

**LA CAÑADA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT
MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE GOVERNING BOARD**

June 27, 2006

SPECIAL MEETING

The Special Meeting of the Governing Board of La Cañada Unified School District was called to order at 6:03 p.m. by President Scott Tracy on June 27, 2006 in the Round Building at 4490 Cornishon Avenue in La Cañada, California. Present were Board Members: Scott Tracy, Jinny Dalbeck, Cindy Wilcox and Joel Peterson, Deputy Superintendent Bill Loose, Assistant Superintendent Michael Leininger and Executive Secretary to the Superintendent Kim Bergner. There were 20 people in the audience. Mr. Tracy asked Sue Dietel to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS BOARD ON AGENDIZED ITEMS

The following audience members addressed the Board:

None

WORKSHOP: Special Education

The workshop began at 6:04 p.m. Mr. Tracy introduced Dr. Tammy Jackson, Director of Special Education. Dr. Jackson began her presentation with the history of Special Education and continued her presentation with the background on what defines Special Education and a student with disabilities. Under the current system, a student is tested after they have fallen behind in learning the regular curriculum. If testing shows a discrepancy between intelligence and achievement, the student receives special education services. By the time the IEP (Individual Education Plan) is implemented, the child might be two years behind. Dr. Jackson said that this is sometimes referred to as the "waiting to fail" model.

Special Education services were discussed. Dr. Jackson explained the DIS services (Designated Instructional Services) and the process for identifying services for students. Dr. Jackson reported on the Response to Intervention (RTI) which is a new model that is expected to be initiated. RTI is a comprehensive, multi-step process that closely monitors how the student is responding to different types of research-based services and instruction. RTI is an intervention program that would be implemented for identified students prior to the student being referred to Special Education. Dr. Jackson said that RTI will start services much sooner than under the old "discrepancy model". Using RTI, students will receive help and intervention before they have fallen behind.

Dr. Jackson explained the Individual Educational Plan (IEP). Dr. Jackson clarified what an IEP must include; the role of the general education teacher in the IEP and what happens when there is a disagreement in the IEP.

The Costs and Services of Special Education were presented to the Board. The State and Federal Governments require the District to provide services to Special Education students, but the governments do not provide adequate funding. These requirements are sometimes referred to as unfunded mandates. Using rounded figures, the District budget is approximately \$32 million. Special Education costs about \$5 million. Total State and Federal revenue for Special Education provide about \$3 million. The remaining \$2 million is paid out of the General Fund. This cost to the general fund is referred to as an encroachment on the general fund.

Dr. Jackson ended the workshop with her plans for improving the special education program by providing new instructional training programs for teachers and aides; new perspectives including accommodations, modifications and teaching strategies; and providing parent educational forums.

Parents in the audience were given the opportunity to discuss various special education issues. Several parents stressed the need for transition meetings between the prior year teacher and the new teacher at the start of the school year. The prior year teacher often has valuable tips and strategies for helping a child succeed and the sooner the new teacher is aware of these, the better the start of the new year. The parents noted that this meeting usually can not be held at the end of a school year because the upcoming teacher has not yet been assigned.

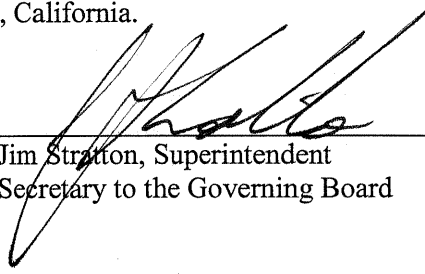
During the discussion, members of the audience and Board noted Special Education staffing had decreased over several years, while the total Special Education budget had increased significantly. Staff was asked to consider whether or not an increase in district Special Education aides or service providers could decrease the number of private placements. As an example, in the past, the district had sent students to outside services for occupational therapy. Eventually the district hired occupational therapists to offer the services in-house. This provided the same service for the students and saved money.

Audience members suggested that social and emotional sessions could be considered for in-house services. In another area, with the growth in the number of autistic students, would it be possible for the SELPA to run a school for autistic children which may cost less than the current private placement schools. A parent also recommended that the District re-start a district Special Education Advisory Committee. The comment was made that the SELPA committee is not focused on district issues, and doesn't meet the same need. Another suggestion was to offer awareness classes to general education students. Parents also suggested that the district needs a form-filler computer program to facilitate IEP documentation.

The Board thanked Dr. Jackson for tonight's presentation and the parents for attending.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 8:17 p.m. The Next Regular Meeting of the Governing Board will be held on Tuesday, July 11, 2006 at 7:00 p.m. in the Round Building at 4490 Cornishon Avenue in La Canada, California.



 Jim Stratton, Superintendent
 Secretary to the Governing Board

MINUTES APPROVED



 Susan Boyd, Clerk



 Date