

Report on SELPA III CAC Workshop: “IDEA 2004 and NCLB”

Compiled by Tom Cobourn, October 16, 2007

Event Info

Date: Thursday, September 27, 2007

Time: 7pm – 9pm

Location: Campbell Union High School District Office

Speaker: Pamela Ptacek, SELPA Director, Santa Clara County Office of Education

Attendance

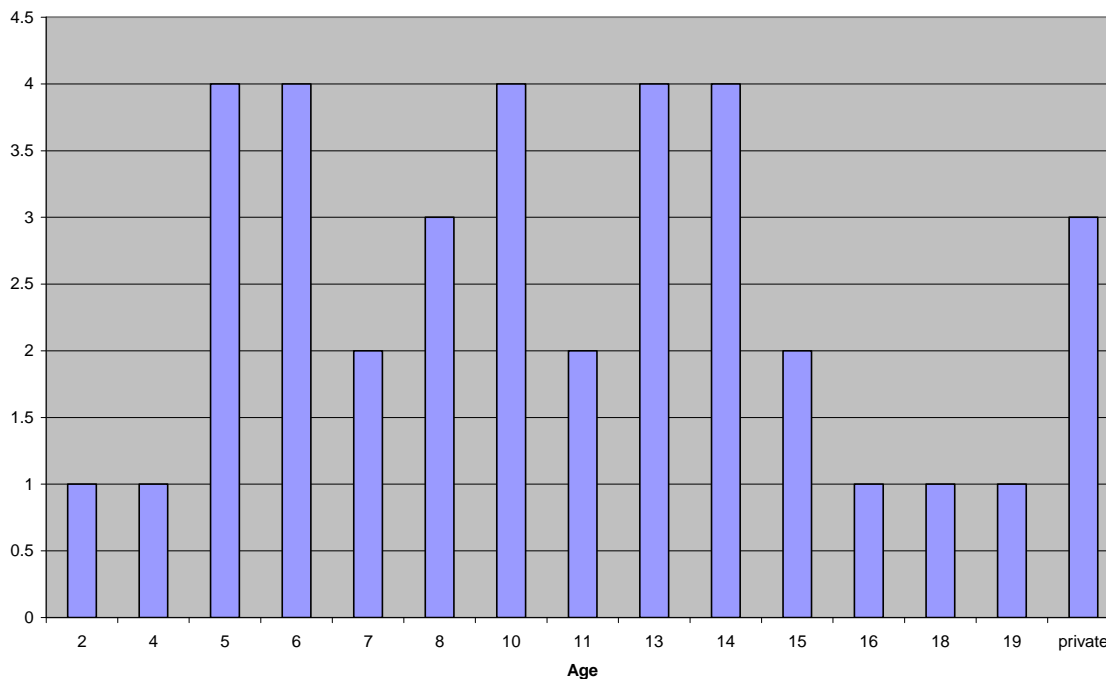
Approximately 35-40 by visual count.

About 25 at start of talk.

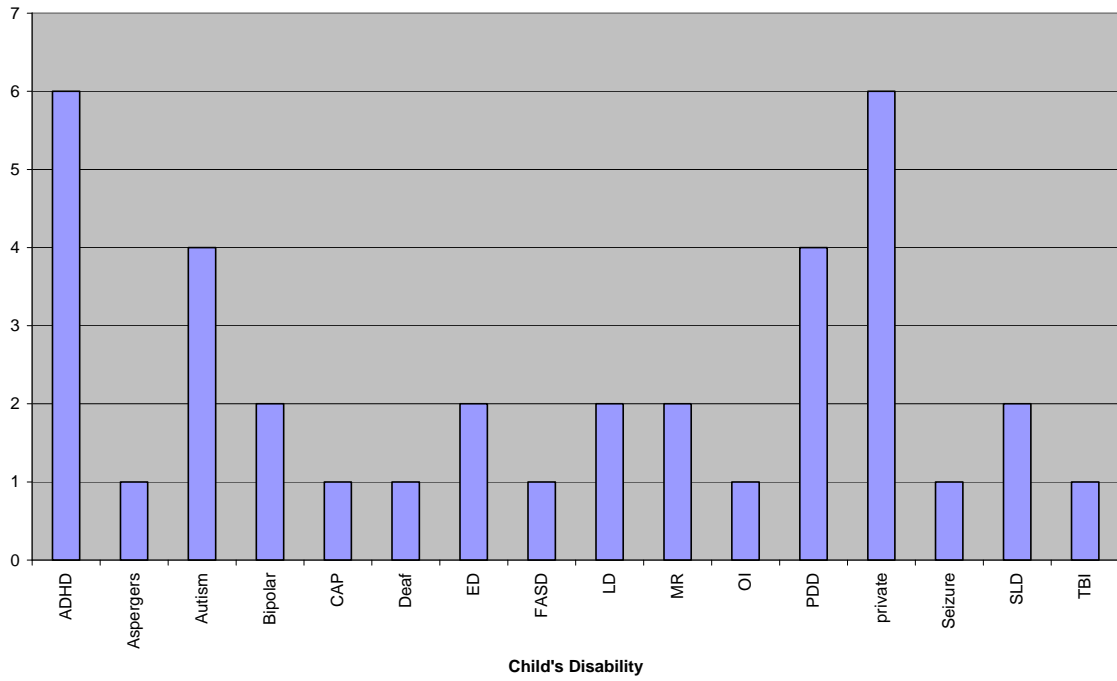
30 names on sign-up sheet (includes 3 CAC members).

Attendance breakdown by category:

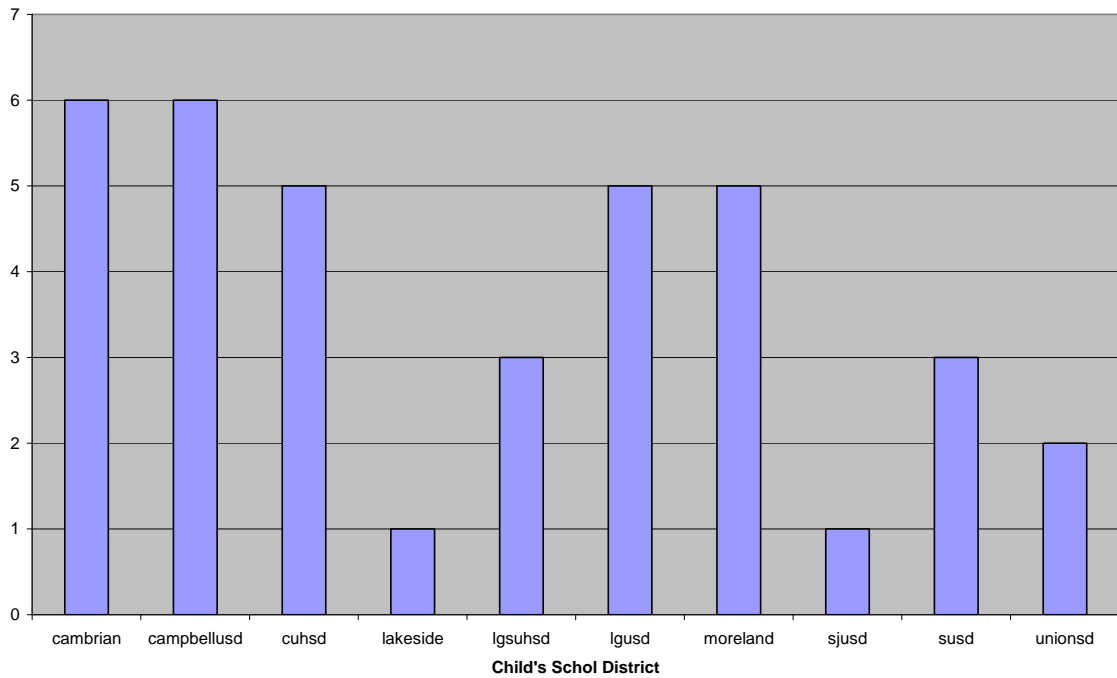
Attendance by Child's Age



Attendance by Disability



Attendance by School District



Questions and Feedback

The audience listened intently and appeared very interested in the topic. Questions from the audience were very relevant, though they had a tendency to be focused on a specific issue / child. Pamela was excellent at generalizing the questions to make them applicable to more of the audience.

Many of the parent questions are listed below:

- “My child hasn’t had an assessment in 3 years.” Parent was advised to contact teacher. Related notes:
 - Law says that educators must try intervention before assessment.
 - Obligation however is to “search and serve”.
 - Parent can deny services for children who are new to special education (“first-timers”).
- “I’m hazy on how many days you get prior written notice after requesting services at an IEP.” Parent said they never received a notice of any kind regarding services. Parent advised (I think) to contact IEP team to clarify.
 - “Prior written notice” goes to parents upon initial referral for assessment, OR when district proposes to initiate or change, OR when district refuses to initiate or change the identification, assessment, or educational placement of the child or the provision of FAPE to the child.
 - A proposed assessment plan must be developed within 15 days of the referral for assessment.
- “Is there a list of services available to choose from? For example, I just found out that there is a ‘full’ reading SDC available, but I don’t know how to get in it”. Pamela advised that the “annual service plan” can be found at the CA Dept. of Education (CDE) website under Special Ed / Data Collection. Look for “composite of laws” and “related services”.
 - Note that you have the right to receive “some” educational benefit from services, not the maximum benefit.
- “My child was held back a grade, then later it was found he has speech/language delay. But now he’s falling behind again”. Pamela advised to call an IEP and find out why.
- “Short term objectives/benchmarks are no longer mandatory except for students who use alternate achievement standards. But I’m afraid that’ll mean a year will pass before I find that my child has made no progress”. Pamela said that you should still get progress reports 4 times per year. If you see no progress then you need to call an IEP asap.
- “My child was exempted from state wide assessment with a waiver. The teacher recommended this”. Pamela advised parents to allow their children to be tested in state wide assessments like STAR. They need the practice at taking tests, just like any child.
- “My child could not read the standardized test”. Pamela acknowledged that this was a difficult issue. The non-reading portion of tests can be read to a child, but the reading portion can not.
- “What can I do to help my child pass the high school exit exam?” Pamela suggested CAHSEE classes after school (put it into your child’s IEP), and get

extra materials, e.g., you can Google to get sample questions. Chris DeLapp noted that CAHSEE subject matter is worked into their daily instruction. Also you can take the parts separately – you don't have to take it all at once. And you have 6 opportunities to pass.

- “Funding for RSP (resource specialist pupils) is inadequate”. Pamela talked about her involvement in an October drive (“ECHO campaign”?) for adequate state and federal funding of special education. Right now only 25% of a district's special ed budget comes from the General Fund. That means district resources from regular ed are sapped to help special ed – so everyone is affected. Huge increase in high cost students like those with autism is making matters worse. One special concern is the minimal funding for preschool.

Other notable items from the speaker:

- Our SELPA offers facilitated IEP meetings where trained facilitators can help to resolve conflicts. There are 3 PHP facilitators as well as program specialists, teachers, and Pamela herself who have been trained.
- Aides must have an AA degree.
- An IEP amendment to increase or decrease services can be done in writing without having a meeting. But you must have a meeting for placement in services.
- School cannot say that medications are needed to receive an education.
- For due process hearing, subject matter must be in writing before the meeting and not added during the meeting.
- www.sccoe.org --Student Services--SELPA has parent's rights and other documents in 5 languages.

Follow Up Actions

8 parents requested copies of the presentation: 6 by email and 2 by physical mail. These were sent on October 16, 2007.

Thank you note for Pamela will be hand delivered to her at October 18th SELPA III Ops meeting.

Lessons Learned / Suggestions

- Some parents, and the speaker, had difficulty with traffic. Would there have been less traffic at 7:30pm?
- Several parents stayed on to discuss their personal issues in small groups. Should we have some mechanism for parents to vent their concerns so that over time CAC can generalize the issues and provide feedback to administrators?
- Used 24 water bottles and a few soda bottles. 96 water bottles and 15 soda bottles were left over for our next workshop.
- Decrease sign-up sheet width by ½ inch so it can be electronically scanned.
- Provide more copies of the handouts. Can we ask speakers to bring a certain number of them?