



## **Palo Alto CAC Year-End Report to the Board of Education June 4, 2021**

Here is a summary of the activities of the Palo Alto CAC during the 2020-21 school year.

### **Community Building**

- Family Fun Day (7th Annual) - this year it was virtual, but we still had about 50 attendees join and children were very engaged with online music with Quarantines, Story Time with the Palo Alto Library, Animal Assisted Happiness Farm Tour, Jr. Museum, and a fun art activity offered by a PAUSD student.
- Unity Day/Inclusive Schools Week (8th annual) - promotion and facilitation.
- Holiday Tea (5th Annual) - This is our annual self-care event for parents and caregivers. This year we did a virtual interactive art activity with a local artist.
- Sweetheart Awards (17th Annual) - once again, over 100 teachers, aides, bus drivers, principals, classmates, and other community members received an award. We had to do our ceremony virtually this year, but nevertheless it was a well-attended and meaningful celebration of kindness and the people who have had a positive impact on our students with special needs.
- Special Olympics of Northern CA - we helped to promote the events (which were online this year) and support the Adaptive PE teachers, including with the virtual run.
- Bus Driver Appreciation (26+ year Annual) - we provided breakfast prepared by Ada's Cafe for this annual celebration of our district's bus drivers.

### **Parent Education**

- Special Education Rights during COVID-19 Distance Learning workshop, with staff from Disability Rights California - about 40 attendees at an informative presentation and Q&A.
- PTA Special Education/Inclusion School Rep Training & Support.
- Hosted a Mini-seminar with Dr. Lawrence Fung, director of the Stanford Neurodiversity Project
- Literacy and the Science of Reading - organized this parent ed event featuring current research by 2 Stanford professors, attended by over 50 people
- Co-sponsored Elementary Special Education Info Night with district staff
- Hosted Palo Alto School Board Candidate Forum with the theme of: Educational Equity and Access: the Achievement Gap and Special Education"
- Co-sponsored "Rethinking Adulthood: A Neurodiversity Trajectory" presentation with REEL.
- Hosted a Mini-seminar with Ann England, the project coordinator of CAPTAIN (California Autism Professional Training And Information Network) to learn Autism interventions during distance learning.
- Transition Planning Workshop with PAUSD for families of students entering 6th, 9th and post-secondary. 2nd year of this event - this year we primarily just promoted it, after last year helping to get it established with the district. Attended by 85 families and well received.
- Co-sponsored "2e Self Advocacy Panel—Help Your Student Understand Their Brain, and Help Their Teachers Understand It, Too" panel with REEL.
- Presented Executive Function Parent workshop and lunch session during PAUSD's Family Leadership Summit and were one of the sponsors of this event.

- Collaborated with PTAC using their eNews as a platform of parent education opportunity for the topics of special education and disability.

### **Advisory**

- Return to in-person instruction -- successfully advocated for district to prioritize highest needs students with disabilities who were unable to access educational benefit from the distance learning offering. First groups of secondary students returned to campus in Summer 2020.
- Dyslexia -- continued calls for investment in professional development, universal screening, evidence-based interventions, and capacity-building. Stakeholder meetings with District Literacy and Dyslexia Coordinators. Legislative advocacy for California SB237 (Universal Screening for Risk of Dyslexia).
- Equity - Represented needs of Students with Disabilities in the district stakeholder meetings to address the CDE's Finding of Significant Disproportionality in PAUSD.
- Sexual Health Ed - advocated for improved programming for students who may be at risk and would benefit from an enhanced sexual health ed program
- SELPA1 CAC -- Representation at meetings and collaboration with local area parents
- Bi-monthly analysis of School Board Meeting Agenda items and statements to the Board on relevant items (available in [News section of CAC Website](#))..

### **Operations**

- Monthly CAC Meetings open to the public, where parents could hear from Special Education Directors, School Board Liaison, and others.
- Maintained website, google group and communications with parents of students with IEPs

During this unprecedented year, our mission remained 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.

As schools are expected to move back to full in-person in the coming school year, 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

[www.cacpaloalto.org](http://www.cacpaloalto.org)