

# Special EDition



San Joaquin County  
Special Education Local Plan Area

2017 - 2018 · VOLUME III · May 2018

## Stockton Leadership

Brandie Brunni, Division Director of Special Education Programs, is making connections within the San Joaquin region through her participation in the Leadership Stockton Class of 2018. Leadership Stockton brings professionals together from a wide variety of professions to learn about the wonderful resources and history of Stockton and San Joaquin County. The intent of the program is to further develop leaders and make connections. Each year the Leadership class chooses a project to support the community while raising funds to accomplish the goal.

This year Project Improve, Mentor, Promote, and Advance Our Children and Teens (IMPACT) will be making renovations to the Teen Impact Center, Children's Museum, and developing a mentorship program to support the youth in the community. It was clear early on that this Leadership Stockton Class of 2018 had a focus on supporting the development of youth in our community. Brandie is thrilled to be part of this group of individuals and leaders to further their knowledge of our students with special needs and develop connections to support students.



Leadership Stockton Class of 2018!



Team bonding with the Stockton Leadership class.

## What's inside...

1

Stockton Leadership

2

A message from our  
SELPA Director

3

Community Advisory Committee  
(CAC)

Give Every Child A Chance

Rotary Read-In

4

5th Annual C.A.P.T.A.I.N.  
Summit — A BIG Success!

A Special Teacher

5

WorkAbility I Participates in  
Mock Interviews

Restorative Practices in  
Washington D.C. and New York  
City

Positive Behavior Tips for  
Special Education

6

CHOICES

Upcoming Events

7

Rising Above Dyslexia Challenges  
Legislative Information Sharing Day

8

The Road Less Traveled

PENT

9

LSH Spring Symposium —  
Spring Fling!

Riverside ADR Conference

10

Now Hiring IA's

Interested in professional development opportunities? Information on upcoming San Joaquin County SELPA workshops and trainings can be found on our website at:

<http://www.sjcoe.org/SELPA>

# From Our SELPA Director Kathleen Skeels

We are making it to the end of the year with a lot of celebrations and graduations! This is also the time of the year when there is state budget development and legislation activity. At the federal level, there are minor monetary increases for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEA). California receives about 10% of the federal special education dollars. There is no increase in state dollars for special education services. However, there is one-time funding for local educational agencies (LEAs) to implement programs to increase and retain special education teachers.

The teacher shortage across the state is of grave concern. There continues to be a decrease in funding trend for special education. Initially, the federal government promised to pay for 40% of the special education costs that were mandated. They are currently funding at 8.85%. State funding has gone from 38.28% to 26.70% in the last ten years. Statewide the LEAs or districts pay 64.45% of special education costs out of local funds. Increases to the overall cost may relate to additional staffing to address the increasing students with disabilities (SWD) population, health insurance, increasing pension costs, and salary settlements.



**Kathleen Skeels**  
Assistant Superintendent,  
Special Education/SELPA  
Director

## Legislation: **SUPPORT AB 3136 (O'Donnell)**

This would bring in over 15 million dollars to our SELPA by:

- Funding our SELPA at the 95<sup>th</sup> percentile since we receive less than other SELPAs to do the same things.
- Establish funding within AB 602 for programs serving preschoolers with disabilities. We receive no funding to serve our preschoolers, especially those with intensive needs such as autism.
- Provide additional funding for students with significant high-cost disabilities.
- Amend AB 602 to allow use of either current school year ADA or prior school year ADA, whichever is greater, in the aggregation of total SELPA ADA for multiple district SELPAs.

Educators will keep doing excellent work with our students. However, we all need to continue to bring light to the trend of more students with disabilities and the decline in required funding to fulfill the federal and state assurances to meet the needs of all students.

Enjoy your summer! Take time to breathe and relax. Keep on... Keep on...

## 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.

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# Community Advisory Committee (CAC)

The San Joaquin County (SJC) SELPA's recent Community Advisory Committee (CAC) Business Meeting was held on February 9, 2018. This group advises the SELPA about the Special Education Local Plan and allows parents, school districts, the SELPA, and related agencies the opportunity to build communication, share resources and improve knowledge about special education issues. Dr. Randhir Bains, representing Ripon Unified School District, conducted an informational presentation on the district's multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS). Other programs and services available within our SELPA districts and local agencies were highlighted by attendees including Family Resource Network (FRN), Valley Mountain Regional Center (VMRC), Manteca Unified School District, SJCOE County Programs, Tracy Unified School District and Lincoln Unified School District. SJC SELPA CAC continues to seek representatives from several school districts. If you are interested in being your district's Special Education Representative, please contact your district's Special Education Director for more information. For information on trainings offered at the San Joaquin County Office of Education, please see the SELPA workshop and training calendar at [www.sjcoe.org/selpa](http://www.sjcoe.org/selpa).



## Give Every Child A Chance

Give Every Child A Chance (GECAC) held their 19<sup>th</sup> Annual Bowl-A-Thon on Saturday, February 24, 2018 at the Manteca Bowl and Family Fun Center. Five teams represented the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) for two rounds of fun and an opportunity to

raise money for the organization so it can continue to provide support and services to San Joaquin County children. GECAC is a non-profit organization that offers tutoring services at no cost to youth in our community at various locations.



SJCOE staff spent their morning bowling for a worthy cause!

## Rotary Read-In

On February 22, 2018 employees from the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) had the opportunity to read to students in kindergarten through third grade at Ansel Adams Elementary School in Stockton during the annual Read-In, an event sponsored by the Rotary Club of Stockton. County Superintendent of Schools James Mousalimas read "In a Cloud of Dust" by Alma Fullerton to enthusiastic 3<sup>rd</sup> graders. Judy Casetta, a WorkAbility I Job Developer at SJCOE in the SELPA Department, also read books to 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students at the same school. It was her first Read-In and she enjoyed it as much as the children. All who participated purchased books to read and then donated the books to the classes they read to or the school library. It was a fun morning for all!



County Superintendent of Schools James Mousalimas with students from the Rotary Read-In event.

# 5<sup>th</sup> Annual C.A.P.T.A.I.N. Summit — A BIG Success!

San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) proudly hosted the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual California Autism Professional Training and Information Network (C.A.P.T.A.I.N.) Summit for Northern California on January 23-24, 2018.

The summit included the C.A.P.T.A.I.N. “Boot Camp”, an induction training on the C.A.P.T.A.I.N. organization that emphasized many available resources respective to autism. Highlights from the two day conference included a keynote presentation by Kristin Wright, California State Director of Special Education at the California Department of Education and a presentation by Tony Anderson, Executive Director of Valley Mountain Regional Center that emphasized *Regional Collaboration and Planning* for stakeholders working with individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The summit concluded with regional C.A.P.T.A.I.N. teams collaborating and planning for local ASD trainings and activities in their respective geographic areas in Northern



Assistant Superintendent, Special Education/SELPA Director Kathleen Skeels welcomed everyone to the 5<sup>th</sup> year of the summit.



SJC SELPA Program Specialist Rolf Athearn was acknowledged for his years of service with the network.



## A Special Teacher

Lammersville Unified School District’s Special Day Class (SDC) teacher Renu Singh does an exemplary job of including her 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grade students in extracurricular activities to ensure that her students are able to participate with their peers. Renu’s students have opportunities to complete assignments and projects that look very much like those of their peers in the general education setting supported with appropriate accommodations and modifications.

Renu applied to the Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) project at Levi Stadium so her students could experience its unique curriculum of STEM concepts presented through a football-themed learning platform. Her application was accepted and the class headed to the 49ers’ Levi Stadium in San Jose this March. The students explored the stadium with a tour guide, learned how stadiums are designed and created and participated in a sports circuit to promote health and fitness. Students then used technology and hands-on materials to design and create their own stadiums. Renu’s students returned from the trip with renewed interest in STEM subjects and the confidence that they could flourish in these areas.



Renu Singh, SDC teacher at Lammersville Unified fostering student engagement and learning.



## WorkAbility I Participates in Mock Interviews



Stephanie Sanchez, student, ready for her interview.

WorkAbility I Job Developers participate at mock interview events as interviewers for many San Joaquin County SELPA schools, districts and community agencies. One such event was the Village Oaks High School, Lincoln Unified School District's continuation high school, Windows On Your Future mock interviews. After the mock interview students are given positive feedback on dress, employment applications, cover letters, resumes, and references as well as on their mock interview. Students participating in the event cultivate soft skills such as good communication and time management; and career readiness skills such as critical thinking and problem solving.

Village Oaks students participating in the mock interviews reported the experience boosted their confidence and improved their comfort level with the interview process. Senior Stephanie Sanchez, after her initial introduction, shared that she was really nervous.

However, as the interview progressed, Stephanie was able to share her work experience in her family's business, discuss her work ethic, and her future career goal. After the interview, she stated that she felt more at ease with the process and now knows what to expect.

## Restorative Practices in Washington D.C. and New York City



SJC SELPA Program Specialists Irene Acevedo (left) and Susan Scott (right) arriving in New York City!

Members of the San Joaquin County Special Education Local Plan Area (SJC SELPA) joined together with San Joaquin County Office of Education's County Operated Schools and Programs (COSP) to attend a learning tour of high schools in Washington D.C. and New York City to see first hand how staff have been implementing restorative practices at their schools. The group was given tours of the school, observed the practices, and was able to discuss the impact it has had with both staff and students. COSP is phasing in this practice at their schools.

The use of restorative practices in schools offers a respectful and equitable approach to discipline, as well as a proactive strategy to create a connected, inclusive school culture. Inspired by indigenous values, restorative practices is a philosophy and a theory of practices that emphasizes bringing together everyone affected by wrongdoing to address needs and responsibilities, and to heal the harm to relationships as much as possible.

## Positive Behavior Tips for Special Education

Positive behavior management supports the following notion:

"If a child doesn't know how to read, we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to swim, we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to multiply, we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to drive, we teach."

"If a child doesn't know how to behave, we....?" Shouldn't we answer this question in the same way? Teach! (Herner,1998) Teach students how to deal with conflict. Teach students how to deal with strong emotions. Some of the challenging behaviors we see in the classroom aren't a "won't-do" problem, but instead a "can't-do" problem, meaning they just don't know how to behave in certain situations. In addition, research indicates that you can improve behavior by 80% just by pointing out what someone is doing correctly. (Schmoker) Teach and reinforce are two components of Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS). <http://www.pbis.org/>

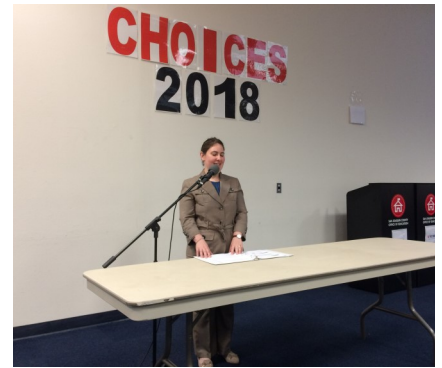


# CHOICES

CHOICES Institute held their 31<sup>st</sup> Annual Self-advocacy and Educational Conference on April 6, 2018 for people with developmental disabilities, their families, and support providers at the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE).

This year's theme was "It's All About Me!". Self-advocates Kevin Fortunato and Chris Coulston were the keynote speakers during the morning session. Their presentation emphasized the nine components of self-determination: choice making; decision making; problem solving; independent living; goal setting and attainment; self-observation, evaluation, and reinforcement; self-instruction, self-understanding, self-advocacy and leadership; internal focus of control; and self-awareness. Their presentation was informative and stressed the importance of goal setting!

The afternoon keynote speaker was Piper Robertson, a self-advocate and talented writer/storyteller who is also a powerful speaker. She credits her on-going success to learning to overcome her fears, building a circle of support, finding the love of her life, and then going after her dreams. She shared her story and inspired the audience. The conference was a huge success!



Afternoon keynote speaker Piper Robertson.



Person Centered Services singing group "The Advocates" performed at lunch for the crowd at the sold out event.

## Family Resource Network

**June 14, 2018** — "Conservatorship for Your Adult Child with Special Needs"  
6:30 — 8:30 p.m.

San Joaquin County Office of Education, Wentworth Center — Burwood 2  
2707 Transworld Drive, Stockton, CA 95206

*For more information regarding this workshop, contact:*

*Family Resource Network at [frnfamilies@frcn.org](mailto:frnfamilies@frcn.org)*

## Diagnostic Center

**August 29, 2018** — "The Incredible 5 Point Scale & Executive Functioning"  
9:00 a.m. — 12:00 p.m.

Calaveras County Office of Education  
185 South Main Street, Angels Camp, CA 95221

*For more information regarding this event, contact:*

*Laura Machado at 209-736-6016 or [lmachado@ccoe.k12.ca.us](mailto:lmachado@ccoe.k12.ca.us)*

**August 29, 2018** — "Best Practices in Autism Assessment"  
1:00 — 4:00 p.m.

Calaveras County Office of Education  
185 South Main Street, Angels Camp, CA 95221

*For more information regarding this event, contact:*

*Laura Machado at 209-736-6016 or [lmachado@ccoe.k12.ca.us](mailto:lmachado@ccoe.k12.ca.us)*

Email [pabdollahzadeh@sjcoe.net](mailto:pabdollahzadeh@sjcoe.net) to receive the monthly workshop/training calendar by email.

If you no longer wish to receive this publication, please contact Pam Abdollahzadeh at (209) 468-9283 or [pabdollahzadeh@sjcoe.net](mailto:pabdollahzadeh@sjcoe.net) to have your name removed from our email list.



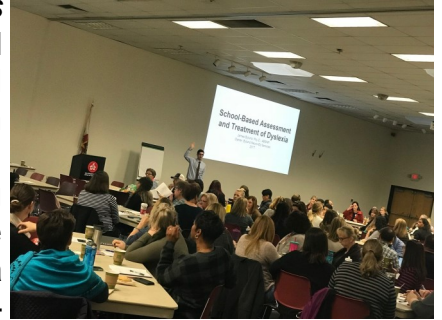


# Rising Above Dyslexia Challenges



Dr. Denise Gibbs sharing valuable information regarding dyslexia.

Participants in the *Helping Students Rise to Dyslexia Challenges* training walked away with a wealth of information and understanding on how to help students with dyslexia learn to the best of their potential. Dr. Denise Gibbs proved to be an engaging and insightful speaker as she guided the audience through the new California Department of Education's Dyslexia Guidelines, the neurological origins of dyslexia, and a framework for the identification of students



The audience actively engaged in learning strategies to effectively teach students with dyslexia.

who may be struggling with a learning disorder. She also detailed how dyslexia impacts the learning of students, as well as specific instructional strategies on how to mediate these learning differences in the classroom environment.

## Legislative Information Sharing Day

San Joaquin County (SJC) SELPA was recently involved in the annual Legislative Information Sharing Day at the Capitol. Representatives from SJC SELPA, local districts, and the Community Advisory Committee (CAC) traveled to discuss the programming and supports that students with disabilities require in our region. As part of this conversation with lawmakers, the team discussed improving funding and providing more support to increase early intervention at the preschool level. In addition to meeting with our local assembly members, the team had the opportunity to listen to individuals who have helped transform the way services are provided to students with disabilities throughout our state. This event is a very effective tool to advocate for the needs of our students as we are able to share the success of our programming and discuss the barriers we face to expand the level of service we currently provide.



**From left to right:** Keynote Speaker Elizabeth Estes from AALRR spoke on "Breaking Barriers"; Lincoln Unified School District's Director of Special Education Thomas Crocker, Executive Assistant Marlene Flau, Assistant Superintendent, Special Education/ Director Kathleen Skeels, and CAC Member Gina Marie Haugh with the California State Capitol "Golden Bear"; and Assembly Member Eduardo Garcia being acknowledged for all his hard work.

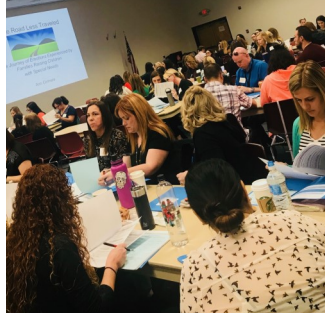


# The Road Less Traveled

On April 10, 2018 the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Autism Forum was held at the San Joaquin County Office of Education. The Forum Committee was honored to present keynote speaker Ann Crimele, former Director of the Family Resource Network, who spoke on *The Road Less Traveled: Understanding the Emotions Experienced by Parents Raising Children with Special Needs*. The Forum offered several breakout sessions following the keynote address and a resource room offering a variety of free informational materials and online resources, as well as a make and take token board station.



The Autism Forum Committee united in their shirts.



**From left to right:** Current Executive Director of Family Resource Network, Lisa Culley, hugs the retired Executive Director, Ann Crimele, who was the keynote speaker at the Autism Forum spoke about the grief process; over 150 participants actively engaged in the presentation; and participants made token boards which are a form of positive reinforcement.

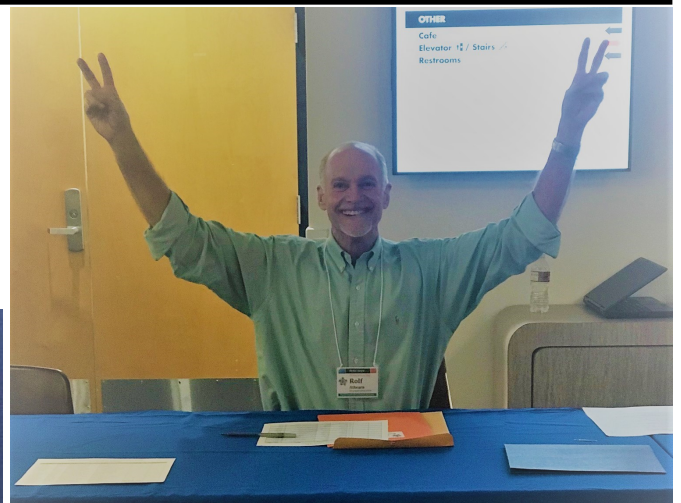
Staci Johnson, San Joaquin County (SJC) SELPA Program Specialist and Director II for Special Education programs respectively, was honored by the Autism Forum Planning Committee for years of commitment to and support of families and preschool students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) when she was awarded the Autism Collaborative Forum Recognition Award. This award recognizes Staci's innovative and collaborative leadership and her willingness to take risks on behalf of students, families and professionals in the Region 6 autism community. Congratulations Staci!



SJC SELPA Program Specialist Staci Johnson receiving an award from Assistant Superintendent, Special Education/SELPA Director Kathleen Skeels.

## PENT

The Positive Environment Network of Trainers (PENT) held their summit on March 13-14, 2018. Over 160 educators learned about interconnecting mental health and positive behavior interventions and supports. Cadre members met as regional groups to set goals on how to best share information at the district level.



SJC SELPA Program Specialist Rolf Athearn "managing" the sign-in table, while checking to make sure all the necessary documents are turned in.



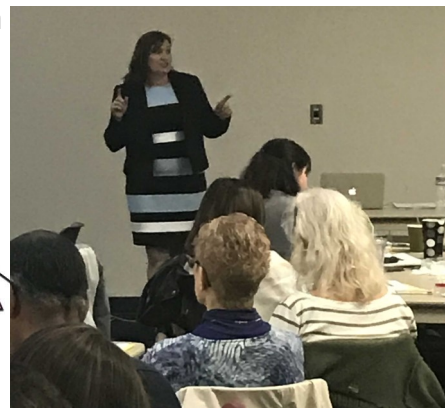
# LSH Spring Symposium — Spring Fling!

On March 22, 2018 the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) was honored to host Jody Stratton, Owner and President of the Communication Development Center in Costa Mesa, California, for her presentation at the Language, Speech and Hearing (LSH) Spring Symposium. Jody, a former graduate of the University of the Pacific and a past intern for SJCOE County Programs, was excited to return to the area and share her years of experience.

Her presentation on *Comprehensive Assessment and Treatment of Speech Sound Production* was designed to teach the most likely causes of speech sound production errors, assessment considerations and intervention plans and tools.



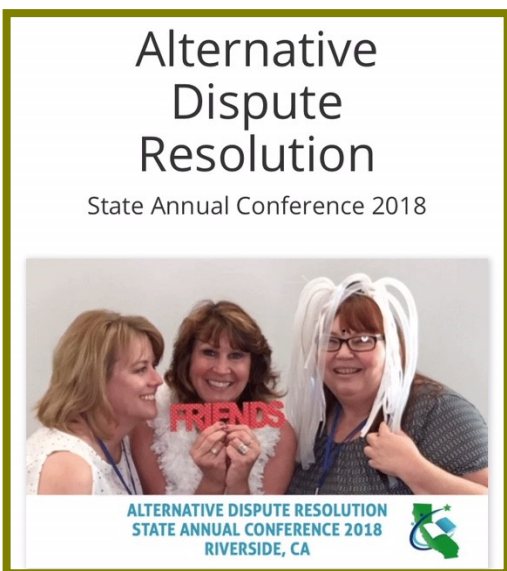
Over 160 people attended the symposium.



Presenter Jody Stratton informing participants on speech sound production.

## Riverside ADR Conference

On March 8-9, 2018 San Joaquin County (SJC) SELPA Program Specialists Margaret St. George, Susan Scott and Staci Johnson were honored to be selected as presenters at the annual state Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Conference in Riverside, CA. The conference is attended largely by educators who work with school teams to resolve conflict and improve communication. Their presentation was an overview of the six-part series, developed by the three presenters, on proactive planning strategies and supports to help improve communication. This series has been offered for the last two years at the San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) and at district locations within our SELPA, upon request.



**From left to right:** Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) is fun; SJC SELPA Program Specialist Staci Johnson gave instruction on ADR strategies; and SJC SELPA Program Specialists Susan Scott, Margaret St. George, and Staci Johnson took a moment to grab a quick photo prior to their presentation at the state ADR conference.

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## Special Education Substitute

### Instructional Assistants

The San Joaquin County Office of Education (SJCOE) is seeking creative, flexible, and motivated individuals for substitute instructional assistant positions. As a substitute instructional assistant you will fulfill an important role assisting teachers with the instruction, supervision, and training of children and young adults with special education needs.

#### Must Have a High School Diploma or Equivalent

Applicants must have a high school diploma or equivalent and meet one (1) of the following criteria:

- Pass a basic skills proficiency exam administered by the SJCOE, **or**
- Have earned 48 college semester units with a C- or better, or completed an AA degree or higher.

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