ELAC Q1 Meeting Minutes | San Diego Mission Academy

Date: September 30, 2026 **Time**: 6pm **Location:** Virtual (Microsoft Teams)
Facilitators: Damaris Owens, Heather Barnhart, Gabrielle McCord, Emily Berkowitz

Call to Order

Damaris Owens welcomed attendees and reviewed the purpose of the ELAC meeting, emphasizing family engagement, stakeholder input, English learner support, and upcoming school initiatives. Translation support was offered in Spanish for attendees who preferred bilingual participation.

Attendance and Officer Updates

I. Call to Order & Welcome
The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM. Facilitators welcomed attendees, provided an overview of the agenda, and conducted initial family and staff greetings.

II. Roll Call & Attendance

- Total Attendees: 17 Parent/Guardian/Community members (PCGs) and students in attendance.
- Staff & Leadership Present:
    - Heather Barnhart
    - Dr. Damaris Owens
    - Gabrielle (Gabby) McCord
    - Multilingual Parent Specialist (Guest Speaker)
- Officer Roll Call & Status Updates:
    - Chairperson: Valerie Galdamez, Recorded as absent
    - Vice Chairperson: Christina Hernandez, Recorded as absent - Official announcement made regarding the Vice Chairperson's resignation
    - Secretary: Sandra Alcantar Lopez recorded as absent. Announced as vacant and open for parent/guardian applications

ELAC Purpose and Parent Input

Heather Barnhart reviewed the purpose of ELAC, noting that California schools with 21 or more English learners are required to maintain an English Learner Advisory Committee. The committee provides families with a voice in advising school leadership regarding programs and services for English learners.

Participants completed a poll regarding preferred meeting times for future ELAC meetings. Several attendees indicated that 6:00 p.m. was a convenient time, while feedback was collected for consideration in planning future meetings.

ELAC Leadership Opportunities

Emily Berkowitz presented information regarding ELAC officer positions:

- Chairperson
- Vice Chairperson
- Secretary

Interested parents, guardians of English learners or reclassified students, and eligible community members were invited to complete an interest form to participate in future elections. Responsibilities and expectations of officers were briefly reviewed.

LCAP Goal 1 Review: English Learner Progress and Reclassification

Gabrielle McCord reviewed LCAP Goal 1.1, which focuses on:

- Improving English Language Proficiency Assessments for California (ELPAC) performance.
- Increasing reclassification rates for English learners.

Key points shared:

- The school continues to invest in targeted supports and resources to accelerate language development.

- All Elev8 schools demonstrated significant growth in English learner progress.
- Schools either met or closely approached the goal of having 52% of English learners demonstrate annual progress toward English proficiency.

Stakeholder Feedback Polls

Families were asked what supports would most benefit English learners, with options including:

- More tutoring opportunities
- Additional instructional support
- Stronger school-home communication
- Parent workshops
- Student incentives

Several participants used the chat to share feedback, including support for workshops and appreciation for current services.

Review of Prior ELAC Recommendations

Heather Barnhart reviewed feedback collected during the previous year's Quarter 4 ELAC meeting and explained how stakeholder recommendations influenced school decisions.

Examples of supports implemented based on prior feedback included:

- Hiring Multilingual Program Specialists.
- Adding English learner paraprofessional support.
- Expanding tutoring services.
- Increasing counseling and social-emotional support resources.

NWEA Assessment Updates

Heather Barnhart reviewed upcoming NWEA testing.

Key information:

- Testing window: October 26-30, 2026.
- NWEA data helps identify student skill levels and academic growth.
- Families will receive additional preparation materials and reminders before testing.
- Student participation is important in order to provide effective academic support and measure growth throughout the year.

Reclassification Updates

Emily Berkowitz shared updates regarding English learner reclassification.

Assembly Bill 2555

The recently approved Assembly Bill 2555 changes reclassification requirements:

- Students who achieve an ELPAC score of 4 will now be automatically reclassified.
- Students taking the Alternate ELPAC may qualify for reclassification with a score of 3.
- The school will review prior-year reclassification records affected by the new legislation.

Current Reclassification Status

Reported completed reclassifications:

- Mission Academy: 14
- San Diego Mission Academy: 8
- Paseo Grande: 5

Additional students are currently in process and expected to be added to these totals. A digital celebration recognizing reclassified students is planned for the Quarter 2 ELAC meeting.

Public Questions and Discussion

Topics discussed included:

- Accommodations for students with disabilities during ELPAC testing.
- Alternate ELPAC eligibility and reclassification criteria.
- Clarification for students who previously exited English learner status.
- Requests for meeting and survey links.
- General feedback regarding supports provided by staff and school programs.

Positive comments from parents and students expressed appreciation for staff support, workshops, and communication efforts. Several participants shared that school personnel had been helpful in supporting student success.

Closing Remarks

Administration provided contact information for:

- Damaris Owens, Principal
- Gabrielle McCord, Interim Principal
- Heather Barnhart, Assistant Principal

Participants were asked to complete the feedback survey and indicate interest in attending the next ELAC meeting. Future meeting times may be adjusted based on poll results collected during the meeting.

Meeting Adjournment

The meeting concluded after final questions, survey reminders, and appreciation for participant attendance and engagement.

Official Actions/Records for Minutes

- Attendance recorded through participant introductions and chat submissions.
- Vice Chairperson resignation from Cristina Hernandez acknowledged.
- Secretary position identified as vacant.
- Chairperson, Valerie Galdamez was not present
- Community members invited to express interest in ELAC officer positions.
- Parent feedback collected regarding meeting times and English learner supports.

- Reclassification and NWEA testing updates presented.
- No votes or formal motions were conducted during this portion of the meeting.