



Palo Alto CAC Year-End Report to the Board of Education

June 26, 2020

Here is a summary of the activities of the Palo Alto CAC during the 2019-20 school year.

Community Building

- Family Fun Day (5th Annual) - we had over 300 attendees join and children were very engaged with activities from the Jr. Museum, Library, Magical Bridge, Innovation for Youth, Kids With Dreams, face painting, and more.
- Community Movie Night screening of "Wonder", co-hosted with the Human Relations Commission & Recreation Division of the city of Palo Alto, for promoting Palo Alto community to be united for kindness, acceptance and inclusion.
- Unity Day/Inclusive Schools Week/Not In Our Schools Week - promotion and facilitation.
- Holiday Tea & Mindfulness Workshop (4th Annual) - this year we were helped with hospitality by Futures students.
- Sweetheart Awards (16th Annual) - over 100 teachers, aides, bus drivers, principals, and other education specialists received an award. We had a full house as the community celebrated kindness and effort on behalf of our students with special needs.
- Special Olympics of Northern CA - we promote the events and provide volunteers to the Adaptive PE teachers.
- Bus Driver Appreciation (25+ year Annual) - this year it fell during shelter in place, so we donated 30 hand-sewn masks to bus drivers and passed out Thank You notes from students.

Education

- IEP Basics Workshop with staff from Packard Children's Hospital - about 50 attendees at an informative presentation and Q&A.
- PTA Special Education/Inclusion School Rep Training & Support.
- Co-sponsored "Facilitating Social Skills Using Mobile Technology " workshop with Opening Doors PTA.
- Transition Planning Workshop with PAUSD - developed slides and co-presented. Very well received with more than 60 families from 5th, 8th & 12th grades. District agrees they'd like to make it an annual event;
- Learning Differences & Dyslexia Simulations - our volunteers developed and conducted about 11 sessions for audiences including PAUSD certificated teachers, School Psychologists, PAUSD Special Education Aides, parents, and others.
- Reading Workshop for PAEA - organized a staff training with the teachers' union and IMSE on developing efficient readers with structured literacy.
- Deej: Screening and Discussion of film with director DJ Savarese - we co-sponsored this community event promoting inclusion
- Partnership with Stanford Neurodiversity Project and to promote a culture that treasures the strengths of neurodiverse individuals and introduced this program to the district leadership.

- Hosted Mini-seminar with Ann England, the project coordinator of CAPTAIN (California Autism Professional Training And Information Network) to learn about CAPTAIN and Evidence Based Practices(EBPs) for Autism treatment.
- From the beginning of the school closure, created and maintained an online At Home Resources and added a summer opportunity list for Students with Exceptional Needs with IEPs and 504s

Advisory

- School Board Observer -- bi-monthly analysis of School Board Meeting Agenda items.
- Advocated for retention of PAUSD School Board Two-meeting Rule to preserve transparency & community engagement.
- Special Education service continuum -- Advocated for expansion and funding, provided comment on Non-Public School (NPS) Placements & related support programs
- Dyslexia -- called for investment in professional development, universal screening and capacity-building for literacy and Dyslexia. Advocated for explicit instruction in General Education setting.
- Advocated for city-wide inclusive recreation programs, therapeutic programs and reasonable accommodations for city facilities in partnership with Human Relations Commission of the city of Palo Alto.
- Distance Learning -- raised concerns regarding early remote learning experience. Conducted Survey of parents and presented findings. Advocated to prioritize student needs assessment, individualization, and routine communication. Endorsed in-person Extended School Year.
- CDE's Finding of Disproportionality in PAUSD -- raised concerns regarding identification of students with specific learning differences, and PAUSD's equity efforts.
- SELPA1 CAC -- Representation at meetings and collaboration with local area parents
- Developed relationships with PAUSD's new Special Education Directors for Elementary and Secondary schools.
- Statements to the Board (available in [News section of CAC Website](#)).

Operations

- Monthly CAC Meetings open to the public, where parents can hear from Special Education Directors, School Board Liaison, and others.
- Maintain website and discuss list and communications with parents of students with IEPs

As we move into the next school year, whatever it may hold, our mission remains the same: to bring together and support parents, guardians, students, professionals, and community members to advocate for effective, best practice, Special Education programs and services.

The Palo Alto CAC values our continuing partnership with staff on behalf of parents. As recommended by the CDE**, "collaborative, ongoing discussion about an appropriate path forward once school sites reopen for each student...is critical to ensuring equitable access and offering of FAPE for students with disabilities." We look forward to continued engagement with district and community partners, advising on behalf of parents.

Signed,
Palo Alto CAC Co-Chairs and Committee Members

**Source: <https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/he/hn/sandtinstspeialed.asp>