

**MINUTES OF THE
SCHOOL BOARD OF MIAMI-DADE COUNTY, FLORIDA
SUPERINTENDENT'S DISTRICT ADVISORY PANEL FOR ESE
IN-PERSON / ZOOM MEETING
Thursday, January 9, 2025**

VOTING MEMBERS IN ATTENDANCE

In-Person

Sandy Ames
Michelle Cumming
Ivan Deveaux
Beverly Heller
Kelli Hunter-Sheppard
Yvonne Leon
Blanca Malagon
Laurie Malman
Ernie Martinez
Lynn Miskiel
Gisel Prado
Maria Ratti
Lisette Rodriguez
Patrick Salmasi
Mark Thompson
Jennifer Urbay

Virtual

Enrique Escallon
Elias Seife
Kathy Vergara

MDCPS STAFF IN ATTENDANCE

In-Person

LaKisha Richardson Jones
Olga Gonzalez-Olivera
Tiombe Bisa Kendrick-Dunn
Ray Novo
Allison Mollman

Virtual

Reagan Chalmers
Ava Goldman
Shannon Gottardi
Josee Gregoire
Giselle Mendieta
Anseing Partridge
Alina Rodriguez
Marie Sellek
Natalie Tappert
Angie Torres
Dayana Cadaya
Martha Diaz
Danita Duhart
Raul Garcia
Tamelia James
Rachel LaFrance
Silvia Lewis
Luis Loriga
Brianna Llado
Carla Magluta
Raydelin Munoz
Nancy Torres

GUESTS IN ATTENDANCE

In-Person

Paula De Carolis

Virtual

Valerie Zenni
Sabrina Bishop
Ariel Li
Norma Urquiza
Ivette Dominguez

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for ESE (SDAPESE) meeting was held in-person and by virtual Zoom, on Thursday, January 9, 2025. The meeting was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Ms. Beverly Heller, 2nd Vice Chair. Ms. Heller is acting as chair for Ernie Martinez until his arrival.

Ms. Heller presented a quorum, and the motion to approve the November meeting minutes was made by Dr. Lisette Rodriguez (1st) and Ms. Yvonne Leon (2nd), passing at 11:10 AM.

November Meeting Minutes Correction: Noted that page 4 of the November minutes, that Mr. De Agostini was incorrectly titled as "Ms. De Agostini" in the Discussions and Questions section.

II. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS OF PANEL MEMBERS AND GUESTS

Standard introductions were made by panel members, guests, and staff.

III. AGENDA REVIEW

Panel Liaison, LaKisha Richardson Jones, reviewed meeting norms and agenda. She explained that approval requested for meeting dates and topics through a consent agenda.

IV. CONSENT AGENDA

Ms. Heller reviewed approval of meeting agenda, dates, and topics of the meetings. She presented the consent agenda and asked if there were any objections to its adoption. Hearing no objections, the consent agenda was adopted by unanimous consent.

V. SPECIAL PRESENTATION: BUDGET

Shannon Gottardi, District Director, Office of Educational Services and ESE:

Ms. Gottardi explained the different IDEA Grants that support special education. She provided a breakdown of IDEA Grants and 2023-2024 Final Budgeted Amount vs. Final Expenditures compared to previous years.

Grant Allocations and Spending (Fiscal Year 2023-2024)

- IDEA K-12 Grant: Funding awarded annually to provide supplemental resources to support specialized programs and services for children and youth with disabilities (SWD): Budgeted \$115.7 million, with \$92.3 million spent.
- IDEA Pre-K Grant: Funding awarded annually to provide early-intervention services for preschool children ages 3-5 with disabilities and their families; budgeted \$3.7 million, with \$1.7 million spent.
- FDLRS: IDEA funded state project that provides Child Find diagnostic services, professional development for teachers, resources for parents, supports for schools on inclusive practices; budgeted \$1.9 million, with \$1.8 million spent, and revenue of \$51K, with \$41K spent.
- SEDNET: Multiagency Network for Students with Emotional/Behavioral Disabilities that assists in the provision of a quality system of care for student with or at-risk of emotional

and/or behavioral challenges; budgeted \$90K, with \$89K spent; SEDNET trust account \$47K, with \$21K spent.

Ms. Heller Question: Pertaining to expenditures being less than the budgeted amount: Will the amount left over will roll over to the next year or we will lose it?

- Ms. Gottardi answered that the IDEA K12 and IDEA Pre-K do, but the other grants do not. Those funds would go back to the DOE. She explains that more detail about individual grant expenditures is coming in the presentation to further explain the grants that roll-over and those that do not.

Total ESE Budget: \$121.5 million budgeted; expenditure of \$96 million.

IDEA K-12 Grant Budget for 2023-2024

- Original grant award: \$84.4 million with a \$2.7 million award adjustment from the DOE (yearly).
 - Award Adjustment: This year was positive adjustment, while in 2021-2022 it was detailed that there was a negative adjustment. Reasoning is not usually provided by the state.
 - Ms. Gottardi shares that it is usually this time of year that we hear from the state on the award adjustment amount.
- \$28.5 million rolled over from the previous year, but this will decrease with ESSER funds ending.
- Total Budget Amount: \$115.7 million
- Total IDEA Expenditures: \$92.3 million
 - Salary Expenditures: \$81.2 million
 - Non-salary expenses: \$11 million
 - \$23.4 million (20%) of the IDEA K-12 budget remains

Salary Expenditures

Salary expenditures increased by \$11 million due to additional full/part-time employees, a fringe rate increase (from 23% to 25%), and rising medical insurance costs.

- Salary allocations:
 - \$21.6 million – Full-time paraprofessionals & bus aides
 - About \$2.7 million increase from 2022-2023
 - \$28.2 million – Full-time ESE staff
 - About \$2.5 million increase from 2022-2023
 - \$4 million – Hourly positions
 - About \$1.5 million increase from 2022-2023
 - Ms. Gottardi shares that ESSER funds have ended and were not available to use for some of the hourly positions, explaining the increase.
 - \$237,000 – Overtime (Transportation/Custodial)
 - \$13,000 - Stipends
 - Ms. Gottardi notes that like the year before, some stipends were supplemented from ESSER funds. Professional developments with a stipend provided still occurred as much as it did in 2021-2022, but with the available funding, this category has less expenditures.
 - Substitutes are now contracted via an outside agency rather than being a salary expenditure. Substitutes will be addressed on non-salary expenditures going forward.
 - \$13.5 million – Fringes
 - Fringe benefits increased by \$2.5 million due to more employees and a higher fringe rate (from 23% to 25%).
 - \$13.4 million – Benefits (Medical insurance)

- About \$2 million increase due to increased coverage costs for more full-time employees.

Total salary expenditures: \$81.2 million

Discussions and Questions:

- **Mr. Deveaux's Question:** Mr. Deveaux asked about stipend management, specifically for ASD support.
 - Ms. Gottardi clarified that stipends are only allocated to participants of professional development sessions that take place outside of the school day (for example: during summer or on Saturdays).

Full-Time Personnel Counts (Authorized vs. Filled Positions)

Ms. Gottardi shared that the district has been asked for a personnel count and provided the Authorized and Filled Positions for the 2023-2024 school year, along with the previous two school years. Filled positions are an average count from July to June.

For the 2023-2024 school year:

- Paraprofessionals: 585 authorized with 510 filled
- Bus Aides: 350 authorized with 333 filled
- Speech Language Pathologists: 10 authorized with 10 filled
- Psychologists: 53 authorized with 43 filled
 - Authorized number has decreased from previous years due to nationwide shortage of available working psychologists – some of the responsibilities have been moved to support the shortage to placement specialists and social workers.
- Itinerant DHH Teachers & Interpreters: 23 authorized with 22 filled
- Itinerant VI Teachers: 9 authorized with 8 filled
- Transition Specialists/Teachers: 21 authorized with 20 filled
- Placement Specialists & Social Workers: 104 authorized with 96 filled
- EBD Counselors: 21 authorized with 18 filled
- EBD/ASD Teachers/Art Therapists: 9 authorized with 9 filled
- ESE Support/Program Specialist/Liaisons/etc.: 223 authorized with 199 filled
- Private School Itinerant Teachers: 16 authorized 14 filled
 - MDCPS does support SWD that are enrolled in private schools.

In total: 1,424 authorized full-time positions with an average filled position of 1,282.

Discussions and Questions

- **Ms. Heller's Question:** What is being done to fill these positions?
 - **Ms. Gottardi Response:** In collaboration with Mr. Salmasi's and Dr. Hunter's teams alongside with her team, they are working together to advertise available positions, recruitment fairs, college partnerships, and collaboration with Dade County's recruitment office. Paraprofessional positions remain the hardest to fill with a lot of competition, with school sites responsible for their hiring.
 - **Dr. Hunter Response:** Emphasized that Ms. Salmasi, herself, and all other administrators who work in ESE continuously work to hire highly qualified individuals to work in our ESE program. She shares her praise of Mr. Salmasi's work to bring in qualified personnel amongst the competition of other schools and programs.
 - She notes reasons for the open positions are for a variety of reasons. Some personnel may be on leave, retiring, or leaving for a lucrative opportunities in other counties to teach/virtual school. Additionally, the national shortage of school psychologists is another factor in open positions.

- Dr. Hunter highlights MDCPS' efforts to bring in qualified personnel: paying internships to retain college graduates in teaching or psychologist positions (utilizing IDEA Grant) and collaboration with FIU, who is providing full scholarships for these positions to recruit in. Filling personnel roles is a constant and consistent challenge.
- **Ms. Ratti Comment:** Suggests simplifying paraprofessional application processes and reducing hiring fees to make these roles more accessible to community members. She recommends sharing open positions to parents that can fill the positions. Ms. Ratti mentions she has been in touch with HR and has been able to recruit paras.
- **Mr. Seife Question:** Does this part of the presentation cover contracts for SLPs?
 - **Ms. Gottardi Response:** Clarified that this is for MDCPS employees.
 - **Mr. Seife Question:** Is the plan to use contractual labor for SLPs going forward?
 - **Ms. Gottardi Response:** There are only the SLPs that IDEA funds cover (10 SLPs funded) while additional positions are funded through the general fund, providing a further supplement, and then to contracted agreements.
- **Question:** Why is the EBD/ASD Teachers/Art Therapists number very low?
 - **Ms. Gottardi Response:** These are employees that are paid through the IDEA grant, which is only one part of the budget.
 - **Ms. Martinez Comment:** Reiterates that currently, we are only reviewing the IDEA Grant Budget.
- **Ms. Heller's Comment:** She states that she did not receive the Budget PowerPoint prior to meeting. Going forward, she suggests advance access to budget materials for review before meetings.

Non-Salary Expenditures – IDEA K-12

- Contracts: \$3 million - \$1.3 million increase from last year due to specialized transportation funding.
- Travel/Professional Development: \$18,700 - Comparable to the 2022-2023 school year.
- Substitutes: \$427,000 - Transitioned from a salary expenditure to a non-salary expenditure.
 - As a district, substitutes became harder and harder to find – but contracting with outside agency, number of substitutes has increased in availability.
- Field Trips/Special Olympics: \$80,000 - Decreased due to expenditures shifting to the Life Skills Office.
- Repairs & Maintenance: \$7,000 - Dependent on equipment with servicing needs, which can explain decrease.
- Software Licenses: \$1.2 million - Increased as ESSER funds previously covered these expenses in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023. In 2022-2023, ESSER funds covered \$1.2 million in this category.
 - Usage reports allowed team to make decisions on available supplies and curriculum.
- Supplies: \$1 million - Decreased by \$45K from 2022-2023
- Printing/Duplicating: \$4,700 - Small increase, varies on year.
- Furniture/Equipment: \$500,000 – over \$400K decrease
 - In 2022-2023, ESSER funds were not used.
- Private School Non-Salary: \$1.8 million - Increased due to more private schools participating.
- Indirect Costs: Increased by \$2.9 million.

Total Non-Salary Expenditures: \$11 million

No questions at this time.

IDEA Pre-K Budget (Ages 3-5)

- Original grant award was \$1.6 million, with a \$242,000 Award Adjustment.
- Roll-over funds were \$1.8 million, increasing from previous year.
 - In the 2022-2023 school year, MDCPS utilized ESSER funds to supplement.
- Total Budget Amount: \$3.7 million
- Total Expenditures: \$1.7 million (\$600,000 increase from year before)
 - Salaries: \$1.3 million
 - Non-salary expenses: \$332K
 - \$2 million (54%) of funds remain for 2024-2025, which will roll forward into 2024-2025.

Salary Expenditures

- \$660,000 - Full-Time ESE (i.e. Directors, Staffing Specialists, Teacher, Clerical)
 - 11 available positions with 11 filled
- \$323,000 – Hourly Employees
 - Approximately 70 filled positions
 - ESSER funds were not available for hourly employees
- Substitutes are now a non-salary expenditure.
- \$245,000 – Fringes
- \$139,000 – Benefits (Medical Insurance)

Total salary expenditures: \$1.3 million

Discussions and Questions:

- **Ms. Heller's Question:** Only seeing that 70 hourly positions were filled last year, how many positions were open/available?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** Clarified that hourly employees fluctuates, especially in PreK. We hire teachers and staffing specialists to work over summer (usually 10 month employees) to be able to staff children into ESE the full year. Work beyond the school day is accounted for here.
 - **Question:** Were some children not able to be taken care of with the missing filled positions?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** No, this number was based on need.
 - **Ms. Heller's Suggestion:** I'd like to see what number you were looking for, along with the filled, to be sure we are meeting the needs of the students.
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** We only hire for the hourly positions for what we need. We do not have hourly positions that are open and unfilled. We hire based on need.

Non-Salary Expenditures

- Travel/Professional Development (PD): \$779 - There was a significant decrease in expenditures from the previous year due to only two trainings being offered in the 22-23 school year.
- Substitutes: \$4,900 - Transitioned from a salary expenditure to a non-salary expenditure.
- Software Licenses: \$4,200 - There was an increase in spending compared to the previous year.
- Classroom Supplies: \$77,000 - A decrease in spending was noted, which is directly related to the number of open classrooms and the materials needed.
- Furniture/Equipment: \$191,000 - A notable increase in expenditures was observed, as ESSER funds were utilized in the 2022-2023 school year, impacting the spending trend over the past three years.
- Field Trips: \$3,520 - This year marked the first time expenditures were made in this category.

Total Non-Salary Expenditures: \$282,000

Due to indirect costs totaling \$50,000, the total is brought to \$332,000.

Questions and Discussion

- **Ms. Malagon's Question:** Does the decrease in professional development expenditures indicate that no training was provided to Pre-K teachers during the 23-24 school year?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** Teachers were still trained, but the district did not contract with an outside vendor for professional development. Instead, MDCPS Pre-K staff conducted the training internally, which accounted for the reduction in costs.

FDLRS Budget

- Original IDEA FDLRS Grant Award: \$1.9 million
- IDEA FDLRS General Revenue: \$51K
- Total FDLRS Grant Award: \$1.9 million
- Total Expenditures: \$1.9 million
 - Salary Expenditures: \$1.5 million
 - Non-Salary Expenditures: \$376,000
- Funds Sent Back to State: 2.4% - Compared to 28% the previous year, which is possibly due to several open positions in FDLRS last year.

Dr. Danita Duhart joined Ms. Gottardi to share information about the FDLRS budget.

Dr. Duhart shared that the department worked closely with the district and the new project liaison to manage the budget and reallocate funds according to state guidelines. She expressed appreciation for the district's collaboration in supporting the needs of the FDLRS South budget. Efforts have also been made to fill vacant positions, in collaboration with Ms. Salmasi, with some former employees returning in different capacities to retain employment. Currently, FDLRS has a full-time staff member who has received positive feedback from families that previously worked in MDCPS. She is excited to continue working with district staff going forward to find innovative ways to minimize the amount of money being sent back to the state.

Discussion and Questions:

- **Ms. Malagon's Question:** To clarify – this particular grant does not allow roll forward of funds?
 - **Ms. Gottardi Reponse:** That is correct.
 - **Ms. Malagon's Question:** So, we have to send it back to the state?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** Yes, that is correct.
 - **Ms. Malagon's Question:** Are we expecting these grants on a yearly basis?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** Yes
 - **Ms. Malagon's Comment:** Kudos to district and FDLRS for only allowing 2.4% to be sent back in the previous year.
- **Dr. Duhart's Comment:** Dr. Duhart praises Ms. Salmasi again on working with FDLRS and helping unpack the most successful way to use the group. She also thanks Angie Torres for welcoming and assisting FDLRS to be so important in MDCPS.
- **Ms. Malagon's Comment:** She used FDLRS since her son was 3, over 30 years ago – and notes that the first experience most MDCPS ESE parents have is with FDLRS – and having this program running most effectively is so important to our community and our school district.
- **Ms. Ratti's Comment:** recommended increasing in-person workshops for parents and teachers to enhance support and knowledge.
 - **Dr. Duhart Response:** FDLRS is working toward increasing face-to-face opportunities while balancing accessibility for parents with limited availability. She shared that there are plans for smaller, state-approved trainings to be rolled out

in the future. FDLRS has also partnered with UM Pediatric Mobile Bus to provide post-diagnosis support to families.

- **Mr. Martinez to Ms. Ratti:** How did you learn about FDLRS?
 - **Ms. Ratti's Response:** She learned of FDLRS in the PPP workshops. Her child's LEA suggested this to her. By attending, she learned from other parents and families that were in a similar situation as her and realized she could be a voice for these parents. She references Ms. Mendoza's knowledge and training from years ago and details how important this was for her and the other families that were there.
 - Mr. Martinez asks because he wants to bring more attention to the FDLRS work based on this budget and the value that this program brings.
- **Ms. Malman's Question:** She used to be a parent liaison to FDLRS and had sent information to all pediatricians in area with FDLRS information/contact. Is there money in the budget to send information to doctors?
 - **Ms. Malagon's Comment:** She believes there is still this practice in place.
 - **Dr. Duhart** confirms that yes, they are in contact and have cultivated a relationship with Jackson.
- **Dr. Duhart** expresses that FDLRS are more than just Child Find; they also hold trainings for ESE teachers and new teachers. FDLRS also supports teachers working in classrooms with new strategies and tools to provide SWD. Dr. Duhart says that she would need much more time to detail all their work.

2024-2025 IDEA Grants Preview

The total projected IDEA grant funding for the 2024-2025 school year is \$115 million, with the following allocations:

- IDEA K-12 Part B: \$109 million (includes roll-over from previous years)
- Pre-K: \$3.7 million (includes roll-over from previous years)
- FDLRS: \$1.9 million (with \$51K in revenue)
- SEDNET Part B: \$90,000
- SEDNET Trust: \$47,000

Discussion and Questions:

- **Mr. Deveaux's Question:** In cases where families go through due process and need to be rectified, where does the money come from for that and where can we see the information that states where that is being allocated from/being paid out? If the family wins, where does that money to pay for the extra services come from?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** Unsure at this time, but some comes from IDEA, and some comes from the general fund. but will be something they explore at the next subcommittee meeting.

Martha Diaz, Chief Budget Officer, Office of Budget Management:

The General Fund has two years in data available in their presentation of the adopted ESE budget.

Breakdown by program spreadsheet is as follows:

- green highlight - adopted budget 23-24
 - yellow highlight - accepted budget 22-23
 - gray highlight – difference between year
-
- Increase of \$45 million in the adopted 2023-2024 ESE budget.
 - ESSER funds were not used in the general fund, so the increase is unrelated to ESSER

Discussion and Questions

- **Ms. Malagon's Question:** Asked to review a category with a \$3 million increase and a \$1 million decrease in some programs
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** Students requiring nursing services/price to pay for those services has an increase in the new year. The number of students requiring nursing services is almost over 250 students.
- **Ms. Malagon's Question:** What is exceptional student MESA?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Answer:** MESA is supplies, furniture, equipment directly to schools. MESA is not to the district office, that is funding that goes direct to schools.
- **Ms. Gottardi's Comment:** Program 6700- ASD is under educatable mentally handicapped – \$11 million increase in amount due to ASD exceptionalities increasing county-wide. Additionally, payment to ESE Consultative teachers and inclusive classroom consultation services.
- **Ms. Ratti's Question:** Why did the emotionally handicapped budget went down?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Answer:** EBD number enrolled has gone down. ASD has gone up, EBD has gone down.
- **Enrique Escallon's Question:** Due to change in population/immigration, is there any way that information is captured in the ESE budget?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Answer:** That information is captured within the bilingual department, unless that student may be identifying as ESE, which is when they would fall into one of these budgets. Our team can start to look into this number, as there may be some overlap, but there has not been a deep dive into the ESE/ESOL overlap.
 - **Enrique Escallon's Comment:** Would be interesting, some of these kids may have experienced trauma and may require special services.
 - **Ms. Ratti's Comment:** Most parents she helps are new arrivals to USA - as well as with a child with autism. Some of these students may already be accounted for in this budget/spreadsheet.

Ms. Diaz reviews the Net Changes in FTE from the 2022-2023 to 2023-2024. Not including charter or FES (scholarships to private) and only holds MDCPS FTE.

- Increase of 458.74, mostly attributed to 111 program (K-3)
- Program 112: Grades 4-8
- Program 113: Grades 9-12
- Programs 254/255: ESE level 4/5

Discussion and Questions:

- **Ms. Malagon Question:** For 2023-2024, for Program 111: that's 17,308.75 represents what?
 - **Ms. Diaz's Response:** This is representing what we get paid by the state for students in ESE programs, dependent on where they are in ESE or GE classes.
 - **Ms. Malagon's Question:** So that's a dollar amount that the district is getting paid? What does the number represent?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** This number represents FTE – full time equivalent for how much time that student is receiving ESE services.
 - **Ms. Diaz:** Amount will increase or decrease dependent on the population and this FTE number.
 - **Ms. Malagon's Question:** So the decrease in 112, that represents what grades?
 - **Ms. Diaz's Response:** Grades 4-8

- **Ms. Gottardi Comment:** An increase in FTE means an increase in budget.

ESE Expenditures Per Cost Report

The report outlines the usage of ESE funds across fiscal years, comparing expenditures allocated to the FTE category for ESE students.

- Direct costs (salary/fringes) refer to teacher salaries that can be directly tied to specific students.
- ESSER funds played a role in maintaining necessary services during COVID, ensuring continued support for ESE programs. Reminder that some grants liquidated at the end of 2022-2023, and there would be no available funding from those going forward as they are not being distributed anymore.
- Funds were allocated to programs based on FTE to meet student needs effectively.

ESE Expenditures and ESSER Phase-Out

- ESE funding reductions: \$98.3 million decrease in 2023-2024.
- Remaining federal and state grants will continue despite ESSER ending.
- Future funding strategies will absorb costs into IDEA, other federal grants, and the general fund.

Discussion and Questions

- **Ms. Malagon's Question:** With ESSER funds are going away/are gone, other than those federal funds, are there any federal/state grants that are going away?
 - **Ms. Diaz's Response:** No, only ESSER
 - **Ms. Malagon's Question:** So federal and state grants that we received will still be coming in?
 - **Ms. Diaz's Response:** Yes.
 - **Ms. Malagon Question:** With ESSER funds leaving, how will that cost be covered to continue funding?
 - **Ms. Diaz's Response:** Salary/fringes will either be absorbed by IDEA or other federal grants, then the general fund. Non-recurring expenditures are prioritized for the general fund. To maximize on what is being provided and not feel the impact from losing the ESSER funds. MDCPS tried to use funds in non-recurring costs (with computers, etc.) that may be one-time larger purchases that last longer.
- **Mr. Deveaux's Question:** Are we seeing that the spending is evenly across the groups in K-3, 4-8, etc. meaning is the money consistently across all grade levels or is it different?
 - **Ms. Gottardi's Response:** Spending is consistent across the grade levels, but budget/received funds is based on student enrollment count.
- **Ms. Diaz's Comment:** If you are curious on fund allocations, there is a book on the financial services website "School Allocations Plan" that detail how the amount is broken down and sent out.
- **Ms. Gottardi's Comment:** Different resources are being allocated in different schools depending on student ratio/needs, so you may see the difference in spending based on student need there. Not necessarily on grade level, but on that individual student's need.

Mr. Martinez asks for members to hold questions to the end due to time constraints.

Salary Expenditures with Authorized and Filled Positions – General Fund vs. ESSER/GEER Funds

Ms. Diaz reviewed the number of authorized and filled positions funded by the general fund compared to ESSER/GEER funds. Ms. Gottardi shared that ESSER funds covered the costs of

summer programs. Ms. Diaz explains that spending increased in years with greater fund availability. Ms. Gottardi said that an increase in FTE resulted in more available and filled positions, even with a teacher shortage. Ms. Diaz referenced a slide displaying salary expenditures, illustrating how funds were absorbed.

- Salary Expenditures: Increase
- Non-Salary Expenditures: \$2.5 million increase
- Indirect Expenditures: \$430,000 increase

Ms. Diaz shared that ESSER/GEER funds decreased by \$13.9 million as the grants are being closed and will not be available for future school years.

- Indirect expenditures: \$11.5 million

Discussion and Questions

- Ms. Heller inquired about how the panel could assist in providing recommendations to the superintendent or school board and asked what support was needed for the team.
 - Mr. Salmasi highlighted recruitment and retention of qualified personnel, particularly in ESE, as a major challenge. He noted that awareness campaigns have been discussed to promote career opportunities in education. He emphasized the importance of spreading awareness within personal networks to encourage interest in MDCPS careers, as the district is committed to nurturing the next generation of educators.
 - Ms. Heller asked about specific budgetary needs to support recruitment efforts.
 - Ms. Gottardi expressed appreciation for the offer of support and stated that she would meet with her team to determine the best approach for collaboration. Ms. Heller requested a timeline for updates by the next meeting, to which Ms. Gottardi agreed.

Mr. Martinez set a motion to extend the meeting by 15 minutes. Ms. Ratti (1st) and Ms. Malagon (2nd); motion approved.

- Ms. Ratti emphasized the importance of engaging community members to fill vacant positions. She urged the district to actively encourage graduates and interested individuals to pursue employment opportunities within MDCPS, particularly in high-need paraprofessional roles. She encouraged all members to spread awareness within their communities about available job openings.

VI. DISTRICT UPDATES – The chair requested any non-time sensitive information to be saved for March, due to time constraints. All members were in agreement.

Yvonne Leon, District Director, Office of Educational Services and ESE: Updates are not time sensitive and willing to forgo information to the next meeting.

Dr. Lissette Rodriguez, Executive Director, Division of Academics: Updates are not time sensitive and willing to forgo information to the next meeting.

Dr. Josee Gregoire, Executive Director, Office of Educational Services and ESE: Updates are not time sensitive and willing to forgo information to the next meeting.

VII. SUBCOMMITTEE UPDATES

Mr. Salmasi announced the Parent Choice Expo at MDC Kendall Campus on Saturday, January 11, 2025, featuring 169 participating schools. In addition, Family Resource Day will take place at DA Dorsey Technical College on Saturday, January 11, 2025.

VIII. NEW BUSINESS - The chair requested any non-time sensitive information to be saved for March, due to time constraints. All members were in agreement.

IX. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Lakisha announced that it is an election year, all voting members will participate in the nomination process for the March meeting. A nomination form will be distributed prior to the meeting to collect submissions from members. Floor nominations will also be accepted during the March meeting. **Members are asked to attend in-person to cast their votes.**

Mr. Martinez emphasized the importance of attending the March meeting. He states that due to expected attendance, a larger venue will need to be arranged with the panel.

Next Meeting (March): Topics will include mental health discussions and elections.

X. ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Enriquez called for adjournment at 1:07 PM. Ms. Malman supported the motion, and Ms. Miskiel seconded it. The meeting was officially adjourned.