CA's Special Education Advisory Council 25-26 Report

Under Act 274 (SB 158) of the 2019 session, Collegiate Academies created a Special Education Advisory Council (SEAC) starting in the 19-20 school year. The purpose of SEAC is to improve educational opportunities for students with disabilities through collaboration. To provide a forum for parents and staff to share ideas, identify concerns, and advise the network to improve services for children with disabilities.

Formation:

Several members of the 24-25 Special Education Advisory Council opted to return as council members for the 25-26 school year. Additional family and staff members were solicited to join the advisory council to fill vacant seats.

Twelve members were selected, as follows:

Emma Gambaro, Collegiate Academies Manager of Student Support
Ashley Garner, REACH Teaching Assistant at Walter L. Cohen*
Wesley Johnson, Essential Skills Teaching Assistant at Walter L. Cohen*
Kelly Murray, ABA Therapist, Collegiate Academies*
Michele White, Parent of OA scholar and former ASA scholar*
Nicole Lee, Parent of WLC scholar
Michelle Rodriguez, Parent of WLC scholar
Dave Ramirez, Parent of WLC scholar
Charles Mamon, Parent of ASA scholar*
Lakisha Mamon, Parent of ASA scholar and Child Psychiatrist*
Carla Sublett, Parent of ASA scholar
Eddy Alvarez, Teacher at ASA

Emma Gambaro was selected as the Chair of the Advisory Council.
*denotes returning council member

Collegiate Academies

Meeting Dates/Times/Topics:

What	When	Objective(s)
Kick-off + EOY goals and results	5/20 at 3:30 pm via Zoom	Council will share successes and areas of growth in CA special education programming this school year! Council will be shared on the objectives for the following meetings, and request additional topics.
ESY FAQ	5/27 at 3:30 pm via Zoom	Council will discuss ESY, how scholars qualify, what a typical day looks like, and which other summer programs are available in the city for scholars with disabilities.
Transition Planning	5/29 at 3:30 pm via Zoom	Council will review the TOPs and LEAP Connect graduation pathways and the post-secondary options in the city aligned with each diploma

***Meetings Held*:**

The first meeting took place on Wednesday, May 20th, from 3:30 to 4:10 pm on Google Meet. The council discussed both successes and areas for improvement based on their scholars' experience at CA this year and highlighted how their growth showed up at home! Ms. Lee expressed a desire to learn more about integrating speech best practices at home over the summer, so a CA SLP will be added to the next meeting to share tips. Last-minute conflicts prevented several committee members from joining, so next week we will be spiraling today's content in addition to discussing ESY!

Council members present:

- Emma Gambaro, Collegiate Academies Manager of Student Support
- Kelly Murray, ABA Therapist Collegiate Academies*
- Nicole Lee, Parent of WLC scholar

The second meeting took place on Wednesday, May 27th, from 3:30 to 4:00 pm on Google Meet. The council identified both successes and areas for improvement based on their scholars' experience at CA this year, and Ms. Sublett shared that increased parent communication was pivotal to her daughter hitting her goals this year. We also discussed how scholars qualify for ESY and the benefits it offers! Finally, we shared resources for families to utilize while ESY is not in session, including the Arc, programs at NORD, and free classes at the public library.

Council members present:

- Emma Gambaro, Collegiate Academies Manager of Student Support
- Kelly Murray, ABA Therapist Collegiate Academies*

- Ashley Garner, REACH Teaching Assistant at Walter L. Cohen*
- Wesley Johnson, Essential Skills Teaching Assistant at Walter L. Cohen*
- Carla Sublett, Parent of ASA scholar
- Eddy Alvarez, Teacher at ASA

The third meeting took place on Friday, May 29th, from 3:30 to 4:00 pm on Google Meet. The council reviewed the qualifications for the LEAP Connect diploma pathway and opportunities for employment and independent living post graduation from Opportunities Academy. Phone numbers for services such as Families Helping Families and The Office for Citizens with Developmental Disabilities were shared so families could begin forming connections and begin waiver processes.

Council members present:

- Emma Gambaro, Collegiate Academies Manager of Student Support
- Kelly Murray, ABA Therapist Collegiate Academies*
- Carla Sublett, Parent of ASA scholar
- Eddy Alvarez, Teacher at ASA