

Miami-Dade County Public Schools

**SUPERINTENDENT'S DISTRICT ADVISORY PANEL FOR
EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION**

Minutes for September 21, 2023
1501 NE Second Avenue, Conference Room 326 Y
Miami, FL 33132

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 11:11 am.

Members Present

In-Person Participants (P)

Leylani Cardoso
Michelle Cumming
Beverly Heller
Yvonne Leon
Laurie Malman
Blanca Malagon
Lynn Miskel
Anseing Partridge
Gisel Prado
Sandra Rancano
Maroa Ratti
Patrick Salmasi
Elias Seife
Kathy Vergara

Virtual Participants (V)

Enrique Escallon
Brenda Lampon

School Personnel Present (P) Physical / (V) Virtual

Giselle Mendieta (P)
Ray Novo (P)

Josee Gregoire (V)
Alina Rodriguez (V)

Guests

Jeanette Macias, Advanced Academics (P)
Ailyn Perez, PEN (P)
Liz Filipowicz (P)
Sylvia Calderon Special Olympics (P)

Diana Abril, Parent (V)
Nancy Torres, Parent (V)
Krystal Giraldo, Parent (V)
Norma Urquiza, Florida
International University (V)
Yaner Leon, UM Card (V)
Lynn Myceras, Early Childhood (V)

Members Absent

Sandy Ames, Rosa Maria Barbara, Kelli Hunter-Sheppard, Anthony Julio, Amanda Ley
Christina Rodriguez, Lisette Rodriguez, Mark Thompson, Shirkayla Trimble, Allicia Walford.

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION of Panel Members/Guests

Mr. Martinez welcomed all panel members and guests and reviewed norms for the meeting. All panel members and guests introduced themselves.

AGENDA REVIEW

The agenda was reviewed and approved.

Mr. Seife requested to review the agenda/minutes from sub-committee meetings.

Certification for conflict of interest was provided to all participants in a packet. Mr. Salmasi reviewed the certification process for conflict of interest. He requested that all documents be reviewed and returned by September 29, 2023. The information will be sent via Zoom to those attending virtually.

A reminder regarding quorum criteria was made and Mr. Martinez encouraged everyone to attend in-person if possible.

CONSENT AGENDA AND APPROVAL OF MEETING MINUTES

The Consent Agenda was reviewed and approved.

Mr. Seife requested that more details be included in the minutes.

Ms. Ratti expressed that she would like to have more individuals join the sub-committee meetings.

Mr. Martinez indicated that he has noticed that in the past we have omitted some details, but that the important stuff is in the minutes.

Ms. Heller indicated that she has made a suggestion that the legislative topics be discussed in September. She indicated that someone should have come and presented. She thinks it would be effective for panel to hear which ones affect Exceptional Student Education.

Chair asked Ms. Heller if she had made the request, and she expressed that she had at the last panel meeting.

Chair indicated that if someone has something they would like on the agenda they should make requests/concerns to the entire panel for extra assurance.

Chair indicated that he is concerned because the legislative issue concern won't be addressed until November. He asked if there are going to be sub-committee meetings. Mr. Salmasi indicated that someone would need to move to hold a special meeting to address the legislative topics in October.

Ms. Ratti expressed that when there is a request like that, parents should be the ones to address, and that this could be done through the Engagement Committee.

Ms. Heller expressed that at some point the panel would need to approve this. Chair requested clarification. Ms. Heller clarified and expressed that if we want to have input on legislative issues, we have to do it during the meeting session. She expressed that we should review, discuss, and pick 3-4 topics.

Parent expressed that not all topics are related to Special Education.

Ms. Ratti said that in the past the panel has never said anything about this.

The chair requested a motion to hold a special meeting to discuss the legislative topics and asked if there are any other discussions on this.

Parents asked who would be presenting for us, and Ms. Heller indicated that someone from the district would, and that Mr. Salmasi should reach out to find this person.

Mr. Salmasi moved to schedule a special meeting in October with our Intergovernmental Affairs Office to discuss legislative updates. He asked if the meeting should be scheduled in person or virtually. Ms. Heller suggested it should be in person and added to the motion.

Mr. Seife indicated that we should not mix some things together since we are discussing Special Education. He indicated that he could invite the Speaker of the House to attend the meeting. He recommends that we focus on what is the real need of Special Education in public schools. He said that we need a good plan and to be prepared. Before we speak to individuals in Tallahassee, we need to find out what we really need in Special Education.

Clarification was added to suggest that we not create a new listing, but review what is already in the book and then approve or disapprove.

Ms. Ratti indicated that she does this for another committee. They do not create their own ideas but share input on what is already going to be discussed, then give feedback.

The chair asked if this needs to be developed, and it was clarified. Mr. Salmasi explained that minutes are being taken for the meeting.

A suggestion was made to take the list of legislative updates and identify the ones pertaining to Special Education so they can be reviewed.

Ms. Heller explained that a separate group has put together a list of priorities that address Special Education. The list has other items as well. The suggestion was to take those that apply to us from the list that has already been made by the Superintendent. Those are the ones we look at, discuss, and choose what we want presented. We would be supporting the Superintendent and have input on what we want supported. This would be the initial motion and reason for the meeting.

Chair called the vote (15 in favor/ 0 opposed).

PROPOSED PANEL MEETING SCHEDULE AND TOPICS

Mr. Salmasi will handle scheduling and district personnel involvement. Mr. Salmasi said that we need to lean on them for a date that is suitable. If the group would like, he can send out some dates.

Mr. Salmasi will review the topics in the presentation, edit the page, and send out a finalized version of selected topics.

The group will decide when we want topics to occur, and the finalized version will be sent out.

Topics and dates were discussed. There will be a special meeting in October to discuss legislative updates. In the past, the budget was discussed in January. The panel discussed retention and substantial number of student influx being experienced by the state, after care programs (how they work for SPED students), transition and deferral options, and transportation as topics to be presented.

Mr. Salmasi indicated that the group needs to decide on the topics they want.

Ms. Heller indicated that we have an opening in November and a suggestion was made to discuss student influx at that time.

Ms. Cumming asked if we could have more than one topic since staff retention is critical. Ms. Heller suggested that staff retention should be discussed with the budget.

Mr. Seife indicated that November is a suitable time to discuss student influx since October is FTE.

Ms. Ratti suggested that transition be discussed during the last meeting.

A suggestion was made to consider discussing transition prior to the last meeting since May might be too late.

Ms. Ratti suggested that the Transition sub-committee discuss all of these things, and the information be presented during the last meeting.

A question on sub-committees was asked and Chair explained the purpose of sub-committees.

Ms. Heller made motion to discuss student influx and teacher retention during the November 16th meeting. Vote: Yes- Unanimous

Ms. Ratti indicated that there are many high school parents that have joined the transition sub-committee. There are presentations from agencies, and she has learned a lot.

Ms. Abreu asked how additional topics for consideration get on the list. Mr. Salmasi explained that during sub-committee meetings they discuss and then provide to panel. Additional recommendations through the panel at large can be considered as well.

Mr. Escallon explained that in order to add a topic to the panel, you make the suggestion and send it through the chair and Mr. Salmasi.

Chair asked if January meeting date, time, and topic to be discussed (budget) was good. Mr. Salmasi recommended that additional topics for discussion be gathered, brought back to the group, and a motion to discuss be made. Suggestion was made to add after-care discussion to the January meeting. Everyone was in agreement.

March date and time was approved. Mr. Seife feels the topic for March is too generic. Chair asked for suggestions.

Suggestion was made to move transition topic to March along with mental health.

Ms. Ratti suggested that the whole topic be switched. She expressed that discussion in May would be too late for summer program discussion.

Ms. Cardoso expressed that sign up for summer programs occurs in May. Students have a lot to in advance to qualify for some programs. Discussing before would be a good idea so everyone has a good idea what the expectations are.

Mr. Salmasi expressed that the rationale for having it in May is to present the finished product. He indicated that things move quickly through Spring and that Summer programs are ready to go. We can't guarantee that the finished product will be available in March.

Ms. Leon agreed and expressed that Summer programs (district-wide) are not looked at until March and April. The beginning of May would be for program sign-ups, and we could always provide whatever information we have through a flyer.

Mr. Salmasi indicated that the intent is to inform the panel at large so they can share the information with families. Ms. Ratti suggested that we could have a presentation from the Family Engagement committee indicating what is being worked on for summer. Mr. Escallon agreed with Ms. Ratti and expressed that the panel can have input.

Mr. Salmasi asked if the panel wants to have an earlier conversation for Summer, gather information that parents feel need to be shared during March. Ms. Ratti expressed that they can discuss during sub-committees how to engage parents to have that discussion.

Mr. Salmasi suggested topics and dates of presentations:

November-student influx and staff retention.

January-budge and aftercare

March-mental health, transition, and feedback for Summer Programming

May-Summer programming

Mr. Seife expressed that the budget meeting is two meetings in one. District budget and funds is an intense presentation, and adding another presentation may be ambitious. He suggested moving aftercare to March meeting.

It was suggested that we move aftercare to November. Mr. Salmasi gave an option to add it to the October special meeting. It would cover Legislative updates and after care.

It was asked to clarify what is being addressed through the aftercare topic. A parent explained that she gets calls from parents that their children are being kicked out of aftercare programs. She suggested that presentations be made on what is allowed or not for aftercare.

A parent expressed that the Children's Trust has done a great job in getting aftercare programs.

Mr. Salmasi reviewed topics for discussion and asked if aftercare could be added to the November meeting. It was agreed upon.

October: Legislative updates (special meeting)

November-student influx, staff retention

January-budget, aftercare

March-mental health, transition, feedback for summer

May-summer programming and options for Summer Youth Internship Programming

Motion, by Mr. Seife, second by Ms. Heller, to accept proposed meeting schedule as amended.

PROPOSED PUBLIC COMMENT STRUCTURE

The chair expressed he would like to offer a different structure. He proposed that meetings should start with call to order, then roll call and introductions, then public comments and announcements, followed by new business (presentation that is on the agenda), old business (follow-up questions), committee reports, and then adjournment.

The chair expressed that under the Sunshine Act the public can talk on items on the agenda or concerns in the community.

Parent suggested that when we get to the actual agenda items instead of new business it should be agenda items to discuss, old business or prior/presentations, committee reports, items from the floor or concerns not on the agenda can be at the end. The chair would have an opportunity to control the time, so the meeting can be adjourned on time.

Mr. Seife thought that a sub-committee discussed what structure should be developed and then the panel discusses at the meeting. He asked if this had happened.

Ms. Heller pointed out that the chair had not included the proposed minutes in the structure.

Chair expressed that public comments or announcements should be items on the floor.

Agenda should have what needs to be readdressed, etc... . There needs to be a place for new business needing to be discussed, and old business needed to be readdressed.

Mr. Salmasi expressed that there are some technical difficulties with virtual platforms. He asked if were okay as far as Sunshine is concerned. The chair indicated that we are in compliance. Mr. Salmasi asked if we were okay moving forward since virtual people are not present.

Ms. Malagon expressed that matters from the floor can be called "new business."

The chair indicated that he is introducing the structure, and he feels comfortable hearing suggestions and asked if there were concerns.

Ms. Heller indicated concerns with the suggested agenda.

Ms. Ratti wanted to follow up on Mr. Seife's comments and said this was discussed in the sub-committee. Some were done at the beginning of the meeting, some suggested at the end. These would be the ones that we suggest should be discussed with the panels. The proposal was to have who was going to talk and have topics vetted.

The chair stated that it did not seem like there was a problem that the public comments area is open. We do not to put guidelines or rules.

Ms. Cumming asked for the form to sign up for sub-committees be passed, If the times are on the agenda, it would be more helpful to stay on task.

Mr. Seife moved to adjourn.

A motion was made to extend the meeting by 15 minutes was made by the chair.

Ms. Cumming moved. Yes- Unanimous

The sub-committee form was passed around, and Ms. Heller clarified that the bi-laws state that you must sit on at least one sub-committee and be actively involved.

PROPOSED SUB-COMMITTEES FOR 2023-2024 AND SIGN UP

Mr. Salmasi explained that there is no limit to how many sub-committees you sign up for; Quorum is not needed, and it does not need to be in person. Fact finding is the mission of the sub-committee. Hopefully, we have time to hear sub-committee reports. He asked if there were questions on sub-committees.

Mr. Salmasi sent an email to submit the form by next Thursday. Information will be shared with the group and the date for the October meeting will be provided soon. He explained when sub-committees meet that attending in person is not a requirement.

Mr. Salmasi expressed that if anyone needed to leave, they could as no further motions would take place. The meeting was extended to 1:15 pm.

The chair expressed that they do not need a motion to extend the meeting and if anyone needed to leave, they could.

DISTRICT UPDATES

Ms. Leon reviewed ESE (Exceptional Student Education) updates on enrollment, and State Performance Indicators for ESE.

Ms. Macias, representing Gifted/Advanced Academics (in place of Lisette Rodriguez) provided updates for the Gifted and Advanced Academics Department as it relates to gifted placement and the NNAT-3 Screening.

- The Gifted Subcommittee will conduct its first meeting on Thursday, October 19, 2023, in SBAB Annex 326Y at 10:00 AM.

Ms. Gregoire, Representing Pre-K ESE programs provided information regarding Pre-K ESE enrollment and State Performance Indicators.

Meeting was adjourned at 1:30 pm.