

East Valley SELPA
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
April 19, 2021

REPRESENTATIVES PRESENT:

Paula Bailey	Rialto Unified School District, Vice Chairperson
Katie Castruita	Redlands Unified School District, Chairperson
Karla Kellems	Rim of the World
Anna Klapproth	Yucaipa-Calimesa Joint Unified School District

OTHERS PRESENT:

Courtney Beatty	East Valley SELPA
Susanne Ferguson	East Valley SELPA, Secretary
Anne-Marie Foley	East Valley SELPA
Dr. Rick Homutoff	East Valley SELPA
Mary Anne Klenske	East Valley SELPA
Colleen Meland	East Valley SELPA
Dr. Patty Metheny	East Valley SELPA
Jo-Ann Vargas	East Valley SELPA
Shannon Vogt	East Valley SELPA
Tracy Schroeder	East Valley SELPA

1.0 Call to Order, Welcome & Introductions

At the request of EV SELPA CAC Chair Katie Castruita, Administrator, Dr. Patty Metheny, of the East Valley SELPA Office, 670 E. Carnegie Drive, San Bernardino, California, called the virtual meeting to order at 9:30 a.m. and shared the agenda on the screen. She welcomed everyone and asked attendees to introduce themselves. Everyone shared about their children and work.

2.0 Review/Approve February 22, 2021, Minutes

Dr. Metheny reviewed the minutes from the February 22, 2021, CAC meeting and entertained a motion to approve them. Ms. Castruita voted to approve, and Ms. Klapproth seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by consensus of the committee.

3.0 Review Proposed EV SELPA 2021-2022 Parent Trainings

Dr. Metheny asked the CAC Chair for approval to switch the order of two agenda items and begin with an overview of proposed EV SELPA 2021-2022 parent trainings instead. This would allow some Program Specialists to leave the meeting early due to other commitments.

Her request was granted by Ms. Castruita. Dr. Metheny screen-shared a list of proposed parent trainings and spoke briefly about each one. They include:

1. Understanding the IEP & Educational Benefit
2. How to Read Assessment Reports
3. Parent Role in an IEP Meeting
4. Tips for Transitioning from Home to School: Strategies to Support Students Returning to In-person Instruction
5. Introduction to Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) for Parents and Caregivers: Strategies for Children who Struggle with Verbal Communication
6. Applied Behavioral Analysis: One of the Most Effective Approaches to Improve Behavior
7. Supporting Skill Development for Life Beyond High School
8. Community Resources for Life After High School
9. Dealing with Challenging Behaviors

Dr. Metheny invited questions about the proposed trainings. She specifically inquired whether additional trainings were needed. Ms. Castruita asked a question pertaining to AAC. Do students need to start with the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) before advancing to more high-tech AAC systems? Ms. Ferguson, EV SELPA Program Specialist, explained that some students may benefit from starting with PECS, but many already have the skills needed to access high-tech systems. An assessment should determine the appropriate AAC system for a student. Ms. Castruita asked if information about PECS is included in the training. The training covers both low-tech (i.e., PECS) and high-tech (i.e., iPad apps). Presenters' contact information is provided for attendees to ask individual questions.

Ms. Klapproth inquired how training information is disseminated to parents. It is shared in different ways, including on the EV SELPA website, sent to Special Education Directors, parents, teachers, and Related Service providers. Dr. Metheny asked for additional ways to promote trainings. Ms. Klapproth will contact her child's principal about advertising trainings on YCJUSD's website. Dr. Metheny and others will meet with social media representatives from each district and reiterate the importance of sharing parent trainings through these avenues.

Ms. Kellems, who represents Rim of the World Unified School District (RIM), asked about Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) trainings for divorced or separated parents who disagree about special education issues. An EV SELPA team is scheduled to come to RIM in early May to speak about general ADR strategies related to special education. Ms. Kellems proposed a parent panel where parents can connect with other parents and ask questions. Per Ms. Kellems, parents are often intimidated by school professionals and special education acronyms. Dr. Metheny offered to look into any beneficial parent-to-parent resources. Ms. Klapproth inquired if any specialists would be available to support the panel in cases where parents need more information. Dr. Metheny offered to do research into this matter. She also mentioned the EV SELPA's parent resources provided through the ADR COVID grant and through the EV SELPA social media accounts.

Ms. Klapproth inquired about trainings, support groups, or resources for parents of newly adopted children. Dr. Metheny noted existing IEP trainings would also support IEP information for this group of parents. She asked Tracy Schroeder, EV SELPA Mental Health Manager, to speak on the issue of adoption resources and supports. The San Bernardino County Superintendent of Schools (SBCSS) offer trainings on IEPs and behaviors. Ms. Schroeder offered to get these resources to Ms. Klapproth. Once children are adopted, SBCSS is more “hands off” and EV SELPA trainings may be a more viable option. Ms. Klapproth share her difficulties in obtaining behavior support for adopted children compared with foster children.

Ms. Schroeder explained how adopted children remain on Medi-Cal in addition to any private insurance and may qualify for county-run programs, such as Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), and Wraparound or “Wrap” services in the home. Some may qualify for behavior intervention services through Inland Regional Center (IRC). Dr. Metheny asked Ms. Schroeder to define Wrap. It is a county program through the Department of Behavioral Health. Wrap provides therapeutic behavior services in the home and sometimes extends into the school setting. Parents are paired with a parent partner, and the student works with a coach. Ms. Schroeder added a link to the Department of Behavioral Health in the chat. Ms. Klapproth shared how Medi-Cal only covers these types of services for a very limited time, and private insurance only extends the timeline slightly. Ms. Schroeder confirmed Wrap is a time-limited service, typically for 6-9 months. If the child continues to have needs, the focus may be more on individual counseling or other services. Ms. Klapproth reiterated the need for more resources for adoptive parents, especially in the area of mental health, both for children and parents. A brief discussion ensued about respite care.

Dr. Metheny thanked parents for sharing their experiences and assisting the CAC in identifying training needs. She asked for feedback on the virtual training format. The response was positive. Virtual trainings are more convenient. Recorded trainings are even better, as they are available any time parents are.

4.0 Learn about the Proposed Legislation to Support Students with Disabilities & Their Families

Assembly Bill 126: Family Empowerment Centers

Dr. Metheny spoke about AB 126, a bill that is pending in the state legislature and sponsored by assembly members. It will provide funding for the creation of more Family Empowerment Centers (FECs) in the state. FECs provide resources for families of children with disabilities and are a link between the families, the CACs, and SELPAs. FECs have been mandated for some time in California. Unfortunately, San Bernardino and Riverside counties have never had an FEC. For about 4-5 years, the state SELPA organization and other agencies have supported the need for more FECs. The bill will also require FECs to work closely with SELPAs in the area of alternative dispute resolution (ADR). Dr. Metheny has worked with lobbyist and others in Sacramento to support this bill which will provide both one-time and on-going money to get the FECs started and keep them going.

Assembly Bill 967: COVID Special Education Fund

In addition, Dr. Metheny shared how she has engaged with other SELPA directors and lobbyists in Sacramento and FECs in Northern California to write AB 967. This is a special education bill related to COVID-19. The federal government has made significant funding available to address the educational impact of COVID-19. This bill would ensure money set aside for special education students instead of going into the general fund. The money is then marked for direct services and interventions to special education students as a result of the need for learning recovery.

Districts, parents, and other stakeholders will collaboratively identify the needed interventions and services for their schools and community. Parents are an integral part of this collaboration. Once the services and interventions are identified, the district will apply to the SELPA for approval, and the money will be diverted directly to the district from the SELPA. The bill went to the Assembly Education Committee two weeks ago without any objections. Next, it will go through the fiscal committee and into the Senate. Dr. Metheny has worked with lobbyist Tanya Lieberman from the Governor's office, who has already secured the Governor's support for this bill. Dr. Metheny asked for the CAC's support of AB 967 which would provide needed one-time money to students with disabilities.

Dr. Metheny invited questions about the two bills. Ms. Castruita asked about the amount of funding. It is unknown at this time but the intention is to distribute it based on the count of special education students in each SELPA for equitable distribution. Ms. Castruita further asked how the money would be distributed between districts. The California Department of Education (CDE) has yet to determine that.

Ms. Klapproth asked how the EV SELPA will decide on the services and interventions. Dr. Metheny clarified that districts, in collaboration with parents, will decide which services and interventions to focus on through the creation of a data driven plan. The plan is then sent to the SELPA for review and signature. The SELPA monitors the funds, but the districts and parents identify the services and supports.

Ms. Castruita inquired whether iPads could be purchased for students in need of AAC. Dr. Metheny responded that they could be if part of the district's plan. Another use of funds could be the hiring of a reading teacher if needed. Ms. Castruita also asked if aides can be funded to work with students in the general education classroom. This might be a possibility with intended outcomes clearly identified. All federal dollars are reimbursement funds and would therefore not be given ahead of time. It would be up to each district to come up with a plan and then seek reimbursement from SELPA.

Ms. Klapproth asked about the time frame for getting the bill approved. Dr. Metheny hopes it goes through in June, so the Governor can sign it in October. Ms. Klapproth will follow up with her district about the bills. Dr. Metheny will keep everyone updated about the progress on the bills through email. The EV SELPA may need advocacy from parents through letters of supports and engaging in conversations. Dr. Metheny thanked the parents for their support.

5.0 Conduct Review of EV SELPA 2021-2022 Annual Service Plan

Every SELPA must have a local plan. The plan includes a service plan and a budget plan both of which must be updated annually. The CAC must review each to help expand an understanding of their contents. The California Department of Education (CDE) requires the use of a specific detailed template. Dr. Metheny screen-shared Section E of the Local Plan or the Service Plan. The Service Plan with attachments was emailed in advance to CAC members on Friday. Each SELPA must identify all services by code and title that were available on Census Day in early October. Dr. Metheny briefly reviewed and described each of the provided services and asked if anyone had questions. No one did.

Next Dr. Metheny screen-shared an excel document (attachment six). This document must be attached to the Service Plan. The document itemizes the district and school of each service. Every district and school site are featured, including county, private, and non-public schools. Dr. Metheny scrolled through all of the listings for CAC members to view and invited questions. No one had any.

6.0 Conduct Review of EV SELPA 2021-2022 Annual Budget Plan

Next, Dr. Metheny screen-shared the Budget Plan, or section D, on the CDE-required template. She reviewed the different funding revenue sources, including AB 602 State Aid, AB 602 Property Taxes, Federal IDEA Part B, Federal IDEA Part C, State/Infant Toddler, Preschool, State Mental Health, and Federal Mental Health. She explained how budgets are developed by object codes which fund various necessities, including Certificated Salaries, Classified Salaries, Employee Benefits, Supplies, Services and Operations, Capital Outlay, and Other Outgo and Financing.

Dr. Metheny summarized the federal, state, and local revenue. Federal and state revenue are not sufficiently funding the cost of special education. Within our region, each district's general fund supplies about 55% of the funds. The state funds approximately 34%, and the federal government supplies 10.5 % of the funds. Dr. Metheny asked if anyone had questions. No one did.

Dr. Metheny highlighted the parts of the form which describe how money is distributed to districts by the EV SELPA. In addition, she reviewed the projected EV SELPA operating expenditures and the projected expenditures for Supplemental Aids and Services in the Regular Classroom for Students with Low Incidence Disabilities. Finally, Dr. Metheny screen-shared the Local Plan attachments, which contain information about instructions and contact information for district Special Education Directors/administrators. The EV SELPA distributes most funds directly to the districts. She reviewed the various funds allocated to each district and county schools on attachment II. Next, attachment III was reviewed which details how districts plan to spend the funds. In addition, Dr. Metheny reviewed Attachment IV (Projected Revenue by Federal, State, and Local Funding Source by Local Educational Agency) and Attachment V (Projected Expenditures by Local Educational Agency for Supplemental Aids and Services in the Regular Classroom for Students with Disabilities and Those Identified with Low Incidence Disabilities).

7.0 Review/Approve Proposed CAC Meeting Dates for 2021-2022

Dr. Metheny screen-shared a list of proposed CAC meetings for the 2021-2022 school year. The meeting dates are:

September 20, 2021
November 15, 2021
February 28, 2022
April 25, 2022

The CAC approved these meeting dates. Everyone agreed that virtual meetings are more convenient than in-person meetings going forward. As such, all meetings will be held virtually at 9:30 a.m. on the above listed dates.

Ms. Klapproth asked a question about transition support for an autistic student who has graduated from high school. Program Specialist, Colleen Meland, spoke about the trainings she conducted this year. The trainings have been recorded, and parents are welcome to listen to those, sign up for next year's trainings, and/or contact her directly for support. Ms. Meland will email Ms. Klapproth, so she can provide any needed support. Dr. Metheny asked for any further questions. No one had any. She thanked parents for their valuable input and the program specialists for attending and answering questions. She reminded CAC members to contact the EV SELPA if they have any questions before the next CAC meeting. The next virtual meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2021, at 9:30 a.m. through Zoom.

8.0 Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 10:59 a.m.