

**Superintendent's District Advisory Panel
For
Exceptional Student Education
Transition Subcommittee Meeting Minutes
March 20, 2024
11:00 am**

Members Present

Brenda Lampon
Giselle Mendieta
Maria Ratti
Daniela Santana
Valerie Zenni
Enrique Escallon
Sylvia Calderon
Lisa Friedman-Chavez
Raydelin Muñoz

Members Not Present

Beverly Heller
Allicia Walford
Maria Henao
Diane Adream

Meeting was called to order at 11:00 am by Ms. Giselle Mendieta.

Welcome and Introductions

- Ms. Mendieta welcomed everyone.

Agenda Reviewed

- ✓ Mrs. Mendieta explained transition challenges and what we found when dealing with transition process for parents. at schools are used for more

- ✓ Mr. Escallon explained Parent to Parent and Children's Trust resources available.
- ✓ Valerie expressed that parents should be encouraged to have face to face meetings with families to discuss options and resources. Share UR, Project 10.
- ✓ Mrs. Muñoz explained the change in transition services, which now begins at age 12 or in 7th grade, whichever comes first.
- ✓ Ms. Friedman-Chavez shared the transition checklist in the chat.
- ✓ Ms. Lampon expressed that we have resources, but the information is not getting to the parents. We have to collaborate and be a support to transition teams at the schools.
- ✓ Ms. Ratti expressed that the discussion of post-secondary meetings needs to be discussed and it doesn't get to be discussed in IEP meetings. Parents are more focused on current and not on future. She expressed that parents don't attend meetings, and that more Hispanic parents prefer face to face meetings. She suggested that someone at the schools gather the questions and try to find the answers for parents. Schools should be more proactive, and flyers for transition on our website is only in English. The flyers should be in multiple languages. She expressed that parents are clueless on the process of transition.
- ✓ Ms. Friedman-Chavez expressed that all high schools have college and career fairs. She asked if we could have a fair for transition specifically. She expressed that she knows of some counties that have had one, including Palm Beach who collaborates with Palm Beach State College. They have Open Houses and many options.
- ✓ Mrs. Muñoz shared the Open House information for Projects across the district. She expressed that even though it was advertised, not a lot of participation from parents. She is unsure if the information is getting to the parents. She expressed that Transition Specialists are doing their own Open Houses at each school.
- ✓ Ms. Santana expressed that she has never received information from schools. She doesn't see the information on social media, and teachers don't know when meetings are held.

- ✓ Mrs. Mendieta suggested different ways for schools to promote/educate parents on transition, including emails, websites, presentations during Open House, and Transition Fair.
- ✓ Ms. Ratti asked about the Family Expo. She suggested that maybe it can be done by school and the schools can share the information with parents during that night. The Parent Academy has ambassadors and has helped parents in the past. Maybe schools can have someone to assist. She expressed that providing translation helps, and she is going to suggest it at her children's schools.
- ✓ Ms. Lampon indicated that she agreed with Ms. Friedman-Chavez and with Ms. Ratti. It takes a lot of manpower to put together a conference. Conferences were initiated by this team years back. The last one done was not as successful. She also shared that they are finally at Miami-Dade College and were able to participate in a college visit for students at Barbara Goleman Senior. MDC does a great job of sharing information, but it needs to get to the schools and the parents. She suggested having another STEP Conference. She feels parents are getting the information and we need to try other things.
- ✓ Mr. Escallon questioned how we would do this. He suggested maybe following the model used by North Miami Beach Senior where parents receive emails with information on transition and transition planning after each IEP meeting. He shared information on WAZE to Adulthood. It is a class free of charge to parents. It provides FACT sheet. He shared he feels the goal should be to improve communication through events, social media, etc...
- ✓ Ms. Santana expressed that we need information on social media, newsletters, etc...
- ✓ Mrs. Mendieta expressed that when you offer food and/or gifts (gift cards, etc...) you tend to have more participation.
- ✓ Ms. Ratti expressed that maybe we could consider "Breakfast with the Experts." She shared how that event has gone in the past and that if we offered it in the morning, we target those parents dropping off students in high school. The events could be offered at different times. Also, schools who have good transition programs can share what works for them with other schools. She feels that parents won't really take advantage of WAZE.

- ✓ Ms. Calderon expressed that providing information is essential, and that students need to be included. She suggested maybe a session with the schools' Department Chairpersons.
- ✓ Mrs. Mendieta explained that students should and are included in their transition meetings and IEP meetings. She expressed that North Miami Beach Senior offers a class to all SPED students in 10th grade. It is a Self Determination course that focuses on self-advocacy and determination, as well as career prep. It immerses the students in the transition process and gives them ownership and accountability.
- ✓ Ms. Calderon expressed that parents should receive information since PreK.
- ✓ Mrs. Mendieta shared that in comparison to other districts, and based on personal experience, MDCPS is above the rest.
- ✓ Mrs. Ratti expressed that she participated in an Autism Speaks event and that MDCPS has services no one else has.
- ✓ Mrs. Mendieta indicated that she would share our vision with Mr. Salmasi.
- ✓ Mrs. Muñoz indicated that information to parents goes out every year.
- ✓ Mr. Escallon expressed that there is an influx of special needs students coming from out of the country and we need to start being proactive.
- ✓ Mrs. Mendieta explained that we do have a process to address students who register from outside the US and have special needs.
- ✓ Mr. Escallon expressed that the ESOL department should be included.
- ✓ Ms. Friedman-Chavez expressed that she loved today's discussion. She indicated that reaching out to parents is key. FDLRS offers services and other resources, as well as Parent to Parent, and Parent Network on Disabilities. MDCPS has amazing opportunities, and that we should start promoting transition services earlier than the required age. She questioned how the information is being presented even as the legislature is requiring. She indicated information has to be documented on IEP, and questioned how information is being presented. She indicated offering parents a list of suggested resources. She thought it would be helpful to explore what are the methods right now that are used to get information to the parents. What are the current communication methods? What are successful strategies? Do parents know that Parent to Parent offers free resources. She also expressed that teachers need resources and training.

Meeting concluded at 12:00 pm