LYON COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT

Staff Travel Report to School Board of Trustees

Your recent request to travel has been approved. Within two weeks of the date of the conference, the following report is due in the office of the Deputy Superintendent.

Please Download & TYPE the following information.

Staff Member: Rachel Stewart

School: District Office

Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities

Executive Director of Special Services

Conference: Do not use acronyms

Staff Assignment

Location of Conference: Long Beach, CA

Dates Attended: 1/14/26-1/17/26

General Overview: Do not use acronyms

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC): Division on Autism and Developmental Disabilities (DADD) Conference is one of the only professional learning events focused exclusively on the education of students with autism, intellectual disability, and other developmental disabilities. It was a conference that was able to bring together experts in research and practice from across the field. Teachers, administrators, behavior specialists, research institutes, parents, students, and more were able to come together and discuss evidence-based strategies, insight into national and international trends in special and inclusive education, tools and resources that can be used and applied across a variety of learning environments, as well as networking events.

The conference also had an exhibitor hall that allowed us to look at new and innovative tools, instructional materials, and resources to help our students gain more accessibility and allow students to be more engaged in their learning.

How will this impact student learning in a positive way?

As the Executive Director of Special Services, I collaborate with our administrative and IEP teams to implement best practices. Attending this conference has provided a wealth of insights that will directly elevate our classrooms by refining how we teach and ensuring every student can engage with the material. The sessions underscored three pillars of effective education: tailoring instruction to the individual, varying learning paths, and using concrete data to drive our choices. By leaning into these methods, we can better spark student interest, accelerate academic progress, and provide targeted support for students with diverse learning needs.

From my perspective as Executive Director, these insights and resources are the catalysts for a necessary systemic evolution. Our mission is to move beyond a "compliance-first" mindset and toward a culture of results-driven excellence, where we aren't just meeting legal mandates, but actively dismantling the institutional barriers that have historically limited the trajectories of students with disabilities.

By strategically aligning general education standards with the specialized supports our students require—leveraging tools for literacy equity and Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT) for transitional success—we are building a unified educational ecosystem. Ultimately, my goal is to ensure that every learner in our district is met with high expectations and provided with the robust, individualized scaffolding necessary to turn their potential into lifelong independence.

How will I implement what I learned and how will I share this information with my colleagues?

As the Executive Director of Special Education, my focus is on translating these conference insights into systemic improvements that elevate our entire department. I will spearhead the integration of these evidence-based instructional strategies by aligning our district-wide vision with the high-leverage practices identified. This includes overseeing the strategic procurement and rollout of accessible technologies and ensuring our teams are equipped with modified, standards-aligned curriculum materials from Attainment to meet the specific goals of our most complex learners.

The goal is to foster a culture of collective efficacy. By bridging the gap between high-level theory and classroom practice, we can ensure that every educator in our district feels empowered to use these resources, ultimately driving better academic outcomes and more inclusive environments for every student we serve.

Other Comments:

Thank you for the opportunity to attend this conference.

NA

Site Principal/Supervisor Approval

Stacy L Cooper, EdD

Deputy Superintendent Approval

Date

1-28-26

Date

Rev. 7/2023