

MINUTES

ESE Advisory Panel Family Engagement Sub-Committee Meeting 11.21.24

Attendance

Vanessa Seron – Instructional support Specialist, MDCPS Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

- Committee Chairperson

Beverly Heller - Chair of the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for ESE

Olga L Gonzalez Olivera – District Coordinator, MDCPS ESE department

Rachel Lafrance, Director of Community Outreach, FDLRS- South – Serving KIPP Charter, Mater Academy, Miami-Dade and Monroe

Danielle Leys – Outreach Coordinator - Parent to Parent Miami

Anseing Partridge, Instructional Supervisor, MDCPS Exceptional Student Education (ESE)

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting began at 9:37 am. Ms. Seron welcomed everyone to the ESE Advisory Panel Family Engagement sub-committee Meeting. Introductions were made.

Beverly Heller was a teacher of students with ESE for many years. She has experience in advanced Academics and early childhood. Her children are Miami Dade County Public Schools Alumni. Currently her grand child is enrolled in an MDCPS school.

Vanessa Seron introduces herself as an Instructional Support Specialist in the MDCPS department of ESE. She works in the office of autism. She is passionate about the field of behavior analyst. She is a licensed social worker who values the importance of family engagement.

Olga L Gonzalez Olivera works at the district office as a coordinator. She has a background in budget, Title 1 and accounting. She has been a PTA volunteer for most of her life. She worked as a secretary/treasurer at an MDCPS school. She is a member of a social committee at the district. She organizes events and anything else in need of assistance.

Ms. Heller informs the committee of what was shared at the new board meeting. The new board member spoke about safety and Exceptional Student Education. This means we have a strong person interested in our group. Parent and Family Services and ESE. We're lucky for that!

Danielle Leys introduces herself as the Outreach Coordinator for parent to parent of Miami. She

has been part of this committee for two years.

Anseing Partridge introduces herself as an Instructional Supervisor for the department of ESE. She is with the compliance department, private schools' evaluation, and was the co-chair of this committee.

Rachel Lafrance introduces herself as the FDLRS- South Director of Community Outreach. She oversees the Parent and Family Services function. She is part of the ESE Department.

II. Mission and Purpose of the Family Engagement Sub-Committee

Vanessa Seron shares that the Mission and Purpose of the Family Engagement sub-committee is to assist parents and families in accessing appropriate services to help their child develop and reach their full potential. This includes connecting them with resources in Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the community.

III. Review of 2024-2025 Goals

Ms. Seron invites the committee and attendees to review the goals that were shared with the Chair prior to the meeting. Rachel Lafrance is invited by the chair to speak on the goal she shared.

Ms. Lafrance reads: "To provide information, training and support to help increase parent participation in their children's education and overall growth." She explains that families need to be informed before they can advocate for their children. As a result, she believes that parents need to have access to resources. But they also need to be trained on how to use these resources to benefit themselves and their children. In doing so, we will be able to increase parent participation in their children's education and overall growth as well as promote informed parent decision making. This goal also aligns with that of the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Systems (FDLRS). This is why our Parent and Family Services team at FDLRS-South commits to these efforts.

Anseing Partridge, former sub-committee chair, shares that last year, a flyer was created to raise awareness for families. However, the panel still needs to review the flyer and make changes as needed before publishing. She requested that one of the former sub-committee participants share the flyer with attendees if possible.

Danielle Leys believes she has a copy of the flyer. She proceeds to explain that it would be shared with parents and families during events such as PTA meetings.

"The sub-committee needs more members.", says Ms. Heller. The committee members need to get more involved in raising awareness. She believes the sub-committees most important goal should be to get all people Involved and Aware, not just parents and families.

Ms. Gonzalez-Olivera mentions that school sites need to remember to let parents know the purpose of the meetings. Parents need trainings on what to ask when they go to an IEP meeting. They need to be provided with the phone number of the ESE office in charge of developing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Ms. Heller says we need to use our liaisons to go out and recruit people from PTA. This will help us to grow slowly. But at least grow. Reach out to Lisa at the Family and Community Committee. Also, the citizens coalition.

Ms. Seron believes she has a contact with parent and families. She will reach out.

Ms. Heller motivates the committee to have people from all our committees to be involved. We need advocates talking about raising funds for our committees. Pre-Kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds. After school and before school care for all children. That is one of the things of the legislation. Let people know that we exist and what we want.

Ms. Leys shares that Parent to Parent of Miami raises parent awareness at their trainings. This helps them. They let parents know about their services. She wants her team to be more aware. So, she thinks we should begin working on the flyer as soon as possible. Ms. Ley shares her screen to allow the group to review the flyer.

Ms. Heller states that the awards sub-committee meeting is starting now. She is unable to attend because she is here in this meeting. She asked the Chair and sub-committee members to consider reviewing their upcoming meeting dates, so they do not overlap with the other sub-committees.

Ms. Lafrance shares with the group that she was part of a committee that created a flyer that could serve as a road map for parents and families to find services. She can share with them after we review the current flyer to see how we can merge the ideas if the team agrees.

Ms. Seron reviews flyer shared by Leys. She likes having the dates for our sub-committee meetings. A telephone number they can call to get information. Great images.

Ms. Heller highly recommends inviting parents to the committee and make it open for all.

Ms. Leys thinks this would provide parents and community members the opportunity to mark their calendars.

“The parent academy provides training for parents and gets their information out to parents.” Says Ms. Heller. She believes we should seek to collaborate with them.

Ms. Seron shares that in addition to the flyer, creating a Padlet would be a great resource to have.

Ms. Lafrance shares the Speciale Education Connection newsletter provided by the state as a resource that could be shared with parents and families to raise awareness and guide them through securing Exceptional Student Education Services for their children. She puts the link in the chat for the team. <https://www.specialedconnection.com/>. Parents can sign up to receive this free newsletter.

Ms. Gonzalez Olivera asks whether various groups could access the newsletter. Is the newsletter available in Spanish and other languages?

Ms. Lafrance states that she believes so. Parents and families can also filter by state since the laws in each state may differ.

Ms. Heller asks if this meant that schools were not educating parents of the IEP process and not informing parents of what to expect prior to meetings.

Ms. Lafrance states that she believes that the ESE department notifies parents and informs them of the process. However, additional support is sometimes needed. Parents sometimes forget the information that was shares with them. Therefore, this would be a good tool to help educate and remind them of things they might have forgotten about.

Ms. Heller says that sounds great. However, she would like to know if it is required for parents to receive information prior to an IEP meeting? She wants to know what MDCPS is doing. She feels she must know.

Ms. Seron and Ms. Gonzalez Olivera state that we cannot be sure that everyone takes the time to do it with the parents even though the procedures are in place.

Ms. Lafrance and Ms. Ley share the goal for their services. At FDLRS-South and parent to parent, we make sure we train our parents and families.

Ms. Lafrance informs the Chair that she was able to locate the flyer she reviewed with another early childhood committee that could be help the team generate additional ideas.

Ms. Seron allows Ms. Lafrance to share the flyer with the team.

Ms. Lafrance explains that the flyer is basically a road map indicating with arrows the direction parents should take when looking for the right ESE services for their children. Ms. Lafrance reads the information on the flyer aloud and shares the theme of travel used by the committee. Maybe we can come up with another theme to help guide parents. She also highlights the visual

support of children at play and a family taking a walk. This makes the flyer more appealing. Maybe we can have a front and back version of the flyer. One side with the road map and the other side with the contact information of all the ESE departments and community services that will be able to assist our parents and families.

All members really like the flyer and agree that it would be helpful to parents.

Ms. Lafrance informs the team that she will get permission from the other committee before sharing the final version of the flyer with this sub-committee.

Ms. Seron wants the team to create and share a flow chart for our parents to receive this information in a simple format. She thinks a trifold would be a good idea.

Ms. Heller suggests having it included in the packet that goes home to parents during the first day of school. This is because most people do keep the packet.

Ms. Seron recommends that the flyer be placed at different school sites.

Ms. Seron believes that the group has a good goal.

Ms. Heller adds that the team has a good goal with actions.

IV. Future Meeting Dates

December 10, 2024, at 11:30 am; February 11, 2025, at 11:30 am; April 8, 2025, at 11:30 am.

Ms. Seron likes the brochure idea. We can have parent academy share it.

Ms. Lafrance reminds Ms. Seron to check the master calendar as Ms. Heller previously mentioned the conflicts with other sub-committees.

Ms. Heller says that would be great for her and others who would want to join more than one sub-committee.

Ms. Seron will look at the master calendar to see if the dates and times overlap.

IV. Adjournment

Ms. Seron Thanks everyone for attending. It was a great meeting. A calendar invite is forthcoming.

End Time: 10:26 AM