



SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March, 25, 2026

Community Advisory Committee Meeting Minutes March 25, 2026

A. Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m.

B. Member Roll Call

Members present: Ryan Digman, James Moraga, David Martasian, Kimber Rice, Tanya Morgan, Aaya Al-Ttaee, Emily Getz, Kaylin Boyce, Nicole Harrigan, Luc Taylor, Sean Owens, Daniel Hicks, Heather Taylor

Members absent: Lacey Martinez, Lisa Sotelo, Cordelia Haines, David Burbridge, Mackenzie Guye

C. Board Remarks

Nick Bloise thanked the committee for their continued efforts and provided an update on policy related to motorized scooters, referencing discussions from a recent listening session. He noted that the policy addresses motorized scooters capable of traveling more than 20 miles per hour. Additionally, he shared that voters authorized a \$100 million bond measure to support modernization efforts.

D. Visitor Comments

Tiffany Hart shared updates related to transportation, including bussing, rerouting, and ongoing staffing efforts. She highlighted the strong work happening in these areas. She also noted that Carmichael is one of the oldest school sites in San Juan Unified and referenced efforts related to potential rebuilding, though the site was not identified on the current rebuild list. Additionally, she emphasized that the school serves students on a historic campus, has received new furniture, and has a significant special education presence, including students who use wheelchairs.

Rachael shared her personal experience navigating the diagnostic process, including involvement with a medical institute and receiving an AUHD diagnosis. She noted that while a doctor referral was part of the process, many interactions occurred through the school system. She expressed concern about the language used in the IEP, describing it as appalling and hurtful. Rachael also shared an experience that occurred during a recent school event.

Dina shared her experience at her child's new school, describing her child as high-functioning and noting that students who are able to sit quietly in class may mask their needs and go unnoticed. She expressed concern that these students can become lost in the system and are not receiving the support they need, which can lead to academic struggles. While she shared that her child has made friends at the new school, she also expressed frustration that instruction is not consistently meeting her child at their current level.

E. Modernization of Laurel Ruff and Ralph Richardson (D)

Frank Camarda, Chief Operations Officer, and Nicholas Arps, Director, provided an update on the district's facilities master planning process. They shared that the district is currently in the master planning phase and has received valuable feedback through engagement with the



SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March, 25, 2026

Facilities Committee, as well as input from teachers, parents, and the broader community through surveys and meetings.

The Facilities Team provided an overview of projects funded through the bond measure, noting that the focus is on modernization rather than full site rebuilds. The goal of this work is to improve overall functionality, accessibility, and the student experience across school sites.

They highlighted the extensive engagement efforts conducted to inform planning, including site visits (“day in the life” observations), staff and community surveys, and meetings with various stakeholder groups.

Key themes that emerged from this engagement include challenges with parking and traffic flow, accessibility limitations (such as doorways, bathrooms, and campus circulation), the need for specialized instructional and therapy spaces, and storage limitations for equipment. Additional concerns included environmental factors such as HVAC and temperature regulation, as well as safety, campus security, and the need for improved outdoor and recreational spaces.

- Public Comment (regarding Item E)

Tiffany asked about the pool at Laurel Ruff, noting that it is not included in current project plans beyond minor maintenance. She also discussed considerations related to facility design requirements, including feedback about maintaining the ability to have doors open where appropriate. Tiffany also asked about planning for additional space in the future, specifically inquiring about the inclusion of sensory rooms.

A parent asked for clarification regarding the district’s decision to focus on modernization rather than full site rebuilds. They questioned whether this approach is driven by bond measure limitations or budget constraints, and expressed concern that some sites, such as Ralph Richardson Center and Laurel Ruff, may benefit more from complete rebuilds. The parent also shared concerns about long-term capacity and growth, noting that updated facilities could better support an increasing number of students and expand program opportunities. They questioned whether retrofitting existing structures would be a worthwhile investment compared to developing entirely new school designs that could better meet evolving student needs. In response, staff explained that decisions are based on multiple factors, including site conditions, cost considerations, and the scope of funding available through bond measures.

Sherry shared her experience at Mariemont, expressing concern about classroom temperature and ventilation. She noted that her daughter has difficulty regulating body temperature and has become overheated at school, at times feeling close to passing out. Sherry shared that accommodations such as a doctor’s note, access to the office for cooling, and use of a personal fan have been needed. She emphasized the importance of considering individual student needs, particularly related to factors like temperature.

- Member Discussion -

James asked about the level of parent engagement in the process, as well as whether students and alumni were included. He also inquired about opportunities for online participation and whether consultants with expertise



SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March, 25, 2026

in special education were involved. In response, it was noted that accessibility, including ADA compliance, is a key consideration in the planning process. He also shared observations about students of various ages using playground spaces, noting the importance of designing areas that are inclusive and accessible for children across age groups.

Ryan raised considerations related to furniture, including couches and flexible seating, as well as the need to account for student devices, access to electricity, and adequate storage. He also emphasized the importance of including student voice and asked how student feedback is being incorporated into the process.

Heather asked about the overall timeline for the project and when plans would be presented. She also emphasized the importance of thinking ahead and ensuring there is a clear plan to capture input and information. Additionally, she inquired about how design input will be incorporated into the project schedule.

Kimber shared that families are seeking more than ADA compliance, emphasizing the need for truly inclusive and accessible environments. She noted that past projects meeting minimum standards have still left students facing barriers, such as difficulty navigating spaces. She stressed the importance of designing for equitable experiences for all students and encouraged openness to feedback, noting these concerns stem from students previously being overlooked.

Nicole and Monique asked how meetings and surveys are being advertised, noting low participation and sharing surprise that engagement was limited. They emphasized that while families are highly involved, caregiving responsibilities can make it difficult to attend meetings, especially virtual ones. They suggested increasing outreach through direct communication from teachers, as well as exploring additional methods such as surveys and other outreach strategies to better reach families and encourage participation.

Heather shared that these spaces are essential for supporting students' basic and hygienic needs. She emphasized the importance of tracking comments and suggestions, improving communication and outreach, and ensuring safe access to education. She also noted that successes are not always visible and should be more clearly highlighted.

F. Staff Report - Department/SELPA Updates (R)

Rebecca Foster, SELPA Director, and Sandy Butorac, Director of Special Education, provided an update on secondary programming and service models. They emphasized a focus on supporting students at their school of residence or school of choice through core content courses.

District leadership, including the Board and Superintendent, shared a goal of increasing opportunities for all high school students, including students receiving special education services, to learn alongside their peers through collaboration between general and special education staff. An update was also provided on the expansion of the Secondary Service Model (co-teaching) across all high schools to increase access to general education



SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March, 25, 2026

curriculum, strengthen consistency across sites, and support staff through guidelines, strategies, and professional development. Additionally, information was shared about the development of the expanded graduation pathway options and increased access to high school diplomas through standards-aligned course sequences and four-year planning models.

- Public Comment (regarding Item F)
None.
- Member Discussion
Heather suggested including CTE students in teaching pathway programs to help expose future educators to special education and support the development of a more inclusive, homegrown workforce. She acknowledged that while some may wonder why this work was not implemented sooner, families and staff have busy lives and may miss communications. She expressed appreciation that the district is engaging in meaningful conversations and taking steps forward, noting the importance of continued feedback and ongoing progress.

Kimber expressed strong support for expanding inclusive practices, noting past efforts in the district that were later discontinued. She emphasized the importance of implementing these efforts systemwide to ensure sustainability and prevent them from being dismantled in the future. Kimber highlighted the range of emotions in the room, including hope, frustration, and cautious optimism, and stressed the need for continued commitment across the entire system. She also reflected on past challenges, including inconsistencies between district messaging and site-level experiences, and emphasized the importance of transparency and follow-through moving forward.

Ryan reflected on the significant effort and difficult conversations that led to current progress. He noted past inconsistencies in district communication, specifically regarding the existence of co-teaching, which created confusion and, in some cases, impacted family decisions. He emphasized that clear and accurate communication is critical, as it directly affects trust and can have significant impacts on families. Ryan acknowledged appreciation for current progress while highlighting the need for improved communication moving forward.

Nicole shared the experience of her students attending Mira Loma and that it has taken a lot of time and difficult conversations to get to this point, and that past communication from the district, especially about co-teaching, has been inconsistent and confusing for families. She also expressed concern that the cohort model can feel segregating for students who are otherwise fully included, and noted that IEPs are not always consistently followed across teachers. Nicole shared that families often have to do a lot of advocating to get the right supports and questioned whether that is truly equitable. She emphasized the need for clearer communication, more consistent practices, and systems that better support students without placing so much responsibility on families.

G. Workgroup Updates (D)



SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March, 25, 2026

Legislative Sharing Day: May 6, 2026

You Light the Way: April 8, 2026

IEP Process Workgroup: group will meet during February break to review the parent handbook and provide edits and suggestions. Members encouraged others to reach out to Jim for additional information.

- Public Comment (regarding Item G)
None.
- Member Discussion
Ryan shared that the DHH Parent Group has formed, with the first meeting held on March 12. He noted it has been a positive opportunity for families to connect and described the group as responsive and well-received by the community. He also shared information about SEPTA, with the first meeting scheduled for April 13 from 6:00–7:30 p.m. (virtual). SEPTA is connected to the California PTA, open to all families, and focused on advocacy, support, and uplifting all voices across the district.

H. Approval of Minutes, February 25, 2026 (A)

It was moved by Ryan Digman, seconded by James Moraga, that the minutes of the February 2026 meeting be approved. Ayes: all members; Opposed: none.

I. 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.

Legislative Sharing Day: May 6, 2026

You Light the Way: April 8, 2026

Winners:

Keliah Owens, student at Bella Vista High School

Ed and Wendy Gonzalez, parents at Thomas Edison Language Institute

Caeley Kelly - Teacher at Carmichael Elementary

Thursday, March 26

Parent Advocacy: Tips for Advocating for Your Child in Special Education

9 - 10:15 am Webinar presented by Alta Regional

<https://www.altaregional.org/alta-sponsored-event/parent-advocacy-tips-advocating-your-child-special-education>

- Public Comment (regarding Item I)
None.
- Member Discussion
None.

J. Future Agenda (D)

May 27, 2026 - last meeting of the school year!

Requested Items:

Equity update



SPECIAL EDUCATION COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE
March, 25, 2026

K. Adjournment

With there being no further business, this meeting was adjourned at 8:32 p.m.