

## ***Amador County Public Schools***

ACUSD/ACOE Board of Trustees  
Joint Meeting: A Special Education Study Session

July 17, 2019

Facilitated by:

Dr. Steve Russell, ACOE Superintendent

Dr. Amy Slavensky, ACUSD Superintendent

Mr. Jared Critchfield, Assistant Superintendent, Business Services

Mr. Sean Snider, Assistant Superintendent, Educational Services

## Agenda

- Purpose of the Study Session
- Special Education: Funding in CA and Amador County Public Schools
- Special Education: Purpose & Goals
- Special Education: Best Practices
- Special Education: Laws
- Interaction & Discussion
- Next Steps

## Purpose of the Study Session

- Study the various funding mechanisms of that support Special Education in CA and Amador County Public Schools
- Increase understanding of the purpose, goals, best practices, and laws related to Special Education in CA
- Increase understanding about ways to continue offering quality services to Amador County Public Schools students with disabilities in ways that are more cost efficient (*for a future Board meeting or study session*)
- Have discussion and ask questions

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## Why are we here?

- ACUSD is a single school district in the county, responsible for all students in the county including all students with disabilities.
- In 1998, the tri-county SELPA consortium disbanded and Amador County Public Schools chose to be its own SELPA with ACOE as its Administrative Unit (AU).
- Our SELPA follows the model provided by multi-district and multi-county SELPAs which provide more efficient use of resources.

SELPA = Special Education Local Planning Area

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## Wait! What is a SELPA?

### What is a SELPA?

- In 1977, all school districts and county school offices were mandated to form **consortiums in geographical regions of sufficient size and scope to provide for all special education service needs of children residing within the region boundaries.** Each region, Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA), developed a local plan describing how it would provide special education services.
- SELPAs are dedicated to the belief that all students can learn and that special needs students must be guaranteed equal opportunity to become contributing members of society. **SELPAs facilitate high quality educational programs and services for special needs students and training for parents and educators. The SELPA collaborates with county agencies and school districts to develop and maintain healthy and enriching environments in which special needs students and families can live and succeed.**

<https://www.cde.ca.gov/sp/se/as/caselpas.asp>

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## Why are we here?

- Our SELPA follows the model provided by multi-district and multi-county SELPAs which provide more efficient use of resources.
- Typically, county offices of education with multiple districts act as a regional provider to maximize services in the most efficient way.
  - Example: Calaveras COE provides the Intensive Intervention program for multiple school districts who may not have a student population that warrants having their own program.
- A lot has changed since 1998. This model is no longer a good fit in a county with only one school district.
  - Funding mechanisms have changed.
  - According to a state consultant, over the last 10 years, 70% of county-run Special Education programs in CA have transferred back to school districts to improve cost efficiencies and delivery of services.
  - It creates duplication of effort and redundant work, such as doing each process or task twice, once for the County Office and again for the District (i.e., time and money).
  - Our district has the capacity to provide direct services for our students with disabilities.

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## Why are we here?

- The other six single school districts within a county each operate Special Education services differently, so there is a need to determine what is the best approach for our county. (They are Alpine, Del Norte, Mariposa, Plumas, San Francisco, and Sierra.)
- A process to study the pros and cons of program transfer would include examining the best use of funds and delivery of services for student success through the work of a collaborative, broad-based stakeholder team.

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## SpED Funding in CA and Amador County Public Schools

### Federal Funding Sources

- Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)
  - Basic Local (K-12)
  - Early Intervention (Infant)
  - Preschool Grant Part B
  - Mental Health

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## State Funding Sources

- CA Assembly Bill 602 (AB 602)
  - General Funding
  - Low Incidence
  - Out of Home
  - Program Specialist Regionalized Services (SELPA)
- Early Education for Individuals w/ Exceptional Needs
- Infant Discretionary
- Work Ability
- Lottery
- Mental Health

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## Local Funding Sources

- ACUSD Contribution to Program
- ACUSD LCFF for Students in COE Operated Programs
- ACUSD Transportation Contribution
  
- ACOE Contribution to Program
- ACOE Transportation (LCFF Hold Harmless)
- ACOE Transportation Contribution
- ACOE Property Tax Transfer

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## Expenses

- Low Incidence
- Preschool
- Mental Health
- Infant
- Transportation
- Classroom teachers, para-educators and all other related services and expenses

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## SpEd: Purpose & Goals

"Every child with a disability has the right to be educated with his or her grade level peers without disabilities. ... What exactly this means – in statute, in intent and in practice – points to a public education system that supports and ensures equity, access and inclusion for each and every child and student with a disability ..." ("The Edge Newsletter," Fall 2018, p. 1)

Time for Reading, Thinking and Talking:

Please:

- Read p. 1 of "The Edge Newsletter," Fall 2018
- Mark areas that are important to you, and think about why they are important to you.
- Talk to one another about this.

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## SpEd: Best Practices

"Central to a coherent system is the development of a culture of collaboration and coordination across the numerous educational and service agencies that influence how children are educated." (*One System: Reforming Education to Serve All Students*, March 2015, p. 2)

Time for Reading, Thinking and Talking:

Please:

- Skim pp. 1-2 of *One System: Reforming Education to Serve All Students*, the section titled "A Coherent System"
- Skim pp. 4-5 of *One System: Reforming Education to Serve All Students*, the section titled "Evidenced Based School and Classroom Practices: Recommendations"
- Mark as follows:
  - ✓ = areas that seem like strengths for us
  - ? = areas where you're not sure
- Talk to one another about this.

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## SpEd: Laws

"The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) requires schools to educate students with disabilities in the 'least restrictive environment' (LRE) ..." ("The Edge Newsletter," Fall 2018, p. 12)

Time for Reading, Thinking and Talking:

Please:

- Skim pp. 12-13 of "The Edge Newsletter," Fall 2018.
- Mark areas that are important to you, and think about why they are important to you.
- Talk to one another about this.

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## The Role of the SELPA Board

1. Exercise authority over, assume responsibility for, and be fiscally accountable for special education programs operated by the SELPA.
2. By approving the Local Plan, enter into an agreement with other agencies participating in the plan, for purpose and delivery of services and programs.
3. Review and approve revisions of the ACOE SELPA Local Plan for Special Education.
4. Participate in the governance of the ACOE SELPA through its designated representative, the ACOE SELPA Director. The ACOE SELPA Director has the authority to act as the Board designee to approve and amend procedures as necessary.
5. Appoint/approve the election of members of the Community Advisory Committee (CAC).

(As per the ACOE SELPA Local Plan for Special Education, p. 18)

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## Next Steps

1. Study the fiscal pros and cons related to transfer of some or all parts of the Special Education program from ACOE to ACUSD.
2. Consider ACUSD Board action prior to September 1<sup>st</sup> to authorize the District to proceed with studying options with a collaborative stakeholder team, per the ACOE/ACUSD SELPA Plan, pp. 28-31.
3. Consider external facilitation of a collaborative stakeholder team to study and make recommendations for the ACUSD Board's consideration.
4. Pending ACUSD Board action prior to September 1<sup>st</sup>:
  - Develop a collaborative stakeholder team
  - Begin the work of learning, studying and thinking together related to the possible transfer of program
  - Bring an update to the Board in late Fall 2019
  - Bring a recommendation to the Board in Winter 2020

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Discussion &  
Questions

