



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

MINUTES

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

MEMBERS PRESENT: Sally Fernandes Stephanie Caldera, Irma Peralta, Anthony Martin, Connie Acevedo, Michelle West

MEMBERS ABSENT: Amy McMahan, Timberly Romero, Tiffany Stark

OTHERS PRESENT: Jessica Ceja, Malinda Furtado, and Joy Voita—Parent Liaisons with Tulare County Office of Education, Amy Rogers—Parenting Network, Nicholas Lutton—EPU, Tammy McKean—Assistant Superintendent Special Services/SELPA Administrator, Jennifer Reimer—Administrator of the Mild to Moderate Program TCOE, Ray Buchanan—TCOE BHS, Amy Rodgers—Parenting Network, Karee Prather—TCSD psychologist, Josie Garcia, Josefina Manriquez—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 November 4, 2021. Sally Fernandes made a motion to accept the minutes and Stephanie Caldera seconded. The minutes stand.

REPORTS:

- A. **DOSE Report for December 2021**—The December report was provided by Michelle West—Director of Special Education for Woodlake School District
- Joe Martinez, Director, Psychological Services shared about a new EL assessment handbook that is being developed by TCOE and should be ready late spring
 - Sarah Hamilton, Administrator of AcCEL provided a report on the recent SEACO meeting held and discussed an advisory group that is brainstorming an alternate pathway to graduation for students on IEPs. This third pathway would lead to a diploma, but not have the same A-G Requirements that currently exist for typical students. Nothing has been decided yet and the group is still in the planning stages, with any decisions being several years away.
 - John Davis, Administrator, Leadership Support gave a State and Federal update on the Dyslexic Initiative as well as the rollout of Universal Preschool and Transitional Kindergarten.
- B. **CAC “Meeting Challenges” Calendar distribution**—Jessica Ceja, Parent/School Liaison
- Jessica presented the new 2022 calendar and asked for feedback from the group. She also asked for volunteers to help with distribution throughout the County and said anyone interested can pick up bundles at the end of the meeting.
 - Several members volunteered to help, and Jessica will be coordinating delivery areas with them.
 - Jessica also reminded members that she will begin planning for the 2023 calendar at the next CAC meeting in January and will be explaining the year-long design process. She will be asking for a subcommittee of interested volunteers at that time.
 - Anthony Martin expressed his gratitude for the calendar and told Jessica to make sure to tell the graphic designer what a great job she did. Everyone present was very pleased with the design and grateful for a job well done.

NEW BUSINESS:

- A. **STUDY TOPIC & GUEST PRESENTER:** “Transitions Into and Out of Junior High”—Jennifer Reimer, Administrator of the Mild to Moderate Program presented a slideshow with the following points:
- Students entering junior high and/or high school will face many new challenges regarding scheduling, classroom environment, academic load, number of teachers, size of campus, class choice, etc.
 - Districts help students transition successfully by holding parent information nights, sharing information about the student with his/her new IEP team, holding tours of the new campus, etc.
 - Parents have the right to ask school staff questions regarding transition and may request an IEP meeting to address concerns if necessary.
 - There is a lot that parents can do to help their student transition well, but one of the most important is to foster independence in your child and help teach daily living skills.
 - A Transition Plan is required to be added to an IEP prior to a student’s 16th birthday. This plan ties into the student’s goals for life after high school and covers topics such as transition goals, credits completed, and whether student is working towards a certificate or diploma.
 - High schools provide students many opportunities to gain career training and get work experience.
- B. **BRAINSTORM CAC STUDY TOPICS FOR 2022-23 YEAR:** Malinda Furtado, Parent Liaison and CAC Facilitator shared a list of possible Study Topics, or presentation ideas, for next year. She encouraged those present and on zoom to read through the list of ideas and mark those of interest or add their own.
- Tammy McKean suggested reaching out to DOSE to hear what topics would interest them
 - Several people were curious about the topic of “Romantic relationships for young adults with disabilities” and thought it should be included.
 - Joy Voita suggested a presentation on “Community resources” due to there being so many changes in businesses being open/closed with COVID. Perhaps, we could even highlight a specific organization that has worked well for a student in our area?
 - Sally Fernandes would like information about “College programs for students on an IEP”
 - Jessica Ceja requested more information on “How law enforcement works with school districts to respond to incidents involving special education students”. When/How do districts decide to call police? What is the role of a School Resource Officer?
 - Joy Voita liked the topic of “Self-determination and self-advocacy”.
 - Josie Garcia would like to address the topic of “What to do when I have a disagreement with my IEP Team?” Specifically, who should parents talk to and how can a relationship be built between parents and the school that promotes communication. She stated that she often hears from frustrated parents that don’t feel like they are heard and/or supported. Also, sometimes parents don’t know how to best communicate their concerns and questions, and this can lead to more of a breakdown in the process.
 - Tammy McKean mentioned that Josie’s idea might tie into a discussion of the ADR process—what it looks like and how liaisons can help. Such a presentation could be developed into a Parent Training that might be done at each of the districts in the County with district representatives invited as well. Anthony Martin suggested doing such a presentation by regions of the County and consolidating the smaller districts into one presentation.
 - Joy Voita suggested that Josie’s topic of disagreements between parents and the schools also connects to the topic of “Informed/Empowered parents (empowering parents in the IEP process)”. She shared that some parents struggle to feel that they can advocate on their own, without the help of a liaison. How can we help them feel more confident and prepared?
- C. **Form Subcommittee for Annual Luncheon:** Anthony Martin asked for volunteers for the May 12, 2022, luncheon at TCOE. Those that volunteered to begin meeting in January were Anthony Martin, Irma Peralta, Sally Fernandes, Connie Acevedo, and Stephanie Caldera.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

- A. **Next Meeting:** The next CAC meeting will be—**January 13, 2022, at 9:00am in Redwood A** and virtually at:

<https://zoom.us/j/95313888474?pwd=VUZaUy8vZ3VRZ1h4Z1U0amlmTDNYUT09>

Meeting ID: 953 1388 8474

Passcode: 590066

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Sally Fernandes and seconded by Connie Acevedo. Meeting Stands Adjourned.