

SCUSD CAC
6/27/2021 Special Meeting

Meeting Notes

Meeting recording: <https://scusd.zoom.us/rec/share/JKcznh34N3EvJpf9OurmIXQYJS2LizSZ-nHZxfGEOli2hujF7woKKesd9955aGdl.-qCrhwF9GJrm23k5>

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- Dennis Mah: There is tension and stress among CAC members. Some comments have become personal and are distracting from the work of being a representative of the community and students. It seems like there has been a power struggle. The question is whether some groups in the community think the CAC is not doing its job and wants to take its place. We should not be in competition with other groups. The more people on the same side, the better. It also seems like there has been a lack of trust and respect.
- Benita Shaw: Unfortunately, other groups are not here to talk about any conflict. The District is also not here.
- Colleen Toler: As a member, it has been hard to sit and watch the conflict. It takes away from the reason I come to these meetings. Kenya today proposed a timer for comments, and that is a good idea. That could help. A visual timer would make it so it does not seem like Kenya (parliamentarian) is cutting people off. The CAC does not feel like a safe space anymore. This goes back to the election for this year when a lot of people showed up to vote and then have not been back since.
- Benita: The executive team is here to serve all students of this district. What else can the team do to make things more collaborative?
- Colleen: The two groups need to come together and move past this. Until we do that, it seems that all the meetings will have aggression and discomfort. We are all here for our kids, but there are some personal agendas that seem to be getting in the way. This goes back to the planning meeting for this year: we discussed what we wanted but then it seems that some members did not agree and wanted to change course, but won't come together and talk about it. This tension is also resulting in longer meetings, and that extra time does not benefit the kids.
- Benita: I have probably been on the CAC for the longest, around 10 years. The actions of other members who were executive members and are not now have been different in their different capacities. For example, this meeting had to be delayed due to a Brown Act violation allegation. The District's email seemed incorrect regarding where the agendas can be posted. When other members have been chair, we have had meetings posted to Facebook but not the District website. There seem to be conversations between other members and the District that are conflicts now. As a long-standing member, some actions occurring now are not right or correct.
- Rose McAuliffe: Is there a way to have the chair or parliamentarian call a point of order if someone is being disrespectful? A warning, etc. – a progressive order. I do not know what the bylaws say, but we should look to this either way.
- Dennis: A point of order can be called for being off topic or a violation of the agenda or a violation of the Bylaws. We can note that in the records. First a verbal warning. We can follow up with a letter addressing that conduct for subsequent issues, and share that with the SELPA director.
- Dennis: Beginning October 1st, we need to go back to in-person meetings. Until then, we can look into muting people. We should note that this could occur in the norms at the beginning.

- Taylor Kayatta: I noticed some tension from certain members and the District after we started inviting SCTA to our meetings. Perhaps we could have had further discussion about this (not just one executive meeting) before doing so.
- Kenya: We invited SCTA after discussing this in our executive meeting. It was a public decision. We also wanted other groups to attend. The intent was to solicit feedback from other groups, not to give any group a platform. We were trying to create common ground.
- Dennis: One way to invite trust is to formally invite a variety of groups and give them all set time to talk. We need to also ensure we keep our relationship with the District and Superintendent intact while doing so. We would create a clear protocol for this.
- Colleen: It is good to get our name out there. As a teacher in another district, I knew about CACs but did not know what they did. I'm sure a lot of stakeholders in SCUSD do not know our purpose. Familiarizing stakeholders to our work will invite them to reach out to us in the future – build relationships.
- Benita: When another person was chair, SCTA was invited to an executive meeting at a coffee shop. This is not the first time that SCTA and CAC have met.
- Dennis: Examples of other stakeholders to invite: Black Parallel School Board, SEIU, Coalition for Students with Disabilities, United Professional Educators. All would be given a spot at our meetings if they wanted it. This would make us a forum to hear from organized groups and parents. We could be the Reader's Digest: we know a lot because groups and parents share with us, and we bring all that information together in one place.
- Taylor: We also need to address comments some members made to the Board this year saying that the CAC had an opinion on supporting the Superintendent, etc. I think we should be a neutral group that does not have a formal opinion on matters like this as a body. Individuals may have opinions, but as a group we are a neutral sounding board.
- Dennis: I looked at the letter referred to at the board meeting and it did not include a statement of support.
- Kenya: Former members and officers have met with SCTA. When I was chair, Renee and I met with SCTA. We wanted to solicit feedback from teachers. Also, something that the Coalition for Students with Disabilities seems to keep bringing up is Appendix D. This has been taken out of the MOU and does not exist anymore. To consistently bring that up is tedious and I do not know why that is continuing to happen. We should have a collaborative relationship with all groups (District, unions, etc.) to make us student focused, kid focused, etc. We should not be working to make adults happy. As far as points of order, I feel that I have not been taken seriously this year. I am disregarded. Even having a timer would help, but I do not see folks taking our schedule into account.
- Lisa Arnold-Fernandez: There are a lot of raw feelings. It would be nice to get us back to being a safe space. Something that may help is having our agenda presented to people can visually see what we are discussing. We should also leave room in the agenda for open items that people want to discuss that are not just public comments, and make it clear that people can speak at other times than public comment. We could also make our year-long planning schedule more transparent. I agree with the comment timer as well. Lots of people, me included, do not want to attend meetings that are big conflicts. It would be nice to walk away either learning something, feeling that you belong, or accomplishing something. Let people walk away feeling like they are heard. Maybe a mission statement at the forefront.
- Benita: Some solutions (recap): a timer for comment time (for example, phone timer on display would work); visual agenda (screen share or projection in person). What happens if members demand more time? I think we should not extend meetings just for additional thoughts.

- Rose: When we see that the conversation is deviating from the topic at hand, we can try to redirect the focus back to the agenda through the parliamentarian or chair.
- Benita: I agree with Rose.
- Taylor: If we make this a safe space, we should be able to address the issues that have occurred. We cannot unilaterally go back and fix what went wrong this year. Maybe facilitating more open conversation would help. Our presentations took a lot of time this year, and were often the first agenda item. Maybe we could make presentations second or make them shorter.
- Benita: We may want to go back to having two meetings a month to allow more time for conversation while still having our presentations.
- Kenya: It is hard to collaborate on how to fix what went wrong this year if the people there has been conflict with are not here. If those people wanted to improve the CAC, they would have been here today.
- Dennis: We cannot control what other people do, but we can control what we do. Like what Colleen and Taylor said, making a safe space will make it clear when certain people disrupt that. We can move forward by taking the high ground.
- Taylor: Do we need to improve things with the District? This meeting getting cancelled due to non-notice last week was problematic.
- Benita: We should only need to improve things with the District if we did something wrong. Did we do something wrong?
- Dennis: Maybe the people who have the answer to that question is the District's lawyer, SELPA director, and Superintendent. When they asked for an agenda item that became a conflict (was added unilaterally by SELPA director) it seemed that they wanted to have a conversation.
- Rose: Through the budget ad-hoc committee, we spent a lot of time meeting with the District. That has been a very collaborative relationship.
- Benita: How do we address, in points of order, continuing to talk and not listening to the point of order.
- Rose: We can have a vote. There can be a motion and second.
- Dennis: With the timer, it is more clear to the entire group when time is up. It will be on display to the speaker also.
- Lisa: Is muting the answer? It seems to go against a safe space. That would feel like a last resort.
- Taylor: I agree with motions rather than going straight to mute. I also think we should extend time on individual agenda items rather than just extending the whole meeting – that will make it clear what time is available.
- Kenya: Some of our members and parents are not able to participate because a lot of the same people dominate the conversation. We need to look out for folks that are less vocal. We need to make an inclusive environment that includes voices that do not usually come to our meetings.
- Dennis: I agree with extending discussion on specific items, with those in attendance agreeing. It is not for the person but for the topic. We need to lay this out at the beginning.
- Taylor: We should differentiate between open conversation topics and agenda items that are not meant to be open conversations and so each person should only get one comment. For non-conversation items, we should get a list of who wants to speak before opening it up to comment and prioritize people who speak less. For conversation items, we should build in a large amount of time so we do not rush those conversations.
- Benita: I will add this to the norms information we discussed today.
- Rose: We should not be shaming others (including executive members) in public meetings. We should contact people individually and try to talk it out. Especially if we are leaders, we should not publicly make comments about others.

- Kenya: Regarding some recent conduct, Benita and I tried to address something privately but it backfired.
- Benita: Since the person Kenya's comment relates to is not present, we may not want to discuss that here.
- Dennis: I agree, let's not talk about someone who is not here.
- Kenya: One off-topic issue. We need to plan for another executive meeting between the planning meeting and next school year. Usually the executive meeting is right before school starts. A check in.
- Benita: I will send an email out around the first of August looking for a date for an executive meeting.
- Benita: I understand the Superintendent attended the last meeting. He has reached out to me to meet with him. I invited Kenya to attend with me, as a former Chair. Lisa Murawski has reached out as well.
- Dennis: I recommend Taylor attend. His legal background may help.
- Taylor: I agree to attend. I would like to invite Kristen in my place first, as Vice Chair.
- Benita: Kristen is not available based on previous availability she mentioned.
- Dennis: I suggest we go the extra mile and ask her again just to make sure. She has indicated that she feels excluded from the CAC.
- Taylor: For next year, I think we need to get more clarity about what we can do publicly vs. privately within the context of the Brown Act. I think the District's Brown Act presentation scared some of us too much and made it so we could not function as officers to set agenda, etc. We should be clear on what communications the officers are able to have outside of public meetings, to avoid some of our meetings being extended conversations that could have occurred separately. That could prevent some of the conflict we had this year.
- Dennis/Benita: Since Kristen is not here today to be committed to a meeting with the District, we should agree on who would attend now. That would be Benita, Kenya, and Taylor.
- Taylor: I agree with that. I can attend.
- Colleen: I am not getting emails or phone calls about these meeting anymore. I only learn about them from Facebook.
- Lisa: I have not been getting the calls or emails at all this year.
- Taylor/Benita: The robocalls and emails are sent by the District. We should follow up on that. That can be part of our planning meeting.