

**TULARE COUNTY COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION**

**MINUTES**

The Tulare County Community Advisory Committee for Special Education met on October 7, 2010 at Central Valley Regional Center, 5441 W. Cypress Ave. Visalia, CA at 1:30 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Blanca Florez, Cyndi Ward, Connie Acevedo, Tim Perrotta, Amy McMahon, Gary Kenny, Stephanie Caldera, Randi Kestner, Joyce Nunes

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Tiffany Stark, Claudia Garcia, Dana Collins, Filomena Rocha

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Norma Erwin; Parent Liaison/Tulare County Office of Education; Lori Collins, Parent Liaison/ Tulare County Office of Education, Carol Sonier; Program Administrator for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Programs

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:** Chairman, Tim Perrotta welcomed the committee members back and self introductions were made.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no members of the public present to address the committee on agenda items.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** The minutes of September 2, 2010 CAC meeting were approved as read. The minutes stand.

**REPORTS:**

- a. Norma Erwin reported that the Tulare County Board of Education had officially appointed Cyndi Ward and Blanca Florez to serve on the Community Advisory Committee. Committee members applauded and received an updated member list and directory including a preview of the updated CAC website.
- b. Joyce Nunes director of special education for Tulare City Schools provided the CAC with an explanation of the Tulare County SELPA Annual Service Plan and explained the codes used.
- c. CAC reviewed and discussed the results of the 2009-2010 Parent Survey Response Log provided by Norma Erwin. Norma explained that the parent survey was a CAC idea that was rolled out in 2008. There were twenty-two "Parent Survey-Special Education" surveys returned by parents for the 2009-2010 year. Parent members new to CAC stated they were unaware of the parent survey and have never received one before or after an IEP meeting. One parent stated it was given to her at the end of an IEP meeting and members of

the IEP team waited for her to fill it out. Stephanie Caldera stated that the original intent was that it be sent with the IEP Meeting Notice. Joyce Nunes stated that she would bring it to the attention of the Directors of Special Education. Joyce commented that they may not be handed out if the school has met their percentage of returned parent feedback. Tim Perrotta suggested the survey be made available to parents on the CAC website. Joyce Nunes suggested the web address be inserted on the CAC notice that is given to parents at each meeting.

- d. CAC Parent Panel at COS: Stephanie Caldera reported that she and committee member, Filomena Rocha presented to a room full of interactive students. They shared their own personal experience and answered many questions from students. Some students were parents of children with special needs who had questions concerning evaluations and identification. Stephanie reported having received calls from parents as a result of the presentation.
- e. Joyce Nunes, director of special education for Tulare City Schools reported on the recent Directors of Special Education (DOSE) meeting. She said Carol Sonier's presentation was also made to the DOSE. Joyce Nunes explained what the one-time American Recovery Reinvestment Act (ARRA) funds were and how schools were using them to make a difference for students.
- f. Program Administrator for Deaf & Hard of Hearing Programs, Carol Sonier: Carol Sonier explained that staff received specialized training to address the language needs of increasing number of students entering with cochlear implants. Carol discussed the application of discipline specific listening and spoken language strategies.

Carol also explained that hearing loss brought about by the atresia must be evaluated immediately so that early hearing aid fitting can happen. Carol explained that hearing needs to be maximized during the crucial language development period. She reported that many students were entering school with no language and discussed how important it was for them to use their voice as much as possible using the above strategies. This will be the aim along with sign language classes provided in geographical locations to families.

Tim Perrotta commented that communication is a big focus when it comes to assessing students that sign and asked about listening and spoken language standards.

Stephanie Caldera commented that parents need to have a commitment to improve their child's communication and network with other agencies but also that services need to be made more available to all parents.

Cyndi Ward commented that she had attended all the trainings provided by TCOE and found the sign language flash cards helped to increase her

daughter's communication skills. Cyndi suggested parents be invited to observe how a speech therapist works with their child because she found it beneficial.

Randi Kestner added that conducting home visits would also help to identify and break down barriers to services and commitment. Perhaps there may be literacy challenges, late work schedules or other issues that parents are dealing with.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** Announcements were made regarding upcoming events and the meeting was adjourned at 3 p.m.