

MINUTES

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

Minutes of March 17, 2016

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

Members Present

Diane Adreon	Enrique Escallon	Christine Reigadas
Rosa Maria Barbara	Ava Goldman	Elias Seife
Eric Cintron	Ernie Martinez	Elaine Silny-FLASHA
Amam Condon-Easter Seals	Janet McDaniel	Kathy Vergara
Da Silva, Odile-CCDH	Lynn Miskiel-MCCD	

Alternates Present

Lauren Bustos (Isabel Garcia)
Maria Delgado (Martin Karp)
Maria Jakoniuk Ratti (Rosa Maria Barbara)

Members Absent

Myrna Charlton-ARC
Elsa Clarke
Elizabeth Cramer-FIU
Katherine Fuentes
Isabel Garcia
Martin Karp
Yubeda Miah
Linda Reiter
Madeline Spado-Best Buddies
Miguel Suau

Honorary Members Present

Vickie Burley

School Board Members Present

Laurie Malman – Alternate Dr. Lawrence Feldman

School Personnel Present

Dr. Magaly Abrahante
Gigi Arrieta

Elena Camacho
Sue Clifford
Kelli Hunter-Sheppard
Kathy Maguire
Robin Morrison
Angie Torres

Guests Present

Cynthia Aucoin – Parent
Angelica Coroner – Access/MDC/Wolfson
Nicole Attong – FIU Director of Operations
Margarite Montalvo – Family Network On Disabilities

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:15 pm.

Introduction and Welcome

After introductions, Ms. Rosa Maria Barbara, Panel Chair, welcomed members and guests. Ms. Barbara apologized for cancelation of the February 18th meeting. It was due to a family medical emergency.

Approval of Minutes

Members of the Panel approved the minutes of the meeting of January 21, 2016 as presented as well as the minutes of the Awards Committee meeting on March 10, 2016, the Education-Inclusion Committee meeting of February 2, 2016, the Panel Secondary Transition Committee meeting of February 11, 2016. Ernie Martinez moved to approve the minutes as presented. Chris Reigadas seconded the motion. Rosa Maria Barbara asked members to approve the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Kathy Vergara thanked Lynn Miskiel for taking the minutes during the January 21st meeting.

Chair Report

Rosa Maria Barbara reported that she has been very busy attending as many committee meetings as possible. She recently attended the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resources System (FDLRS) Breakfast with the Experts meeting and it was fantastic. It was wonderful to listen to parents of young children with disabilities express their opinions. It is so important for parents to participate in the process. FDLRS is having another meeting on March 29th at 9:00 AM at FDLRS. Please encourage parents to attend.

Presentations

RtI Response to Intervention

Rosa Maria Barbara introduced Dr. Sue Buslinger-Clifford, Instructional Supervisor, and Psychological Services to the members. Dr. Clifford began her presentation by stating that Response to Intervention (RTI) can be a confusing concept. The basis of RtI is to provide high quality instruction and intervention aligned with student needs through the use of a data based lens to identify, define, and track student progress in the areas of academic and behavior. Data collection is critical to determine if the student is responding appropriately to the classroom curriculum.

In 2004 there was a change in IDEA requiring scientifically based information before placing a student in exceptional student education. In 2009, Florida required every District to submit a plan to adopt RtI in general education classrooms to prevent delay by intervening early. Florida's RtI goals are to

increase the use of prevention and early intervention strategies decrease inappropriate referrals of minority students to special education; and increase the number of schools using effective literacy and behavioral interventions for students who are culturally and linguistically diverse. Since that time, there has been a decrease in inappropriate referrals for special education.

Dr. Clifford explained that RtI is a three tiered process that includes systematic, research-based instruction and interventions to struggling learners. Tier 1 includes classroom intervention, screening, assessment, and differentiated instructions, Tier 2 includes small group interventions, Tier 3 includes individualized intensive intervention.

School RtI Teams represent an extension of school leadership. Their purpose is to screen, monitor, and evaluate. Positive behavior support is important. M-DCPS is developing a new form for teachers to complete when referring a student for RtI services.

Elias Seife asked if RtI really worked. Dr. Clifford responded that there is data that demonstrates that it does. Data in i-Ready provides valuable information about the individual child. Interventions are based on this data. Mr. Seife asked how the program was funded. Dr. Clifford responded that RtI is part of the general curriculum. Enrique Escallon asked how they avoid missing individual differences. He continued by asking if a child with an IEP can receive RtI in the general education setting. Dr. Clifford responded that RtI is similar to the IEP process. Special education is addressed on top of Tier 3. Children who require sustained and substantial effort are considered for an IEP. Laurie Malman stated that students with IEPs do not need RtI. The purpose of RtI is to lead to the IEP if necessary.

Lauren Bustos asked about the time frame required to move a student from one tier to the next. Dr. Clifford said that the program is based on individual student needs. Rosa Maria Barbara commented that parents have stated that it takes too much time for a student to move from one tier to another. Sometimes it can take over a year to identify a Learning Disability. Dr. Clifford notes that the system is so intensive that individual students receive special, individualized instruction throughout the process. Ms. Barbara asked how we know that this is really happening. Dr. Clifford said that many schools are doing an incredible job. Dr. Clifford asked members of the Panel to let them know where the problems are. Ms. Barbara thanked Dr. Clifford for her presentation.

Very Special Arts Program

Ms. Ava Goldman, Administrative Director, Exceptional Student Education

Rosa Maria Barbara asked Ava Goldman to share information about the Very Special Arts Program with the members. Ms. Goldman asked members to imagine students arriving at Adrienne Arsht Center to experience the magic of theater. Through the Very Special Arts Program, exceptional student education students are prepared to participate in a theatrical performance. The students love the experience. In addition, M-DCPS has partnered with History Miami, where projects created by students enrolled in exceptional student education are on display. Approximately fourteen schools per year participate in the Very Special Arts Program. The next program at the Adrienne Arsht Center will be on May 10th. It will begin around 10:00 AM. Rosa Maria Barbara and Enrique Escallon agreed that this is a very special and amazing opportunity for our students. Ms. Barbara thanked Ms. Goldman for this wonderful presentation.

ASD Prom

Ms. Angie Torres, Instructional Supervisor, Autism Programs

Rosa Maria Barbara introduced Ms. Angie Torres, who announced that the Sixth Annual Prom for students with autism will be on May 17th at the Doubletree Hilton by the Airport. The event includes many accommodations for the students. The event is funded by many vendors and sponsors. The

entertainment will include a DJ and Jazz Ensemble from Miami Senior High School. This year the theme is a Mardi Gras Masquerade. Ms. Torres announced Prom Committee Members were announced and said that school partners are South Miami Senior High School, Homestead Senior High School, Ferguson Senior High School, and Miami Senior High School. The event also has many community partners. Ms. Barbara thanked Ms. Torres for her presentation.

STEPS Conference

Ms. Robin Morrison Executive Director, EBD Programs

Ms. Barbara introduced Ms. Morrison who announced that the 2016 Miami STEPS Transition Conference will be on Saturday, April 30th from 8:30 AM – 12:00 Noon on Saturday, April 30, at Miami Jackson Senior High School. Ms. Morrison reviewed the Agenda and Sessions offered at the STEPS Conference. The purpose is to provide valuable information and resources to help students transitioning from M-DCPS to Post Secondary/Employment. Each session will have a facilitator. Student experiences will include social media safety, Panther Life, and health and exercise. Ms. Barbara asked Panel members to volunteer to assist.

Ms. Goldman said that the conference was reinitiated because of Panel requests. Elaine Silny said that the conference is a lot of fun. Angelica Coroner from Miami Dade College said that this is a wonderful conference. Miami Dade College will be giving a presentation about “What is the Access Center.” Ms. Barbara thanked Ms. Morrison so much for this presentation. Dr. Magaly Abrahante thanked the ESE staff for their wonderful presentations at the Panel Meeting today.

Committee Reports

Awards Committee - Kathy Vergara/Jill Brookner

Kathy Vergara distributed copies of the minutes of the March 10th meeting and the Application Packet to the members. The Annual Panel Awards Ceremony will be at Ruth Kruse Educational Center on May 19, 2016 at 12:00 noon. Student Award Applications are due to Parent to Parent of Miami on April 15, 2016 and Reno Cocchi Employer Recognition Award Applications are due on April 22, 2016. The Education-Inclusion Committee has selected Hammocks Middle School to receive the award this year.

Dr. Kelli Hunter-Sheppard reported that she secured a \$1,000 donation from Human Services of Florida City, Inc. Jerome Eppinger is the director. Special thanks to Dr. Hunter for her assistance. With this donation, we will have a balance of \$2,748.22.

The luncheon is complimentary for award recipients and their guests as well as dignitaries. Panel members and guests are asked to pay \$20 per person for the luncheon. Ruth Kruse charges \$15. The remaining \$5 helps cover the cost for complimentary meals.

Guests may purchase a table for \$200 to help cover the cost of award recipients, their sponsors, families, etc. Discussion followed about the possibility of recognizing a para professional at the ceremony in the future.

D/HH Committee - Lynn Miskiel/Linda Reiter

No report.

Education-Inclusion Committee Janet McDaniel/Rosalia Gallo

Janet McDaniel reported that the committee met on February 2, 2016 and reviewed the proposed

Paraprofessional Survey. The committee is interested in learning about who is supervising paraprofessionals and what type of training they are receiving and need. The survey will go out to program supervisors so they can provide assistance to the paraprofessional.

Rosa Maria Barbara thanked Mari Ratti for her research regarding the responsibilities of paraprofessionals. The survey was the result of her efforts. Elaine Silny suggested that inclusion paraprofessionals should be included. Diane Adreon said that it is important to balance the information gathered. Discussion followed regarding who should receive the form, supervisors or principals. Ava Goldman said that District would assist with defining who should complete the form.

Panel Secondary Transition Committee - Chris Reigadas/Ernie Martinez/Jill Brookner

Rosa Maria Barbara reported the committee had developed two flyers identifying the top ten facts parents should know about transition. The flyers are titled "Transition Top Ten" and address the top ten areas from Middle School to High School and High School to Post Secondary/Employment. Flyers should start being distributed to families when students are fourteen years of age.

Sue Clifford recommended distributing the flyer with the meeting notification form. Dr. Magaly Abrahante noted that the forms need to be approved by the District before they can be distributed. The distribution mechanism is the standard electronic management system. The forms can be included in the new computerized IEP system to ensure consistency. The IEP system is being revised by a new vendor, Accelify. Enrique Escallon was happy to learn about the new platform. He suggested adding guardianship information and including transition documents from Prekindergarten to Kindergarten. Kathy Maguire suggested including options for kids that are not college bound.

Ad-Hoc Budget Committee - Elias Seife

Mr. Seife thanked everyone who participated in the Ad-Hoc Budget Committee meetings. The last meeting was on March 11th. Ms. Goldman gave a PowerPoint presentation. The committee has determined that it is important to inform Panel members about budget issues regarding special education so that members will have the knowledge to inform others.

The committee is looking at current trends in exceptional student education. This information will be very informative and will provide comprehensive demographic data to members.

Dr. Magaly Abrahante would like the committee to present a report to members at the next Panel meeting so that once members have been informed about the data, members will be able to make recommendations.

Rosa Maria Barbara thanked Mr. Seife and Dr. Abrahante. She said the committee has created important transparency and understanding. She found her participation to be a wonderful experience.

Nominating Committee - Report as needed

Ms. Barbara reported that the committee will be reviewing membership.

Steering Committee Report as needed

No report.

Committee Representation

Attendance Boundary Committee - Rosa Maria Barbara/Kathy Vergara

Ms. Barbara reported that the next meeting is scheduled on April 3rd.

**Family and Community - Rosa Maria Barbara
Involvement Advisory Committee**

Ms. Barbara said that information was presented about social workers and referrals. She is concerned that school personnel do not receive information.

Other

Mr. Seife asked how paraprofessionals are funded. Ms. Goldman stated that paraprofessionals are funded through IDEA. Some are part time and some are full time depending on the needs of the students. It is difficult to find paraprofessionals because of the pay range. Dr. Abrahante said that the District is working on this problem. Everyone agreed that the roll of paraprofessionals is very important. Enrique Escallon recommended that the Panel send a letter of concern to the Superintendent. He said that finding qualified paraprofessionals was a challenge with his son. Ernie Martinez asked about Human Resources benchmarks for paraprofessionals. Dr. Abrahante said that Human Resources is aware of the problems and is supportive. M-DCPS salaries are comparable to those offered by other service industries.

Ms. Maria Ratti announced that “Light It Up Blue for Autism” is scheduled on April 2nd. Her children’s school is very involved.

The Autism Speaks Walk is scheduled to take place on April 10th at Doral Central Park.
Palm Springs Middle School is hosting a parent meeting on April 19th titled “Transitioning into Adolescence.

Enrique Escallon was in Tallahassee during the last meeting working on family involvement issues.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:50 pm. Elias Seife moved and Ernie Martinez seconded the motion.

Next Meeting

The General Membership meeting is scheduled on April 21, 2016 at 3:00 pm in the School Board Administration Building – Room 559.