



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

**MINUTES**

**The Tulare County Community Advisory Committee for Special Education  
met in-person and virtually on November 4, 2021 @ 9:00 am**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sally Fernandes Stephanie Caldera, Tiffany Stark, Irma Peralta, Anthony Martin, Tracy De LaCruz

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Marilyn Malloy, Cyndi Ward, Amy McMahon, Timberly Romero, Connie Acevedo, Michelle West

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jessica Ceja, Malinda Furtado, and Joy Voita—Parent Liaisons with Tulare County Office of Education, Ron Pekarek—Program Manager for Bright Future Program, Vicky Lopez—TCSD psychologist, Brandice Larsen, Alexis Tapia, & Eric Lindberg—Parents and Members of the Public

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS:** Anthony Martin, CAC Chair, welcomed everyone and called for self-introductions.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:** There were no comments made by members of the public present.

**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:** Anthony Martin called for approval of the minutes for October 14, 2021. Stephanie Caldera made a motion to accept the minutes and Sally Fernandes seconded. The minutes stand.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. **STUDY TOPIC & GUEST PRESENTER:** “The Bright Future Program: Moving from In-Home to Center-Based Support for Students with Autism”—Ron Pekarek, Program Manager for Bright Start/Bright Future presented a slideshow with the following points:
- Bright Future Program has provided services to students with autism since 2009 and decided to shift from in-home to center-based services in August 2020.
  - Currently, centers are located on the Liberty Campus in Visalia, at Snowden Elementary in Farmersville, and a third Bright Future Burton center opened in September 2021; 35 children between ages 3-5 receive services with a maximum capacity of 48
  - Rationale for change: research shows higher rates of learning in center-based settings, services better prepare students for academics, opportunity to improve behaviors and classroom-based skills
  - Ron shared a video walkthrough of the Burton Center
  - Every student in a Center is assessed using the ABLLS, which is a comprehensive assessment, curriculum guide and tracking system for children with ASD; behavior tutors collect data to update progress on goals—which may be academic, play, or social in nature
  - Eight children have exited program at age 6, with total service time in center ranging from 7-14 months.
  - Ron shared positive outcomes including number of skills mastered, positive reports from district staff, and students who have moved to less-restrictive classrooms after receiving support in the Centers

**REPORTS:**

- A. **DOSE Report for November 2021**—The November report was provided by Tiffany Stark--Program Manager of IRC, Tulare County Office of Education
- Dr. Jennifer Newell, Director of Behavioral Health Services, TCOE reported on SB 14 and SB 224, which promote mental health wellness and education in the schools including mandating that absences due to behavioral health needs be excused in the same way as absences for physical illness
  - Malinda Furtado, Parent Liaison, TCOE shared the CAC “Meeting Challenges” calendar
  - Rachel Weaver, Program Manager of Related Services, TCOE reported on caseloads for SLPs throughout the County

- B. **CAC “Meeting Challenges” Calendar**—Jessica Ceja, Parent/School Liaison in charge of the calendar project reported on the expected delivery of the CAC Calendars. A firm date will be given at the next meeting for distribution. As always, volunteer help from CAC members is always appreciated. Anthony Martin stated he would be happy to pick up and distribute calendars to the Porterville area as he has in the past.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS & RESOURCES PROVIDED:**

- A. **Next Meeting:** The next CAC meeting will be—**December 9, 2021, at 9:00am in Redwood H** and virtually at:

<https://zoom.us/j/99347296116?pwd=dU55ODIwVlFhUjAyaVp1c05nVEZBQT09>

Meeting ID: 993 4729 6116

Passcode: 512451

- A light breakfast will be served. Malinda Furtado reminded CAC Members to please advise in advance if they will not be able to attend.
- B. Malinda Furtado shared information regarding Parenting Network trainings and support groups, as well as a schedule of Professional Development trainings offered through TCOE/SELPA; information available via handout or online.

*A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Tiffany Stark and seconded by Sally Fernandes. Meeting Stands Adjourned.*