

Tulare County  
COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
For Special Education

MINUTES  
February 5, 2009

The Tulare County Community Advisory Committee for Special Education met in the Downstairs Conference Room of the Tulare County Office of Education at 1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Amy McMahon, Filomena Rocha, Gary Kenny, Tiffany Stark, Connie Acevedo, Danna Collins, Ramon Cervantes, Tim Perrotta, Jeff Higgins, Claudia Garcia, Stephanie Caldera

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**  
Eric Sinclair, Shelley Dever

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Norma Erwin, Brenda Beatty; Renae Bendix, Parent Liaisons/Tulare County Office of Education, Kevin Clements, community member, Christina Moreno, parent

**WELCOME / INTRODUCTIONS:** Chairperson, Stephanie Caldera welcomed CAC members and had everyone introduce themselves.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** Members of the public did not address the Committee on agenda items.

**MINUTES:** The minutes of the January CAC meeting were approved.

**D.O.S.E. REPORT:** Jeff Higgins reported on the following areas of interest discussed at the February Directors of Special Education meeting: A) Parent Training Opportunity, "Effective Autism Treatments" March 24 with Ron Pekarek, Board Certified Behavior Analyst. B) Introduction of the new "Special Education Rights of Parents and Children" form. Changes are effective January 2009.

Jeff informed the committee about a sample letter that may be used as a formal response to doctors, parents and others requesting a special education evaluation. He reported that it addresses the evidence for a suspected disability.

Jeff reported on the following legislative updates:

1. FERPA – Student education records are protected under the "Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act" and parent consent is required in order to disclose information between agencies but not between schools.

2. OCR – Student transcripts cannot disclose disability status and will no longer have special education label on forms.
3. IEP – Jeff informed the committee that IEP forms should always be labeled as “draft” at IEP meetings. He said these forms are not set in stone and parents should be given ample time to review in order to have the IEP team consider their concerns and make changes as appropriate. Jeff informed the committee that parents should always ask for data to support the team’s proposal and recommended that parents consult Wright’s Law as it is a good reference guide.

**ANNUAL LUNCHEON REPORT ON ENTERTAINMENT PLANS.** Norma Erwin reported on her meeting with Leslie Berry and it appears that a video production is definitely possible. Tim Perotta suggested a high school audio visual student might also be a good resource. Norma will assist Amy McMahon in contacting Linda Chester. Claudia Garcia confirmed her son would sing a song in sign language. A song has not yet been selected. The CAC voted to move forward with the entertainment ideas discussed.

**STUDY TOPIC:** Scott Aldrich, Speech and Language Services Program Manager, discussed Auditory Processing Disorders. Scott stated that APD was a totally misunderstood disorder and then he provided CAC members with hands on experience. Scott proceeded with his presentation while covering his mouth with a piece of paper as “white noise” blasted from the television behind him. The members agreed that it was difficult to hear and understand him. He explained that APD is not a hearing loss but rather a lack of communication between the ears and the brain. It may vary in severity and may impact the student’s ability to attend, discriminate, remember, recognize, or comprehend auditory information presented. Scott reviewed classroom strategies and environmental accommodations that help students with APD. He also added that there is not enough research to show great gains even if the classroom is structured right and all accommodations are provided. Scott pointed out that students with APD will still struggle. Therefore, it was extremely important that they learn how to compensate.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

Flyers were made available for the following parent training opportunities:  
“Effective Autism Treatments”- March 4, with Certified Behavior Analyst, Ron Pekarek  
“Abuse Prevention for Persons with Cognitive Disabilities” and “The Ring of Safety: Teaching your child abuse prevention skills.” with David Hinsburger

The Parenting Network facility is now officially a designated Family Resource Center. Families with children with disabilities who receive parent support can now also receive vital resources. Parenting Network is currently in need of school age clothing for children.

Brenda Beatty asked if members still needed the agenda sent by mail and email. The CAC members voted to have the agenda emailed only and made available at the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:30 p.m.