

Summary Report of Comments from Community Advisory Committee Members on the Revised LAUSD Local Plan for Special Education, 2016/17

LAUSD's Community Advisory Committee appreciates this opportunity to comment on the proposed revisions for the Special Education Local Plan. The sections reviewed by the CAC that will be revised and submitted to the State of California include:

- Governance and Administration of the Plan
- Regionalized Services;
- Community Advisory Committee (CAC)
- Public Participation
- Early Childhood Special Education Program
- Literacy
- Behavior Support
- Psychological Services Educationally Related Intensive Counseling Services (ER-ICS)
- Incarcerated 18-22 Year Olds
- Charter Schools

The first eight sections were presented to the CAC on April 13, 2016, with 30 days allowed for CAC members to provide comment. The CAC received another opportunity to review the plan on May 17, 2017, with another 30-day period for review and comment. This is a summarized report of member comments.

Section V: Governance and Administration of the Plan

Provide clarification/ clearly define "Governing Body" and "Individual."

Section VI: Regionalized Services

Some communities in our region lack resources, especially when compared to other communities. It is helpful to hear that referrals are provided so that families can access needed services, regardless of disparities.

The staff of all agencies and organizations serving LAUSD students must receive adequate training, including bus drivers.

Foster Youth services were previously included; when and why was this removed? Can the description of specific services and inter-agency collaborations for Foster Youth be reinstated?

Section VII: Community Advisory Committee

A recommendation was made for more and continuous updates to CAC members. More can be done to ensure CAC input into the annual priorities of the Local Plan and the provision of special education services within LAUSD.

One member requested that a more detailed description of the CAC membership selection procedure, and description of the composition of the CAC, be included.

The CAC Bylaws, which are in the process of being revised, allow for up to 32 members and the appointment of two alternates. The description in the local plan appears to cap membership at 31 members with no mention of alternates. Although the Bylaws have not yet been finalized, is it possible to correct this information to align with the updated Bylaws?

It should be required that LAUSD's CAC include one member representing an Institute of Higher Education. Currently, there is one such member on the CAC, but this should be required as an ongoing category.

A copy of the CAC Chair's signature and evidence of the date the Assurances were signed in May 2016 was provided, upon request, to members.

Section VIII: Public Participation

Continue publishing the CAC newsletter and use this as a vehicle for outreach to inform the community about topics related to the SELPA Local Plan review, and the continuous and annual updates.

Section IX: Early Childhood Special Education Program

Emphasize how parent participation is addressed when these services are provided.

Continue to partner with Institutes of Higher Education regarding program development and training of staff.

Section X: Charter Schools

Could more detail be provided in the Local Plan, for both independent and affiliated charters?

Section XI: Literacy

Emphasize how parent participation is addressed when these services are provided.

Continue to partner with Institutes of Higher Education regarding program development and training of staff.

It was noted that general education teachers require training about learning disability issues. Those at-risk students who have not been assessed for Special Education services may struggle due to learning disabilities that have not been identified.

Another CAC member noted that intervention is not a gradable subject and conflicts with other academic opportunities. Reconsider the provision of intervention when this conflicts with a student's ability to access other instruction; consider making intervention a gradable subject.

Another CAC member stated that "Literacy intervention programs driven by data" are important, not just for students in Special Education taught by RSP teachers, but also while students are being assessed for Special Education. Schools have lots of leeway in selecting the intervention model to be used. Some schools offer intervention only after school; not all students can access this. Intervention should be a consistent, high-quality, evidence-based program offered during regular school hours, with tutoring available after regular school hours.

One member noted that "students with exceptional needs" include students with disabilities, students who are gifted/identified in GATE, and students who fall into both of these categories. Please ensure that general education and resource teachers receive adequate training on differentiating instruction to meet all students' needs.

Providing more in-service professional development training on proper interventions, including Tiers I-III, is recommended.

Finally, with the passage of AB1369, how will the provision of Literacy services -- and LAUSD policies, procedures and practices related to dyslexia -- be adapted in accordance with the new laws and the directives from the California Department of Education? How will staff be trained?

Section XII: Incarcerated 18-22 Years Old (Revised 2016/17)

Emphasize how parent/guardian participation is addressed when these services are provided.

Will information be added to/included in this section to reflect changes made in light of recent "Garcia" case?

More data about incarcerated youth is requested.

Section XIII: Behavior Support

Emphasize how parent participation is addressed when these services are provided.

Continue to partner with Institutes of Higher Education regarding program development and training of staff.

One CAC member observed that "Behavior Support" conflicts with Positive Behavior Intensive Support and Restorative Justice. Positive behavior is being advocated in operations already and it is successful. Special education behavior support is not as successful, in this member's opinion. So this recommendation would be to better align the

Behavior Support being provided through Special Education with the data available from the Discipline Foundation/Positive Behavior Intensive Support policies.

Increase behavioral training for general education teachers. Functional Behavior Assessments are to be completed by the Resource Specialist Teacher (RSP). Could more time be provided to allow the RSP to complete these assessments by funding substitutes; or could District staff complete them?

Also, upon examining Section A., “Behavioral Intervention Prohibited by Law,” another CAC member asks what are the consequences or the procedures followed when a child is denied access to bathroom facilities or when a child is left without adequate supervision?

Section XIV: Psychological Services Educationally Related Intensive Counseling Services (ERICS)

Emphasize how parent participation is addressed when these services are provided.

It was noted that including timelines in this section would provide greater transparency to parents and other stakeholders studying this policy. This section alludes to the fact that resources and services are provided in a “timely manner” — but timeliness is subjective. The recommendation is to include specific timelines in order to expedite mandated services in a way that is clearly defined for families and stakeholders.

Another CAC member noted that the expectation should be that once the IEP is finalized, services should start within the week.

Additional Comments (general comments, those related to CAC Operations, or Local Plan Sections that are not currently presented to the CAC as part of the current revision)

Why are policies and procedures not included in the Local Plan and/or Appendices?

Regarding the revisions proposed to the sections on Charter schools (Section X) and Incarcerated Youth (Section XII): CAC members were not involved in the review, development and revision of these sections. Were meetings held regarding the revisions of these sections during the 2016/17 school year? These sections were not discussed when the Local Plan was first being revised during spring of 2016.

Partnerships with institutions of higher education (IHE) should help train student teachers, and ensure that evidence-based practices from faculty at local IHEs inform professional development trainings for other LAUSD staff.

Why aren’t specific services that are provided to Foster Youth who receive special education services included in the plan? Foster Youth services were previously included: why and when was this removed? Can it be reinstated?

To facilitate participation by teacher representatives on the CAC, the District should send a release for teachers in advance to their respective school sites. The release should indicate how the substitute teacher covering the classroom will be paid for. A teacher member has been written up for attending a regularly scheduled CAC meeting; this was only dropped after UTLA intervened.

Advocate for legislative changes to mandate that a parent or guardian must participate in each child's IEP meetings by law.

The Parent, Community Services branch needs resources to support further parent engagement efforts for parity.

Following a presentation from UCLA on the POPE and SMART programs for students with autism, one member wondered if LAUSD's SELPA supports these programs?

- Continue partnerships and cooperation with institutes of higher education to provide training of personnel and development of innovative programs.

A member asked for more information about communication within and between SELPA's — for example: 1) when a preschool student with an IEP transitions to elementary school; or 2) when a particular Charter is overseen by one SELPA, but then moves to another SELPA, how do we ensure that effective communication takes place? How do we ensure the continuity of services provided to the effected students? How do SELPA's communicate, and by what mechanism?

It appears that structures for special education and general education administration remain very separate, despite a mandate for Least Restrictive Environment and new recommendations for increased overlapping in structures by the Commission on Teacher Credentialing.

CAC members want more data provided during CAC monthly trainings. The Special Education budget could also be reviewed as an ongoing CAC Agenda item.

Members want to know specifically:

- How many of the Non Public Schools that serve LAUSD students are out-of-State?
- How many Foster Youth receive special education services?
- How many incarcerated youth receive special education services?
- Can we see year-to-year comparisons of the number of students receiving mental health/psychological services?
- What amount is budgeted for providing transportation to students receiving special education services?
- A Parent Outreach Plan has been submitted to the State after a complaint was filed, but this hasn't been implemented. Please provide an update.

And finally, members would like to see ongoing recommendations elicited from the CAC and community stakeholders in an ongoing dialogue, rather than just as an annual occurrence. They would also like to see more data made available to the CAC regarding the quality of services provided to students. The concern is that:

- services be provided to students in a timely manner;
- students have access to all required curriculum, instructional materials, services and resources;
- there is a shortage of qualified teachers; and
- the move toward greater integration is a positive development, so long as the appropriate placement of students remains the priority.

This report is respectfully submitted by Kathy Kantner, CAC Chairperson, on June 30, 2017.