

Community Advisory Committee (CAC) for Special Education Minutes

Extra meeting on FCMAT report

Date: 11/05/17

Time: 2 - 3 pm

Location: PUSD District Office
15250 Avenue of Science San Diego, CA 92128

Board members present:

Karen Harkins Slocomb, Chair

Michelle Perry, Vice-Chair

Doyan Howard, Special Ed director

Etis Fathy

Frida Brunzell, secretary

Absent: Bernard Larsen, Anna Quint, Gina Zanolini, Sheila Keesling, Tiffany King

Public attendees: Kate Clay, Thomas Salazar, Kate Whelan, Melissa Lazaro, David Choi, Eric Olmos, Bertha Taylor.

I. Call to order at 2:05 pm by presiding chair Karen Harkins Slocomb.

II. Quorum: Quorum was not established as only four parents were present.

III. Reading and Approval of Minutes: Not applicable since this we did not have quorum.

IV. Public Input

Everyone introduced themselves with name.

V. FCMAT Report

1. Fiscal Considerations

- I. Frida asked about what the cost is of litigation and what the district is doing to monitor and improve attendance. David, who is on the district's budget committee, replied that the cost of litigation is not part of the special education budget. The district has a goal of 97% student attendance and it is usually around 96.7%, which is very good.
- II. There was a brief discussion about the cost of transportation. Melissa talked about a school bus driver who spoke at a school board meeting about how the district could

save money. Doyan and Kate W. replied that there are certain rules the district must comply with, like some students cannot stay for a long time on a bus, so it is very complicated to save on transportation. There are many factors which make saving on transportation costs difficult.

2. General Education Academic and Behavior Support (page 11)

- I. Frida mentioned that RTI² programs need evidence based interventions in order for RTI² to work. Currently, a lot of money is being wasted on inefficient programs for students with dyslexia. For example, “Read Naturally” that the district has used for many years, is a program to improve fluency not decoding and reading comprehension. Students with dyslexia typically struggle with decoding and therefore this program is not appropriate. We also want to know how students are going to be screened in the RTI and how they are going to follow-up. “Endorsing Universal Design for Learning Instructional strategies...” on page 15 is another way of saying that the district needs to train teachers in using assistive technology so that all students can access the curriculum and show their work.
Kate Clay and Karen said that their children in special education had improved their reading after having used the district’s program, but their children do not have dyslexia. Michelle shared that although some children may make progress, children with specific deficits in the area of phonological processing needs programming which addresses their specific deficits.
- II. Melissa Lazaro said that there needs to be uniformity all over the district to what programs are being used. Teachers also need to be qualified to teach the programs that are being offered. Read Well, the program that the district purchased a few years back to teach children with dyslexia, has been found to have a small positive impact on English learners reading, but negative impact on children with dyslexia. See What works clearinghouse <https://ies.ed.gov/ncee/wwc/> from the Department of Education. There are some signs of progress within the district with the new K-2 reading program.
- III. Thomas Salazar asked if the district has a database for information on what teachers are trained/certified/ instructors for different programs. There is no such formal database. Members agreed that this was a good idea. Doyan says that the district makes sure that all teachers are trained on the programs that are being used.

3. Identification Rates (page 19):

- I. Kate Whelan mentioned that she is concerned that if the district aims to limit identification to special education because of future budget restrictions, then less privileged students like English learners will be identified at a lower rate than today. Doyan said that the budget will not influence identification rates.
Michelle asked if the FCMAT report relied only on staff reports to determine if parents/advocates were requesting that students qualify under OHI instead of Emotional Disturbance.

Doyan shared that FCMAT used other information to make the determination and that this type of request occurred with frequency at IEP meetings.

Michelle expressed concern that the parents perceive the ED category as having a social stigma and stated that perhaps the CAC should consider providing a training for parents to educate them about emotional disturbance to foster acceptance.

- II. Frida is concerned about districts low rates of identifications of students with specific learning disability (26.7% compared to 39.2% statewide). Are students being qualified under OHI instead of under SLD?

Doyan does not believe that this is a concern and she thinks that more students are going to be identified with SLD in the future.

4. Least Restrictive Environment

We discussed the fact that the FCMAT report discusses the district's minimal progress in reaching this federal mandate. Doyan talked about that some districts have gone to the Learning center model, but it had not worked. She does not think that all special education students will be ever fully integrated in general education.

Kate Whelan mentioned that she was disappointed when her son was moved from a general education classroom to a Special day class, but that it has worked out well and that he is leaning much more this year. His general education teacher and aids were not trained in redirecting him appropriately.

Frida talked about her son who was moved to a special day class with students with a wide range of disabilities and how this was a big mistake. He would have done better in general education with good assistive technology and an appropriate reading program.

VI. Tuesday's closed FCMAT planning meeting.

Members expressed concerns that the chair, Karen, did not tell the rest of the CAC board that she had been invited to Tuesday's closed planning meeting on the FCMAT report. Several members expressed concern of the lack of transparency by the district. Frida expressed disappointment that the FCMAT report was never discussed even though she asked to put it on the agenda in September.

Karen said that it was on the agenda under Doyan's report. Frida doesn't think that is the same as having it on the agenda. Michelle Perry shared that representatives from the CAC and other organizations like the PTA should be invited to events such as the FCMAT planning meeting to provide a wider representation of community/parent input.

Bertha Taylor also expressed concern with how the district handled this issue.

VII. Adjournment:

Chair Karen Harkins Slocomb declared the meeting adjourned at 3:12 pm.

Respectfully submitted by,

Frida Brunzell, secretary