

**Special Education District Advisory Committee
2020-21 Year End Report for Board of Education**

June 2021

**Administrator Co-chairperson: Deanna Sinfield
Co-chairperson: Payal Maniar**

2020-21 Charges and Progress:

The school year began in Distance Learning with staged transition back to in-person school beginning January 2021. Given the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on all the District's programs and in-person special education services, SEDAC's main charge this year related to sharing perspectives on the needs of students with disabilities during distance learning and offering input on the Special Education Department's back to school plans during the spring. SEDAC members shared concerns and questions in a timely manner on social emotional and academic learning losses and impacts. The committee communicated with the department and board liaisons on a regular basis and worked to disseminate important information back into the community. The department worked hard to roll out the transition back to school effectively and addressed several issues as quickly as possible during this unprecedented and volatile time.

Update on two charges from the 2019-20 school year:

- Charge related to collaborating with the district to develop a view of the master communications calendar. This was not directly worked on this year given the shift in focus but will be considered for the 2021-22 school year.
- Charge to provide input into the SPED department's website architecture. Per discussions, a dedicated charge is not necessary at this time and may be considered in the future as needed. Parents provide feedback on the website on an ad-hoc basis.

Additional Initiatives:

Based on discussions and member input, several initiatives (highlighted below) were undertaken by the department, some in partnership with external service providers:

- **Resources when transitioning to High School:** Parents indicated a need for more descriptive course details and specific direction to help students with disabilities choose high school level classes and specifically electives. The Department developed the following [course description list](#) for SAMOHI to help incoming students understand various course options. This class list may be found online on SMMUSD Special Education page. The department is also working to bring more clarity to various elective options as well.
- **Disabilities as a part of Social Justice Curriculum:** SEDAC invited the American Culture and Ethnic Studies Curriculum Coordinator, Dr. Satinder Hawkins, to learn about her work as Dr. Hawkins is also overseeing the implementation of the district's Social Justice program. The committee is passionate about incorporating and emphasizing Disability into SMMUSD's social justice curriculum from the onset. We hope to collaborate with Dr. Satinder in the fall to support her work and make additional recommendations on how special education and disability can be

woven into the district's social justice lesson plans and reading materials. We also discussed a possible event in October for Disabilities Awareness Month.

- **Sex Education for Students and Families:** Members expressed the need for adaptive sex education for students with disabilities. SEDAC and the Department invited [UC-LEND](#) for an initial parent+student ed session on "Things To Know As You Grow" to address feelings and changes that occur as our children become teenagers. The department will continue to collaborate with UC-LEND in the fall to explore ways to develop a multi-session sex education program.

Considerations for Charges for 2021-22 School Year:

1. **Human Development/ Sex Education:** Collaborate with the Department to provide recommendations on the sex education program roll out in the fall.
2. **Parent Support Groups for Transitions:** Facilitate and collaborate with the special education department to plan for short term (e.g., 8 week) parent support groups for families transitioning from pre-K to K, elementary to middle, middle to high and beyond high school. Continue to support/ review recommendations made and potentially drill down to the next level for specific transitions e.g., preschool, middle to high as priorities
3. **Social Justice Curriculum:** Collaborate with Dr. Satinder Hawkins on incorporating Disabilities/ Special Needs into the Social Justice Curriculum development. Examples could include (but not limited to) sharing book ideas for both parents and students, curriculum ideas and lessons plans that members believe would be helpful.

Possible other areas of continued focus for SEDAC next year:

1. **Supporting special education in Gen Ed/ Collaborative classrooms at Elementary Level:** - Tip Sheet/ recommendations for coordination between Sp Ed-Gen Ed Resource Teams. Reviewing lessons learned from collaborative K programming at Will Rogers and translating that to more systematic tip sheets/ recommendations.
2. **Systems of record:** Review district/ department efforts to improve database/ systems of record so contacts for both parents/ families of SPED students are captured and can receive communications.
3. **Effective Strategies to build trust and community:** Explore new approaches to mitigate due process and litigation in special education