

SUPERINTENDENT'S SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY COUNCIL

Annex Board Room

October 20, 2016 9:30 AM

Voting Members Present:

Karla Darnall, Brooke Davis, Garry Eagles, Michael Quinlan, Jan Schmidt, Catherine Scott, Glen Senestraro, Barbara Short and Fred Van Vleck

Voting Members Absent:

Steve Godla, Richard Graey, Chris Hartley, Craig Kimball

Non-Voting Members Present:

Mindy Fattig, Tess Ives

Guests Present:

Laurie Alexander, Jeff Brock, Damon Collier, Jeff Harris, Lynette Kerr, Genevive Macias, Michelle Roslosnik, Holly Sage, Melanie Susavilla, Cindy Vickers, Carly Wallace, Angela West and Paul Ziegler

1.0 CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 9:38 AM by Michael Quinlan, Vice-Chairperson.

2.0 ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA

No adjustments were made to the agenda.

3.0 APPROVAL OF MINUTES

3.1 September 22, 2016

A motion was made by Glen and seconded by Fred to approve minutes as read. The motion carried with all in favor.

4.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS

Holly Sage shared upcoming deadlines for voter registration and ballot submission.

5.0 ACTION ITEMS

None

6.0 INFORMATION/ACTION ITEMS

6.1 Review of Current SELPA Fiscal Allocation Structure

- Lynette presented information about the current SELPA funding model that she hoped would be useful in the ongoing evaluation process. Her intention was to recap the history of Special Education (SE) funding, outline various changes that have occurred and present challenges that are anticipated in order to assist members with discussions going forward. Upon conclusion of the presentation, several questions were addressed.
- Karla asked whether or not transportation costs were included in the budgets, Lynette responded that they were only included in data from a few districts as maintenance of effort (MOE), with Pacific Union not being one of those districts.
- Paul inquired about discrepancies in cost by district. Lynette explained that these were due to differences in the way expenses were tracked and the fact that many districts do not log in all expenditures (i.e., Title 1 is often coded for SE expenses) or fully track MOE. Lynette noted that she continues to coach districts to examine and report their true SE financial picture. She also reminded members that students may receive multiple SE services that are not accounted for in reporting. She described medium (vs small or large) sized districts as those that fare the best in regard to funding and that there was often a circular funding calculation that occurred with funding for one portion of the SE population increased as that for another portion decreased.
- Lynette explained that her financial data did not include preschoolers since they do not generate ADA and that this sector continues to be a large and rising cost.
- In regard to her handout outlining current allocation rates, she noted that LCFF funding varies per grade level and for severe/non-severe students. She also explained that it does not take into account huge fluctuations on the salary scale for staff serving SE students. She reiterated that it is necessary to take into account other revenue sources as these have a huge impact on calculations as well. She indicated that it was important to be aware of hidden costs that have been covered by HCOE, including those associated with support of SELPA, school psychologists and Glen Paul School.
- Lynette explained that three big changes impacting funding at this time are: 1) ADA associated with Charter Schools, 2) an overall lower SE population, and 3) changes in the LCFF.

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- In conclusion, Lynette suggested that the development of a new delivery model of services to SE students should address the following points: ensure that all SE students are served and funding is allocated equitably, take into account the impact of Mental Health in addition to hardship issues faced by small LEAs (with limited reserves), and consider the State and Federal impact of MOE.
- Garry clarified that if funds continue to be distributed on an ADA basis and that this money does not follow students; this is problematic for Humboldt-Del Norte counties because the SE population in this region is currently double that of the State average.
- Garry shared an update about a State public policy report, due for release on 11/29/16 that many expect to recommend that all funding be distributed through the LCFF, supposedly eliminating the need for SELPAs. This does not address, however, who will be doing all of the work (reporting, etc.) currently being handled by the SELPAs. Nor does it recognize the issue of small districts (the majority in Humboldt County) not having the capacity to hire individual staff members to meet the needs of their SE populations.
- Mindy reported that in regard to input for the upcoming Public Policy report, she had been in discussion with individuals compiling the report in order to more fully communicate rural needs (including those related to high costs and limited numbers of services) and was hopeful that her input would be considered.
- Fred thanked Lynette for her considerable time and effort involved with compiling and presenting her detailed, comprehensive fiscal report; Michael and other attendees expressed their appreciation as well.

6.2 Proposals of Outside Agency Special Education Fiscal Review

Mindy reported that through recommendations from her ListServe contacts of thirty-two statewide SELPA directors, she was able to identify four outside consultants/agencies that could perform a Humboldt/Del-Norte SELPA review. They included School Services of California (SSC), Maureen Burness (a well-known private consultant with a wealth of background in similar areas), Jack Lucas (a well-respected fiscal analyst, formally with the State Department) and California School Information Services (CSIS), a division of the Fiscal Crisis Management Assistance Team (FCMAT); she distributed copies of initial letters and emails received from the former two in response to her inquiries.

Mindy noted that she has been waiting to receive more information from the four potential consulting sources regarding their services, costs and timelines (although it was likely that Burness and Lucas would be available the soonest). She anticipated the study could range in cost from \$40,000-\$75,000 depending on the final scope of the project. When asked her opinion about what that scope should be, she expressed her belief that a combination of both programmatic and fiscal reviews would be most beneficial. She indicated that a fiscal review alone might not provide any more detail than what Lynette had just offered Council members in her report.

Fred shared the huge discrepancies he has discovered between "A" and "B" teams at consulting agencies and cautioned Council members to be sure to identify and enlist "A" team individuals from any selected agency. Michael asked if members had general guidelines to suggest pertaining to the procedure(s) and scope for the evaluation. Fred said it was important to determine current key issues, both programmatic and fiscal, for the review.

Garry brought attention to the issue regarding best timing for the review in light of the upcoming PPIC report that will soon be submitted to the governor impacting his revised budget in January. As a result of the report, there could be a shift in emphasis toward local decision-making via the LCFF (as discussed previously), in lieu of any continued SELPA funding. If this proves to be the case, there would be no need for a fiscal review of the Humboldt-Del Norte SELPA.

Michael suggested that Council members come to the November meeting prepared to list areas of interest they would like to see reviewed by a consultant/consulting firm. In January, after the State budget revision has been released, Council members could then make final decisions about scheduling a review, its scope of investigation, and the best consultant/agency with whom to contract; bids could then be requested at that time.

Michael suggested that other superintendents be contacted for input as well. Fred recommended that Policy Council members reach out to other superintendents for their comments, ideas and feedback about the proposed review.

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7.0 COMMUNICATIONS

None

8.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

9.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Pooling of information received pertaining to the proposed SELPA fiscal and/or programmatic review.

10.0 COMMENTS

None

11.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:50 AM. The next meeting will be November 17th.

Respectfully submitted by Kris Diamond, Special Education Secretary