

Community Advisory Committee Meeting
February 13, 2008
County Office of Education
6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.

Minutes

1.0 Call to Order & Roll Call

The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm. Each member introduced himself or herself. Warm welcome extended to the new members from SLV, Laurie Lewis and Jill Wilhelm.

Members present: Carmel Weifert Oscar Torres
 Dan Cope Rebecca Cernac
 Janiece Ransone Susie Christensen
 Jill Wilhelm Tracy Marquart
 Katie Merchant Victoria George
 Laurie Lewis

Visitors: Peter McLean, Hillary Stern

2.0 Review and approval of minutes from last meeting

M/S/C (Weifert/Torres/All Aye) to approve the minutes of the 01-09-2008 meeting

3.0 Additions/Deletions to Agenda

- CAC membership

4.0 Public Input (For items not on the agenda)

Peter McLean distributed a handout, reviewing the CAC record from September of 2005. He gave a brief overview of the material that the handout covered. One of his concerns is that not as many people show up to the business meetings as they do to workshops. He would like to see the attendance numbers rise. He also pointed out that he was at the SECA meeting in September 2007 and was the only one to raise the issue of the policies not going through the CAC prior to going to SECA.

Dan advised that advocacy does not mean being adversarial. Peter complained that the CAC group was not receiving policies and taking action. Janiece Ransone said that she was very confused and offended by Peter's presentation.

Vicki said that the CAC and the SELPA as a whole suffered last year due to Dan's absence and the unavailability of the interim SELPA director on a full-time basis. This year will be different. Laurie Lewis asked how many representatives there were from each district and how many of them were parents. Vicki explained the membership to everyone. She said that the goal is to have a majority of parent-representatives on the CAC. If parents are unavailable, then teachers can become committee members too. Laurie asked another question-what constitutes a quorum? The response to this was a simple majority.

Tracy Marquart surmised that Peter would like the CAC to function in more of an advisory capacity. Laurie said that she could not imagine that parents would blindly agree to policies that did not help their children. Dan said that in his absence, policy drafts were not taken to the CAC for review. He assured everyone that while mistakes were made in the past, the SELPA was now back on track. He also said that many policies are more for operational issues, and thus do not affect parents and students. For the policies that do pertain to parents and students, all issues with the policies are seriously considered.

Susie Christensen said that a lot of information used to go over her head initially. It has taken her time to get up to speed. She was wondering what could be done to make meetings more people-friendly. Vicki responded by saying that in the past, the special education director would accompany the new representatives to the meetings to give them an orientation. She said that she would like to see this practice return. Susie suggested that this practice would not always be effective, especially in situations where there is antagonism between the parent and the special education director. Dan suggested that the CAC could have an orientation meeting to review the role, purpose, by-laws, and responsibilities of the representatives. Susie said that as a CAC parent, she would like to know how the CAC advocated for parents and how she should navigate the special education system. Tracy suggested the formation of a committee to address new members' concerns and to look into developing a non-biased orientation program. Vicki said that she would hold an informal orientation at the next business meeting in May.

Peter said that he understands the effort the CAC members make to be available for meetings. He said that he is an advocate for parents and hopes that people would take action to support the children. He said that it was not his intention to launch personal attacks against the CAC. Dan asked Peter and the rest of the group to forget the history and move on with the future.

5.0 Reports

A. Chairperson Report

Victoria started her report recapping some of the many positive things in which the CAC has played a role. One of the CAC's goals has been to reach parents. To this end,

- Parent handbook was updated
- Tri-fold brochure, building awareness of the CAC, was distributed
- The website was developed to extend the CAC's reach
- The yearly award ceremony to acknowledge teachers, students, and other contributors to special education in the community was implemented.
- Parent-education workshops were introduced, and their attendance has grown.
- Legislative Day is a well-attended function each year, with attending parents sharing their real stories with the legislators in Sacramento
- The Art Competition has become a very well participated in endeavor. The reception for this year's competition will be held on February 27, 208 at the County Office of Education offices. There will be three practicing artists judging the entries this year.

Victoria let on that she would be willing to serve as CAC chair for another year, at the end of which she would like someone else to take over the responsibility. On a personal note, she was celebrating being cancer-free for 10 years.

B. SELPA Administrator Report

Dan started off by saying that SELPA works with the parents and their school districts in the best interest of the children. If parents disagree with a SELPA policy, they should raise issue so that the SELPA can take all necessary action.

In theory, the budget has experienced huge cuts. Dan is optimistic that the cuts in reality will not be as drastic. Unfortunately, because of the smaller budget,

- COEs and other educational institutions will have to give out pink-slips
- The Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Conference has been cancelled. Even Legislative Information Sharing Day was almost cancelled.

Dan said that sometimes it takes years to get mandated programs funded. For example, No Child Left Behind (NCLB) is an unfunded mandate to date. The funding situation in education will not change until there is a huge backlash of parents demanding adequate funding for their children's education.

New Horizon School, the school for the homeless children in Santa Cruz County, is a private school, and they offer their own special education services. There are staff members to support the special education students.

C. SEC Liaison Report

The SELPA has been working on a new IEP system, SEIS. The new instructional manual for the SEIS forms is already being distributed. Katie has heard some positive things about the tracking of goals and objectives.

A few members of the SEC will be attending a workshop that takes a deep look at assessment processes and the students that do/do not qualify for the different assessments out there.

The Autism Taskforce has been formed to look into the process of serving autistic children in the birth to five population, reviewing how their needs are being met by the COE & SARC, and recommending improvements to make the transition for children between autistic programs as smooth as possible. The taskforce will be considering different delivery models and the benefits and caveats of those models.

The Desired Results Developmental Profile (DRDP) is an assessment for 3, 4, & 5 year olds. It is administered twice a year. There are two instruments recording the observations: the DRDP-R and the DRDP-Assess. The instruments are not interchangeable. This is not a singled-out test. It only applies to state preschool and other preschool programs with special education students.

6.0 A. Election of Chairperson

M/S/C (Weifert/Torres/All aye) to approve Victoria George as the CAC Chairperson for the year 2008-2009

- B. Election of Vice-Chairperson
M/S/C (George/Torres/All aye) to approve Rebecca Cernac as the CAC Vice-Chairperson for the year 2008-2009
- C. Committee Appointments – Autism Taskforce
Susie Christensen and Victoria George volunteered to serve on this committee to look into the current autism program for the population 0-5 years and recommend ways in which to improve it.
M/S/C (Ransone/Weifert/ All aye) to approve the CAC representatives participating on the Autism Taskforce
- D. Legislation Day Participants
On this day in May (05-07-2008), the parents will go to Sacramento to share their children’s needs and their concerns with legislators. The SELPA directors are also actively involved in this day. Those interested in attending the function are Laurie Lewis, Victoria George, and Rebecca Cernac.
M/S/C (Weifert/Ransone/All aye) to approve the CAC representatives attending Legislation Day 2008
- E. General Attendance at CAC Business Meetings
Victoria asked that the members share their ideas about how to build awareness about the CAC in the community. A committee was formed to look into this issue deeper. The members are Tracy Marquart, Carmel Weifert, and Rebecca Cernac
- F. Recognition Ceremony
This event has been rescheduled to Saturday May 24, 2008
- G. Membership
The CAC will have full representation from all districts effective the next business meeting after the school boards have approved their new district representatives. On the day of the next business meeting, there will be a half hour orientation preceding the meeting

7.0 Announcements

Tracy announced that Imagine and Balance4Kids would collaborate to hold a fundraiser at the Seascapes Golf Club on 05-03-08. The money raised in support of Imagine will be used to build a community center. The funds raised by Balance will go towards the teacher grant program.

8.0 Future Agenda Items

The subcommittee to look into general attendance at CAC Business Meetings will report back at the next business meeting.

9.0 Close

Motion to adjourn meeting by Tracy Marquart, seconded by Jill Wilhelm
Motion approved unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.