

MINUTES

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

Minutes of October 18, 2012
School Board Administration Building – Room 916
3:00 P.M.

Members Present

Lourdes Bravo	Lynn Miskiel	Liliana Salazar
Elsa Clarke	Stephanie Mintz	Elaine Silny
Elizabeth Cramer	Linda Reiter	Miguel Suau
Ava Goldman	Christine Reigadas	Kathy Vergara

Alternates Present

None

Honorary Members Present

None

School Board Members Present

Laurie Malman – Alternate Dr. Lawrence Feldman

School Personnel Present

Jill Brookner
Katherine Cadieux
Helene Chait
Sonja Clay
Rosalia Gallo
Kathy Maguire
Mary Paz
Alfredia Robinson

Guests Present

Rose Painson, Parent/PLC Haitian Board

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:08 pm. Chris Reigadas reminded members that they had been asked to review the minutes of September 20, 2012 prior to the opening of the meeting.

Introduction and Welcome

Following introductions, Ms. Chris Reigadas, Panel Chair, welcomed members and guests.

Chris Reigadas stated that she wanted to take a few moments to discuss the STEPS Conference. She

thanked everyone who attended and assisted with the organization of the conference. She recognized Rosa Maria Barbara for all of her hard work and Ava Goldman for assisting with the conference coordination. Ms. Goldman reported that approximately four-hundred (400) people attended the conference.

Elsa Clarke said that participants were so pleased to see School Board members, Dr. Lawrence Feldman, Dr. Wilbert Holloway, and Ms. Raquel Regalado, at the meeting. Dr. Holloway and Ms. Regalado expressed an interest in visiting one of our Panel meetings this year.

As always, Dr. Feldman had some great suggestions regarding the STEPS Conference. Ava Goldman said that Superintendent Carvalho could not attend due to a family emergency. Laurie Malman thanked district professionals who assisted. It made a tremendous difference.

At this point, Stephanie Mintz arrived. She was warmly welcomed by the members. Ms. Mintz reported that her son, Kevin, is doing very well in London and the academic program is outstanding. Kevin has graduated from Harvard and is now working on his PhD in political theory.

Approval of Minutes

Members of the Panel were asked to approve the minutes of the meeting of September 20, 2012 as corrected. Lourdes Bravo so moved. Elsa Clarke seconded the motion. Chris Reigadas called the question. The motion passed unanimously.

Agenda Items

Training on Inclusive Practices

Rosalia Gallo, Instructional Supervisor

Ms. Reigadas introduced, Rosalia Gallo, who thanked everyone for inviting her to present. Ms. Gallo said that as a result of the Panel's recommendation, this summer the Division of Special Education provided a four day professional development conference titled, Inclusive Practices/Achievement for Students with Disabilities Summer 2012. The conference objectives were as follows:

- To collaborate in the development of an Inclusion and Achievement Plan with Miami-Dade County Public Schools Division of Special Education, The Florida Inclusion Network (FIN), and Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities.
- To ensure that students with disabilities are instructed in the least restrictive environment based on student individual needs.
- To direct administrators and teacher in instructing student to promote and sustain achievement for students with disabilities across all subjects.
- To build capacity within our schools and our district to address the impact all stakeholders have as it related to students with disabilities.

The conference was a great success. Over one-hundred (100) LEAs and Special Education Teachers attended the four day conference. Sixty-two (62) schools completed and submitted Inclusion and Achievement Plans to the Division of Special Education.

During the first day, the focus was on the definition of inclusion and how to best make it work. Ms. Gallo said that the content was inclusion 101. The second day focus was on accountability, achievement, transition, curriculum, grading, interventions, Universal Design, and differentiated instruction as well as standard and modified curriculum course codes. The third day focused on behavior and bullying while the fourth day focused on the parent perspective, review, and the completion of an Inclusion and Achievement Plan.

Conference highlights were parent testimonials presented by members of the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities. Laurie and Aaron Malman were fantastic. Ms. Gallo said that everyone enjoyed the Building Inclusive Schools CD provided to the participants by the Florida Inclusion Network and Tools for Content Teaching provided by SPED. Learning Ally, FDLRS, CCDH, and FIN all provided handouts to the participants. Those in attendance were compensated for their participation and received Master Plan Points for their completed action plans.

Ms. Gallo reported that in October 2011, the inclusion rate was 50.67% and in 2012, the rate was 54%.

Schools submitted their completed plans during the summer. If they need more work, they were returned. Participating schools will be monitored during the school year. Stephanie Mintz asked for the feedback to be reported to the Panel. Kathy Maguire asked for a list of participating schools. Chris Reigadas recommended that the training be provided every year. Ms. Goldman responded that this is already in the District Plan.

Common Core State Standards

The second part of Rosalia Gallo's presentation was about the Common Core State Standards. Research reveals that students with disabilities who receive Common Core instruction in General Education demonstrate learning gains and academic growth. Students with disabilities who participate in inclusive classrooms more than 80% of the day make greater gains than those who do not.

In today's world, all students need to be ready for college or careers and all teachers need to be highly qualified. There now needs to be accountability in Special Education.

IDEA and the US Department of Education through the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) require Local Education Agency (LEA) Determinations. These determinations are a way of designating the status of each LEA Program in relation to one of four categories: 1) meets requirements; 2) needs assistance; 3) needs intervention; and 4) needs substantial intervention.

The 2012 LEA Profile requires fifty-three percent (53%) of students with disabilities in grades three through ten to demonstrate proficiency in reading. In Miami-Dade County thirty-one point forty-six percent (31.46%) demonstrated proficiency in reading.

The 2012 LEA Profile requires that 55% of students with disabilities in grades three through ten will demonstrate proficiency in math. In Miami-Dade County 38.59% demonstrated proficiency in math.

The Common Core State Standards initiative is led by the Council of Chief State School Officers (CCSSO) and the National Governor's Association (NGA). These organizations believe that we need a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn. Common Core Standards promote high expectations in the areas of reading and math for all students including those with

disabilities. The IEP must reflect annual goals that are aligned with Common Core Standards and teachers must be able to implement evidence based instruction based on these standards.

Common Core Standards are expected to be fully implemented by 2014. Nineteen (19) states including Florida are working together to implement the Common Core Standards. Forty-five (45) states have adopted the Common Core Standards.

Jill Brookner announced that the Core Content Connectors will be the new access points for students with disabilities.

Lourdes Bravo asked Jill Brookner about the Florida Alternate Assessment. Jill Brookner said that it will be necessary to develop a new assessment. Assessments must lead the way to the Common Core State Standards. Forty-five (45) states have adopted these Common Core Standards. At the present time the standards pertain only to Language Arts and Math. Science and Social Studies will remain under the Sunshine State Standards.

Chris Reigadas asked Jill Brookner to present more about the changes with the Florida Alternate Assessment at the Panel meeting on February 28, 2013. Ms. Brookner agreed to present.

The new assessment selected to be administer in Florida is the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC). The test will be administered to children with disabilities with necessary accommodations.

Stephanie Mintz noted that assistive technology will be critical for success. She asked where M-DCPS is now with assistive technology (AT). Ms. Mintz asked for a Panel presentation on assistive technology. She said that basic AT really helped her son when he attended Harvard. Ava Goldman said that a portion of IDEA funds are specified for assistive technology and specific requests are honored.

Lourdes Bravo asked about the remediation process. Rosalia Gallo responded that remediation has not clearly defined at this point. It is possible for students to get a waiver for the End Of Course (EOC) exam.

Elaine Silny said that she has observed that many teachers are not trained appropriately regarding the use of assistive technology in the classroom. Ms. Goldman noted that IDEA money provides professional development for assistive technology. M-DCPS has a team of professionals involved in assistive technology. Kathy Maguire said that determining individual assistive technology needs is a priority throughout M-DCPS.

Chris Reigadas announced that assistive technology will be presented in February 2013 in combination with Ms. Brookner's presentation.

Chris Reigadas thanked Rosalia Gallo for her presentation. Miguel Suau asked who determines if a psychologist is needed to evaluate a child. As a parent, he said that he asked for a psychological evaluation for his daughter and was told that she did not need an evaluation. His request also included a laptop for her to use in class. Kathy Maguire clarified that his request would have been for a re-evaluation, which is a determined through a team approach. Mr. Suau said that the team determined that his daughter did not need an evaluation and, as a result, she was not provided with the accommodations she needed.

Ms. Goldman assured the Panel that each case is considered on an individual basis. At times, the situation does not require an evaluation by a psychologist.

Lourdes Bravo expressed concerns about low functioning children being considered for appropriate assistive technology. Mr. Suau asked specifically who is responsible for assistive technology. Sonja Clay responded that there is an assistive technology contact at every school. Ms. Bravo noted that parents might not be able to advocate for their child and might not realize that their child would benefit from assistive technology. Stephanie Mintz agreed and said that assistive technology is complicated. For example, it would have been helpful for her son, Kevin Mintz, to have had a screen reader. Yet, a screen reader was never recommended for him because screen readers were developed for visually impaired students. He began to use a screen reader at Harvard and it was extremely helpful.

Jill Brookner said that the new IEP requires that assistive technology needs be addressed at every IEP meeting. Ms. Mintz recommended that a specialist in assistive technology attend the IEP meeting to provide appropriate information about assistive technology. Ms. Bravo said that we need to advocate about the importance of assistive technology for students with disabilities. Elaine Silny said that many years ago she was the President of the Dade County Chapter of the Florida Association for Computers in Education (FACE) and the President of Region VI, which covered two counties. At that time assistive technology was extremely expensive. Today the cost has come down. She suggested writing a grant for additional assistive technology for students with disabilities. Lynn Miskiel said that the Debbie School is conducting a pilot study with the Mailman Center for Child Development about using iPads with young children.

Ms. Clay said that she would follow-up on these concerns. Ms. Goldman said that she would recommend that information about assistive technology be included in the weekly briefing as a reminder for each school.

Liz Cramer noted that a representative from APPLE provided trainings at Florida International University.

Committee Reports

Awards Committee

Kathy Vergara/Jill Brookner

Kathy Vergara and Jill Brookner are planning to schedule a meeting early in November.

D/HH Committee

Lynn Miskiel/Linda Reiter

Lynn Miskiel announced that they had a brief meeting before the Panel meeting today. The first meeting will be on October 24th at FDLRS.

Education/Inclusion Committee

Trini Lora

No report.

Panel Secondary Transition Committee

Lourdes Bravo/Jill Brookner

Jill Brookner announced that the first meeting would be October 29th will meet at 3PM at Ruth Krusé.

**Family and Community
Involvement Advisory Committee**

Chris Reigadas

Chris Reigadas reported that the Family and Community Involvement Committee met this morning. Miguel Suau also attended the meeting and said they presented an overview about homework and pacing guidelines. Questions were raised about slow learners who cannot keep up with the pace. In addition, the Superintendent's Annual Report was reviewed. Everyone was encouraged to vote for the bond proposal for building improvements for M-DCPS. They also noted that FCAT scores were lower due to spelling errors. It is generally believed that texting has had a negative impact on spelling errors. Liliana Salazar said that there is a shift to the grading of the FCAT Writes test with an emphasis on spelling.

Miguel Suau said that presentations should include a list of acronym definitions. Laurie Malman is putting together a book for parents defining acronyms.

ABC Committee

Yolanda Herrera

No report.

Other

Kathy Vergara is a member of the Florida Interagency Community Council for Infants and Toddlers (FICCIT). She distributed a report from the Department of Education. Florida Teacher of the Year, Alex Lopes, a PreK Special Education Teacher from Miami-Dade County Public Schools was praised at the meeting. In addition, their report featured the LEAP Programs for children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. In Florida, the LEAP model programs were initiated by the M-DCPS Prekindergarten Programs for Students with Disabilities. Today, there are fourteen (14) LEAP Classrooms in M-DCPS.

Elaine Silny expressed concerns because special education teachers are not eligible for teacher incentive pay. Liliana Salazar said that teacher incentive money distribution is decided by school based Educational Services Advisory Committees (ESAC). Guidelines are dictated by Florida State Policy.

Miguel Suau announced that the Associations of Agencies developing hurricane guidelines for individuals with disabilities and others with special needs.

Lynn Miskiel announced that the Florida Summit on Childhood Deafness would take place at the Westin Hotel in Lake Mary, Florida on November 9th and 10th.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

Next Meeting

The General Membership meeting is scheduled for November 15, 2012 at 3:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Kathleen C. Vergara