

## MINUTES

### Miami-Dade County Public Schools SUPERINTENDENT'S DISTRICT ADVISORY PANEL FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES (SWD)

Minutes of February 22, 2018

School Board Administration Building – Room 559  
1450 Northeast 2nd Avenue  
Miami, Florida 33132

#### **Members Present**

Sandy Ames-FCC	Ernie Martinez	Miguel Suau (T)
Rosa Maria Barbara	Janet McDaniel (T)	Kathy Vergara
Ava Goldman	Elias Seife (T)	

#### **Alternates Present**

Michelle Cumming (Elizabeth Cramer)  
Jennifer Durocher (Diane Adreon)  
Maria Jakoniuk Ratti (Rosa Maria Barbara)

#### **Members Absent**

Magaly Abrahante  
Diane Adreon-CARD  
Lauren Bustos-PTP  
Myrna Charlton-ARC  
Elsa Clarke  
Elizabeth Cramer-FIU  
Irenaida Diaz-ACT  
Enrique Escallon  
Martin Karp  
Lynn Miskiel-MCCD  
Elaine Silny (FLASHA)  
Linda Reiter (resigned)  
Camila Rocha-Easter Seals  
Madeline Spado (Best Buddies)

#### **Honorary Members Present**

Vickie Burley

#### **School Board Members Present**

Luis M. Garcia – School Board Attorney's Office

### **School Personnel Present**

Jesus Aviles  
Marisol Diaz  
Juan Carlos Gonzalez  
Yvonne Leon  
Laurie Malman (T)  
Robin Morrison  
Vivian Nunez  
Raymond Reyes  
Alfredia Robinson (T)  
Angel Rodriguez  
Orfi Sanchez  
Ana Maria Sasseville (T)  
Maria Sellek  
Keisha Sparks

### **Guests Present**

Tanya Acevedo	Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Carlos Fuentes (T)	Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Beverly Heller	Grandparent
Brenda Lampoon	Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Mary Palacios	Miami Dade Parks
Fabiana Puliti	Department of Vocational Rehabilitation
Mark Thompson	Special Olympics

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:20 pm.

### **Introduction and Welcome**

After introductions, Ms. Rosa Maria Barbara, Panel Chair, welcomed members and guests.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Members of the Panel reviewed the minutes of the meeting January 18, 2018 as presented or corrected. Since a quorum was not present, approval of the minutes was tabled.

### **Chair Report**

Rosa Maria Barbara reported that she represented the Panel at the Exceptional Student Education Program and Related Services presentation to the Task Force appointed by the School Board to review Exceptional Student Education services provided by Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Ms. Barbara shared the 2017-2022 Interagency Agreement between the Agency for Health Care Administration, Agency for Persons with Disabilities, Department of Children and Families, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Education, Department of Health, Guardian ad Litem Program and Office of Early Learning. The purpose of the Interagency Agreement is to coordinate services for children served by more than one agency. The goal is for mutual communication between agencies to prevent service overlap and children from falling through the cracks. The coordinated flow of information across agencies should be designed to ensure that policy, procedure, service delivery, and resource development are provided in a manner that maximizes the potential of positive outcomes.

Ms. Barbara extended her deepest sympathy to the community of Parkland, Florida regarding the tragic incident that occurred at Marjorie Stoneham Douglass Senior High School. It has been reported that the shooter had been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). Ms. Barbara reported that Autism Speaks extended its condolences to the community. She read a statement published by Autism Speaks stating that research shows that people with ASD do not have higher rates of criminal behavior than the general public. Ms. Barbara said that it is very important not to stigmatize students with disabilities. Janet McDaniel asked if the Panel could make a similar statement. Ms. Goldman said that she would communicate this request to the Communications Office.

### **Attendance Boundary Committee**

Ms. Barbara was not able to attend the last meeting.

### **Family and Community**

#### **Involvement Advisory Committee**

Ms. Barbara reported that the committee did not meet. She is planning to attend the next meeting.

### **Presentations**

#### **Applying the Requirements of the Florida Sunshine Law**

**Luis Garcia, Deputy Assistant School Board Attorney**

Rosa Maria Barbara introduced Luis Garcia to the Panel. Mr. Garcia explained that the Florida Sunshine Law focuses on three basic requirements: Meetings of Public Boards or Commissions, Public Records Act, and Code of Ethics.

He continued to explain that the Sunshine Law applies to advisory committees like the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities. Requirements are as follows:

- Meetings must be open to the public and be conducted in ADA accessible locations.
- Reasonable notice of these meetings must be given to the public (5 days).
- Minutes of the meeting must be written and cover general points addressed at the meeting. The minutes must be open to public inspection.

The law applies to any meeting of two (2) or more members of the Advisory Panel who meet to discuss a matter that will foreseeably come before the Advisory Panel for action. The law applies to sub-committees that the Advisory Panel has delegated decision-making authority.

Members may meet together socially so long as they do not discuss any matter that may come before the Advisory Panel for action.

The law does not consider one-way electronic or written communications between members a meeting unless they result in comments or responses by members. For example, circulating reports among members is permissible as long as the reports do not solicit comments from members. If just one member responds to such an e-mail or communication, a violation of the Sunshine Law has occurred.

Florida Public Records Act: The law requires that all documents made or received pursuant to Advisory Panel business, must be retained and made open for public inspection unless specifically exempted from disclosure by statute. In other words, anyone can ask for records or documents from the Advisory Panel. It is advised to save all documents for five years.

Code of Ethics: Members are required to abstain from voting if they have a conflict. Members are required to vote unless there is a conflict.

Knowing violations of the Sunshine Law are subject to criminal and civil penalties.

Mr. Seife asked if members who attend the member via electronic presentation could vote. Mr. Garcia responded that members who attend the meeting via telephone cannot be counted for purposes of a quorum and cannot vote. It is best to require members to attend the meeting in person.

Maria Ratti said that in her opinion Panel members are honorable individuals who are devoted to helping children and would never knowingly violate Sunshine Laws.

Mr. Garcia noted that an Agenda is not a state requirement for this committee. Ms. Goldman reported that Panel Meetings and Panel Sub-Committee meetings are posted on Miami Dade-County Public Schools Master Calendar. When searching, go to Advisory Panels and scroll down to ESE.

Ms. Barbara thanked Mr. Garcia for his presentation to Panel members about the Sunshine Laws.

#### **ESE Program Review –**

#### **Ava Goldman, Administrative Director, Exceptional Student Education**

Ms. Barbara introduced Ms. Ava Goldman, who explained that in September, the School Board had approved the Board Item introduced by Dr. Steve Gallon requesting a review of Exceptional Student Education in Miami-Dade County Public Schools. The Board Item proposed establishing a Task Force to assist with the review process. The information presented today was included in the presentation to the Task Force about Exceptional Student Education and does not replace the Panel budget presentation, which will be made at a later date.

Ms. Goldman explained that the overview will include information about statistics, demographics, programs/services, accountability measures, exceptional student education support resources, sources of funding, and use of funds.

#### Statistics:

- During the 2016-17 school year there were a total of 35,057 students with disabilities, which is 10% of the total population
- Regarding racial/ethnic category, 6% of SWD are white; 24% are black; 69% are Hispanic; less than 1% are Asian
- The four most commonly identified exceptionalities are Specific Learning Disabilities; Autism Spectrum Disorder, Other Health Impaired and Intellectually Disabled
- 21% of SWD are placed in a separate class setting; 28% resource and 51% are in General Education
- 4,175 SWD are on a Modified Curriculum
- There are 43,122 gifted students and of that, 894 are both gifted and have a disability
- 9,686 students were provided services and accommodations through Section 504 plans

Ms. Goldman reported that the total number of students with disabilities has increased during the past three years from 34,926 in 2014-15 to 35,057 during 2016-17. The greatest increase has been in the Program Exceptionality of Other Health Impaired and Autism Spectrum Disorders. There was a slight decline in the students with Specific Learning Disabilities.

New Initiatives for 2017-18 are as follows:

- Teleplanning Initiative to facilitate ACTIVE virtual parent participation in IEP/EP/504 Plan Meetings.
- Establish “ASD EpiCenter” Model at Citrus Grove Elementary to enhance program, services and supports for schools with high populations of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder.
- Planning year for full inclusion program for SWD at Toni Bilbao K-8 Center.
- Conduct district wide Family Expo on April 21, 2018.
- New professional development for teachers on the Orton Gillingham, multi-sensory approach to reading is offered monthly.
- Spring 2018 launch of new blended Professional Development platform for ESE teachers and administrators, featuring the courses to meet 20-hour ESE requirement for Certification/Recertification.

Achievements are as follows:

- Two district Family Expos were conducted in 2016-17 serving 470 participants and six Parent Outreach Sessions were conducted.
- Over 7,793 educators participated in close to 300 ESE Professional Development Sessions conducted in 2016-17.
- Over 2,500 teachers participated in training on the new ESE EMS system; over 40 training sessions for other professionals on the system and 7 Summer Academies on the IEP were conducted with over 1,000 participants.
- New resources for teachers of SWD on modified curriculum were developed including “wikispaces”, Pacing Guides, and newly designed workshops. Additionally, new supplementary curriculum programs were purchased to support Mathematics and Reading. Achievements: Parent outreach, trained over 7000 educators, new electronic features for teachers

State Performance data revealed improvement during 2017. FSA data showed a three percent (3%) increase in English Language Arts and Mathematics scores. The number of students with disabilities who graduated from district managed schools was 75.3% exceeding the state average. Seventy eight percent (78%) of PreK parents and seventy-six percent (76%) of K-12 parents reported that the schools promoted parent involvement as a means of improving serves and outcomes for students with disabilities.

The State of Florida Education Finance Program Audit is in process. Forty-one (41) schools have been identified for audit covering three areas: schools, teacher certification, and transportation. Fourteen State Performance Indicators are assessed annually to determine the District’s LEA Profile.

Exceptional Student Education Department review process is in three tiers including Instructional Program Audits, Instructional Reviews, and Desktop Monitoring pertaining to recordkeeping compliance. Teams went to ten schools.

Models of Support include the setting of General Education and Special Education. General Education

includes consultation (external support) and collaboration (in-class support) while Special Education includes Resource Room placement or Separate Class placement. Professional Development sessions were provided to 7,793 educators during the past year in a variety of settings.

Sources of Funding include State and Federal Funding. Federal supplemental funding is distributed through the State of Florida to support the Individual with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Programs. The funds are intended to supplement State and Local funds authorized by the Florida Legislature. IDEA funds can roll forward. Approximately \$10,000,000 in funds rolled forward this year.

State funds used to support teachers, paraprofessionals (these are different from those provided by IDEA to implement IEP), therapists, psychologists, and placement specialists. The District contracts with the University of Miami Debbie School and United Community Options (formerly United Cerebral Palsy) for specialized services and contracts for services provided by therapists, nurses, transportation, ESE EMS, and residential programs.

In summary, a total of 35,057 students with disabilities are enrolled in M-DCPS programs, 3,196 are enrolled in Charter Schools, 5,045 are recipients of the McKay Scholarships, 1,308 are recipients of the Gardiner Scholarship for a total of 43,298. Ms. Goldman reminded Panel members that Congress still has not fully funded IDEA and the shortfall has placed a significant burden on states and school districts.

Ms. Barbara thanked Ms. Goldman for this comprehensive presentation.

### **Committee Reports**

#### **Awards Committee**

No report.

**Kathy Vergara/Ava Goldman**

#### **Education-Inclusion Committee**

No report.

**TBA/Reagan Chalmers**

#### **ESE Family Engagement Committee**

No report.

**Ernie Martinez/Angel Rodriguez/  
Kelli Hunter-Sheppard**

#### **Early Childhood PreK Committee**

Marisol Diaz reported that the last meeting was on January 12, 2018. The VPK Lottery for the next school year is on February 23<sup>rd</sup>. During the meeting, Dr. Sasseville explained the process followed to identify non-disabled prekindergarten students to participate in inclusion classrooms with students with disabilities. Students are screened prior to being selected to participate in the programs.

We are pleased that several new members have joined the committee. Ana Torres represents FDLRS, Dr. Hart represents FIU, and Delsey Yancoskie represents the Department of Family Support Services.

Ms. Diaz will send handouts to Ms. Barbara to distribute to Panel Members. The next meeting will be on March 6<sup>th</sup>.

**Kathy Vergara/Marisol Diaz**

#### **Low Incidence Exceptionalities Committee**

No report.

**Lynn Miskiel/Kelli Hunter-Sheppard**

#### **Panel Transition Committee**

Vivian Nunez reported that the committee met on January 22<sup>nd</sup> and divided into sub groups to work on

**Chris Reigadas/Vivian Nunez**

each of the four goals developed for this year.

Goal 1: Develop/connect outside resources for Early School Intervention Programs for Teens Drug and Alcohol Intervention. Chris Reigadas and Jay Glover are coordinating the work on this goal.

Goal 2: Include People First Language with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) instructors. The committee is working on an Exceptional Student Education Tool Kit to target this goal.

Goal 3: Create an ESE linkage to CTE website for industry certification and testing accommodations. The committee is working with the ESE Transition website to provide resources for parents.

Goal 4: Develop connectivity to resources for college and employment. The committee is identifying colleges that are friendly to ESE students.

Transition Task Force Meeting: Ms. Keisha Sparks updated the Panel about the Transition Task Force activities. She said that the Task Force contributed to the development of the interagency Agreement discussed earlier in the meeting.

The Transition Task Force met on January 25 and is working on providing information about resources to parents through Constant Contact. Ms. Sparks expressed her gratitude to Ms. Goldman, Ms. Nunez, and Dr. Morrison for their assistance.

The Task Force is also working on a universal referral sheet to facilitate the transition process.

Mary Palacios from Miami Dade Parks announced that they were sponsoring a Transition Resource Fair. She will send the flyer to Dr. Morrison to distribute.

Dr. Rodriguez reported that they are monitoring graduation rates for students with disabilities. He thanked the Transition Team for their assistance. It is so important to encourage students to stay in school.

Rosa Maria Barbara expressed concern about the fact that higher education institutions are generally out of compliance with ADA guidelines. Professors do not seem understand the needs of students with disabilities. Although IDEA no longer applies for these students, ADA does apply. IEP goals must be appropriate for students to receive college accommodations. Janet McDaniel said that students resist using the note taking accommodation, which is basically what a college student needs as well as extra time. Dr. Aviles said that he previously worked at Barry University where IEPs were converted into college plans.

Michelle Cumming said that FIU professors receive lists of students who need special accommodations from the DRC Center. Janet McDaniel said that many times she does not get the notification. In her opinion, FIU needs much improvement in providing appropriate accommodations for students with disabilities.

### **Report as Needed Committees**

**Nominating Committee**

**Steering Committee**

**By Laws Committee**

No Meetings

September 28, 2018

December 13, 2017, December 19, 2017,

January 13, 2018 & February 2, 2018

### **Announcements & Updates**

Ava Goldman announced that the Annual College Fair this Saturday.

**Other, Public**

Ernie Martinez arrived late and asked about Charter Schools policies regarding students with disabilities in the areas of bullying and transition. Ms. Nunez said that Charter Schools are also on her list of schools to contact about transition. Ms. Goldman will invite a representative from Charter Schools to come to Panel meeting to address this issue.

Sandy Ames distributed a flyer about the DD Wait List Campaign. Many families wait years to receive the Florida iBudget Waiver. Reducing the waitlist provides lasting social and economic impacts for students with disabilities.

Maria Ratti announced that the Best Buddies Walk is on March 27 and Autism Walk is on April 29.

Mr. Seife requested that the Agenda and Minutes be distributed via e-mail prior to the meetings.

**Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm. Ernie Martinez moved and Sandy Ames seconded the motion.

**Next Meeting**

The General Membership meeting is scheduled for March 15, 2018 at 3:00 pm in the School Board Administration Building – Room 559, 1450 Northeast 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132.