



Special EDITION

San Joaquin County
Special Education Local Plan Area

2014 - 2015 · VOLUME 2

January 2015

2015



Save The Date!

All events held at:

SJCOE Wentworth Education Center
2707 Transworld Dr., Stockton

February 24

Autism Authorization Strand, presented by Ananda Aspen from Central CA Diagnostic Center, "The Incredible 5-Point Scale and Other Self-Regulation Strategies", 9:00 a.m.—10:00 a.m. in Chartville 1. For more information, contact Patti Farhat at (209) 468-4928.

Autism Assessment Strand, presented by Ananda Aspen from Central CA Diagnostic Center, "24-Autism Characteristics", 12:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m. in Chartville 1. For more information, contact Patti Farhat at (209) 468-4928.

March 16

Community Advisory Committee Business Meeting, 9:00 a.m.—10:00 a.m., Chartville 1.

Community Advisory Committee Presentation: Behavior—Response to Intervention 10:00 a.m.—12:00 p.m., Chartville 1. For more information, contact Patti Farhat at (209) 468-4928.

For more information/events please visit our online calendar at www.sjcoe.org

Students with Autism make CONNECTIONS!

At the beginning of the 2014-2015 school year San Joaquin County Special Programs announced that the preschool autism program would be known as CONNECTIONS! The program consists of twelve classes spread throughout the county and is designed to serve students ages 3-5 on the autism spectrum. At the time, preschool staff explained that the name was chosen because making connections is what they do all day with students making communication connections, social connections, and cognitive connections while the staff works hard to structure environments to facilitate those connections.

A visit to the program revealed that the CONNECTIONS! theme goes even farther. The program has been restructured, resulting in four levels of classes. "There's a great deal of research that shows the benefits of working with more homogeneous groups," said Susan Scott, Coordinator of Autism Programming. "Students have similar skills and needs, they are less frustrated, and there is more targeted teaching."

The four levels allow for a progression of learning and skill development that moves students toward success and independence. Level one is an intense, richly staffed program that focuses on instructional readiness skills. Students generally make rapid progress in this level. Level two moves into pairing students in learning situations. Potty training intensifies if needed and there are more concepts and skills taught. Students generally spend more time in Level 2. Level three starts to look more like a preschool with about 80% of the classroom time in group instruction. Level 4, the "mock classroom" uses preschool curriculum and focuses on accelerated academics, other preschool skills, and self-help, while still addressing individual areas of need.



Tim is good at cutting!

(See CONNECTIONS, page 6)

From Our SELPA Director Kathleen Skeels

Happy New Year 2015!

It is time to celebrate a new year and a new beginning. Think about all those things that are important to you as a parent, son, daughter, grandparent and educator. Savor the opportunities that are available every day. “The voyage of discovery is not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes.” by Marcel Proust. We celebrate **James “Jamie” Mousalimas** as our newly elected County Superintendent of Schools. He has a vision for educational excellence. Jamie has already visited more than 80% of the San Joaquin County Office of Education Special Education teachers. He has set his goal on visiting every class this year and I know he will accomplish that. When we visit a class I see a Superintendent that looks kindly, and for the potential of every student and supports the stellar work done by educators.

Students with special needs are general education students first and Jamie reflects his inclusive perspective when he speaks of all students young and old. He will visit all of the districts and listen so he has a good grasp of the perspectives and needs of those he serves. We will all benefit from James’ leadership in the coming years. He fosters, trusts, and encourages everyone to have the opportunity to be a leader because the potential and work to be done is endless. Welcome James Mousalimas!



Kathleen Skeels
Asst. Superintendent/SELPA Director



Ezequiel (right) and James (left) hard at work
with Superintendent Mousalimas



Delilah puts away toys with Celina and Superintendent Mousalimas

Search & Serve

If you have a baby who was very small or sick at birth or a young child whose development worries you, a telephone call may put you in touch with someone who can answer your questions and help you get service for your child. Call your school district office or the San Joaquin County Office of Education at (209) 468-4925 for more information.

Si usted tiene un bebé, quien era muy pequeño o enfermo de nacimiento o un niño de quien su desarrollo le preocupa, una llamada telefónica puede ponerlo en contacto con alguien quien le puede contestar sus preguntas y ayudarlo a obtener servicios para su niño. Hable a la oficina de su distrito escolar o a la Oficina de Educación del Condado de San Joaquin al (209) 468-4925 para más información.

250 Young Adult Students Enjoy Festivale in Hawaii

250 young adult special education students from across San Joaquin County reveled in food, music and fun at the **Festivale in Hawaii** on November 9 at the Brookside Country Club. Sponsored by the Junior League of San Joaquin County and Ladybugs of San Joaquin County, it was the second year of the celebration. Students from 17 classes in Stockton, Manteca, Tracy and Lodi, along with their teachers, enjoyed a dazzling choice of activities with lots of great food.

Greeted at the door of the beautifully decorated Brookside Country Club with leis and escorted to their tables, students were offered a continental breakfast buffet. A gift bag for each student and teacher was delivered to their table. Soon the DJ began spinning tunes that brought most to their feet for dancing. Between dances many took advantage of the photo booth to record the good time with friends. Baskin-Robbins ice cream was also on hand with a seemingly endless supply of ice cream, enough for seconds and more! Pizza for lunch and a luscious dessert bar rounded off the event. Busses arrived soon after to take all back to their classes, full, tired and looking forward to next year's Festivale!

"None of this would have been possible without the support of so many individuals and businesses throughout the community", observed Daisy Plovnick, co-chair of the event and member of Junior League of San Joaquin. She and co-chair Pat Delucchi worked for months planning the event, organizing the volunteers and securing the sponsorships to make it possible. This year a videographer was on hand to record the event and interview participants with the goal of developing a short film to use to generate support for Festivale in the future. The many volunteers worked tirelessly under the direction of Plovnick and Delucchi to make the Festivale another stunning success.

"We are already thinking about the next Festivale," Daisy said. "Look for our next theme to be Festivale Goes West!"



1) Daisy Plovnick and son Michael help decorate. 2) Students from Marina Young Adult and Lincoln Young Adult Transition Program pose for a picture!
3) Left to right: Laura Estrada, Daisy Plovnick, Sharon Brenneise and Margaret St. George enjoy the Festivale.

Positive Behavior Intervention Training Well Received

Thirty-six educators from the San Joaquin County (SJC) Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA) and partner non-public schools recently attended two days of a three part training course on positive behavior intervention strategies offered by the SELPA. Presenters were: Rolf Athearn and Irene Acevedo, Program Specialists; Clint Eatmon, Behavior Intervention Specialist; Susan Scott, Autism Coordinator; and Ted McNair, Educational Behavior Analyst. Participants came to the training with a variety of levels of experience. The purpose of the training is to develop and demonstrate competency in identifying positive behavior interventions, administering and writing reports for Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA), and developing Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP). Individuals who successfully complete the training will receive a certificate of participation and competency by SJC SELPA in the continuum of positive behavior intervention strategies.

This course places a “strong emphasis on identifying and implementing positive behavior interventions”, remarked Rolf Athearn, who helped develop the eight training modules in the course. “Implementing these preventive and pro-active strategies in the classroom and school setting can have a positive effect in reducing problem behaviors,” Athearn continued. Recent changes in California law, with the passage of AB 86, resulted in a need for this training both to update educators on the legal background and to refine the competencies and skills required in the area of behavior intervention. Before the next meeting in March, participants will have administered a functional behavior analysis and developed a behavior intervention plan based on the assessment. “During our next session those BIPs will be peer reviewed using a quality evaluation tool,” Athearn said.

Participants commented that the on-line resources provided will be helpful, that the course provided useful information on problem behaviors at all levels, that there were great examples of real-life situations, and that there was excellent information to take back to the field.

Presenter Irene Acevedo explained that it is expected that the participants will take the training back to their districts and schools to share with teachers in the classrooms. A second three part training opportunity will be offered in April and May.



Above: Presenter Rolf Athearn,
Program Specialist

Below: Presenter Irene Acevedo,
Program Specialist



SJCOE Cabinet Left to right: Jim Thomas, Jane Steinkamp, James Mousalimas,
Kathleen Skeels, Janine Cuaresma

Training for English Learners Draws Crowd

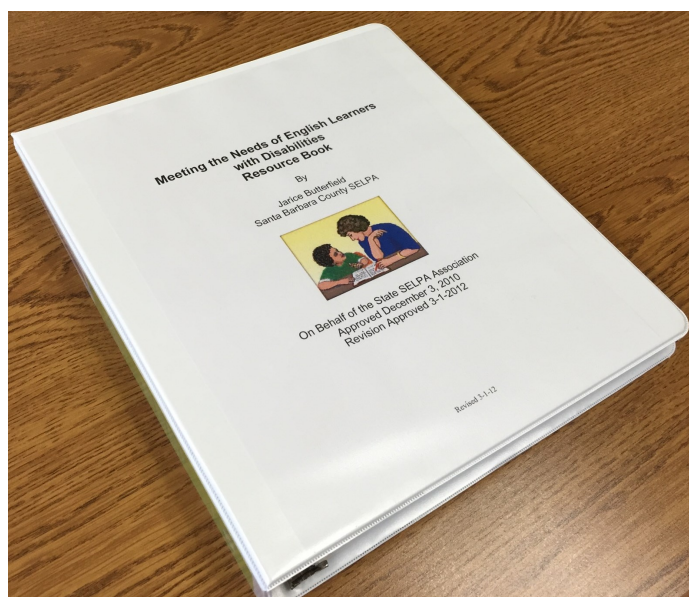
San Joaquin County SELPA welcomed a packed house to a recent training for working with English Learners. Two hundred educators from around the Central Valley and Bay Area attended the presentation titled “Best Practices for Working with English Learners with Disabilities and English Learners/Special Education Training of Trainers. Dr. Jarice Butterfield, Language Development Specialist and Director for the Santa Barbara SELPA presented. The training was given in two parts, a morning general session and an afternoon session for training of trainers.”

Dr. Butterfield is an acknowledged leader in the area of working with English Learners. She brought a wealth of information and strategies aimed at increasing knowledge and skills in assessing English Learners, writing linguistically appropriate and compliant Individualized Education Plans (IEPs), and providing needed services.

The morning session was intense, concentrating on providing attendees with information and details about working with English Learners. Dr. Butterfield shared many worksheets, forms and other helpful materials. In the afternoon the focus switched to how to take the information and materials back to districts and SELPAs in order to put the information learned into practice locally.

“One of the ‘take-away’ lessons I appreciated,” commented Staci Johnson, San Joaquin County SELPA Program Specialist, “was Dr. Butterfield’s approach to writing appropriate IEPs for EL students. She showed us how to connect the dots from assessment to goals, to developing implementation strategies that will lead to student growth.”

This training was developed by the state SELPA Directors organization. Kathleen Skeels, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education/SELPA Director for San Joaquin County, explained that she was part of a committee within the organization which planned seven presentations by Dr. Butterfield throughout the state. “This is such an important area for us to be on top of, with our demographics and diversity. Addressing the needs of English Learners in both the general and special education populations is required by law for all students. Our goal is to be sure that all who are responsible for the education of English Learners have the tools, skills and knowledge so they can confidently serve all students.” Collaboration to coordinate these regionalized trainings allowed the information to reach a maximum audience. “That’s the value of SELPAs,” said Kathleen Skeels. “It’s what we do!”

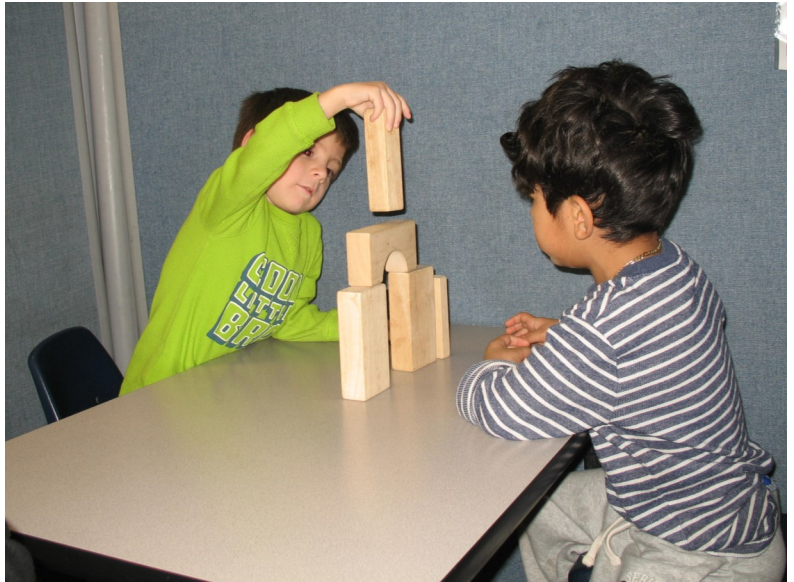


Dr. Jarice Butterfield, Language Development Specialist and Director for Santa Barbara SELPA

CONNECTIONS Cont.

“Our real focus is always about communication and socialization in all four levels,” Susan Scott explained.

The structure of the leveled classes has been helpful to parents, Scott continued. “They are able to see the progression of learning from level to level and it seems to relieve their anxiety about where their child is going and how they will be exposed to accelerated learning at every step. So, in addition to the connections seen in the curriculum areas, there is also a valuable connection in the structure itself as it unifies and directs student learning and is a further inspiration for our new name, CONNECTIONS!”



Above: Ricardo and Andres playing with cars and blocks. Below: Santiago works in his cubby (left). Lovely Lluvia (right).

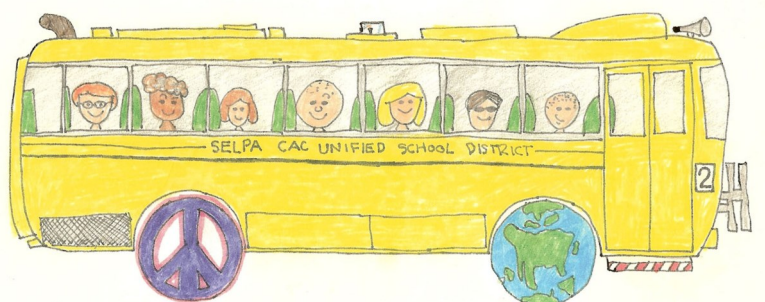


Community Advisory Committee Presents on Nutrition

Our recent Community Advisory Committee (CAC) workshop, held on January 12, 2015, was on the topic of Nutrition. This workshop started with Donna Beckman and Katie Savage, Registered Nurses with County Programs, discussing student’s nutritional needs at each age and a providing a plethora of resources on healthy eating. Then, Tissa Lopez-Jewart, Behavior Intervention Specialist and Kristi Baysinger, Educational Behavioral Analyst, both with San Joaquin County Special Education Programs, gave information on behavioral aspects surrounding picky eaters. They also provided a wide variety of resources and suggestions to those in attendance to take home and review. Presenters took time to answer questions from participants, which were specific to their situations. Audience members shared how much they enjoyed this presentation and the helpful information shared by the presenters.

The last CAC presentation this year will be on March 16, 2015 from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. The topic will be “Empowering Parents to Address Behaviors” and will include panel presentations and demonstrations on accessing resources.

For more information on CAC, or to join, please contact Patti Farhat at (209) 468-4928 or by email at pfarhat@sjcoe.net.



Over 1,000 Students Benefiting from WorkAbility I

The San Joaquin SELPA WorkAbility I (WAI) grant has begun the second half of the school year with a bang – Happy New Year! WAI teachers are busy assisting 165 middle school and 805 high school students in gaining knowledge about future careers, employment and education. WAI job developers have placed over 150 of the 192 possible students at job training sites allowing these students to gain valuable on the job experience. One of these students has had the good fortune to be hired permanently by Home Goods back in December.

During the Holiday season, many of the young adult WAI classes developed, implemented and sold holiday gifts as fundraising activities for future outings. This allowed students to learn about product development, how to calculate how much material or ingredients would cost, decide how much profit the product would support, develop a production schedule, develop marketing to sell the product and meet delivery deadlines. This was a great way to introduce many students to the idea of micro enterprises, essentially small businesses that take a work force of one or a few to produce a product to sell. Micro enterprises can be a good option for many people. At the CHOICES self-advocacy conference on May 1, held at the Wentworth Education Center in Stockton, people will have an opportunity to see micro enterprise in action as micro enterprise entrepreneurs will be at the conference selling their wares.

WAI is also supporting an upcoming tour to Las Positas College. One of our WAI teachers, Mrs. Robins, will be taking her students to the campus for a tour so they can see that college is a viable opportunity and one to look forward to as they get ready to leave high school. WAI encourages future employment, training and education. WAI will continue to provide updates on the many great things that our students, staff and teachers are doing to support students in their future goals and dreams.



Marsela at Home Goods



Gabi L. at the library

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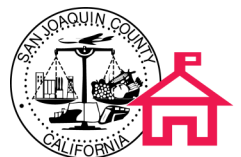
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Thank you to the sponsors who made the Festivale possible



WorkAbility I students on the job. Above: Erin at Petco

Below: Danny at Walgreens



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