

SUPERINTENDENT'S SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY COUNCIL

January 28, 2026 ~ 9:00 AM

Humboldt County Office of Education – Annex Board Room

Voting Members Present: Danielle Carmesin, Ferndale/Mattole Area
 Katie Cavanagh, Humboldt County Office of Education (Alt)
 Gayle Conway, Northern Humboldt Union High School District
 Karris Feierabend, Fortuna Area
 Julie Giannini-Previde, Northern Humboldt Feeder Schools
 Tom Kissinger (Vice Chairperson), Del Norte City Schools
 Shari Lovett, Independently Reporting Charters
 Becky MacQuarrie, Eureka Feeder Schools
 Gary Storts, Eureka City Schools
 DeAnn Waldvogel, Blue Lake School District

Voting Member Absent: Luke Biesecker, Regional (Chairperson), No Humboldt Feeder Schools
 Michael Davies-Hughes, (Parliamentarian) Humboldt County Office of Education
 Jeff Harris, Del Norte County Office of Education
 Jacqueline McCullough, Klamath-Trinity Joint USD
 Sarah Schipper, Southern Humboldt School District

Non-Voting Member Present: Haley Jones, Humboldt – Del Norte SELPA

Guests Present: Lisa Claussen Laurie Clendenen Calli Coleman
 Nichole Dollarhide Carol Ingram Colton Johnson
 John Leonard Sarah Poust April Quincey
 Elwira Salata Inga Townsend Cindy Vickers
 Corey Weber Travis West Kelley Withers

- 1.0 CALL TO ORDER and LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT
 Tom called the meeting to order with the land acknowledgement read at 9 AM.
- 2.0 ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA
 None
- 3.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS
 None
- 4.0 CONSENT AGENDA
 - 4.1 Approval of Minutes – September 10, 2025
 A motion was made and seconded (Conway/McQuarrie) to accept the minutes. The motion carried unanimously.
- 5.0 DISCUSSION ITEMS
 - 5.1 Updated Charter School Policy – First Read
 Haley reported that two charter schools are seeking to become their own LEA for special education purposes. The policy was identified as outdated, primarily in language and process, and revisions have been reviewed by legal counsel. A vote is scheduled for March. An additional revision will be made to Page 4 to allow charter schools approved as their own LEA to reapply indefinitely, per legal recommendation, prior to final approval. This change will allow the admission of the Charter for the life of the charter. If removal is necessary, the Policy Council will follow the process that is outlined for any other SELPA member.
 - 5.2 McKinleyville Union School District Program Transfer 26/27 School Year
 MUSD submitted a request to transfer its preschool/TK program from HCOE to operate independently beginning in 2026/27. Haley noted the request was submitted after the standard deadline, requiring a unanimous vote to proceed.

 Julie shared that MUSD has been working collaboratively with HCOE to ensure a smooth transition, including classroom preparation and facility upgrades. The goals of the transfer include reducing student travel and strengthening early family engagement within the district.

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5.3 Redwood Coast Regional Center Enhanced Behavioral Support Home

Haley reported information regarding the Enhanced Behavioral Support Home (EBSH) in Fortuna. The home is called Carson Wood and is a vendor through the Redwood Coast Regional Center (RCRC). EBSHs provide 24-hour home-like services to children ages 12–18, with possible extensions past 18. Carson Wood is classified as a Community Care home with 4 beds (the maximum for any EBSH), currently with one child placed.

Placement is through RCRC, so children must be RCRC clients — meaning they have a qualifying developmental disability with onset before age 18 (Intellectual Disability, Cerebral Palsy, Epilepsy, or Autism). Placement length varies by need. IEPs are not required. RCRC has indicated that students from Humboldt, Del Norte, Mendocino, and Lake counties will be prioritized for placement.

Per legal counsel, the district where the home is located holds full legal and fiscal responsibility for these students, consistent with Licensed Children Institutions (LCI) and Foster Family Homes (FFH) policy. A concern was raised that students placed here may need higher-level educational supports than the SELPA or LEA can provide — particularly given the absence of a Nonpublic School (NPS) in our area. Government Code Section 7579 requires RCRC to contact the SELPA prior to placement to confirm that an appropriate public or private NPS can meet the student's needs.

Concerns were raised regarding communication and funding for high-needs placements. Haley is working with RCRC to improve coordination and clarify SELPA involvement. Carol noted existing funding mechanisms such as augmentation funds, while Haley shared efforts to develop alternative funding pools for high-cost services. Carol will further research the definition and funding implications of group homes.

5.4 Out of Home Care (OHC) Funds

Haley reviewed the discussion and shared recommendations coming out of the recent Special Education Admin Advisory Committee (SEAAC)/Fiscal Committee meetings.

5.4.1 Therapeutic Learning Classroom (TLC) Support

In the meetings with SEAAC and Fiscal, the groups discussed utilizing OHC funds for up to 3 TLCs, potentially 50 thousand per year. Carol discussed fiscal information with projections for using OHC dollars for this purpose. Haley asked the policy council to provide any input. Both committees were not able to come up with an exact amount for supporting the TLCs but agreed that supporting TLCs is a good use of OHC funds. Haley shared she would like to bring TLC support with OHC funds back for a vote in March. Katie Cavanagh requested future funding models to include 4 TLC programs as there are two potential new programs opening in 26/27.

The two current TLC Hosts – McKinleyville Union School District and Northern Humboldt agreed to come together with HCOE to discuss an appropriate dollar amount for DOL incentivization prior to the next Policy Council meeting.

5.4.2 Behavioral Health Intervention Specialist Pool

OHC funds currently support 8 free hours of behavioral services to LEAs in Humboldt County and Residential Treatment Center (RTC) reimbursements using a scaled LEA model. In the combined committee meetings, it was discussed that the current structure of using OHC dollars to offset the cost of behaviorists could be removed. Around 90% of LEAs currently use the 8 free hours of behaviorist time. Carol provided the council with a calculation of estimated 26/27 rates if OHC support for the Behaviorist program is eliminated.

Discussion focused on balancing TLC incentives, flexibility for LEAs, and prevention of RTC placements. Some members expressed the importance of Behaviorist support as early intervention.

Members emphasized the importance of Policy Council direction.

5.4.3 OHC Funds Reserve Balance

The council agreed that the \$1 million reserve remains appropriate, assuming no deficit spending. This will be brought forward for a vote in the March meeting.

5.5 AB602 Augmentation Discussion

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Haley reviewed the long-standing discussion regarding AB602 augmentation and emphasized the need for clarity and formal direction from Policy Council. She noted concerns about equity, transparency, and alignment with SELPA priorities, including Least Restrictive Environment. Over the past three or more years, Policy Council, SEAAC, and Fiscal Committee have been reviewing the AB 602 Augmentation formula, with the approved goal of leading a comprehensive analysis to determine whether it remains appropriate and effective for the SELPA. Haley shared that review now feels complete.

There is some variation in perspective across groups, but the programmatic side (SEAAC) largely supports shifting away from augmenting SDCs and SCIAAs. A key concern is protecting the smallest LEAs from being negatively impacted by that shift, which is driving discussion around creating an extraordinary cost pool.

Haley shared the "why" behind changing the augmentation includes: increasing transparency and simplifying the AB 602 allocation model; aligning decisions with the SELPA's guiding principles, particularly around LRE and inclusive decision-making; and addressing the fact that approximately 20% of AB 602 dollars are currently allocated to just 5% of students with IEPs. Very few, if any, other SELPAs provide specific augmentation for SDCs or extensive needs in the way that the HDN SELPA does, and the current model raises the question of whether we are implicitly valuing one type of student or service over another — and whether LRE should be prioritized over more restrictive settings.

Haley shared that it is also important to note that AB 602 base funding is calculated from ADA across all member LEAs, and it is a local decision how those funds are distributed. Changes to augmentation do not increase or decrease the total pass-through — they only reconfigure how existing funds are distributed. Currently, the largest LEAs receive the majority of augmentation funds.

The SELPA's unique context has been considered throughout — including its many small LEAs, two-county geography, significantly higher-than-average rate of students with disabilities (~19% vs. the state average of ~14%), large geographic area, and lack of access to non-public schools.

Haley stated that a formal vote is required to either maintain the current structure or pursue changes such as removal of the augmentation and creation of an Extraordinary Cost Pool. Haley shared that she is planning on bringing this topic to a formal vote in March or May. This vote will provide the direct guidance from Policy Council so that the fiscal committee and SEAAC can move forward with determining the next steps.

6.0 ACTION ITEMS**6.1 McKinleyville Union School District Program Transfer 2026/27 School Year**

A motion was made and seconded (Carmesin/Feierabend) to approve the MUSD Program transfer for the 2026/27 school year. Katie added that HCOE is in full support. The motion carried unanimously.

6.2 Certified Behavior Support Technician (CBST) Position Reduction 26/27 School Year

Haley expressed uncertainty regarding whether a formal vote is required; however, she emphasized the importance of transparency given that the funds have been exhausted. She noted that SEAAC and Fiscal have determined that no other resources are appropriate for use at this time to cover the costs of these positions.

It was agreed to proceed with the reduction of five employee positions for the 2026/27 school year. Haley stated that affected staff will retain rights to open positions through HCOE AU (Administrative Unit). She clarified that there will be no changes to administrative costs.

A motion was made and seconded (Giannini-Previde/Conway) to approve the CBST reduction for 2026/27. The motion carried unanimously.

7.0 INFORMATION ITEMS**7.1 Director's Report**

Haley shared a few upcoming topics and upcoming Professional Development opportunities:

- ✓ Uncharted Shores Academy - Notification of Intent to Exit Humboldt-Del Norte SELPA for the 2026/27 SY
 - This charter is looking into joining the El Dorado Charter SELPA for the 26/27 School Year.
- ✓ CDE Monitoring and Data Needs

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Item 4.1

- Small Cycle C monitoring via IEP Implementation has begun and affected LEAs have been contacted.
- Annual Determination Letters will be released in early February.
- Congratulations, all LEAs were SELPA Certified on time for Fall 1 submissions
- For Cycle C and LEAs with more than 100 students served on IEPs, they will be required to participate in IEP Implementation Data Collection.
- Degree of Support is being correctly completed in SEIS and CALPADS
- ✓ It is the 50th Anniversary of IDEA
- ✓ Professional Development Opportunities
 - SELPA continues to support PD with notifications sent and posted. Inga sends emails when training outside of our SELPA is available as well.
- ✓ Spring Meeting
 - The SELPA Spring meeting will be May 12th, 1-4:15 with registration open soon. It will be held virtually to allow for more attendance. Jennifer Nix from F3 will present on legal hot topics.
- ✓ Policy and Guidelines - We are continuing to update policies.
- ✓ Alternative Dispute Resolution Update:
 - SELPA continues to receive calls from LEAs, parents/guardians, and advocates. To date we have supported 41 different ADR contacts.
- Local Plan Update
 - January 26th, we received CDE approval of the 2025/26 submission and has been updated on the SELPA website and all LEAs will receive an email from Teresa requesting that they update their websites with the current Local Plan.

7.2 Legislative Advocacy Updates None

7.3 Committee Update

7.3.1 Fiscal Committee & SEAAC Report Discussion has been shared during the PC

7.3.2 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Report The CAC met November 18th, participation continues to be low however, the few members are fantastic. A bylaw revision is recommended to remove the time limitation for the officers. The hope is to help with continuity and membership growth.

8.0 COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS None

9.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Local Allocation Plan Update
- OHC
- Charter Policy
- SELPA Budgets
- Medical Therapy Unit Interagency Agreement

10.0 ADJOURNMENT The meeting adjourned at 10:35 AM