

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
SUPERINTENDENT'S DISTRICT ADVISORY PANEL
FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SWD)**

**Steering Committee Meeting
Minutes
September 28, 2017**

**School Board Administration Building – Room 559
1450 Northeast 2nd Avenue
Miami, Florida 33132
1:00 PM – 4:00 PM**

Participants Present

Rosa Maria Barbara, Enrique Escallon, Ernie Martinez, Ava Goldman, Kelli Hunter-Sheppard, Robin Morrison, Angel Rodriguez, and Kathleen Vergara

Introductions and Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 1:05 pm by Panel Chair, Rosa Maria Barbara. Ms. Barbara welcomed members to the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities Annual Steering Committee Meeting. Ms. Barbara thanked everyone for coming. She said that due to Hurricane Irma hardships on our community and school closings our first panel meeting had to be delayed to Thursday, October 12, committee agreed to that date.

Minutes – June Meeting

Members were asked to review the minutes of the June 1, 2017 Panel meeting. Enrique Escallon moved to approve the minutes as presented and Ava Goldman seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Membership

Ms. Barbara explained that the Panel has a total of twenty-six (26) voting members including ten (10) parent members, ten (10) agency members, and six (6) District Personnel.

Ms. Barbara along with the committee, reviewed member attendance during the 2016-17 year. Several members have had poor attendance or have not attended any meetings during the past year. Ava Goldman said that she would be happy to draft a letter to agencies that have had poor attendance to inquire if they are still interested in Panel membership and a letter to members thanking them for their service.

There are many other agencies interested in joining the Panel. Rosa Maria said that Miami-Dade Parks and Recreation is interested in joining the Panel. Parents are frequently concerned about the lack of after school programs and summer camps for children with disabilities. Dr. Angel

Rodriguez said that Hope for Miami is also interested in joining the panel. Enrique Escallon said that the Boy Scouts has had good programs for students with disabilities.

Ms. Goldman noted that it is very difficult for individuals from SPED Centers to attend the meetings due to the requirements of their positions. She is very interested in reviewing the configuration of membership as it relates to District representatives. Perhaps, it would be good to have representation from the United Teachers of Dade Task Force. Angel Rodriguez suggested that a Vice Principal may be able to attend the meetings. Ms. Goldman said that there have been some changes in personnel. For example, Jesus Aviles is the new Supervisor for Psychological Services. Ana Torres is the new administrator for FDLRS. Mrs. Barbara also suggested a general education teacher participate in the panel.

Ms. Goldman said that her office could send out an e-mail to community agencies to invite them to Panel meetings if the Panel approves. She said that we need to set up a By-Laws Committee Meeting to review the By-Laws including Panel appointments so that the membership will be a reflection of school population. In addition, we need to explore where to have meetings and how to use technology so that more people can attend the meetings. Discussion followed about meeting times, frequency, and locations.

Enrique Escallon reminded everyone that the scope of the Panel's responsibility is to advise the Superintendent. Rosa Maria Barbara said that members should recognize that the Panel is not a political platform. Ernie Martinez asked about a presentation from the ethics department. Kathy Vergara suggested that perhaps a presentation about the Sunshine Law may be helpful to Panel members.

M-DCPS Update

Ava Goldman reviewed Item H-12L presented on June 21, 2017 at the School Board Meeting by Board Member Dr. Martin Karp regarding the Subject: Gifted Education Evaluation. She reminded members that in Florida Exceptional Student Education includes gifted as an exceptionality. One of the recommended actions in this item is to explore reinstating the District Parent Advisory Committee for Gifted Education. The recommendation is that the Parent Advisory Panel for Gifted Education will operate under the same Exceptional Student Education umbrella as the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities. Discussion on the recommendation followed.

There are approximately 1,000 students who attend Miami-Dade County Public Schools that have both gifted exceptionality and a disability. The District serves approximately 40,000 gifted students per year, 36,000 students with disabilities and over 9,000 on a 504 plan.

Ernie Martinez and Enrique Escallon expressed concerns about this concept. Ms. Goldman said both populations have different needs but many similarities. Mr. Martinez and Mr. Escallon were concerned about funding for the individual programs and inclusion. Ms. Goldman said that Lissette Rodriguez is head of gifted programs. In conclusion, she said that she would take back the questions and concerns to leadership.

Ms. Goldman then reviewed Item H-4 presented on September 6, 2017 at the School Board Meeting by Board Member Dr. Steve Gallon III regarding Subject: Review of Exceptional Student Education Program and Related Services. The recommended actions proposed a review of Special Education programs and a Task Force to be convened to make recommendations regarding ways to improve the education program for exceptional students in M-DCPS. The item included input from the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities. Staff are required to develop a report to the School Board by February 2018.

October is Disabilities History Awareness Month. December is Inclusion Month and Ms Goldman suggested that we wait until December to present the Inclusion Award at the December Board Meeting in recognition of Inclusion Month.

Committee Review

Rosa Maria Barbara stated that the Ad-Hoc Budget Committee had fulfilled the purpose for which it was designated and will be discontinued. Ms. Goldman agreed that the work of the committee was completed. The committee worked very hard to design a financial report template that will be used to present to the updates to the Panel twice a year. Much appreciation was expressed to Elias Seife, Dr. Magaly Abrahante, and Ava Goldman for their hard work on this committee.

Mrs. Barbara asked Dr. Kelli Hunter-Sheppard recommendations on other disability representation, Dr. Hunter suggested the D/HH Committee expand its focus on Low Incidence Exceptionalities that will include Deaf/Hard of Hearing, Dual Sensory Impaired, Traumatic Brain Injury, and Visually Impaired. Mrs. Barbara asked if Committee Chairs that remain the same with Kelli Hunter-Shepard, Lynn Miskiel, and Kathy Vergara serving in this capacity.

Mrs. Barbara opened discussion on Mental Health issues and its relevance as a current topic in all areas to explore and include it in the panel this year, Ms. Robin Morrison recommended establishing an Ad Hoc: Mental and Emotional Health Committee. Mrs. Barbara asked if Committee Chairs could be Robin Morrison & Jesus Aviles.

Rosa Maria Barbara recommended that the following committees continue:

Awards Committee: Ava Goldman and Kathy Vergara
Education-Inclusion Committee: Reagan Chalmers and Janet McDaniel
Early Childhood PreK Committee: Marisol Diaz, Ann Marie Sasseville and Kathy Vergara
ESE Family Engagement Committee: Ernie Martinez, Angel Rodriguez & Kelli Hunter-Sheppard
Panel Transition Committee: Vivian Nunez, Robin Morrison Ernie Martinez, and Chris Reigadas

The following committees will meet and report as needed:

Legislative Updates: Enrique Escallon
Nominating Committee as needed
Steering Committee
By-Laws Committee as needed

MDCPS Committees

Attendance Boundary Committee: Rosa Maria Barbara, representative

Family and Community Involvement Advisory Committee: Rosa Maria Barbara, representative

Ms. Barbara noted that panel members will have the opportunity to sign up for committees at the October meeting.

Proposed 2017-18 Meeting Dates and Topics

The Steering Committee reviewed the school calendar and proposed the following meeting dates and suggested agenda topics:

September 28, 2017

Steering Committee

October 12

M-DCPS Update

November 16

Inclusion Presentation

Magnet Application Process

December 14

Child Find

January 18

IEP Training

IEP Parent Communication

IEP Tool Kit for Parents to Resolve Problems

February 22

Charter Schools (Acceptance & Services)

March 15

Legislative Session

April 19

Hurricane Preparedness

May (TBA, must coordinate with location of luncheon for availability)

Awards Ceremony

June 14

M-DCPS Update

Adjournment

Meeting Adjournment: 3:50 pm

Respectfully submitted,

Kathleen C. Vergara
Recording Secretary