

Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Exceptional Student Education  
Early Childhood Subcommittee Meeting  
Tuesday, April 22, 2025, 10:30 – 11:15 am

**MINUTES**

**Attendees:** Meaghan Chaplin, Deanna Decario, Judy Palenzuela, Julio Suarez, Katie Hart, Lynn Miskiel, Nicole Abreu, Sabrena Bishop, Victoria Quintanilla, Laurie Malman, Tiombe Kendrick

• **Welcome/Introductions:**

- The meeting was called to order at 10:32 a.m.
- Introductions

**I. Review/Approval of Minutes and Agenda:**

- Mr. Suarez shared the meeting agenda and minutes. Ms. Malman made a motion to accept the agenda, and Ms. Miskiel seconded the motion. Ms. Malman made a motion to accept the minutes with corrections. Dr. Hart seconded the motion to accept the minutes with corrections. The motion to accept the agenda and minutes was approved with corrections.

**II. Committee Goals:**

- Mr. Suarez shared the committee's goals with the team.
  - 1) Supporting Families
  - 2) Supporting Pre-K ESE Programs Awareness and Participation
  - 3) Expanding and Supporting Inclusive Opportunities

**III. Review/Update Committee Goals:**

- Mr. Suarez asked if there were questions or comments related to the committee goals. The Committee agreed to keep the goals as presented.

**IV. Pre-K ESE Presentation by Deanna Decario:**

- Deanna presented the Positive Parenting Practices session flyer, available in English, Spanish, and Haitian Creole. These flyers were distributed to teachers to share with families. The sessions are offered both virtually and in person, with an emphasis on encouraging in-person attendance.

**V. Early Childhood Update:**

- Judy Palenzuela, attending on behalf of Lynn Maceres, delivered updates related to early childhood accountability. She explained that since 2021, the state has implemented a new accountability system for VPK providers. This year, schools will receive performance metrics for the first time, using tools such as CLASS observations and STAR Early Literacy assessments. Eighteen schools achieved a CLASS score of 6.0 or higher—an increase from nine last year—and 56 individual classrooms also met or exceeded the 6.0 threshold, up from 34. During Early Childhood Week, certificates were presented to teachers in classrooms across the

district in recognition of their work, and classrooms participated in fun, engaging learning activities.

- Judy reported that 27% of students met expectations in PM1, while 72% met expectations in PM2. According to data from the district's assessment department, VPK completers in MDCPS schools outperformed their peers statewide and in other county programs in both early literacy and mathematics. She also discussed the upcoming Summer Bridge program, which targets students who score below the 10th percentile on FAST STAR Literacy PM3 or who are non-participants due to language barriers or other considerations. The program will provide 100 hours of instruction over five weeks, with sessions running four hours daily. Some schools may offer extended full-day programming modeled after Summer 305. Judy clarified that the program is open to all eligible students transitioning to kindergarten and confirmed that VPK lottery applications will now be completed online. Communication will be sent to schools in three languages.
- Dr. Hart inquired whether the VPK data presented is publicly accessible. Judy confirmed that Pre-K data is now integrated into the K–12 state database, allowing for longitudinal tracking. Dr. Hart also asked about the Summer Bridge schedule, and Judy confirmed that it would run for five weeks, with sessions four hours per day, beginning June 20.

#### **VI. Pre-K ESE Update:**

- Julio provided data supporting increased program awareness and shared a chart reflecting growth in inclusive opportunities across early learning settings.
- Julio provided Pre-K ESE updates, reporting that approximately one month remains to conduct ATK meetings for the 800 students transitioning to kindergarten this year. Initial Head Start cases are currently being staffed, and the summer months will focus on articulation with B-2 community agencies.

#### **VII. Community Agency Updates:**

- In community updates, Dr. Hart shared that enrollment is ongoing for summer programs. The Thena Crowder site has 45 available spots, 15 of which are designated for students with ASD. The FIU program has 10 open spots for students demonstrating early challenging behaviors not related to ASD.
- No additional updates or questions were raised by the team. The next meeting dates were announced as follows: October 14, 2025; December 9, 2025; February 10, 2026; and April 14, 2026—all scheduled for 10:30 AM.

#### **Q & A:**

- There were no additional questions.

#### **VIII. Next Meetings:**

- This was the final meeting for the 2024-2025 school year.
- Dr. Gregoire asked all in favor to adjourn the meeting. The committee agreed to end, and the meeting was adjourned at 11:16 a.m.