

Report of the Community Advisory Group for the Stockton Unified School District

For the meeting of February 20, 2020

What is the Community Advisory Group (CAG)?

CAG is an important component of a formal, court-approved, five-year agreement (Agreement) between the Stockton Unified School District (District) and the California Department of Justice (DOJ). It is intended to provide members of the community with an opportunity to review and comment on changes made by the District and approved by DOJ as they comply with mandates intended to better serve the needs of its students. The CAG is required to meet on a quarterly basis with a written overview of the meeting being published within 45 days. The report is intended to be reviewed by the DOJ appointed monitor, School Superintendent, the Chief of the school police department, and the public.

How was the CAG formed?

Per the DOJ Agreement, members of the CAG represent various stakeholders concerned with how the District provides education and safety to its students. They include School Board member appointees, educators, administrators, parents, students, and members of affected community organizations.

What is the primary purpose of the CAG?

The CAG provides comment on District changes in policy, practice, and procedures intended to accomplish the following:

- Reduce student referrals to law enforcement
- Reduce disproportionality of any referrals to law enforcement
- Reduce the amount of citations and bookings by law enforcement, and any disproportionalities within these classifications

To accomplish the above, 74 specific and measurable tasks have been established by the Agreement and these are to be accomplished within a five-year period. As the District completes these tasks, and after review by the Monitor and approval by DOJ, the CAG is provided the opportunity to review and comment on what changes have been made to comply with DOJ mandates. Feedback from CAG is then reviewed and given consideration by the District Superintendent and the Chief of the school police department.

How are the meetings conducted?

The first CAG meeting was held on August 14, 2019. Subsequent formal meetings are required to be held quarterly, and dates are currently being selected. The results of the quarterly meetings are to be published within 45 days. The quarterly CAG meetings are currently expected to be facilitated by a consultant hired by the District per the DOJ Agreement. The role of the consultant is to serve as a bridge between the District (primarily the District's school police department) and the CAG, to ensure the timely and accurate flow of information. If desired, The CAG may choose to meet on a more frequent basis and to structure meetings to meet their needs.

*What took place at the CAG meeting on February 20, 2020? **

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Destiny Rivas, and attendees were given the opportunity to re-introduce themselves to the group. The first order of business after the introductions was the selection of a CAG member to serve as Secretary. Jasmine Dellafosse was nominated and was selected. There was discussion of putting together short biographies for CAG members, so that people would be familiar with their backgrounds and the perspectives they were sharing.

The next part of the agenda was led by Alan Caddell (SUSDPD's designated "Police Professional") and Agreement Monitor Michael Gennaco. They discussed the materials, responsive to the completion of formal Tasks within the Agreement, that had been submitted to the CAG members for their review. Both of them addressed concerns that had arisen in recent weeks among some CAG members about the mechanics of the process. They talked about the multiple exchanges between the parties and the Monitor that occur before anything is finalized; this makes for some useful "checks and balances." They also reiterated that the intention was indeed to provide CAG members a chance to consider the materials and to raise questions or other feedback. As Mr. Gennaco pointed out, the individual policies and reforms are best understood as a "living, breathing document" that will be subject to appropriate scrutiny and adjustment even after their formal acceptance.

Mr. Caddell had prepared packets for each attendee. These featured documents relating to the completion of 10 individual Tasks. Some were quite straightforward (such as the publication of quarterly statistical information on police staffing changes), while others prompted further questions and discussion. Some CAG members wondered about the seemingly limited selections for "Ethnicity" in the Department's Computer Aided Dispatch ("CAD") data entry fields (per Agreement Task 4). It was explained that the choices ("Hispanic" or "Non-Hispanic" or "Unknown") were derived from the federal government's approach to this designation. It was further explained that the CAD also had a field for racial identification.

In reviewing the training plan, Mr. Gershon suggested that one or more of the trainings occur more frequently. One policy revision that prompted further discussion related to Task 26 and the Department's approach to arrests for "Resisting or Delaying an Officer." This penal code section (148) can be a source of concern about police overreach because of the ways that it can defiance or disrespect for law enforcement into a separate, arrestable offense. As explained by Mr. Gennaco, the new policy reinforces the Agreement's emphasis on limiting police engagement as a response to low-level misconduct issues on campuses and stipulates several offenses that are not to be precursors for arrests under PC 148. CAG members also spent some time reviewing the initial quarterly reports regarding "School Requests for Assistance" that are now being compiled pursuant to Task 8. They noted the heavy representation of "black and brown" students as a concern, while acknowledging that relatively few of the individual incidents had resulted in arrest (on the contrary, most were categorized as being resolved with "No Police Action").

The meeting then shifted to a presentation on the District's new "Student Behavior Intervention and Discipline Matrix." Assistant Superintendent Mary Jo Cowan introduced the topic and provided an overview of the purpose of the Matrix and the way it constituted a major revision in the District's approach to student behavioral issues. Executive Director of Education Services Eric Swanson then led a detailed discussion of the new Matrix and its particulars. The Matrix divides potential misconduct issues into six "Types" of increasing seriousness, with accompanying interventions that are themselves graduated in severity. Director Swanson explained the overall philosophy behind the design of the

Matrix: it is meant to support students and schools by ensuring that responses are constructive and proportional, that teachers have the tools to intervene effectively, and that the most serious or dangerous behaviors would be met in ways that preserve school safety. Even “mandatory expulsion” scenarios (for criminal offenses including sexual assault, selling drugs, or possessing a firearm on campus) are accompanied by “Re-entry Plans and Student Supports.” Many of the designated interventions revolve around “restorative practices” that seek to address behavioral problems in constructive, holistic ways. Member Dellafosse asked how community-based organizations could become involved in assisting with this effort and making connections that recognize the diversity of student needs. Director Swanson expressed his support of the kinds of community circles and “healing-centered” spaces that organizations could facilitate. A lot of it comes down to funding, but he intends to further the communication.

The meeting ended with some expressions of support for the progress that has been made. Members were largely impressed with the Matrix and its principles. Member Gershon said that he had been experiencing some skepticism about whether the CAG’s input was actually a priority and said this meeting had allayed some of those concerns.

What happens next?

The next CAG meeting is expected to be held on May 14, 2020.

What if I have questions about the CAG?

Inquiries about the Community Advisory Group can be sent via email to consultant Alan Caddell at AlanCaddell@gmail.com or to the monitoring team at michael.gennaco@oirgroup.com.

Report prepared by Alan Caddell.

*Accounts of the meeting prepared by OIR staff during the meeting.