



The SELPA Dispatch

Published for our beautiful Butte County SELPA community

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From the Director ...

I say it every year, but this year has really flown by and summer is just around the corner. This year has been one of great challenge but also a year of exploration and growth for our SELPA team and our member LEAs. We have heard from many families and districts asking questions about several developing federal issues. In these uncertain times, it is important to ask questions and get the best information, and most importantly make your voice heard on matters that are critical to your children and our students.

One of the best sources of information is our statewide SELPA Administrators of California association whose mission is clear: to champion educational access and opportunities for students with disabilities in California. Several letters, newsletters, and resolutions have been created and pushed out to legislators at the state and federal level. If you are looking for the best information on how current federal proposals may impact Butte County, please follow SELPA Administrators of California and Butte County SELPA Community Connection on Facebook.

Several letters and resolutions are accessible through the most recent [SELPA IMPACT Newsletter](#), including recent support for full funding of IDEA bills and resolutions to protect IDEA funding intended for students. There are also several advocacy letters on a variety of proposals from closure of the U.S. Department of Education, how shifting the oversight and responsibility for implementation of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), private school vouchers, Medicaid cuts, other funding cuts, diversity, equity, and inclusion, or recent announcements related to autism.

Reflecting on the year, we have successfully met most of our SELPA annual goals for the year. In this issue, you'll see a little bit of that regarding our SIP Inclusion Academy and our Parent University & Resource Fair. We look forward to honoring over 40 of our amazing students at our CAC Student Awards and Recognition in mid-May.

I want you to have a fantastic close to the year and a terrific summer break!



Stay in touch with SELPA and community events by liking and following us at "[Butte County SELPA Community Connection](#)."



Visit our website at: www.buttecountyselpa.org for information, contacts, resources, trainings, and more!



Parent Participation in our CAC & the CDE Constituents Office

Aaron Benton, SELPA Director



Providing a high-quality special education experience for each child is a team effort, and parent participation is essential to meeting student needs and achieving IEP goals. In California, parent collaboration is facilitated through the Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) structure, specifically via the Community Advisory Committee (CAC). Community Advisory Committees are a vital part of effective special education programs in California. Mandated by law, CACs reflect the diversity and values of the communities they serve. Each CAC is composed of parents, educators, students and adults with disabilities, representatives from public and private agencies, and other individuals dedicated to supporting those with disabilities. Members are appointed by their respective governing boards according to locally established selection procedures outlined in the SELPA Local Plan.

Across the state, many CACs are thriving, creative bodies that advise local governing boards on the development and implementation of the Local Plan, annual priorities, parent education efforts, and other special education-related initiatives. These committees are designed to be dynamic partnerships that foster collaboration among educators, families, and community members. By actively engaging in the work of the CAC, members help ensure that parent and community voices are heard in the development and delivery of special education programs and services.

WELCOME TO THE CONSTITUENT SUPPORT SERVICES OFFICE

The Constituent Support Services Office, part of the Special Education Division of the California Department of Education, is dedicated to resolving conflicts while preserving relationships. Our mission is to enhance communication and provide meaningful support to families navigating the special education system.

We help by:

- Ensuring every family feels heard, valued, and supported
- Addressing issues at the earliest sign of dispute to foster strong individualized education program (IEP) team relationships
- Promoting positive and equitable outcomes for all students with disabilities
- Utilizing resources to transform how special education conflicts are handled in California
- Developing a statewide system of support for dispute prevention and resolution

Our knowledgeable staff can:

- Answer questions
- Provide guidance
- Connect families with the appropriate department personnel

Contact us:
To speak with a member of the Constituent Support Services Office, call 800-926-0648, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Outside of these hours, please leave a voicemail, and we will return your call within 24 hours.
You can also reach us by email at SEDCO@cde.ca.gov.

The California Department of Education maintains a helpful resource page titled California Parent Organizations. It includes information on Community Parent Resource Centers, Parent Training and Information Centers (PTIs), and Family Empowerment Centers (FECs) funded under Senate Bill 511. These organizations frequently collaborate with SELPAs and CACs to provide training and support to both families and staff. SELPAs also collaborated with the CDE and SEEDS of Partnership to revise the comprehensive California Special Education Local Plan Area Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Guide, 5 Edition. This year, The CDE opened the Constituent Support Services Office within the Special Education Division to assist families and districts with positive communication and dispute prevention.

College & Career Pathways: Rebranding to Capture our Expanded Vision

Julie Romero, College & Career Pathways Coordinator



For 44 years, the California Department of Education has operated the WorkAbility program to provide opportunities for high school students in special education to gain employment skills and paid work experience. There has not been additional funding granted to this program in more than 15 years, and with the minimum wage increasing from \$9.00/hour to now \$16.50/hour, many programs are not able to provide the services we are meant to, without supplemental funding or programs. We entered into a contract with the Department of Rehabilitation in 2016 to provide that supplemental funding here in Butte County, and have increased this contract over time to ensure we can continue to provide the employment services our students need. That contract now exceeds the WorkAbility grant by almost 2 to 1. With the shift in funding, and the additional services we can provide through the Department of Rehabilitation, we felt strongly that we needed a new program name that encompassed both programs and showcased our vision for services moving forward, hence, college and career pathways.

Over this past summer, we launched our new program name and were able to bring on an additional job developer. This has reduced the individual case loads of our job development staff, allowing us to spend more time at each campus assisting with student career planning and more time in the classrooms giving lessons to more students on employment readiness, and soft skill development. We have already made a record number of referrals to the Department of Rehabilitation for services they can offer students after they graduate and are partnering with them to get counselors on campus to meet with students that would be good candidates for their programs or college support. My staff will be receiving training on filling out college and financial aid applications, and we have partnered with Butte College to expand employment opportunities for our students on their campus.

We are proud of the work we have done so far, but we are not done yet. We are the hub to the Local Partnership Agreement between the Department of Rehabilitation, Far Northern Regional Center and the LEAs to improve the employment outcomes for students with extensive support needs. This falls under the CA state employment blueprint, and looks to be expanded with Governor Newsom's career education initiative (Executive Order N-11-23). We will keep everyone updated as we continue to grow and change according to the needs of our students and local business partners; however, if there are current gaps in this field that you would like to see filled, please don't hesitate to reach out to me. Thank you for all your support, we couldn't do what we do without the teachers, school administrators, parents and employers that allow us in to provide these experiences for students!



Butte County Districts Shine in Inclusion Academy Session #2!

Erin Miller, SELPA Program Specialist



We are excited to share that many Butte County districts have successfully completed Session #2 of the Inclusion Academy Series, a three-part professional learning opportunity supported by the Supportive Innovative Practices (SIP) grant project team! This impactful series is designed to improve meaningful and effective inclusion for students with disabilities by addressing key factors that influence their success. In Session #1 (January 2025), school and district teams focused on building a strong, inclusive culture within their systems. Session #2 took place recently and centered around inclusive policies and procedures, with a deep dive into real-time data related to inclusion. Butte County district teams, and a few Tehama County district teams, came prepared and they engaged in powerful, data-driven conversations that highlighted their dedication to improving outcomes for all students. Looking ahead, we're thrilled for Session #3 coming this September! Teams will use their learning and insights to create clear, actionable plans that will move inclusive practices forward across the county. Butte County is leading the way—together, we're building schools where every student belongs and thrives!



Butte County SELPA Hosts 2nd Annual "Discovering What's Possible: Parent University & Resource Fair"



Chewy Makes the Rounds at the Little Red Hen 5K Walk/Run and Autism Carnival at Sycamore Park

