



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

**MINUTES**

**The Tulare County Community Advisory Committee for Special Education  
met in-person on March 10, 2022 @ 10:00 am at Maple Learning Complex**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Sally Fernandes, Stephanie Caldera, Irma Peralta, Anthony Martin, Phillip Rios, Celeste Toledo, Nicole Delima

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Connie Acevedo, Tiffany Stark, Amy McMahon, Michelle West-Dyer

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Jessica Ceja, Malinda Furtado, and Joy Voita—Parent Liaisons with Tulare County Office of Education, Bea McNearney—TCSD psychologist, Sarah Hamilton—Administrator of AcCEL Program, Lilian Garcia—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 February 10, 2022. Stephanie Caldera made a motion to accept the minutes and Phillip Rios seconded. The minutes stand.

**REPORTS:**

- A. **DOSE REPORT FOR MARCH 2022:** Provided by Sarah Hamilton—Administrator of AcCEL Program, TCOE
- Jennifer Newell, Director, BHS provided information regarding BHS ERMHS demographics and referrals
  - Tiffany Stark, Administrator, IRC presented information about a new mental health support program called “Angst”
  - Sarah Hamilton, Administrator, AcCEL shared information about Special Education enrollment and number and percentage of AcCEL students from each district served in classrooms operated by TCOE.
  - Michelle West-Dyer, Director of Special Education for Woodlake Unified gave a report on the recent CAC meetings
  - John Davis, Administrator, Leadership Support Services provided State and Federal information to Directors
  - Tammy McKean, Assistant Superintendent, Special Services and SELPA Administrator shared information regarding the recent sate SELPA meeting

**NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. **STUDY TOPIC/PRESENTER:** “AcCEL Program Overview”—Sarah Hamilton—Administrator AcCEL Program, TCOE
- Approximately 1,000 students served district-wide—most in classrooms on district sites
  - Four centers serve students needing the most support: Porterville, Yetttem, Visalia, and Tulare
  - CBI Program serves students 18-22 years old learning life skills within their community
  - Students are referred to the AcCEL program from Districts and may come at any point from preschool to high school. Referrals are made when students are obviously frustrated in current setting, curriculum can no longer be modified, and student can no longer work on IEP goals
  - Inclusion into general education is determined on an individual basis and is usually for social/emotional learning
  - Communication with parents happens via phone calls, logbooks, or school communication apps since many students have difficulty communicating

- AcCEL teaching format is whole group for a short period, then lots of small group instruction using the Unique Learning Systems curriculum

**B. DISCUSSION:**

- Nicole Delima asked about what sorts of awareness activities happen on a campus when there are AcCEL students. Sarah responded that it looks different at every campus and depends on the site administrator.
- Bea McNearney shared that TCSD tries to integrate disability awareness into the everyday curriculum using Studies Weekly and talking about tolerance in the classroom.
- Anthony Martin suggested parents talk to site administrators about disability awareness and how to address it at schools. Most general education teachers may not be well-prepared to have those discussions with their students and they would welcome parent input.
- Stephanie Caldera shared that despite her son having a serious disability, he was well-accepted by his peers on campus. It was the parents of the students who had a difficult time. She suggested joining groups like the PTA where parents of students with disabilities can educate other parents.
- Bea McNearney shared that TCSD is in the beginning stages of developing a committee for parents of students in special education where they can integrate with the PTA and give feedback to the District

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

- A. World Down Syndrome Day on March 21<sup>st</sup>: Sally Fernandes shared books, a video, websites, and a poem that could all be shared with school sites to help raise awareness of Down syndrome.
- B. Stephanie Caldera shared information about the Annual Inclusion Collaborative Event on April 22<sup>nd</sup> from 8:30am – 12:30pm, which will focus on preschoolers. Those interested can register at:  
[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfzoucLQxnF2oyb1s\\_QO8lrb\\_G-BGPME3tgro0BcADi5wnxNg/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfzoucLQxnF2oyb1s_QO8lrb_G-BGPME3tgro0BcADi5wnxNg/viewform)
- C. Annual Luncheon subcommittee will meet immediately after today's meeting.
- D. **Next CAC Meeting: April 7, 2022 at 9:00am at the Dream Center at 1740 Walnut Ave., Visalia** and virtually at:  
<https://zoom.us/j/93373898079?pwd=QnBYajMySnpmbk1KVmtMam9CVVhYdz09>  
Meeting ID: 933 7389 8079 Passcode: 740712

*A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Sally Fernandes and seconded by Stephanie Caldera. Meeting Stands Adjourned at 11:12am.*