

**COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
FOR  
CALIFORNIA SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND**

**Tuesday, September 12, 2000  
Conference Center at CSB**

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order at 11:09 am.

**WELCOME**

Donna welcomed members to the first Community Advisory Committee (CAC) meeting of the 2000-01 school year, and stated that CAC's purpose and commitment is to ensure that kids who are blind and visually impaired have the opportunity to achieve their goals and become as independent as possible.

Donna announced that the National Federation of the Blind - California's (NFBC) conference is scheduled for November 4 - 5, 2000 at the Crown Plaza Hotel in Foster City. Donna is president of Parents of Blind Children of California and will be presenting at the conference.

**INTRODUCTIONS**

Introductions were made and those in attendance included: Donna Sexton, Al Gil, Stuart Wittenstein, Jim Willows, Mike Cole, Elmer Chapson, Catherine Skivers, Darryl Skivers, Lynn Laird, Kathy Quilici, Sandy Rosen, Amanda Lueck, Sharon Sacks, LaVernya Carr, Steve Goodman, Sadiya Espino, Herb Anderson, Karen Wolffe, and Kristine Barrella.

Lynne Laird stated that she and Betsy Riles are planning an alumni reunion - if you have the names and addresses of past alumni, please advise Lynne or Betsy.

**ADOPTION OF MINUTES**

Jim Willows made a motion to adopt the minutes, Cathy Skivers seconded the motion, and the motion carried.

Donna offered members the opportunity to add items to today's agenda.

**DEPARTMENT REPORTS**

**Steve Goodman (Director, Pupil Personnel)**

There are a number of events scheduled:

White Cane Day will be held at California School for the Blind (CSB) on 10-16-00, with activities coordinated by Assessment staff.

The Lowenfeld-Akeson conference will be held on 01-27-01.

CSB is hosting the CTEVH Conference scheduled for 04-16-01 - 04-28-01; we currently have three excellent speakers and would like additional speakers from the community, parents, and agencies. If you would like to present, please submit your Call or Papers to Steve as soon as possible. Sharon Sacks is Chairperson for Programs and Judith Lesner is Chairperson for Parent Committee. Our Librarian, Elizabeth Hart, has done a fantastic job distributing materials in appropriate print mediums.

CSB was allocated additional positions:

Two newly hired Assessment Program personnel, Barbara Maher and Joanna Self.

One psychology intern, Mary Hogue, who will join our two staff psychologists, Kristina Bao and Lynette Ship. Koreen Wang recently married and accepted a position outside of CSB; however, Koreen will assist CSB on a part-time basis.

Two new positions for the Library - a librarian and a transcriber. If you know of anyone who might be interested in either of these positions, please have them contact Steve (510-794-3800, ext. 210).

Our Orientation and Mobility (O&M) and Low Vision Specialist have been working together and providing appropriate data to staff. The O&M and Psychology Department staff have reviewed students on a case-by-case basis and have met with the education and residential staff to ensure everyone has complete familiarity of each student's abilities and needs (i.e., O&M, learning styles, etc.). June Waugh, our Low Vision Specialist, works with the students to gain an understanding of their needs, and she leads a number of groups.

The first day of school went very well and we had a very exciting speaker. Steve would like feedback from parents and the community regarding the types of speakers, activities, etc. people would like on Parent Orientation Day.

Our psychologists have psychologist-counselor credentials; the higher certification provides CSB with more flexibility. CSB prefers to hire individuals with experience in the blindness field; however, newly hired psychologists who lack this background serve a 2 - 3 month internship, during which time they receive appropriate training.

Cathy Skivers and Donna Sexton had concerns regarding the CSB psychologists' abilities to work with blind and visually impaired students with the expertise required to deal with

their specific needs. Suggestions for providing good services to the students included:

Possibly members of the Alumni Association, the National Federal of the Blind-California (NFBC) or California Council of the Blind (CCB) could work with students. (Steve stated the CSB clinical psychologist is working to identify resources in the community; Steve will have her contact Jim Willows and Cathy Skivers.)

Psychologists should attend conferences to gain a better understanding of issues facing the blind.

Psychologists could possibly visit the Orientation Center for the Blind (OCB) for an overview of their programs.

We need people who can communicate with the kids and influence them to be the best they can be. Steve stated the psychologists do counsel students, but that counseling comes from learning. CSB does not do clinical evaluations. If a student has significant psychological problems, they are referred to psychologists CSB has identified who work with blind and visually impaired individuals. If CAC members know of individuals who have worked successfully with the blind and visually impaired, who can share their experiences, please advise Steve.

The psychologists met to discuss accommodations for standardized assessments - one of their concerns was whether we can adequately communicate and design accommodations for blind and visually impaired people. Steve will try to set up a time when Donna Sexton, Jim Willows and Cathy Skivers can meet with the CSB psychologists.

**Blindness Advisory Task Force** - Jim Willows stated that Blindness Advisory Task Force came about as a result of a series of telephone conversations Cathy Skivers and Jane Vogel had with Henry Der. Both CCB and NFBC passed resolutions decrying the fact that the California Department of Education (CDE) has no consultants who work with the blind or visually impaired. The resolutions were directed to Delaine Eastin and subsequently referred to Mr. Der. The deaf formed a task force which operated for about two years and as a result was able to gain improved services for deaf children. CDE now has a consultant whose time is divided - half-time for the blind and half-time for the orthopedically disabled, whereas CDE has two consultants for the deaf. Cathy stated they made it clear that a full-time consultant for the blind was needed and they were requesting that Delaine Eastin submit a budget measure to create such a position. CDE currently has 18 consultant positions available, but none for the blind. A letter was recently received regarding the Blindness Advisory Task Force, but nothing was said about a consultant. Even though a Blindness Advisory Task Force is being created, CCB and NFBC will continue their efforts to get a bill before the Legislature.

Stuart stated CDE did hire a consultant, Dennis Kelleher (half-time for the blind and half-time for the orthopedically disabled). Mr. Kelleher's position is in the Special Education Division and he reports to Barbara Thalacker, who reports to Alice Parker, whereas the two

deaf consultants are in the State Special Schools (SSS) Division and report to Ron Kadish. Currently there are over 6000 blind or visually impaired kids, so there is enough work for a full-time consultant. Jim Willows stated that it makes sense to have the blindness consultant position in the SSS Division. Stuart stated this is a controversial issue - several blindness professionals have expressed that the blindness consultant should be housed in the Special Ed Division since most of the kids were served in the districts, not at CSB.

The 18 consultant positions are the result of a Budget Change Proposal (BCP) submitted by the Special Ed Division. The federal Dept. of Education has said that California is out of compliance with IDEA and the 18 positions were created so that these individuals can go out into the districts to ensure that the school districts comply with federal law.

### **Sadiya Espino (Director - Residential Program)**

Changes in the counselor series have been finalized, with Carolyn Parker Thompson and Judith Lesner now classified as Supervisors of Residential Programs. Carolyn and Judith will supervise the new Supervising Counselors, John DeLuca, Jamie Rizzo, Charles Udeze and Tamera Watson. Jamie Rizzo will oversee the night shift.

A second counselor exam was held, but only three candidates applied. The Residential Program continues to have a number of vacancies, so another counselor exam, as well as a night attendant exam, will be scheduled. We are also researching different ways to recruit and hire to fill these vacancies. Agnews has been a source for counselors in the past; however, Agnews currently offers its staff recruitment and retention (R&R) bonuses (\$500 and \$700 per month), so it is impossible to compete with Agnews for new recruits. Stuart has contacted Sacramento regarding a recruitment and retention (R&R) bonus for CSB counselors; if a R&R bonus was included in the counselor pay package, the position would be more attractive to applicants or individuals who might be interested in transferring within state service to CSB.

Mr. Chapson inquired as to how many residential staff are bilingual. Per Sadiya, at this time only one staff member has taken the bilingual test, which is required to receive bilingual pay; however, there are many residential staff members who speak two languages.

Training of residential staff includes time with O&M, the occupational therapist, classroom time, and shadowing other counselors, etc. Most of the candidates for counselor positions do not have a background working with the blind or visually impaired, so training is required.

Kristine Barrella is CSB's new Recreational Therapist (RT) and is currently working with the teachers and assessment staff. We are reviewing past programs to determine what activities are wanted, working with adaptive physical education (APE) teachers and the Occupational Therapist (OT), teaching games to students, ordering games and materials for the Recreation Center for after school activities, planning Family Weekend program for parents, resources at home for recreation and activities for their children, and working with

the students at CSB. The CSB Goalball Team will participate in a tournament at the Oregon School for the Blind in October.

A policy has been drafted for cell phone use in the three dorms, copies of which were distributed to the CAC members for review and discussion. Essentially, with parent-guardian permission, students will be allowed to bring cell phones on campus, and allowed to use the cell phones during times that do not conflict with their participation in organized activities or dormitory responsibilities. Parents need to monitor cell phone usage. CSB does have 911 cell phones available for use by staff when traveling with students off campus. LaVernya and Debby are also looking into the feasibility of having cell phones for use during O&M instruction. Per today's discussion of the cell phone policy, Sadiya will revise the policy - the finalized policy will then be put in effect. A copy of the policy will also be included in the Parent Handbook. CAC will be updated regarding the effectiveness of the policy.

### **LaVernya Carr (Director - Transition Program)**

We still need someone to serve on our Vocational Education Advisory Board, which would require 30 minutes of the individual's time per month to discuss vocational education trends, students capabilities, voc ed goals, job mentoring, etc. The discussions can be held via telephone, e-mail, etc. So if anyone is interested in participating, please contact LaVernya at (510) 794-3800, ext. 262 or [lcarr@csb.cde.ca.gov](mailto:lcarr@csb.cde.ca.gov).

LaVernya is working on the Carl Perkins contract with the Department of Rehabilitation. The Carl Perkins grant is rotated between the three State Special Schools, CSB, California School for the Deaf-Fremont (CSDF), and the California School for the Deaf-Riverside (CSDF), every three years. This is CSB's third year, so after the 2000-01 school year the grant will go back to CSDR for three years. We are writing a plan identifying goals for students and keying on one or two vocational programs - office and business schools.

The Transition Program now has a web site, [www.geocities.com/csbrehab](http://www.geocities.com/csbrehab), which will describe all Transition programs, classes, CSB summer programs for public high school students, a section titled "Where are They Now", which will describe what our students are doing, etc.

LaVernya will attend the Transition Networking Conference to be held at the Washington School for the Blind September 27 - 29, 2000, where representatives from schools for the blind throughout the U.S. meet to discuss their transition programs, etc.- LaVernya will present on CSB's Job Development Program.

### **Debby Kreuzer (Director of Education)**

CSB is off to a great start. All vacant teacher positions have been filled - new staff include Alysa Chadow (Middle School Program); Elizabeth Hartmann (Basic Skills class), who has extensive experience working at Perkins; Dave Petrovay (Mainstream High School Program), who works half-time with transition program and half-time with mainstream program; and Sara Jefferson (Elementary), who worked at CSB prior to accepting a

teaching position. We have six new students in our Middle School Prep Program this year.

Butch Ponder, Principal at the Alabama School for the Blind, will visit CSB on September 20<sup>th</sup> for an overview our Mainstream and Junior High Programs. He is hoping to replicate CSB programs in Alabama.

Study Hall is mandatory for the Middle School Prep students. Sharon stated the Study Hall time frame may be expanded from 3 - 4 pm to 3 - 5 pm; Study Hall is essential for Middle School Prep students, who are mostly day students; and is also being attended by high school students; and the students receive support from staff (teachers, teaching assistant, counselor and volunteers). We are looking into providing reader services for students, and Education staff continues to work with Residential staff to coordinate studies and after school activities.

### **Elizabeth Hart (Librarian)**

Since 1994, Elizabeth has been expanding the library collection, obtaining different types of books in the various print mediums and on cassette, while at the same time removing dated or obsolete materials. Elizabeth now has access to materials from the Library of Congress, and she is researching an alternate catalog system that can be used by students and teachers to search for books by author and title - the system will also indicate in which print mediums the books are available. We do have materials for older students and it would be beneficial to have an Internet connection to access other materials not available in the CSB library. Lynne Laird stated the American Printing House has a program called "Road Runner" for downloading books. Elizabeth stated there is a market for large print books protected by copyright laws; however, most of the classics no longer fall under copyright laws. We also have a storyteller program which we plan to continue.

The Library has two new positions (brailist and librarian) and monies for a server and more terminals. We hope to hire a brailist, who can braille materials and also put them on cassettes. Lynne offered her services to Elizabeth to assist with the braille. Elizabeth encourages the students to use both braille and large print to improve their skills.

### **Sharon Sacks (Assistant Superintendent)**

The school had a wonderful beginning, the staff have a positive attitude and are enjoying their students, and the school is running smoothly. There is lots of communication between the Education and Residential staff and staff have met to review referrals. Currently there are 11 students in the high school mainstream program; Ron Mayeda and Pauline Lee teach the middle school prep program, which is for 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> grade kids, the students have an opportunity to attend Walters Junior High, and Nita Crow and Cheryl Besden are the O&M instructors. Sharon is working duty statements for each teaching position.

Family Weekend is scheduled for the weekend of October 20<sup>th</sup>; Steve Hanamura is the keynote speaker. Mr. Hanamura, who is an alumnus of CSB, has his own consulting firm in Beaverton, Oregon, and is a successful motivational speaker. We are also trying to

arrange to have Sally Mangold as a speaker. Several workshops for families, students, and siblings are scheduled, along with networking for families; storytellers for kids; and off campus trips for older students on Saturday afternoon to the mall or a movie; and on campus activities that include line dancing.

Sharon is continuing to work with the teaching staff to revise the curriculum; working with districts on technical assistance and transitioning students back to the districts; and working on the establishment of a education foundation for CSB - if you can recommend anyone who has experience in fund-raising, please advise Sharon. Ideas for summer programs for 2001 include a Tech Academy, Leadership Academy, and Writers Workshop, a Pre-Middle School Prep, Summer Academy, ESY, etc. Sharon would also like two 3 - 4 week classes that we can offer to public school students in braille and tech skills. CSB has a clerical shortage which impacts all programs.

### **Gayalene Buck (Food Services Supervisor)**

A buffet line has been established from which students can choose a hot entree or sandwich. Fourteen students are currently using the buffet line with the assistance of staff, and Gayalene expects to expand the service so that more students can participate. The buffet line is only available at lunch time since Food Services has less staff available at dinner time. A new program is being initiated at dinner time - one night a week counselors from each dorm will dine with their students, foods will be served family style, and the counselors will provide instruction in dining skills - passing foods around the table, serving foods, etc. The PA system is also utilized to announce menu items.

### **Stuart Wittenstein (Superintendent)**

Stuart was away the first week of school, returning on September 5<sup>th</sup>. Upon his return, he noted a high level of anxiety on campus due to a suspected sexual offender in the area. Stuart investigated and e-mailed all staff with appropriate information - Stuart found that in mid-July a California School for the Deaf-Fremont (CSDF) staff member had contacted the Fremont Police Department (FPD) regarding a suspicious individual on CSDF's campus. FPD advised CSDF that there had been a couple sexual assaults in the area and faxed CSDF a composite drawing of the suspect; however, this information was not provided to CSB. CSDF did advise Security and also provided Security with a copy of the composite drawing. Steps to be taken to ensure the safety of staff and students include:

- Staff will be provided with telephone numbers for Security, Health Services, 911, etc. (to be used after 4:30 pm when the reception office is closed)
- Staff are to inform Security when they plan to work late on campus and if they wish to be accompanied to their vehicles
- CSB's California Highway Patrol (CHP) liaison officer, Ray Muffich, will address staff and discuss precautionary measures and procedures.
- Security staff will be introduced and their responsibilities reviewed.

- Visitors will be required to check in at the Administration Office and wear a visitor's badge.

Based on Budget Change Proposals (BCPs), CSB was allocated nine new positions (two in the Library, two in Assessment, one speech therapist, one recreational therapist, two information technology positions, and supervisor of building trades) and \$48,000 for a server and computers for the Library.

The Supervisor of Building Trades will oversee all deferred maintenance (upgrading existing facilities, painting, roof repairs, etc.). We are currently replacing the awnings, and hope to repair roofs, replaster the pool, and replace the playground behind Westridge dorm.

Capital Outlay Projects include -

- Construction of the new Health Services building is to begin in January 2001.
- The Westridge wing currently occupied by Health Services will be remodeled for dorm use after Health Services moves into its new building.
- Vocational Technical Building (which replaces the building the Diagnostic Center North occupies).
- Air conditioning for the dorms.

Stuart was finally successful in getting air conditioning for the dorms included (for consideration) as a Capital Outlay project; however, requests for air conditioning have been rejected in the past. Stuart and staff are documenting the need for the air conditioning, i.e., we have students with medical problems, changes in weather trends, etc. Additionally, the dorms are the only buildings on campus that are not air-conditioned. Stuart would like CAC to consider writing letters of support. Mr. Chapson made a motion to write letters of support, Mr. Gil seconded the motion, and the motion carried. The letters can be addressed to Stuart at CSB.

Two BCPs were submitted for 2001-02; one for teaching assistants and one for additional clerical support. Stuart thanked everyone for their letters of support for the 2000-01 BCPs.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:56 PM.

The next CAC meeting is scheduled for 12-14-00 at 11:00 am.

PLEASE NOTE: The date for the Lowenfeld-Akeson Conference was announced as January 20, 2001; however, the correct date of the conference is January 27, 2001.