

SCUSD Community Advisory Committee
General Meeting – 1/18/2022

Meeting Notes

Meeting Recording:

- https://scusd.zoom.us/rec/share/L4H6dlxDS47eP2cLdZ7LNv7fsZuUNYP74yjXtTkzDCn2-QqOertJamtR85sM_R75.rTdsmKpJPWWAxpso
- Passcode: H5am\$e3H

2. Public Comment

- Renee Webster-Hawkins: CDE has released a list of those school district in the state that, because of past poor performance, have to include certain goals in their 2022-23 LCAP. That includes SCUSD, among 20 or 30 districts of around 1000. One issue to address is students with disabilities. Important point for LCAP PAC, and maybe this CAC will be asked to weigh in.

3. Inclusion

- All panelists introduced themselves. Dennis Mah, former principal and founder of Bowling Green. Ms. Monteiro, SES. Ellie Boyce, former teacher at Bowling Green. Teri Ha, current teacher.
- Monteiro: Maneuvering resources in a high school day, you have to be creative. Work with administrators to give students a school day that allows them to participate in special education resources. Always trying to find ways to give students access to the tools they need.
- Boyce: When we first started full inclusion, we were a very unique school. Had a clinic area that had the people we needed to support the children: occupational therapy, speech therapy, physical therapy. When we integrated into general education, we provided the teacher with all sorts of backup. It just worked so easily, but we had an ideal situation. One of the best things that happened: program for third graders. Every third grade class received an hour from my team and myself for sensitivity. Ability to understand someone with a disability. Kids became very knowledgeable. Talked about the disability, played games. Chose third grade because old enough to take it seriously, but three years more of them on campus to be an ambassador for children with disabilities. They became great protectors and really stood by the kids. They came to no longer fear what they didn't understand.
- Ha: Fortunate to be trained by great teachers and administrators, when I was at Bowling Green with Ellie. I learned to include all my students. I saw hope in all my students. I created an environment (using the brain compatible component) to level the playing field. Do activities that interest them. Build them up. Fill the gap, but meet their needs for standards. Make them feel included. Build relationships. Three things: relationship, relationship, relationship. Gives hope. Make sure everyone feels included and feels like they belong. Great training to teachers with brain compatible, made this possible. Value to contribute to the tools I have to give to the kids.
- Question about brain compatible.
- Ha: Nine components in a classroom. Give feedback to the kids, experience, build knowledge before going into the classroom, solve problems, make sure kids don't feel threatened, ... those are some components.
- Dennis: Other components: meaningful content, context, opportunity to reflect. Each child has a brain that can learn and it's not a cookie cutter approach like we typically see in schools. Don't put round pegs into square holes. That creates many issues including behavior problems. Help

the kid excel. Important part is they belong and feel they are doing something important in terms of learning.

- Renee: I've experienced a range in this district. Inclusion seems to be: as long as IEP does not cause behavior problem in general ed, they could stay, but intervention would be down the hall in the RSP room. That did not feel like inclusion. For my son specifically, more and more of his intervention as the curriculum became challenging – he was sent down the hall more often and not included in the general education curriculum. At SES, Ms. Montiero is the best of the best. Teacher of the year a few years ago. She trained and supported the teachers (6 teachers for each student for high school) to differentiate their instruction. She does that for her students on her caseload plus looking out for systemic issues. Commitment to success in the general education curriculum. Kudos, Ms. Monteiro.
- Sarah: We've also had a confusing experience. We moved to SCUSD when my son already had an IEP with a pull-out RSP. Even enrolling in SCUSD was confusing and segregated: if you didn't need a SDC but had an IEP, the enrollment center did not know what to do with you. At the school site level, we had pull out not push in. Gen ed teacher was supposed to be knowledgeable about my son's issues, but she really wasn't and didn't know how to effectively implement his IEP. Now at Cal Middle, he's had co-teacher classrooms which has been great especially during remote learning. Financial support for these specific dual teachers may be on the chopping block now, so not sure what it would look like if that were cut.
- Deirdre: Our experience with inclusion. One of the biggest things is that there is a difference between teachers on level of understanding of the disability. You want to assume people will do the best they can, but there is an educational difference among teachers on disabilities. Behavior issues: it is often clear it comes from the disability, but teachers don't always know. Also, we need to make sure to know that a disability is not a bad thing. Just a part of the kid. Forms we have to fill out talk about medical problems and include disability there. They call the disability a problem. That leads to discrimination. Loaded language that goes home to other parents. Language matters. Choose words that do not further put our children on the outside. Are we talking about "them" and "they" or kids that are part of our community. Focus on the kids' strengths.
- Taylor: Recommend using part of the IEP to get collaboration between general education teacher, pull out teacher, and parents. All get on the same page and work through issues in real time.
- Colleen: Communication between providers is difficult. Parent becomes the case manager and coordinator. We need the adults helping the child to talk and to ensure services are provided. Kids, especially those on the spectrum, need consistency. My child has had 14 different paras in just a few years. Especially notable with outside providers. Ongoing support needed. For gen ed, some teachers don't want to make modifications. They need the aide there. Very hit or miss.
- Kenya: We're all kind of speaking from a place of privilege. I have access to great teachers and a good principal. I know how to communicate. But I'd be remiss if I didn't bring up the fact that many parents want their kids included, especially if they are a parent of color or speak another language. Others struggle just as hard if not harder. My experience: as a parent at SCUSD, it's depended on the teacher. My daughter's senior year (this year) has been the best, but it took this long to get here. Sad it took this long to get the dream team.
- Benita: My son is 20 now and in his entire time at SCUSD I've felt that he was not included. I've pushed for him to be included, but I still don't know what that's like. He's nonverbal. It's hard to talk about. What I would say: get to know the individual, always assume competency. Because my son was not included, he was not education in a lot of ways. I did not think it was right or fair

that my son did not get what he needed. Example: if you went to a foreign language location, and you couldn't understand, even something back like using the bathroom is so difficult if no one is grasping what you're trying to say. You would have a behavior, a reaction to that. People talk around and at my son, and he's not respected. Make sure to include everyone. Everyone has the capacity to learn, they just learn differently. The IEP is meant to allow learning in different ways.

- Dennis: Benita summarized it really well. To be included is to be accepted. Now, what can be done district wide. There are gaps: uneven experiences across the district. What can be done at the policy and practical level? I see Board Member Murawski here. I see community leadership here. I ask you: what can we do?
- Lisa: In terms of policy, I've tried to learn a lot about special education over my years on the board. I still don't consider myself an expert. I lean on staff like Geo to guide us. We want to see more inclusion and better outcomes. Trust the staff to advise the Board on the policies we should put in place to get those better outcomes. Deirdre raised issue of language: that's one thing we can put into reviews. I've worked in State Legislature and we've looked to remove outdated language. We can do the same here, remove ableist or discriminatory language.
- Nikki Milevsky: SCTA has been advocating for this for years. That got quashed by the District. We still believe that inclusion is the goal and avenue. Fully supported ability to include students in our classrooms, with supports (MTSS a strong avenue). There used to be no talk about cutting funding for inclusion for the few schools that are full inclusion. We need to expand those services, have coteaching. Need more staff to offer coteaching and other similar supports. Training is also a major component of this.
- John: Funding for special education has never been an issue for the last several years. Especially now with COVID dollars the District is sitting on plus Governor's new budget. There are more than enough resources to support inclusionary practices and other supports. A number of triggers in State budget will require spending down reserve fund. Really a once in a lifetime opportunity to put improvements in place immediately. Turn the page on this "we don't have the money to do it" discussion.
- David: Echo Nikki and John. What we've seen: inclusion like at McClatchy starts and then resources are pulled. Now is the opportunity to do the opposite: engage with the District to use resources to improve services.
- Sarah: Annual performance report on inclusion metrics: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/ds/documents/jndrptlea1920s.docx>. Looking at the actual data in how we're serving our student with disabilities, we're barely meeting one target and not meeting the other two. So, what are we doing on a district wide basis to at least on a minimal level allow for inclusion?
- Renee: Heartened to hear that John is concerned as I am about District conversations starting with not enough funding. That's a red herring. We know the Federal government never promised to fully fund special education. We end up in the quicksand of encroachment: discriminatory framework. We need to put the students first. Trustee Murawski, glad to hear the Board is looking at dusting off old policies. But those policies are largely based on School Board Association: minimum requirements rather than aspirational, visionary policies. Dust off the policies, but have the Board as a policy matter look at aspirational values. How are they being implemented across the board? We need to break the dialogue of what is the union saying and what is the District saying. Stop saying the other side won't talk to you. Aspirational goals in this area are not a contract negotiation. It's a place for collaboration. Students shouldn't be pawns. I want to hear about how site teachers, admin, etc. are aligned and how we can re-engineer

resources to elevate outcomes for supports for disabilities. I just had a school site meeting at Matsuyama. We have some money beyond what allocated in LCFF. Question: can we improve outcomes for students with disabilities? Can professional development be funded? Give experience to the general ed teacher with the best expertise, not necessary other supports that often rotate. Assume best intentions and collaborate in a creative and proactive way.

- Kenya: Can we ask about communication among feeder school sites to prepare of the needs for incoming students?
- Geo: This sounds like little “t” transition: going from elementary to middle, etc.
- Monteiro: I can respond to Kenya’s question. Not a lot of high school teachers input tonight. What I’ve seen is when kids come over from elementary level, they missed out on some tools. We don’t have the same tools. We start to see behaviors escalate at that time. Not in the same small group sessions. Less academic support. Then, going to college prep classes without a coteacher, kids are hit again. Keeping kids in SDC settings because they can’t work at the college prep level. We don’t have the tools to modify the setting. Teachers are willing to support kids, but held to that: you can accommodate but not modify.
- Boyce: All of the things you’re facing now, I realize I’ve been retired a while. Keep talking. You have great ideas.
- Ha: Echo what Nikki said. Quality professional development for teachers. Give the teachers the skills to help our special education needs and fill in gaps.
- Dennis: Close/summary: There is a gap and it is wide. One thing all parents have said: they want their children to be accepted, to belong, and be treated as a person. That’s not happening district-wide. That can be alleviated by training with additional skills, for example. We need to keep looking at this and not let go. We talk about our concerns at these meetings and then we let it go and point fingers. Unique time now: plenty of money to do something. We need to prioritize how to spend that money. Not just do what we did in the past. LCAP and SELPA plan can come together. Renee said this well: if there’s policy that needs to be done, it should be about how kids learn. Compatible education. Emotion is the gatekeeper to learning, and not just for children with disabilities. E.g. English learner kids. Member Murawski: have the Board discuss this policy. I honestly believe the contract now around teacher evaluation can be used by both the teachers and District to improve the District. Improve teacher abilities to teach. Skills, attitude, ability – evaluation criteria. The tools are available. If teachers have a negative attitude toward students with disabilities, those criteria can call that out.

4. MTSS Subcommittee Update

- Renee: Provided draft charter at December meeting. Believe tonight we would address questions on the draft and perhaps vote.
- Geo: At December meeting, no real questions about the draft. General agreement with the draft. Wanted to bring it back to the group again, and if no issues then it would move forward.
- Renee: Brief summary of the charter draft. Bylaws for CAC allow ad hoc subcommittees on discrete topics. Subcommittees are a flexible way to focus on certain priority areas. MTSS subcommittee would follow development and implementation of MTSS in the District. Including, but not limited to, watching LCAP, coordinating with staff, bringing back information to CAC. Act as a watchdog to make sure it’s staying on track and improving environment and outcomes for students with disabilities. Not required, but we would meet in open meetings posted by Geo to CAC webpage.
- Kenya: Question about whether translation will be available. Including ASL. Geo? Is there a point of contact? And translating any documentation to Spanish?

- Geo: We will make translation available. We can add ASL to that list if needed. ASL generally tougher to secure, but can do so with enough notice.
- (The group reviewed the draft charter via screen share. Note that this charter has been posted to the CAC webpage under the December meeting agenda item since shortly after the December general meeting.)
- Voice vote to approve subcommittee charter. All agreed.
- Taylor thanked Renee and Sarah for their work on the charter and said it looks great.
- Renee: Quarterly standing agenda item.

5. LCAP Update

- Steven walked through a slide deck. This deck will be available on the CAC webpage alongside these notes.
- Brief update, and time for questions. Not comprehensive in 15 minutes.
- Steven is available for constant dialogue. Does not need to just be questions in a meeting like this. Get in contact if you have any questions.
- Dennis: What educational theory of learning is the LCAP based on? What drives it?
- Steven: This last year, oriented it largely toward MTSS. Our curriculum instruction department is still developing some of the instructional vision that will come along with that. If you look across our goals (2 and 3 in particular) they speak for a strong foundation in Tier 1. Coming back to CAC, we really came back to: wherever you are in the district, there should be a baseline expectation. There should be appropriate services at Tier 2 and 3 to provide individual needs. Goal 6: something we need to build.
- Dennis: Any data on number and percentage of students who feel they belong and feel accepted?
- Steven: We have some part of that from our climate survey. It is not necessarily about inclusion like discussed tonight, though maybe to a degree.
- Dennis: Would be good to have a baseline foundation for how children learn. Change the course of how the LCAP looks: shift and re-think how we do education. President of state board of education called for a re-think, especially with the money we now have.
- Kenya: Is there a chance for teachers to be a part of the LCAP? LCAP is intended for parents for example, but also important to have teachers in attendance – observe and provide input on how this would be implemented on the ground floor. Obtain buy in. I'm afraid that some of the teacher population does not know about the LCAP, how money is utilized.
- Steven: The meetings are open. Teachers have attended in the past. Public comments.
- John: District is supposed to meet with teachers (union) about LCAP, but they have not done this in the past several years. This is the first time we've met Steven. Hopefully we can have direct input in the future. We've had it in the past, but not in the past several years.
- Steven: Door is always open, John.
- Kenya: We need input of the whole community. That is not just parents but also teachers. LCAP should be reflective of community as a whole, including families of color and monolingual learners. This is a diverse school district. Some of our advisory committees are not reflective of the community as a whole.
- Steven: LCAP PAC is not the only group that comments or informs the LCAP. We work with, for example, DLAC, Student Advisory Council. Survey of course. More voices in the LCAP the better it will be. We try to grow each year, but our District is huge with tons of represented groups and experiences. We hopefully will continue to grow.

- Kenya: We don't see as many innovative things happening because our LCAP does not reflect our diversity. Just having listening sessions with groups does not reflect everyone in the community.
- Steven: PAC is not the only informer of the LCAP. Important one, but not the only one.

6. SELPA Report

- Geo presented a slide deck which will be posted to the CAC webpage alongside these notes.
- Question about attendance at conferences. If you are interested in one we have discussed and have not been invited yet, please reach out to Geo. Geovanni-Linares@scusd.edu.

7. Union Reports

- SEIU not present.
- SCTA: District is in a crisis as a result of staffing shortage. It was bad before, but is getting much worse now with the current surge. We asked the Superintendent to meet with us. At first, he declined to meet jointly with us and SEIU. Finally, David, John, and I met with Superintendent without our other teachers there with us. Superintendent brought his whole team, including Geo. Discussion was productive, but it's clear a lot more needs to be done to address the crisis. We asked about why there is still a proposal for pay cuts, especially given the current State budget. Superintendent said he would still look into it. We're worried we will lose more teachers. I looked up how many special ed teachers lost last year: 17 by Springtime (resignation or retirement). We can't afford to lose those teachers. We need to recruit. Use great benefits and a good salary to hold on to our staff, especially in hard to fill positions. Sac City should have the fewest vacancies, not the highest. Our benefits have helped recruit staff from Elk Grove. Also talked about substitutes: immediately raise the pay. Exacerbated by purging 213 (1/3 of the list from last year). Superintendent had not even read our proposal on this. When we met with Superintendent, he said no plan to move vaccination mandate – but that is now changed. No update from Superintendent on Independent Study. One good update: filtration. Facility director reported that the District had a schedule that is being met to change filters. Portable HEPA filters. Basic cleaning is going on at all work sites.