



AMADOR COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Amador County Unified School District
Amador County Office of Education

JOINT PRESS RELEASE
February 18, 2020

On February 12, 2020, in a regularly scheduled ACUSD Board of Trustees meeting, a historic decision was made. 23 years after the Tricounty Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) disbanded and Amador County became its own SELPA, both the ACUSD and SELPA Boards unanimously took action to direct and authorize the District to plan and support the negotiations process with labor leaders for the transfer of the SELPA, the Administrative Unit (AU), the Transportation Department, and all classified and administrative staff related to mild-moderate Special Education services from the Amador County Office of Education (ACOE) to the Amador County Unified School District (ACUSD), effective July 1, 2020.

Further, the Board unanimously took action to direct and authorize the District to plan and support the negotiations process with labor leaders for the transfer of all mild-moderate credentialed teachers from the ACOE to ACUSD effective October 31, 2020. Both motions include oversight and support by a representative steering committee. The Special Education Community Advisory Committee will be actively involved as well.

ACOE Superintendent Dr. Steve Russell spoke to the Board in support of the transfer. Quoting federal law, he said, “IDEA, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, provides that States must have in place procedures assuring that, ‘to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with children who are not disabled, and that special classes, separate schooling, or other removal of children with disabilities from the regular educational environment occurs only when the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in regular classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.’”

Dr. Russell also stated, “I believe that the best way to meet the IDEA guidelines is to educate all Amador County children in kindergarten through 12th grade who can benefit from the general education curriculum – as one group. To achieve this, I am supporting the move of students with mild to moderate disabilities to the district where they can be educated under one system.”

Prior to the Board decision, ACUSD Superintendent Dr. Amy Slavensky, with colleagues and labor leaders from the Board appointed Special Education Study Team, presented information about the collaborative work of the Study Team including a consensus reaching process and the recommendation which was presented to the Board that same evening.

In a statement following the meeting, Dr. Slavensky said, “Students must always come first when making difficult decisions. In order to make this happen, we must also make sure our teachers and staff are a top priority. They then will be better able to take care of our students, providing the best possible educational experience in every school and every classroom. The Board’s decision tonight will allow us to be more fiscally efficient, freeing up much-needed

dollars to better compensate our wonderful employees and better provide them the resources and tools they need.”

As they continue to work together, Dr. Slavensky and Dr. Russell are confident this is the right decision to support all students now and for many years to come.

To access the February 12, 2020 Board presentation and ten related attachments, you may go to <https://amadorcoe.org/minutes-agendas/>. If members of our school community or public have questions, they may contact Dr. Amy Slavensky at (209) 257-5353, Dr. Steve Russell at (209) 257-5330, or Director of Special Education Kathryn Brown at (209) 257-5306.