

SUPERINTENDENT'S SPECIAL EDUCATION POLICY COUNCIL

March 11, 2026 ~ 9:00 AM

Humboldt County Office of Education – Annex Board Room

Voting Members Present: Luke Biesecker, Regional (Chairperson), No Humboldt Feeder Schools
Danielle Carmesin, Ferndale/Mattole Area
Katie Cavanagh, Humboldt County Office of Education (Alt)
Gayle Conway, Northern Humboldt Union High School District
Karrisa Feierabend, Fortuna Area
Julie Giannini-Previde, Northern Humboldt Feeder Schools
Jeff Harris, Del Norte County Office of Education
Tom Kissinger (Vice Chairperson), Del Norte City Schools
Becky MacQuarrie, Eureka Feeder Schools
Gary Storts, Eureka City Schools
Sarah Wilson, Southern Humboldt Unified School District (Alt)
Kirsten Wright, Klamath-Trinity Joint USD (Alt)

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

Voting Members Absent: Michael Davies-Hughes (Parliamentarian) Humboldt County Office of Education
Shari Lovett, Independently Reporting Charters
Jacqueline McCullough, Klamath-Trinity Joint USD
Sarah Purl, Southern Humboldt Unified School District
DeAnn Waldvogel, Northern Humboldt Feeder Schools

Guests Present:	Marissa Ambosini	Lisa Claussen	Laurie Clendenen
	Calli Coleman	Nichole Dollarhide	Jennifer Goodner
	Carol Ingram	John Leonard	Sarah Poust
	April Quincey	Elwira Salata	Courtney Sousa
	Inga Townsend	Cindy Vickers	Tim Warner
	Corey Weber	Whitney Wirt	Kelley Withers
	Paul Ziegler		

1.0 CALL TO ORDER and LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Luke called the meeting to order at 9:00 and read the land acknowledgement. Alternates were introduced.

2.0 ADJUSTMENT OF AGENDA

A motion was made and seconded (Conway/Kissinger) to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

3.0 PUBLIC COMMENTS on AGENDA ITEMS

None

4.0 CONSENT AGENDA

4.1 Approval of Minutes – January 28, 2026

A motion was made and seconded (MacQuarrie/Conway) to approve the minutes as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

5.0 DISCUSSION/ACTION ITEMS

5.1 Local Plan Section A, D & E – First Read

Haley provided an overview of the 2026–2027 Local Plan process. She explained that the CDE is transitioning to a new submission system through the Grants platform. As a result, the presentation was prepared using the previous format, though revisions may be required once the new system is finalized.

Haley noted several updates to the Local Plan. In Section A, Green Point will be removed, and Local Plans no longer need to be submitted to individual LEA governing boards. In Section D – Annual Budget Plan, expected expenditures are identified, including the addition of the MTU budget of \$1,200, which is now disclosed in the plan. The Out of Home Care (OHC) section may need to be revised depending on the outcome of the augmented funding vote later in the meeting.

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In Section E – Services, Haley clarified that services not currently being provided must be marked “No,” even if the SELPA has the capacity to provide them when needed. She also noted a new reporting item related to Speech-Language Pathologist (SLP) caseloads. The SELPA is awaiting responses from LEAs to confirm caseload information, and current data indicate caseloads remain within required guidelines.

5.2 Medical Therapy Unit (MTU) Update

Haley provided an update regarding the Interagency Agreement. She explained that the MTU is a statewide subprogram of California Children’s Services (CCS) and that SELPAs are required to operate either a Medical Therapy Program (MTP) or Medical Therapy Unit (MTU). The agreement is currently nearing completion and is being aligned with Education Code requirements. Haley noted that an additional update will be provided at the next meeting.

5.3 Authorizing Unit Contract – First Read

Haley reported that the Authorizing Unit (AU) Contract is reviewed annually. No substantive changes were made this year other than updating the contract dates and removing the reference to Green Point. As the contract is essentially a rollover from the prior year, the council agreed it could be approved at this meeting, following review. A motion was made and seconded (Giannini-Previde/Wright) to approve the 2026/27 AU Contract. The motion carried unanimously.

5.4 Humboldt-Del Norte SELPA Charter School Policy Update

Haley reminded the council that the proposed policy update has no fiscal impact. A motion was made and seconded by (Carmesin/Kissinger) to approve the Charter School Policy Update. The motion carried unanimously.

5.5 Community Advisory Committee Bylaws Update

Haley explained that the topic was initially discussed at the January meeting due to the small size of the current CAC membership. Under the existing bylaws, the two primary CAC members would reach their service limit of two years and would no longer be eligible to continue, which could significantly impact the functioning of the committee. To maintain continuity and support the CAC’s work, Haley proposed extending the allowable service term by an additional two years. A motion was made and seconded (MacQuarrie/Harris) to approve the updated CAC Bylaws. The motion carried unanimously.

5.6 Out of Home Care Funding

5.6.1 Funding for Therapeutic Learning Classrooms

Haley explained that the TLC funding discussion at the January meeting had been organized into three categories and would again be reviewed in that format. Due to the overlap in topics, she would recommend that Items 5.6.1 and 5.6.2 were discussed together, with separate votes to follow.

Haley reviewed the prior discussion and noted that no decision had been made at the January meeting. Based on the feedback and conversations that followed, SELPA developed a proposal to provide ongoing annual support of \$50,000/yearly for each TLC program up to four programs, with an additional \$25,000 available to support first-year implementation.

Katie added that HCOE will be offering TLC support as well. They are proposing ongoing support of \$50,000/yearly to each TLC. They will add to the ongoing funds, for start-up costs; year one will be \$50,000 with year two \$25,000 for years 2026/27 & 2027/28.

Questions were raised regarding HCOE startup funding, how funds would be applied, and program transparency. Haley clarified that SELPA funds would go directly to the host district and must be used to support the TLC program. HCOE indicated it also intends to contribute funding to support the stability and operational costs of the programs, with details to be discussed with host LEAs.

Concerns were expressed about supporting more restrictive program settings and ensuring transparency in how the programs operate. Haley noted that TLC locations are county-run programs, while SELPA’s role is to provide offset funding and behaviorist support. She added that discussions are ongoing with

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several LEAs to expand the programs regionally. It is anticipated that four programs may open next year, and SELPA support could extend to up to four programs.

Carol reviewed the fiscal considerations, including the impact on Out of Home Care (OHC) funding and reduced funding related to declining foster youth counts. She explained that if no action were taken, SELPA would continue supporting the current TLC program until the remaining ~\$99,000 in available funds are exhausted.

A motion was made and seconded (Giannini-Previde/MacQuarrie) to approve TLC funding of \$50,000 per program with an additional \$25,000 startup allocation, for up to four programs, revise behaviorist funding to \$150,000 for one year, and set the SELPA reserve at \$1 million.

The motion did not carry: Ayes 9, Noes 10, Abstain 2, Absent 1.

Item 5.6.1 (1 st Motion)	Allotted Votes	Absent	Abstain	Ayes	Noes
Biesecker	1			1	
Carmesin	1				1
Conway	2				2
Cavanagh (Alt for Davies-Hughes)	1		1		
Feierabend	3				3
Giannini-Previde	1			1	
Harris	1		1		
Kissinger	3			3	
Lovett (absent)	1	1			
MacQuarrie	2			2	
Wilson (Alt for Purl)					1
Wright (Alt for McCullough)	1			1	
Storts	3				3
Giannini-Previde (Alt for Waldvogel)	1			1	
Total		1	2	9	10

A revised motion was proposed (Feierabend/Carmesin) to approve TLC funding at \$50,000 per program/yearly, remove behaviorist funding, and maintain the SELPA reserve at \$1 million. Gary noted the challenges of starting a new program and emphasized that the additional \$25,000 startup allocation is needed. A friendly amendment was made to approve \$25,000 contributions for startup costs.

The motion passed: Ayes 18, Noes 1, Abstain 2, Absent 1.

Item 5.6.1 (2 nd Motion)	Allotted Votes	Absent	Abstain	Yay	Nay
Biesecker	1			1	
Carmesin	1			1	
Conway	2			2	
Cavanagh (Alt for Davies-Hughes)	1		1		
Feierabend	3			3	
Giannini-Previde	1			1	
Harris	1		1		
Kissinger	3			3	
Lovett	1	1			
MacQuarrie	2			2	
Wilson (Alt for Purl)					1
Wright (Alt for McCullough)	1			1	
Storts	3			3	

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Giannini-Previde (Alt for Waldvogel)	1			1	
Total		1	2	18	1

Sarah asked if the interest on the reserve \$1,000,000 goes back to the funds and Carol said she believed it remains at HCOE Resource 10. Corey will confirm whether or not it has been returned.

5.6.2 Funding Removal or Continuation of Behavioral Health Intervention Specialist Support

Carol explained the hourly rate of \$171, which is just under 15%. Haley said CAC supported the 1.0 Behaviorist's; however, it would not preclude the LEAs from using the Behaviorists, it would just be all charge back rather than the bank of 8 hours. It also Involves the \$1 million cash reserves.

Questions were raised about cost adjustments, deficit spending, and reserve management. Haley explained that reducing the bank lowers funding for the position but raises the per-hour rate. Gary expressed concern about deficit spending. Carol noted RTC placements currently cost around \$300,000, and can be subject to change yearly depending on the placements. Haley and Luke agreed the situation could be revisited in future years.

Sarah asked if SELPA would fund a fifth program if additional TLCs open. Haley confirmed SELPA funding is capped at four programs but could be amended if needed. Discussion emphasized that behaviorist services would continue, pay-to-play costs would increase, and early elementary programs reduce RTC placements, supporting long-term success. Note: the item was included in Item 5.6.1 and the 8-hour bank of Behaviorists hours to LEAs was removed.

5.6.3 Funds Reserve Balance Policy

Haley requested the council approve a minimum reserve level of \$1,000,000 within the Out of Home Care (OHC) funds to ensure continued Residential Treatment Center (RTC) reimbursement to the LEAs. If the fund balance falls below the reserve threshold PC will be notified and expenditure adjustments will be considered. Luke said that he prefers not to dip into the reserves. Note: This item was included with Item 5.6.1 and passed.

5.7 AB 602 Removal or Continuation of Augmentation

Haley provided a history and overview of Augmentation (Aug) funding, including projected impacts with and without its continuation. Carol then reviewed the fiscal projections and noted that next year's special education base rate is set to increase to \$999 per ADA, which may help offset deficits, if any, for LEAs. Haley further explained that the total FTE count eligible for funding is lower this year because the Policy Council established eligibility criteria that the SELPA applied. As a result, fewer positions qualified for funding, increasing the usual allocation by approximately \$6,000 per 1.0 FTE.

Council members discussed concerns about removing Augmentation (Aug) funding before the Extraordinary Cost Pool (ECP) is clearly defined. Cindy noted that the lack of an established ECP makes budgeting difficult, and Gayle stated that continuing Aug funding would be preferable until more details are available. Haley clarified that a yes/no vote on Augmented funding is necessary to move forward. She added that if the funding structure continues it should be reviewed again in three years.

Discussion also addressed potential ECP uses, including home/hospital services, transportation, and high-cost SCIA placements. Carol explained that the ECP could provide districts with greater flexibility to address high-cost students. Members raised questions about how funding would be redistributed if Aug were removed, with clarification that it would be allocated based on ADA and unduplicated counts rather than a flat 50/50 split. Participants also highlighted equity considerations, noting that small districts and programs with higher concentrations of students with high-cost needs, such as LEAs hosting Charters, Glen Paul School, preschool, and 18–22 programs face unique challenges. The ECP was described as a tool intended to support all LEAs with high-costs rather than targeting any single program.

A motion was made and seconded (Carmesin/Feierabend) eliminating augmentation funding, having fiscal and SEAAC propose/develop an ECP for a future meeting, and returning funds to districts.

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Becky requested to see the ECP prior to the vote. Karissa noted she could not approve an undefined ECP and emphasized that it should benefit all districts if one is put in place. Sarah suggested the ECP could be developed with group input, and Haley confirmed meetings could be scheduled if PC members present do not constitute a quorum. Julie requested an additional meeting prior to the next PC session to specifically discuss an ECP. Haley agreed to expedite discussions and noted that decision-making guidelines will be prioritized in future conversations.

The motion passed: 17 Ayes, 4 Noes, 1 Absent

Item 5.7	Allotted Votes	Absent	Abstain	Ayes	Noes
Biesecker	1				1
Carmesin	1			1	
Conway	2				2
Cavanagh (Alt for Davies-Hughes)	1			1	
Feierabend	3			3	
Giannini-Previde	1			1	
Harris	1			1	
Kissinger	3			3	
Lovett (absent)	1	1			
MacQuarrie	2			2	
Wilson (Alt for Purl)				1	
Wright (Alt for McCullough)	1			1	
Storts	3			3	
Giannini-Previde (Alt for Waldvogel)	1				1
Total		1		17	4

6.0 INFORMATION ITEMS

6.1 Director's Report

- Announcement: Teresa will be retiring on April 24. She has been a strong supporter of Policy Council, missing only one meeting during her twenty-year tenure.
- ERMHS Consortium: One LEA has returned to the consortium beginning 2026/27.
- Annual Evaluation: Watch for an email from Ariel Aaron (HCOE) with a Google form for the Director's yearly evaluation, to be sent by March 30.
- LEA Exit: Awaiting updates from Uncharted Shores Academy regarding a potential SELPA exit; more information will be shared at the next meeting.
- CDE Monitoring & Data: Members should monitor emails regarding CDE monitoring and End-of-Year data needs; Anna will send reminders. Ensure SEIS transactions are submitted.
- Prong II Data: Data pull scheduled for April 10.
- IDEA 50th Anniversary: March focus is "Partners in Progress: The essential role of Families."
- School Social Worker Month: March is recognized as School Social Worker Month.
- Staffing Updates: Job descriptions updated and positions reclassified; retirements expected this year and next. Recruitment efforts are underway, including possible board discussion for LI teacher residency programs. Luke added that for those that don't attend, they need to have an alternate for continuity and updates on discussion items.
- Policy Council Alternates: Reminder that alternate member information is due by September 1 for the 26/27 school year. Discussion needed on whether to continue automatic rollover or require confirmation from voting members.

6.2 Legislative Advocacy Updates

Haley provided an update on:

- AB 560 – The Special Educator Act which was signed into law October 2025. This bill requires the Superintendents establish the maximum recommended adult-to-pupil staffing ration by July 1, 2027. CDE has not made a recommendation yet. An amendment to this was added regarding which requires LEAs distribute

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initial assessment workloads evenly among resource specialists unless otherwise specified by collective bargaining.

- CDE Info Hub: A website with more information is expected to be launched in the next few weeks. Haley has a listserv if anyone wants to be part of the discussion and input.
- Prop 98 Update: Awaiting the Governor's May Revise regarding \$509 million in ongoing funds. If included, the Special Education Base Rate could increase to \$1,032 per student, aiming for full equalization. Current plan is \$999 per student plus COLA for all SELPAs.

6.3 Committee Update

- 6.3.1 Fiscal Committee & Special Education Admin Advisory Committee (SEAAC) Report
None today as they were discussed throughout the meeting.
- 6.3.2 Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Report
None today as they were discussed throughout the meeting.

7.0 COMMUNICATIONS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

None

8.0 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

- Local Allocation Plan Update (May – Vote)
- SELPA Budget Review and Adoption (May)
- Executive Director Evaluation (May)
- Superintendents Policy Council 2026/27 School Year Schedule (May)
- Election of Policy Council Officials for 2026/27 School Year (May)
- ECP Discussion – Special Meeting Scheduled (May)

9.0 ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:21. The next regularly scheduled meeting is May 13, 2026.