

Capistrano Unified School District

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Minutes April 26, 2023 In Person & Facebook Live

Meeting called to order at: 9:34 AM

In Attendance:

Rachel Niemeyer-Sutherland
Mina Carson
Beth Davis
Veronica Hoggatt
Sonia Moser
Michele Ploessel-Campbell
Danielle Schmiesing
Kimber Smith
Janelle R Stever
Steve Burke

CAC members absent:

Whitney Zolna
Nicole Lindstrom
Jillian Stewart

Rachel Niemeyer-Sutherland called the meeting to order. She asked attendees to please sign in. Rachel explained a few changes to the agenda. Michele motioned to approve the agenda as amended. Mina seconded. The motion passed. There were no corrections to the March minutes. All in attendance were notified the meeting was being recorded and would be available for future viewing on the CAC Facebook page.

Election

Rachel Niemeyer-Sutherland, CAC Chairperson-

Approval of incoming Executive Board/Open Board Positions. Rachel presented the slate for the 2023-2023 CAC Executive Board.

Chairperson	Beth Davis
First Vice Chairperson	Mina Carson
Vice Chairperson	Rachel Sutherland
Vice Chairperson	Michele Ploessel-Campbell
Communications/Social Media Chairperson	Julie Cole
Secretary and Treasurer	Whitney Zolna

The slate was approved by a hand vote.

Rachel presented the committee chair positions for 2023-2024. This was an informational item.

Ability Awareness	Nicole Lindstrom & Danielle Schmiesing
Legislation	Michele Ploessel-Campbell
Grade Level Transition Event	OPEN
Sunshine Awards	Julie Cole
Hospitality	Steve Burke & Carol Atkinson

Rachel presented the applicants for voting member status.

- Renewing members are Danielle Schmiesing, Steve Burke, and Kimber Smith. All were approved by a hand vote.
- New members are Julie Cole and Carol Atkinson. Both were approved by a hand vote.
- The applications will now go to the CUSD Board of Trustees for final approval at the next Board Meeting.

Administrator Reports

Clint Collins, Asst. Superintendent, Special Education Services-The updated SPED brochures are now posted on each school's website, so families can learn more about the programs at each campus. Next school year:

- Home Base will expand beyond AVMS. Home Base classrooms will also be at Oak Grove Elementary School, Ladera Ranch Middle School, and Tesoro High School. This program supports students who have social emotional challenges such as anxiety, or for those who find it hard to fit into a 6 period gen ed setting. Students will attend Home Base for as many periods as they need with the goal of transitioning them into a gen ed only placement. Prior to Home Base these students were being sent to nonpublic schools. At the elementary level, Home Base will be similar to the structure in middle or high school, in that students will only attend as needed, and there will be a special education teacher in the room all day.
- A SAC (Structured Autism Class) class will open at Moulton Elementary School next year. Palisades has grown so much that another campus is needed. Ideally all schools will have a maximum of three SAC classes.
- SEALS-Lauren Pattullo will speak more about later.

The Strategic Plan was first developed and adopted in 2015-2016. It is a set of goals for the Special Ed Department. Many of the goals have been reached, some are no longer applicable, and there is a need for new goals. A meeting to update the plan will be scheduled in May. Anyone interested in participating should contact Clint Collins.

Staffing allocations for Special Education Teachers and Related Services for next school year is being done now. In the past it was done in late May or Early June. By working on allocations now, it will allow Principals to be able to plan better for next year.

Jeana Dagley, Executive Director of Special Education Programs and Related Services, SELPA Director-There is more information now regarding the Alternative Pathway to Diploma (see handout). The California Legislature had a workgroup that worked for 7 months on the Alternative Pathways to a Diploma for students with IEPs. The workgroup presented two options for the Legislature to choose from. One pathway was for all students with IEPs, and the

other was for students with cognitive disabilities (rules out specific learning disability). The legislature chose the second option and has updated ed code with the new pathway. To be considered for the Alternative Diploma students must have a cognitive disability, which rules out any student with a specific learning disability. It is an IEP team decision, and the team must meet and decide on the specific pathway before a student enters 10th grade. The District is having meetings now to comply with this requirement to get students started on that pathway. If a student does receive an Alternative Diploma they may still be eligible for post secondary services, such as Adult Transition Program. Another requirement is that students have to take the Alternative CA Assessment (CAA) in 11th grade. Students can do modified course work, but their IEP goals and the curriculum must be aligned with State Standards. The District uses ULS curriculum which does meet the Standards requirement. The goal in the future will be to discuss this option at 8th grade transition meetings, to give students the full 4 years in high school to meet the coursework requirements. See hand out for required coursework. One issue with this pathway is that it does limit access to electives in high school in relation to the number of electives a student in STEPS classes would have access to typically.

Lauren Patullo, Director of Early Childhood, Gen Ed, and SPED Programs-There are many exciting changes to share:

- By 2025-2026 Transitional Kindergarten (TK) will be universal in CA. Each year the State expands to include more birthdates to slowly broaden the amount of students enrolled. Eventually Preschool will be for 3 year olds and TK will be for 4 year olds. With the changes in the ages, all of the classes will be called Early Childhood Classes. Currently to teach TK, you have to have an Elementary Credential, and Preschool has an Early Childhood Certificate. All preschool teachers recently completed a Bridge Credential so they all can teach Preschool, TK, and Kindergarten.
- The Early Childhood Center will move to the current site of RH Dana ENF for next school year. There will be 10 different classrooms including Pre K Gen Ed, SEALS, STEPS and SAC as well as a Preschool assessment center. RH Dana (next to ENF) will also have a Preschool classes.
- SEALS has changed from self contained classroom into a reverse mainstreaming model. It is a role model peer program. Lauren has received positive feedback about the program. Lobo has a waiting list for students to enroll, but there is room for typical peers in the other locations.

Officer and Committee Reports

Sonia Moser - Family Resource Center Liaison-

- There will be a Dia Del Niño celebration in San Juan Capistrano from 11-3 on this Sat. Sonia will be there.
- There will also be a Resource Fair on May 8th in Boardroom from 5:30-7pm. The Wellness and Prevention Center will be there along with the Alexander Neville Foundation, CHOC Mental Health, Start Well Orange County and many other organizations.
- May 17 Western Youth Services will share again their Positive Parenting presentation from 11-12 via Zoom. There were technical issues from the earlier presentation.

Michele Ploessel-Campbell - Legislative Update-Michele just returned from the CAPTA Convention in Sacramento where PTA passed 2 resolutions:

1. Equitable Literacy for All Students. This resolution seeks for universal screenings to identify students with reading difficulties in K-4th grades, implement statewide evidence-based reading curricula, and implement a statewide comprehensive literacy plan that includes, but is not limited to, teacher assessment, preparation, coaching, and professional development requirements.
2. Inclusive Education for Students with Cognitive Disabilities. The PTA is advocating for inclusive practices that support students who need extensive support and modifications to participate in general education and access the core curriculum. Students in inclusive settings have better outcomes in employment, post-secondary education and training.

Last month, Michele spoke about Senate Bill 691 proposed by Senator Portantino. It's also known as the Dyslexia Bill. The bill is out of the Senate but is now stuck in Assembly. Please call Assemblyman Muratsuchi at 916-319-2066 and say, "I support SB 691, please give it a hearing."

Steve Burke-Sunshine Awards-Steve presented an update regarding this year's Sunshine Awards. He said we had a quick last minute venue change due to rain, but it worked out amazingly. This was our 8th year doing the Awards and it still amazes him every single time. The community came together and made the event heartwarming and touching to everyone. The Sunshine Awards fills people with joy, pride and honor. Steve thanked everyone for their support and efforts. He said it was a beautiful event and he's looking forward to next year. There will be an article in the Insider about the event.

Rachel added a huge thank you to the District to help us make the venue change happen. Meetings were moved for us! She said the Sunshine Awards are a labor of love. And she thanked Trustee Hanacek for serving drinks and to Trustee Bullockus for taking out trash! She stated we couldn't have done it without everyone's help!

Beth Davis-RH Dana ENF-ENF will be closing at the end of the school year. The STEPS classes will mostly merge with RH Dana with a few students going to Reilly. "Remembering ENF" celebration event will be on May 25 from 5-7pm. There will be food and activities for kids. Photos are needed for the event slideshow. If you have any, please email them to elisabeth@att.net by May 11th. The celebration should be a great time and will include past and present principals, teachers, staff and students as well as their families.

Suzanne Scott-Gigi's Playhouse-Gigi's Playhouse is located in Laguna Hills, and it serves prenatal to adult clients with Down Syndrome. It is the 57th location of the national non-profit organization and has 200 participants currently. All programming is free. They offer purposeful programming for people with down syndrome. Lots of CUSD kids go there. They have a family environment, with siblings and parents welcome. Suzanne offered to do tours for anyone interested. They are open Tuesday-Saturday.

Chairperson Report

Rachel Niemeyer-Sutherland, CAC Chairperson-Rachel thanked Trustees Amy Hanacek and Judy Bullockus for attending today's meeting as well as CUSD personnel Dr. Merwin, Peggy Baerst, Jeana Dagley, Cary Johnson, Clint Collins, Janelle Stever, Sonia Moser, Lauren Pattullo, Jimmy Knodel, and Ryan Burris.

The Exceptional Student Awards are a part of the Senior Awards Night event. Rachel reminded organizers at the high schools to connect with the Senior Awards Committee at their school to coordinate the handing out of the awards. Also please send the names of the awardees to Rachel so they can be listed on the CAC website after Awards Night.

Please send an email to capocac@gmail.com if you are continuing as a SPED Rep for next school year, or if you have the name of your replacement.

Congratulations to all the Teachers of the Year and to all the Nominated Classified Employees of the Year. Many of them work with students in the special education population. One of the Classified Employees is Kristin Arias, who helps us tremendously with all things CAC.

Dr. Greg Merwin - Associate Superintendent Education & Support Services-Dr. Merwin wanted to take a minute to pause and appreciate Rachel Sutherland! He said he was personally blessed to work with Rachel for many years and there have been so many positive things happen under her time as CAC Chairperson including the Family Resource Center, increased meeting attendance, and a great District-Staff connection. He stated he is so proud and appreciative of Rachel and thanked her.

Mina Carson presented a card to Rachel signed by CAC supporters.

Rachel thanked Veronica Hoggatt for all her years of service and exclaimed this really may be Veronica's last year. Rachel thanked Mina too and the whole CAC team. We all support each other she said.

Meeting adjourned at: 10:35 AM

Guest speaker – Laura Meier on special needs trusts and conservatorships