliance:** LRE is a federal mandate; decisions must be individualized and based on student needs, not program convenience.

Observation Tool for Inclusive Settings

Can be used as a self-assessment for teachers or an observation tool for administrators

- Structure & Routines
- Instruction & Differentiation
- IA Use & Collaboration
- Student Support & Belonging

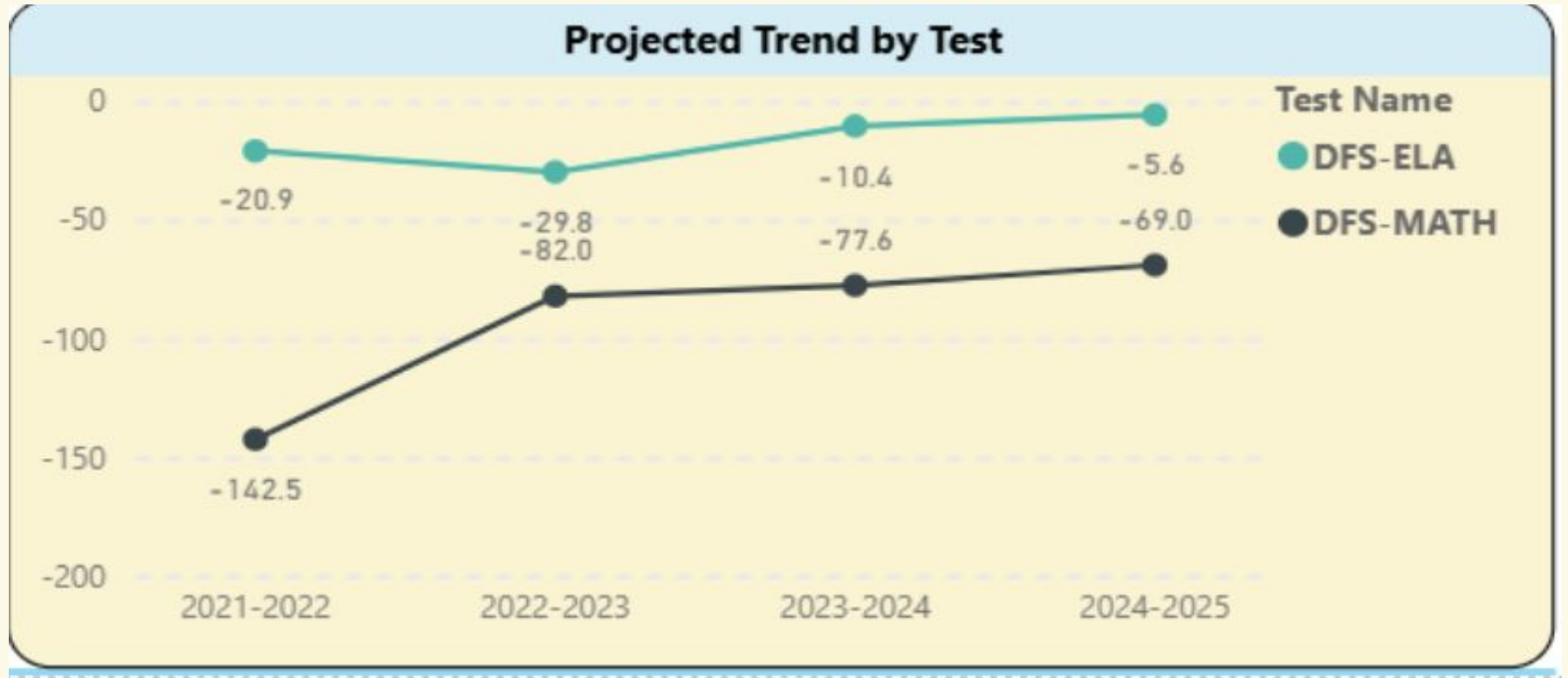


Reflection for PLC/Team Work



1. What is **one area of strength** in how we support students with structure and the use of the IA?
2. What is **one area for growth** where small changes could increase student independence or inclusion?
3. How might we better **plan and communicate** as a team to maximize the IA's effectiveness?
4. What's one **student behavior or outcome** that would indicate we're improving?

Grades $\neq$ Academic Performance



Grades $\neq$ Academic Performance

SBAC scores improve for SWD when we have...

- **High Expectations + High Supports**
- **Consistent Inclusion in General Education**
- **Targeted, Data-Driven Interventions**
- **Effective Use of Accommodations on the Test and in Class**
- **Universal Design for Learning (UDL) Practices**
- **Strong Home-School Communication**
- **Social-Emotional Supports**



TIP: Have students monitor their own progress

Key:

- 1 – Just starting
- 2 – Making progress
- 3 – Got it!
- 4 – I could teach it

Learning Target	Monday	Wednesday	Friday	Reflection
I can explain the cause of a movement.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	<hr/>
I can support my ideas with evidence.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	<hr/>
I can explain how a movement created change.	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	☐ 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4	<hr/>

**24 weeks into
the school
year...**

Nothing
About
Us
Without
Us!

**Special Services
Outreach 2025-26**



“Student talk time averages only 22 seconds per class.”

“According to researchers Karrie Shogren and Michael Wehmeyer, students who actively participate during their IEP meetings are more likely to be employed and/or enrolled in higher education after graduation.”

“Students at any level can participate in a student-led conference by preparing and sending invitations, or they can lead introductions for the meeting attendees.”

Teach self-assessment and monitoring through reflection on progress, strengths, and needs in all environments

Click on the title to read the article

Student-Led IEP: Self-Advocacy Skills: 14 Strategies for Teachers

Student IEP Rubric

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
 <p>IEP Awareness</p>	I don't know what IEP stands for.	I know what IEP stands for.	I know what IEP stands for and the purpose of an IEP meeting.	I know what IEP stands for, the purpose of an IEP meeting, and I can tell others about these meetings.
 <p>IEP Participation</p>	I don't participate or attend my IEP meeting.	I attend a pre-conference IEP meeting and/or my IEP meeting, but I don't participate.	I attend and contribute information about myself for my IEP in a pre-conference or at the actual IEP meeting.	I lead parts or my entire IEP meeting.
 <p>Knowledge of IEP Content</p>	I don't know what is in my IEP.	I know that I have accommodations and goals in my IEP, but I don't know what they are nor do I have a voice in developing them.	I can name the accommodations and goals in my IEP, and I have a voice in developing them.	I can name the accommodations and goals in my IEP, have a voice in developing them, and advocate for them.

Student IEP Rubric

Area	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
 <p>Abilities and Disabilities Awareness</p>	<p>I am not sure of what my disability is and how it affects me.</p>	<p>I have knowledge of my abilities and disabilities, but I do not share it with others.</p>	<p>I can describe my abilities and disabilities to others in my IEP meeting.</p>	<p>I describe my abilities and disabilities, as well as how my disability impacts me to others outside of my IEP meeting.</p>
 <p>Knowledge of Rights and Responsibilities</p>	<p>I don't know my rights under IDEA.</p>	<p>I have knowledge of my rights.</p>	<p>I know my rights and can negotiate with others who I know to ensure that I receive those rights.</p>	<p>I know my rights and can negotiate with others who I don't know to ensure that I receive those rights.</p>
 <p>Social and Communication Skills</p>	<p>I don't know how to interact with others in my IEP meeting.</p>	<p>I know the social and communication skills I need to use in an IEP meeting, but I do not use them at this time.</p>	<p>I know and practice social and communication skills in my IEP meeting.</p>	<p>I use social and communication skills to get my needs met in meetings and interactions other than IEP meetings.</p>



Pitfall to Avoid:

Tokenism: Asking a student to attend an IEP or “say something” in their IEP just to check the box.

Why it's harmful?

Students may feel used or dismissed rather than empowered.

What's a better approach?

Give the student meaningful roles (e.g., sharing their strengths, helping write a goal, co-creating the agenda).

Being prompt dependent implies that it is the learner's fault. It's not...it's the instructor's. We have to teach to prevent the student from learning to rely on the prompt.

Autism
Classroom
NEWS

Pitfall to Avoid:
Over-prompting: Adults telling student exactly what to say or speaking for them.

Why it's harmful?

It prevents genuine self-expression and can reduce confidence (learned helplessness)

What's a better approach?

Provide preparation and scaffolds (sentence starters, role-plays, visuals). Allow for pauses, processing time, and student voice - even if imperfect.

Rewriting Goals With Students – Language Swap

Instead of (Adult-Centered)

- A. Student will improve reading comprehension to grade level.
- B. Student will increase self-advocacy by asking for help in 4 out of 5 opportunities.
- C. Student will demonstrate on-task behavior 80% of the time.
- D. Student will improve written expression with correct grammar and punctuation.
- E. Student will transition to postsecondary goals with appropriate supports.

Try (Student-Friendly, Empowering)

- A. I want to get better at understanding what I read, so I can enjoy books and keep up in class.
- B. I will practice speaking up when I need help, like raising my hand or emailing my teacher.
- C. I will work on staying focused in class by using strategies that help me, like breaks or headphones.
- D. I want to write clearly so others understand my ideas. I'll practice using punctuation and checking my sentences.
- E. After high school, I want to [go to college/get a job]. I will learn about the supports that can help me get there.

Steps toward Student Participation in IEP Meetings

1. Identify Student-Led Components **with** Them

- a. Introducing herself or the other team members
- b. Explaining why the meeting is taking place
- c. Sharing assessment information
- d. Talking about strengths, needs, and interests
- e. Asking questions to clarify information not understood
- f. Self-advocating for her own interests
- g. Identifying potential post-secondary goals and supports
- h. Adjourning the meeting

Steps toward Student Participation in IEP Meetings

2. Provide Opportunities for Practice

- a. Making the time to practice sections the student will present at the meeting
- b. Modeling or arranging opportunities for the student to role-play with other students who have previous experience leading their IEP meetings
- c. Offering corrective feedback and recommendations based on the student's performance
- d. Video-taping the student or another student presenting portions of the IEP meeting and allowing the student to watch it while the teacher provides feedback

Steps toward Student Participation in IEP Meetings

3. Prepare Students To Take the Lead

- a. Scripts for the student to follow during the meeting
- b. Picture cards to help the student introduce the sections of the IEP
- c. Agendas or advance organizers to follow during the meeting
- d. Technology to support the student's participation
- e. Slide presentations to highlight important talking points
- f. Pre-recorded audio of the student presenting a component of the IEP meeting (e.g., talking about strengths, preferences)

Student Self-Advocacy Skill Building

1. **Know Your Strengths and Challenges** - Example: *"I'm strong in science, but reading long passages is difficult."*
2. **Understand Your Accommodations** - Practice matching accommodations to situations: *"When I take a test, I can use extended time."*
3. **Learn How to Explain Needs** - Provide sentence starters: (*"I learn best when..."*, *"It helps me if..."*, *"I need extra time because..."*)
4. **Practice Asking in Safe Settings** - Role-play with a teacher, counselor, or parent before trying it in class.
5. **Problem-Solve When Supports Aren't Provided** - Teach steps if an accommodation isn't given: (stay calm, remind the teacher politely)
6. **Reflect and Adjust** - After each attempt, have the student reflect: (What went well? What was hard? What should I try next time?)

CLICK
HERE



Student Self-Advocacy Skills

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

This checklist can be reviewed during IEP meetings, student-teacher check-ins, or transition planning to set measurable goals and track progress toward independence. It can be used as a checklist or to monitor progress.

0 = Not yet / needs full support
1 = Emerging / needs frequent prompts
2 = Developing / occasional prompts
3 = Independent / consistently self-advocates

1. Self-Awareness

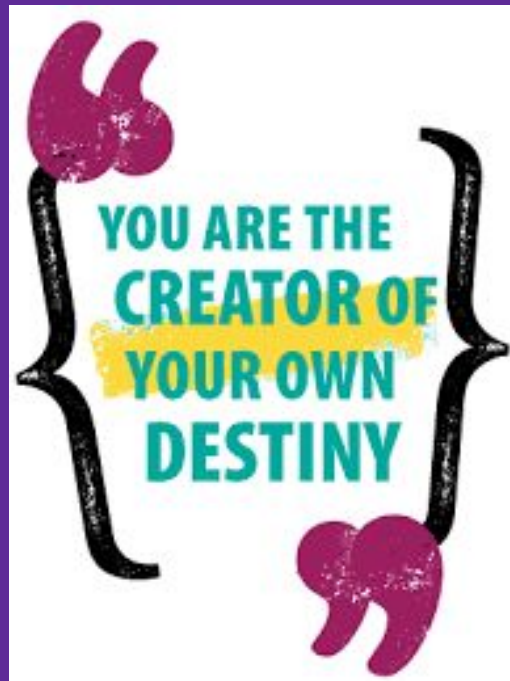
- ☐ Can state their strengths.
- ☐ Can state areas of challenge.
- ☐ Understands their disability in age-appropriate terms.
- ☐ Knows why accommodations are helpful.

2. Understanding Rights and Supports

- ☐ Can name at least one accommodation or support they receive.
- ☐ Understands when and how to use their accommodations.
- ☐ Knows who to go to for help (teacher, counselor, case manager, etc.).
- ☐ Recognizes that all students need help sometimes.

3. Communication Skills

- ☐ Uses polite, respectful language to ask for support.
- ☐ Can use sentence starters (e.g., "It helps me when..." or "I need extra time for...").
- ☐ Can explain their needs without prompts.
- ☐ Can describe how they learn best.



What Else Have We Been Up To?

- Alternative Pathway to Diploma
- Parent Outreach (Regional Center, Department of Rehabilitation, SSI/SSDI, 504 to IEP, Mental Health, Incoming 7th, Autism Parent Night, Conservatorship+)
- All students in General Ed PE with APE support, as needed
- Ethnic Studies Inclusion for SDC (Fundamentals)
- Professional development for full faculty on SWD
- Non-violent Crisis Intervention
- Embedded Supports with Districtwide PD (using accessibility features with online tools)

What Else is Coming?

- Coffee with the Director
Wed., April 29, 2026
@ 10:00 A.M.

Special Services Conference Room
670 L Street, Suite A
Chula Vista, CA 91911

- Paraprofessional Recruitment - Summer 2026

Michelle Sturm-Gonzalez

Sweetwater Union High School District

michelle.sturm-gonzalez@sweetwaterschools.org

(619)796-7550 Office

Coronado Unified School District

- Cell phone policy still is process of updating
- ESY Planning in progress

National School District

- New Superintendent: Dr. Laura Philyaw

National School District Family Resources



District Resources



Resources available to help you and your family during this school year.

Care Solace



24/7/365 mental health support for National School District students, staff, and families.

Food Assistance Guide



Information on local programs, and resources, to help families access free food.

Immigration Resources



Information on programs and resources to help families access immigration support.

ParentVue



Online registration account access. Use this to update emergency contacts.

REACH



A safe place for before and after school childcare, recreation, music, art, tutoring, and more!



Family Resource Center:
(619) 336-8360

Recursos Familiares del Distrito Escolar Nacional



Recursos del distrito



Recursos disponibles para ayudarle a usted y a su familia durante este año escolar.

Guía de asistencia alimentaria



Información sobre programas y recursos locales acceder alimentos gratuitos.

Recursos de inmigración



Información sobre programas y recursos para acceder a apoyo en materia de inmigración.

Care Solace



Apoyo en salud mental las 24/7/365 para estudiantes, personal y familias del Distrito Escolar Nacional.

ParentVue



Acceso a la cuenta de registro en línea. Úsela para actualizar sus contactos de emergencia.

REACH



Un lugar seguro para el cuidado de los niños antes y después de la escuela, recreación, música, arte, tutorías ¡y mucho más!



Centro de recursos familiares:
(619) 336-8360

San Ysidro School District

- Extended School Year (ESY) at La Mirada School from June 15 – July 3, 2026. The application will be sent out both virtually and as hard copy to school sites by mid April. The curriculum will focus on the solar system/space...looking forward to a successful summer
- In recognition of Autism Acceptance Month we are wearing blue on Fridays for the month of April
- Hosted our 5th annual STEM Fair on April 17 at Smythe Elementary

South Bay Union School District

- Welcome Benji Melendez Ramirez, SBUSD SPED Teacher from Oneonta!
- Central Elementary is closing at the end of 25/26 AY
- SPED Day program moving to Berry Elementary School
- Planning for 2026/2027 School Year
- Excited to host an IEP Night for families to attend this Fall!

Chula Vista Elementary School District



Chula Vista Elementary School District

Join the fun at CVESD University!

Exciting opportunities await families in the 2025-26 school year with CVESD University, our ongoing series of informative workshops. This year, we're thrilled to partner with Brain Balance San Diego to bring you valuable insights and practical strategies. All workshops will be held at the district office, located at 84 East J Street in Chula Vista. Light refreshments and childcare will be provided.

2025-26 School Year Schedule:

Executive Functioning
Thursday, August 21, 9-10 a.m.
Executive function skills are necessary to succeed day-to-day, from decision-making to problem solving to time management to motivation and even regulation. Understand how to develop these skills to reach your potential at home, in the classroom, or in the workplace.

Anxiety
Thursday, October 30, 4-5 p.m.
1 in 3 people experience anxiety at some point in their lives, and it is the most common psychiatric condition in youth. Understand what's really happening in the brain to cause low frustration tolerance, emotional dysregulation, rigidity, aggression, and excessive worry and fear, and practice ways to manage.

Sensory Processing Struggles
Tuesday, December 2, 9-10 a.m.
We all receive information in and around us through our senses. Examine different symptoms and challenges for those struggling with sensory processing integration and why a properly functioning sensory system is important for learning, socialization, and behavior.

Managing Meltdowns and Behaviors
Tuesday, February 17, 4-5 p.m.
Discover why some children are more prone to meltdowns and defiant behaviors than others. Take away best practices to increase positive behaviors, reduce defiant or disruptive behaviors, and prevent and manage meltdowns.

The Developing Brain and Learning Success
Thursday, April 16, 9-10 a.m.
Understand your student's unique developing brain and explore techniques to help all learners reach their potential in and out of the classroom, including better focus, behavior, social skills, executive functioning, and more.

For more information contact commsoffice@cvesd.org.

Learn more at cvesd.org

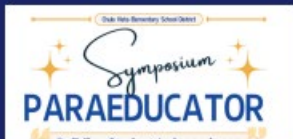
84 East J Street, Chula Vista, CA 91910 • (619) 425-9600

Highlights:

- CVESD University + Brain Balance Workshop Partnership continued. *Managing Meltdowns and Behaviors Workshop* was held in February. *The Developing Brain and Learning Success* was held in April. Hosted by CVESD but open to all districts. Free to attend.
- April 2026 was recognized by the district as Autism Acceptance Month with events at various school sites.
- ESY planning in progress. Emails have started going out to eligible students.

Chula Vista Elementary School District

Rigorous Learning for All



ESN Extensive Support Needs

Using SMART Boards to engage learners using UNIQ & News2You Curriculum



MM Mild-Moderate

Teachers trained with grade level General Education teachers – focused on iReady & Benchmark



RSP Resource Specialists

Focused on Literacy & the Science of Reading Professional Learning

CVESD Call to Action: *Rigorous Learning for All*

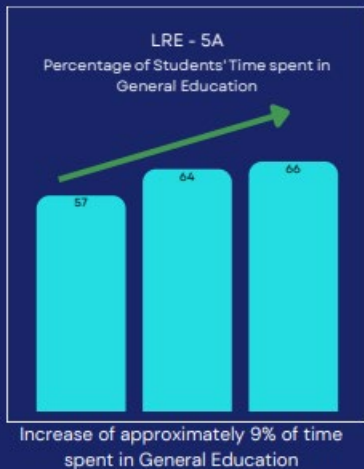
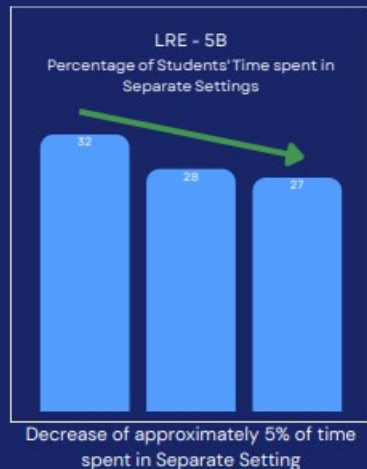
Actions CVESD put forth to meet the needs of the Special Education community in response to this call.

*From Pupil Services Presentation

Chula Vista Elementary School District

Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)

...To the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities...are educated with children who are nondisabled...

[illegible]

Good News:
We are trending in the right direction

CVESD Inclusion in the data

*From Pupil Services Presentation

Chula Vista Elementary School District



Chula Vista Elementary School District
You, Me, & Your Student's IEP

Families are invited to meet the Chula Vista Elementary School District's Special Education staff for an informative and engaging session! This event is an opportunity to ask questions about your student's Individualized Education Program (IEP), gain valuable insights, and discover helpful community resources. Join us to connect with staff and discover ways to support your student's journey.

Sessions:

Thursday, November 6, 2025
5:30-7 p.m.
Greg Rogers Elementary (510 E Naples Street)

Thursday, January 22, 2026
9-10:30 a.m.
CVESD District Office (84 East J Street)

Tuesday, April 28, 2026
3:30-5 p.m.
Sonia Sotomayor Elementary
(1790 Santa Christina Avenue)



Food and childcare will be provided for all sessions.
Questions? Contact Eliza Picazo at Elizama.Picazo@cvesd.org

Learn more at cvesd.org

84 East J Street Chula Vista, CA 91910 • (619) 425-9600

f X @ y t n



Chula Vista Elementary School District
You're Invited!
Pupil Services Coffee Talk

Special Education families are invited to join the Chula Vista Elementary School District's Pupil Services Department for an upcoming Coffee Talk! This event is a chance to share conversations, ask questions, and strengthen the partnership between families and the district. Together, we'll build connections and exchange ideas in a welcoming space designed to support your student's success.

Coffee Talk Sessions:

- Thursday, October 16, 2025, from 9-10 a.m. in Board Room
- Thursday, February 5, 2026, from 9-10 a.m. in Board Room
- Friday, May 1, 2026, from 9-10 a.m. in Room C

Food will be provided for all sessions.
All sessions will be held at the district office,
located at 84 East J Street in Chula Vista.

Questions? Contact Eliza Picazo at Elizama.Picazo@cvesd.org

Learn more at cvesd.org

84 East J Street Chula Vista, CA 91910 • (619) 425-9600

f X @ y t n

Two upcoming events:
April 28, 2026 You, Me &
Your Students IEP

May 1, 2026 Pupil Services
Coffee Talk

CAC Subcommittee Updates

CAC Handbook	Special Education Student Inclusion	Parent & Staff Education
CVESD + SYSD	SUHSD + CUSD	NSD + SBUSD

Chair: Rosemary Lowry (CVESD)

Co-Chair: Melissa Dolo (SBUSD)

CAC Handbook Update

CAC Handbook Timeline



FEB 26

Release draft to CAC members for review, feedback, and additional Q&A input



MAR-APR 26

Consolidate feedback and finalize revised draft

We are here

APR-MAY 26

Collaborate with SELPA to design and format the publishable version

June 26

Publish the final handbook online

Student Inclusion Subcommittee Update

- Survey results sent to all districts.
- Discussion.

Parent & Staff Education Update

- CAC Subcommittee requested feedback from members to help strengthen staff and parent education. Families were asked: “As parents/caregivers — what do you wish you had known when you first started the Special Education journey?”
- Next slides are the key themes shared by families.

Theme 1: Better Transition from Diagnosis to Educational Support

Many parents shared that when they first received a diagnosis (for example, through a medical provider like Cortica), there were no clear next steps provided on the educational side.

Families expressed a need for:

- A stronger connection between the medical world and the educational/autism/disability world
- Immediate guidance on what to do next
- Clear direction on who to contact

Suggested supports at the time of diagnosis:

- SELPA contact information
- List of local autism/disability organizations
- Parent support groups (in-person and online)
- Social media community pages
- Regional Center next steps
- Educational workshops and conferences

This is a critical moment for families. Instead of feeling empowered, many parents described feeling isolated and anxious.

Theme 2 : A “SPED 101” Welcome or Onboarding for Families

Parents consistently expressed a desire for a “Welcome to Special Education” orientation. Ideas included:

- A SPED 101 onboarding session
- Overview of district services
- Clear explanation of the IEP process
- Opportunities to connect with district specialists
- Informative workshops tailored to family needs

Families want early access to information, not a “learn as you go” experience.

Discussion: SELPA offers a Parent IEP Academy. Can this be offered as an online resource? Pre-recorded?

Is Parent Handbook covering these theme topics? If not, could we add some of these topics in a future version of the handbook? District services are in the Local Plan. This can be linked in handbook.

Theme 3 : School-Based Community & Connection

Connection with other families was described as essential.

Suggested ideas:

- Coffee with the principal for special education families
- School-based parent support groups
- Parent meetups
- Opportunities to connect informally with other families

Many parents emphasized that simply meeting other families going through similar experiences can make a significant difference.

Discussion: What districts are we routinely having Coffee with the Principal for for Special Education families? Are you having opportunities at your district for connection with other families like yours?

Theme 4 : The IEP & District Services

Families expressed a strong need for clearer explanations about:

- What services can the district offer?
- What services or accommodations can parents request?
- What do different assessments mean and evaluate?
- What do each section (“box”) of the IEP means?
- How can Special Education parents support the classroom and district?
- Steps and reasons for a SCIA (Special Circumstances Instructional Assistant)
- Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) → Most Restrictive Environment
- Early intervention services offered by the district

We found that many parents want to be collaborative partners but need clearer guidance on how to do so.

Theme 5 : Programs & Services That Made a Significant Difference

Parents highlighted programs that were especially impactful:

- Project Impact (through Regional Center)

Described as making the biggest difference, with more noticeable improvement than speech therapy (ST) and occupational therapy (OT) alone.

- TBS (Therapeutic Behavioral Services) through Medi-Cal

More intensive than ABA and very helpful for families.

TBS providers were also able to collaborate effectively with the school district.

Discussion: How can we share programs that are recommended by experienced Special Education families to new Special Education Families?

Summary

Families are asking for:

- Earlier connection to resources
- Clear, plain-language explanations
- Community and emotional support
- Collaboration between medical providers and schools
- Empowerment instead of confusion.

The Special Education journey should feel supported and guided, not isolated.

SELPA Parent Liasons
Free Parent IEP Support

Liliana Armenta

Spec Ed Parent Liaison

South County SELPA

larmenta@sdcoe.net

[858-290-5812](tel:858-290-5812)

Laura Cervantes

Spec Ed Parent Liaison

South County SELPA

lcervantes@sdcoe.net

[858-290-5811](tel:858-290-5811)

Art Show

Date: April 22, 2026, 3:30 pm

Theme: Splash of Imagination



18TH ANNUAL ART EXHIBITION

"SPASH OF IMAGINATION"

It's time to start gathering student artwork to submit to the 18th Annual Art Exhibition! This year's theme is "Splash of Imagination", inspired by ocean life.

Weekly e-mails are being sent out with further instructions. If you would like to receive them or have any questions, contact us at scselpaadr@sdcoe.net.

**22 APRIL, 2026
AT 3:30 P.M.**

South County Regional
Education Center
(SCREC)
800 National Blvd,
National City, CA 91950

CAC 26/27 Officer Election

Chair Nominations:

Rosemary Lowry CVESD Parent

Erika Lowry Coronado Parent

Co-Chair Nominations:

Erika Lowry Coronado Parent

Melissa Dolo South Bay Parent

Rosemary Lowry CVESD Parent

Secretary Nominations:

Melissa Dolo South Bay Parent

Raquel Lopez CVESD Special Education Teacher

CAC 26/27 Officer Election

Results:

Chair: Erika Lowery Coronado Parent

Co-Chair:

Melissa Dolo South Bay Parent

Secretary:

Raquel Lopez CVESD Special Education Teacher

CAC 26/27 Meeting Date Adoption

5 business meetings proposed. 3 virtual due to higher attendance.

1. Virtual July 2026 PM
2. In-Person Oct 2026
3. Virtual Nominations Jan 2027 PM
4. In-Person Elections April 2027
5. Virtual Planning May 2027 PM

Public Comments

- Individual speakers will be allowed **three (3) minutes** to address the committee
- Speakers are asked to **fill out a Public Comment Form** and submit it to the CAC Chair or Co-Chair **prior** to the start of the meeting
- **No action, comment or agreement can be taken by the CAC** on oral communications

Adjournment

Thank you all for coming!

Chula Vista
Elementary
(619) 425-9600

Coronado Unified
(619) 522-8900

National
(619) 336-7500

San Ysidro
(619) 428-4476

South Bay Union
(619) 628-1660

Sweetwater
Union High
(619) 407-6300