

# **CABE Pájaro Valley Chapter #66**

## **Update for CABE Corner Chapter Highlights, August 2020**

*Written and submitted by Lucía Villareal*

### **CHAPTER OFFICERS**

President, Lucía Villarreal, retired teacher

Vice President, Casimira Salazar, retired teacher

Treasurer, Amie Tsang-Beck, PK teacher, Starlight School

Secretary, George Feldman, K teacher, Ohlone School

### **CHAPTER BACKGROUND**

CABE Pájaro Valley Chapter 66 is located in Santa Cruz County in the Central Coast. Presently, this is the only active chapter in the large coastal area and, therefore, it represents all CABE members in the counties of Santa Cruz, San Benito, Monterey, San Luis Obispo and the south end of Santa Clara county. Before this chapter was created there had been a CABE chapter in Santa Cruz to which we in the Pájaro Valley belonged. However, in the early 1990s it became defunct.

Around 1996 California was facing the biggest threat ever to bilingual education. Anti-bilingual education factions led and funded by Ron Unz, a wealthy Silicon Valley businessman, were poised to file a proposition in the June 1997 election ballot to eliminate all bilingual programs in the state. Teachers in our area were very concerned about this “Unz Initiative” and began to meet to discuss ways to face the challenges created by the terrible political environment. In order to counter anti-bilingual sentiments about to ignite in the Pájaro Valley, interest grew in reviving the old CABE chapter. However, we saw the value in being more local and decided to create the Pájaro Valley Chapter 66. That was twenty-four years ago, and we are still here.

That crisis brought us together and we were able to weather our loss when Proposition 227 was voted in by 60% . Although, under the new law administrators in our district dismantled many bilingual programs, we did not stop championing dual language instruction and supporting the few programs that survived. The proposition had been modified by anti-bilingual proponents because voters were opposed to the original harsh draft that would eliminate ALL bilingual programs. Voters wanted to see the proposition include a parent choice clause and that is what saved some programs.

Throughout those years, our chapter turned to state CABE for guidance for our action plans. We used the research-based information on principles of quality dual language programs as the foundation to work with teachers and the district. Our members advocated for involvement in district groups and committees that focused on English Learner services and programs. We not only had members included in Master Plan updates, but we also monitored implementation of the plan. On too many occasions, our involvement was not readily welcomed by the district.

Those were very difficult years. However, hard work, patience and undying hope brought us, at last, to the 2016 California Proposition 58, known as the Multilingual Education Act, which voters passed by 73.5%. This new state law supports dual language programs and the state, along with Californians Together, developed the English Learner Road Map. With that base in mind, two years ago, our Pájaro Valley School District began to develop a new Master Plan for English Learner Success. Last year it began to roll out the professional development in the plan and created a Dual Language Leadership Team. Some of our members are part of that team and give updates at our membership meetings.

This year due to the COVID19 global pandemic, schools were closed in March and students began to receive their education online. Teachers created lessons for classwork via meeting applications, such as Google Classroom and Zoom. It has become difficult to monitor how the dual language programs are doing because teachers are overloaded with the new teaching/learning system online. Therefore, the monitoring of the district MPELS implementation will be the focus for our 2020-21 school year advocacy.

## **ANNUAL CALENDAR AND MEETINGS**

Every year at our first meeting, our chapter begins its work with a school year calendar that contains the CABA PV focus, events and venues for each month. The president, Lucía Villarreal, invites the group to revisit the past year's calendar and block in the activities to be continued and add any new items. In this way, everyone present participates in creating the new calendar while being aware of the work for the year.

Then, our secretary, George Feldman, facilitates a working session in which he asks participants to list, discuss and prioritize activities. Some of the focus is on policy, research, practice, district master plan implementation, student, parents, teacher and administrator concerns, plus Make and Take sessions. So, while the items are fresh on members' minds, he invites them to write their names on stickies and place them by the items listed. In this way, he garners volunteers while the enthusiasm is still high.

## **CHAPTER ACTIVISM**

Getting volunteers to commit to a focus action early on in the year helps us plan our time and energy strategically. Some examples are :

### **1. District English Learner Master Plan**

For many years, CABA PV has been involved with the writing and updating of district EL Master Plans. It has also monitored the implementation of the plan between writings. The new plan, Master Plan for English Learner Success, is the best plan that the Pájaro Valley Unified School District has developed. Members in our chapter were involved for the two-year development process and this year they are involved as part of the Dual Language Leadership Team. Our members in the DLL Team are George Felman, Eileen Clark-Nagaoka, Erin Levi and Amie Tang-Beck. They were meeting and noted that the new EL Coordinator began a data comparison of Bilingual Programs. However, at this point the coordinator is not comparing DL Programs with EO/SEI and we want that information, too

### **2. ELAC/DELAC Meetings**

Every year, our members try to attend their site's English Language Advisory Committee meetings. Erin Levi, who is also a parent, attends the larger District English Language Advisory Committee meetings. This helps us to stay on top of EL needs, services, parent requests, and district respond and support as she gives us updates on parent concerns and actions.

### **3. County-Wide Dual Language School Network**

This network is headed by Sofia Sorensen, the SCCOE Multilingual Coordinator. Our chapter president met with her and discussed how CABEPV can be of service. The schools in the county Dual Language School Network are: Alianza, Amesti, Freedom, Hyde, Starlight from PVUSD and DeLaVeaga, and Live Oak from Santa Cruz. The district offices are also involved with the DLS Network. The Network held their first meeting and Sofia provided Lucía with the DLSN Feedback Summary with input from teachers, site administrators, coaches and parent coordinator. This included goals met, establishing connections between DL educators and gathering information on common needs and strengths. The CABA Guided Principals for Dual Language Programs was used to guide participants to articulate all that. Participants were able to prioritize the networking focus areas for future actions.

#### 4. Childcare Safety Plan

Our chapter secretary, George Feldman, did a Make-and-Take session regarding this safety plan. He brought copies of documents which were legal resources for undocumented parents to use to prepare themselves and their children in case they are impacted by the disappearance of the parents due to legal status. Included were instructions for other adults who might need to take over the care of students. We were very concerned about this issue and were going to work more on it, but it was another thing put on hold due to the pandemic.

#### **CABE REGIONAL CONFERENCE AT MONTEREY**

Every year our chapter is involved with the supporting and helping to plan the CABE Regional Parent Conference which is held each autumn in Monterey, California. Esabel Cervantes, CABE Regional II representative at the time, led local members in the preparing for a reception the night before and the conference the next day. Attendance was mostly local, but participants came from long distance to participate in both parent and an educator components. The event is always educational and inspirational for the students, parents, teachers and administrators.

#### **CHAPTER SCHOLARSHIP FUNDRAISER**

CABE PV 66 conducts annual scholarship fundraisers. In the past we had pizza nights and raffles. Then in 2018 José-Luis Orozco offered his time and music talent for a concert at the Mellow Center Auditorium and the money going to chapter scholarships. *Estrellas de Esperanza*, a local student dance group directed by Ruby Vasquez, also joined in the concert. It was very successful, and we did it for two years. This year José-Luis was not available, so we planned to have *Estrellas de Esperanza* be the star performance, joined by a student music group directed by José Camacho. The event was called *Concierto Folklórico* and was very successful, raising \$900. Overall views were that the Concierto was gorgeous and families were really pleased to have community and kids showcased. The families lingered and engaged with each other in the lobby giving it a real community feeling. We are so appreciative of both Ruby Vásquez and her student dance group, *Estrellas de Esperanza*, and José Camacho and his After School Program music students, *Academia de Música Ilusión*.

#### **STATE CABE CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE**

Our members try their best to attend the annual conference. At meetings we discuss how to get district and school sites to support sending teachers. Some of the obstacles can be budgets and availability of substitutes. When the conferences are held in Northern California, our attendance is better. This past year we noticed that many more were attending, and we were very excited about that. Our chapter president has been attending the Joint Assembly every year to represent the surrounding counties and to collaborate, report and get ideas for chapter improvement. However, the COVID19 put a stop to that. We hope that next year the conference can be held for in-person attendance

#### **STATE CABE CONFERENCE SHARE-OUT**

Each year after the annual CABE conference, we create a share-out session so that those fortunate enough to have attended the conference can share with those who were unable to attend. In that way, the excitement and motivation from being with the best in English Learner education can be disseminated. Usually we begin by talking about the wonderful CABE experience of being among inspiring leaders and classroom practitioners. From that environment, we come back ever so inspired and motivated, with the goals of sharing what we have learned and also of encouraging others to attend CABE the following year.