Stakeholder Group Notes
3/17/11
CCSA Offices

Attendance
Charter Members: Carolyn McConnell, Mary Bush, Miranda Marsh, Ruben Duenas, Pat Dwyer, Kaye Ragland, Meg Palisoc, Chidozie Ollawa, Amy Hanreddy, Toby Bornstein, Salvada Villescas, Yvetter King-Berg, Joaquin Hernandez, Shakeh Avakian, Diane French, Jennifer Lockwood, Mary Funaoka, Marsha Rybin, Jacqueline Elliot.
LAUSD Members: Nancy Franklin, Jose Cole-Gutierrez
CCSA: Samantha Corbin
Cross & Joftus: Barbara Young, Joe Dominic, Ginger Adams Simon, Bernie Yaklin

Introductions
Joe Dominic welcomed the group and offered apologies on behalf of Alice Parker, Project Manager for her absence. Her husband's sudden illness prevented her from coming, but she is looking forward to working with the group as we move forward.

Joe Dominic has been serving as a focus group facilitator on the project. Barbara Young is a site visit leader, Bernie Yaklin is the data manager for the project, and Ginger Adams Simon is the project researcher and writer.

Why We Are Here
- We are here to try to better understand the progress you are making and the challenges you continue to face in improving the success of all students with disabilities.
- We've got to do a better job- all of us. We also want to help strengthen the partnership you have as stakeholders with CCSA.
- We need your help and guidance as we move forward.

What Are We Doing?

- Targeted site visits, focus groups and interviews
- Survey of all LAUSD Charter SELPA staff
- School sites chosen based on variety of factors to try to get a diversity of size, type (Elem., Middle, High), student demographics and API status[1]
- Twenty five schools engaged to date, over 200 hundred classrooms visited

Correction: Community Charter Early Col- API was adjusted and is officially 753

Whom Are We Serving?[2]

---

[1] Refer to chart on power point (slide #14) for list of schools

- Study pool = 121 charters in LAUSD SELPA
- 63.9% of students with IEPs in the study pool are classified as "Specific Learning Disability" This compares to 54.03% in LAUSD as a whole and 45.13% in California.
- 9.5% of the study pool population has an IEP. This compares to 12.4% in LAUSD and 11% in California.
- Males in the study pool are about twice as likely as females to have IEPs
- Students with IEPs in the study pool as reported as being in the regular education classroom on average almost 90% of their day. This compares to 74% in the district and 78% in the state.
- "Specialized Academic Instruction" is the service most often provided to students with IEPs in the study pool.

Comments from Stakeholders:
- CASEMIS data are only as accurate as the data entered by the schools
- Many students have special needs but do not have IEPs
- Concern about some disabilities that appear on the comparative charts (slides 7 and 8). Because the charts compare All California, LAUSD, and the Charter Pool, some disabilities that will never be served (for example, Deaf-Blind and Established Medical Disability) by the charters are included. These slides are intended to display the diversity across the IEP population at large, not an expectation that all schools will serve all disabilities.

<u>Emerging Issues Discussion</u>

Leadership
How clear is the leadership role in articulating a special education plan?
- Depends on how old the school is
- Depends on the size – easy to get to consensus in a small school.
- The experience and expertise of the leader plays a big role in whether or not an explicit plan is in place
- What will it take to strengthen the capacity of charter school leaders to improve the success of students with disabilities?
- What do you see as most useful for improving school leadership?
- Should there be different approaches based on size of schools? Some of you expressed the opinion that there is a big difference in leadership challenges (and capacities) between large and small schools
- To what extent should the special education plan provide contingencies for meeting the needs of all students with disabilities, including those with moderate/severe challenges?
- How should leadership focus on routinely trying to find new/better strategies
- You expressed the desire to have all teachers brought up to speed and to understand what they need to know and be able to do

---

[2] Refer to powerpoint slides for classification charts. Data were obtained through CASEMIS records and filtered for relevancy to the project.

- Do we know how effective we really are trying to fully integrate students with disabilities into regular classrooms? To what extent is there need for strong leadership here?
- Bringing Parents In – It can be more difficult than you would think. We tried to integrate the special ed kids and got push back from parents

<u>Charter Challenges We Need to Address</u>
- There seems to be a big difference between charter start-ups and conversion charters as to how they approach special education
- There was a comment from one stakeholder (ICEF) about having a high performing school. But more strategic effort is needed for the school to fully address the challenge of kids with special needs. Founders didn't quite understand what this might require financially
- Training needs to explicitly include school process for moving students in an out of special ed programs
- How could school leadership do a better job attracting and retaining quality SPED teachers?
- Some charter startups might have only one RSP teacher
- Need to move towards intentional not informal service to students with special needs
- A critical flaw in the charter school application process – it does not address the need for authorizers and founders to fully and thoroughly address the learning needs of all students.
- With respect to SPED, there is great diversity of schools and challenges in LAUSD. We talk too much about numbers of students being served. We need to focus more on the quality of services and performance of all students
- Credentialing programs for charter teachers- there seems to be a lack of understanding by schools of education

Collaboration – Creating Communities of Practice for Special Educators
- Do we really understand our capacity with SPED teachers to meet the requirement of setting aside time during the school day for planning and collaboration?
- Collaboration is more difficult for small charters. They have to contract out some services. More training and collaboration are difficult
- How can we share contact information among special ed directors to facilitate interaction and exchange about different ways we handle learning challenges?
- We need to work with LAUSD on developing better and more useful ways of communicating about challenges and securing effective assistance for improving the success of students with disabilities
- Routine needs include: time to deal with articulation, SST meetings, common time for grade levels to meet
- One school (CHIME) schedules 20 minutes everyday for debriefing on how well students with disabilities are responding to instruction and learning. What did you do to reach a child today?
- It is sometimes difficult to ensure all teachers share up-to-the-minute information about how students with disabilities are progressing in their schooling. We want to improve process of getting useful information/data to teachers
- We need to pool resources for professional development, cross-visitations

Professional Development Issues

- Let's have a Charter Special Ed Summit this Summer. Bring in service providers and showcase best practices
- Explore ways to effectively do psychological testing
- How can we do a better job purchasing assistive technologies?
- How can we be more effective using behavioral interventions?
- We should explore using a Mediator- to support us with challenges to IEP process
- Where are we effectively using technology to meet learning needs?
- Need to look at new things and what works – maybe in other states

Data- Data Systems

- We are required to use Welligent, the data system "sucks"
- No user manual. When things aren't working you can't get help
- We need all-year access!!!
- School-based and student-based data. What can we do to get a hold of this information? CCSA may need to compile this data themselves
- Feeling of inadequate support from LAUSD, student records disappearing from the school rolls, and difficulty getting useful information from the system.
- CASEMIS data submitted by the SELPAs have not been made available to the schools
- While Jody Molodow is widely respected and liked, other staff have been rude to Charter School Directors when they request information and one was told that her school was not eligible for PD services

General Comments/Issues

- Will we provide good examples in the report? Yes, we will highlight models of excellence and name names
- Let us know if there is a program you want us to see or someone we should talk to.
- Love the calibration aspect of our (C&J) visits. Excited that there will be validation for us

Next steps

- On Line Meeting on 4/11- UPDATE: Live Meeting scheduled for 4/11, 9:30 a.m.
- Meeting in LA on 4/14
- Homework- see URLs