

SUPERINTENDENTS GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE TULARE COUNTY MASTER PLAN FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION

MINUTES

February 28, 2023

The Superintendent's Governance Committee met on Tuesday, February 28, 2023 in the Tulare County Office of Education, Cedar Conference Room.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sergio Mendoza, Superintendent, Burton Elementary; Yolanda Valdez, Superintendent, Cutler-Orosi Unified; Dr. Joe Hernandez, Superintendent, Dinuba Unified; Jaime Robles, Superintendent, Earlimart Elementary; George Eddy, Superintendent, Exeter Unified; Sherry Martin, Superintendent, Kings River Union; Tom Rooney, Superintendent, Lindsay Unified; Dr. Nate Nelson, Superintendent, Porterville Unified School District; Terri Rufert, Superintendent, Sundale Union Elementary; Paula Adair, Superintendent, Tulare City Elementary; Lucy Van Scyoc, Superintendent, Tulare Joint Union High; Kirk Shrum, Superintendent, Visalia Unified; Laura A. Gonzalez, Superintendent, Woodlake Unified; Tammy Bradford, Assistant Superintendent/SELPA Administrator, Tulare County; and Tim Hire, County Superintendent, Tulare County.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Dr. Sergio C. Chavez, Superintendent, Farmersville Unified.

OTHERS PRESENT: TERRA BELLA UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT: Nick Garcia, Superintendent; OAK VALLEY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT: Heather Pilgrim, Superintendent; WOODLAKE UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT: Michelle West, DOSE Representative; TULARE COUNTY OFFICE OF EDUCATION: Jody Arriaga, Director, Internal Business Services; Fernie Marroquin, Deputy Superintendent, Administrative Services; Jennifer Newell, Director, Behavioral Health Services; and Malinda Furtado, Parent Liaison.

PUBLIC COMMENTS: Dr. Joe Hernandez, Chairperson, opened the meeting to public comment.

INTRODUCTIONS: Dr. Joe Hernandez, Chairperson, introduced guest superintendents Heather Pilgrim, Oak Valley Union School District and Nick Garcia, Terra Bella Union School District.

Heather Pilgrim shared that Oak Valley Union School District has an enrollment of 570 students and 23 of those students have Individualized Education Programs (IEP). An RSP teacher, hired by the district, provides services to students. The district also receives psychology, speech and language pathology, and behavioral health services from the SELPA. Lastly, Ms. Pilgrim shared that she has been very pleased with the support services from the county office.

Nick Garcia stated that special education services are provided by the SELPA to 8% of students enrolled at Terra Bella Union School District.

REVIEW OF SGC PACKET: Tammy Bradford, Assistant Superintendent, Special Services, reviewed the Superintendent's Governance Committee agenda packet handouts:

- Special Education Enrollment Data Report – Tammy Bradford reviewed the county served report that lists primary disability and stated that 12,542 students are receiving special education services SELPA wide. Of those students, 1136 are infants.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES: Minutes from the November 15, 2022 Superintendent’s Governance Committee Meeting were presented for approval. *A motion was made by Lucy Van Scyoc and seconded by Yolanda Valdez to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.*

BHS REPORT: Dr. Jennifer Newell, Director of Behavioral Health Services (BHS), presented the 2022-2023 Quarterly Demographics Report and stated that BHS is currently serving 547 students. Currently most of the students served are between 12-17 years old. Consistent with years past, a majority of students being served are male (81.6%). The majority of students who receive BHS services are covered by Medi-Cal. BHS has a unique contract with HHSA to get additional reimbursement for mental health services provided to those students; these funds are then put back into providing services to students and their families. A new State Grant was just awarded to TCOE to open a new clinic in Porterville.

BHS ERMHS Referral Report – Dr. Newell continued by reviewing the referral report that shows the distribution of referrals across grade levels and stated that most services are provided in an educational setting. Students with school avoidance or anxiety are served in the evenings and over the summer, as true quality care continues throughout the summer. BHS has received 59 referrals in comparison to 128 referrals during the 2021/2022 school year. Lastly, Dr. Newell shared that the BHS team has responded to 285 crises interventions and of those students, 46 have been hospitalized. Discussion followed.

Social Worker Contracted Services – Dr. Newell encouraged superintendents to complete the TCOE BHS Contract Services Interest Form for the 2023-2024 school year and added that she is very confident that she may be able to reduce the cost to districts to \$20,000-\$25,000 thanks to a possible additional funding source. Lastly, Dr. Newell encouraged the committee to watch the ABC 30 story of a BHS triage social worker linked to the agenda.

ERMHS MOU – Tammy Bradford presented the revised MOU and provided the committee with an update as the Governor has decided that ERMHS funding is to be provided to districts, not TCOE. Districts interested in having the SELPA provide services to students will need to sign an MOU. Ms. Bradford continued by stating that these discussions started over a year ago however only a few districts have reached out. The same level of service may not be possible in the event that many districts decide to take their funding. Districts who take their funding will be responsible to provide all ERMHS services. Lastly, Ms. Bradford informed superintendents that a decision will need to be made for the 24/25 school year by March 1st.

Superintendents expressed their concern regarding the timeline.

Tim Hire, County Superintendent of Schools, added that districts must notify the SELPA if they are planning on keeping their funding and providing their own services, as there is a year of adjustment and planning so that the following year the SELPA and governing team know what changes need to be made. The SELPA is supplanting the district ERMHS allocation by at least 2.4 million in Tulare County by billing Medi-Cal for services.

Dr. Joe Hernandez, Chairperson, announced that directors of special education and chief business officers will be invited to the next SGC meeting scheduled April 25, 2023. Discussion followed.

A motion was made by Kirk Shrum and seconded by Laura Gonzalez to amend the March 1st date to April 25th. The motion carried unanimously.

Jody Arriaga added that the State has changed how funding comes to the SELPA; speculation is that grant awards will be sent to districts. As a result, agency agreements will be necessary in order to structure funding.

Kirk Shrum motioned to amend his original motion and move the decision date to May 1, 2023 instead of April 25th, seconded by Laura Gonzalez. The motion carried unanimously.

In conclusion, Tammy Bradford added that a joint meeting with superintendents and directors has not taken place in the past and encouraged district staff to have honest conversations so that the meeting may be beneficial to all parties involved.

PARENT LIAISON REPORT: Malinda Furtado, Parent Liaison, presented the Annual Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Awards Ceremony invitation, scheduled for May 11, 2023, and advised superintendents to utilize the QR code to register for the in person event by April 1, 2023. Superintendents were encouraged to submit nominations so that parents and staff may be recognized by the CAC.

AcCEL ENROLLMENT DATA REPORTS: Sarah Hamilton, Administrator, Academic Collaboration for Exceptional Learners (AcCEL), reviewed the Census Day Comparison report and informed the committee that the SELPA has experienced a 9% increase in the number of students with disabilities enrolled over the last two years. However, the SELPA has experienced an increase of 20.14% in students identified with autism. Lastly, Mrs. Hamilton presented the AcCEL Referral report by district and added that as of today, 102 referrals have been received.

STATE SELPA REPORT: Tammy Bradford, Assistant Superintendent, provided a report on the SELPA Meetings held December 1-2, 2022 and February 2-3, 2023 and shared that ERMHS funding was the main topic of discussion. Dr. Jennifer Newell and Tammy Bradford presented information to the Governor's Advisory Council for Special Education regarding ERMHS on February 16, 2023 and will be conducting a second presentation per the council's request regarding managed care. Ms. Bradford continued by informing superintendents that California Department of Education (CDE) will begin to request verification that shows services have been provided to students over x number of years based on the services listed on their IEP. ADA has decreased across the state but special education numbers continue to increase. Discussion followed.

DOSE REPORT: Michelle West, Director of Special Education (DOSE), reported on the DOSE meetings held December 5, 2022 and February 6, 2023. The following items were presented:

- SELPA Expenditures/Revenues – Total revenue for the year was \$110,087,691 with expenses totaling \$110,181,576. The 602 Revenue-Expenditure Comparison for 21/22 versus 20/21 was also reviewed. ERMHS funds by ADA will be shifting back to districts.
- Psychological/Preschool Services Report – DRDP will not be required for students in T-K for the 2022-2023 school year. Directors were encouraged to remind staff to complete DRDP's prior to leaving for winter break. DRDP access training information was provided for new staff.
- State SEACO Report –Alternate Pathways were discussed. Districts are short on staff and as a result are struggling with how to serve kids best; students are being placed on waiting lists for the time being.
- Community Advisory – The CAC Meeting was held at CVRC where they provided training to staff and parents. CAC Calendars were distributed. CAC will be joining Miracle League. Safety issues, such as elopement, are a major concern for parents with students who have special needs.

- SELPA Update – Educationally Related Mental Health Service (ERMHS) funding will be provided to districts and bill backs will be necessary for the districts who choose to continue obtaining services from TCOE. The State is now beginning to track Individualized Education Programs (IEP) implementation. The transportation plan will be written as a SELPA and must be presented to the board by April 1st in order to recoup funding. The proposed 2023-24 spending plan includes an 8.13% cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) therefore budgets will reflect a 10% increase to include worst-case scenario. Directors were encouraged to have discussions with their superintendents regarding their budgets and plans.
- CAC Annual Joint Luncheon Nominees – The Joint Annual Community Advisory Committee Luncheon will be held in person on May 11, 2023. The CAC Honoree and Linda Hess nomination forms were reviewed.
- IFSP Access – Staff with district level access may obtain information regarding student IFSP's in Student Education Information System (SEIS) under TCOE Infant Program which may be located under shared searches.
- Leadership Support Services – LCAP, funding and grant information was provided to directors. Student information will be turned back to the districts for accountability purposes for students enrolled in TCOE Programs. LCAPs will require students with special needs on the panel by 25/26.
- State Compliance Report – Districts are now required to perform service tracker however is up to districts at the local level to decide whether or not to use the service tracker in SEIS. Kevin will be reaching out to districts to discuss SEIS transactions, make changes, and make sure districts are being monitored for what they are doing

The next DOSE Meeting will be held March 6, 2023.

2023/24 DISTRICT FUNDING DISCUSSION: Tammy Bradford, Assistant Superintendent, presented the 2023-2024 Estimated Program Specialist Funds enclosure and explained that services have been provided to districts who left their program specialist funding with TCOE however, this funding will now be sent to districts, as this is not a direct service. Districts will have the option to contract with TCOE for services. Funding set aside for interpreter reimbursements, will also be returned to districts, as it is not a direct service.

Jody Arriaga added that the 1.6 million for hearing impaired reimbursements will go back to the pot and will become part of a base amount of the ADA. Mrs. Arriaga added that she understands the frustration from superintendents regarding funding but wanted to reiterate that she completes the budget with the worst-case scenario.

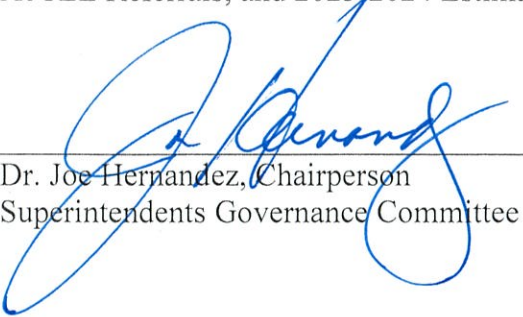
Tammy Bradford concluded that the budget is ever moving. TCOE will give worst-case scenario, hoping to come back with additional funding for districts. Moving forward, the April Meeting will be held with DOSE, SGC and CBO's. Onboarding will take place every August.

ALLOCATION MODEL DISCUSSION: Tammy Bradford, Assistant Superintendent, stated that allocation models, both off the top and bill back/fee for service, will be reviewed as well as being broken up by area for the AcCEL Program, as funding options. Discussion followed.

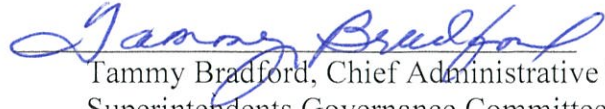
ANNOUNCEMENT: Dr. Joe Hernandez, Chairperson, announced that the Annual CAC Awards Ceremony will be held in person at the Tulare County Office of Education, Redwood Conference Center at 12:00 p.m. on Tuesday, May 11, 2023.

NEXT MEETING: Dr. Joe Hernandez announced that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 25, 2023, at 11:30 a.m. in the Tulare County Office of Education, Redwood Conference Center.

HANDOUTS: AGENDA ITEM HANDOUTS: Draft minutes of the November 15, 2022 Superintendent's Governance Committee Meeting; BHS ERMHS Demographic Report; BHS ERMHS Referral Report; ERMHS MOU; ERMHS Funds by ADA; Social Worker Contracted Services; Annual CAC Awards Ceremony invitation; Honoree Submission Form; Linda Hess Award – Parent Nomination Form; Annual Comparison Student Disability Summary Counts; TCOE AcCEL Program Enrollments by Disability; AcCEL Referrals; and 2023-2024 Estimated Program Specialist Funds.



Dr. Joe Hernandez, Chairperson
Superintendents Governance Committee



Tammy Bradford, Chief Administrative Officer
Superintendents Governance Committee