

MINUTES

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

Minutes of November 12, 2015
School Board Administration Building – Room 559
1450 Northeast 2nd Avenue
Miami, Florida 3313
3:00 P.M.

Members Present

	Janet McDaniel	Elias Seife
Rosa Maria Barbara	Yubeda Miah	Elaine Silny-FLASHA
Da Silva, Odile-CCDH	Lynn Miskiel	
Enrique Escallon	Maria Ratti	
Ava Goldman	Linda Reiter	
Martin Karp	Christine Reigadas	
Ernie Martinez	Camila Rocha-Easter Seals	

Alternates Present

Amara Condon

Honorary Members Present

Vickie Burley

School Board Members Present

Jerold Blumstein-Alternate Dr. Martin Karp

School Personnel Present

Jill Brookner
Katherine Cadieux
Kelli Hunter-Sheppard
Magaly Abrahante

Guests Present

Diane Adreon – UM CARD
Eric Cintron – Student Representative Applicant
Lidia Loarca- UM Ear Institute

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:02 pm.

Introduction and Welcome

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

Approval of Minutes

Members of the Panel approved the minutes of the meeting of October 15, 2015 as corrected. Enrique Escallon moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Ernie Martinez seconded the motion. Rosa Maria Barbara asked members to approve the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

A correction that was requested was to add the name of the Panel members who attended the GIFT conference. Chris Reigadas asked for Jill Brookner's "Top 10 Reasons for Transition" handout from the GIFT conference. Ms. Brookner stated that it will be finalized prior to Thanksgiving and will be shared at that time. Also, from the October minutes was a discussion of the Federal allocation that is not the full percentage of the funds. On page 2 of the minutes the section regarding the IDEA guarantee funding formula, it is requested that the minutes need to reflect the discussion. This is tied to allocation per student per state. Ms. Barbara will work with Ms. Vergara regarding this correction.

Chair Report

Ms. Barbara reported on the Attendance Boundary Committee. The next public meeting will be December 3rd at the School Board Building. Boundaries will be voted on. She also reported on the Family Student Involvement Committee, that they are working on understanding how to better portray M-DCPS alternatives. They are targeting having a Parent Ambassador program at each school site. Also discussed was police presence at schools and school violence. The Superintendent was in attendance. Issues regarding K-8 Centers was also discussed at this meeting.

Presentations

Florida Standards Assessment (FSA)

Dr. Sally Shay, Office of Assessment & Research

English, language arts, and math are the content areas currently being assessed with the FSA. The test items are technology based that target higher level thinking skills rather than traditional multiple-choice formats. There are sample questions in the handout and a practice test available online at FSA.org.

Elaine Silny noted that the language level of the first sample Ms. Shay presented is very high. This makes for a very challenging test. The sample question also asks for more than one answer, not just to pick one response from the choices offered. The students would need to be very aware of this type of instruction. The actual test items are not available even after the exam is given but C-Palms has resources for prompts and responses.

Janet McDaniel asked how short responses are graded. Dr. Shay said that her understanding is they are scored by humans, not by computer. There are issues reported with computer graded items because they are designed to look for key words and might not take into account higher level thinking. At this time Dr. Shay cannot confirm how these test items are scored. Dr. Shay pointed out that the focus should be on teaching content rather than worrying about the test.

It is not known how scoring will be counted. For example if there are two correct responses will a

student get 50% credit if they get one of the answers correct but not the other one?

Dr. Shay reviewed a Math sample question. It required manipulating the technology during the test to answer question. The student would have to click on a tab indicating "point" and draw points on a graph and then click on "line" and draw lines. This presents another layer to the student's ability to respond on that test item. The reasoning behind this requirement is that technology is part of life now and students must be prepared. There are practice tests that are required to be presented to the students so they can become familiar with these items and the technology manipulations that will be required.

Eric Cintron asked a question regarding how do we know every student has the ability to manage the technology. The general reply was that part of the Superintendent's technology initiative is aimed at preparing every student for this challenge.

The conversation continued with a discussion of many issues regarding students with special needs taking the FSA.

Elias Seife noted that there is an overwhelming focus on technology and that society is consumed by this. The layers of technology are over the actual grade level skill set and this is compounded with students with disabilities. He suggested that there be consideration regarding how the software is composed and what the skill set should be so it is not so overwhelmingly tech based. He expressed concern that the test items are addressing concepts that are not being taught. Dr. Shay stated that the test is aligned with the Standards while there is contention regarding this. Dr. McDaniel indicated that the test may be aligned with other state's Standards and not Florida's.

Due to the number of questions Ms. Barbara urged members to write down their questions so that Dr. Shay could proceed through the presentation. Dr. Shay wrapped up with the summary of the FSA item types. She continued with the types of accommodations available. She stressed that the accommodations implemented during test administration should reflect the everyday practices used by the student. For the paper-based test, accommodation for the listening items will be available this year but she is not sure how. Computer-based accommodations are available and listed in her Power Point as well as enhancements that all students can choose during the test administration. ELL supports are listed as well. A dictionary can be used but it has to be word to word and cannot include definitions.

Dr. Shay's Power Point presentation will be made available to the Panel.

Open discussion followed the presentation.

Dr. Shay commented on enhancements for auditory processing that are available she believes that there is an ability to have the question repeated and for the presentation to be at a slower speed. She will follow up on this for the Panel.

Dr. McDaniel stated that alternate mode of response (oral mode) was not available last year on the FSA but she thinks it will be allowed this year.

Mr. Martinez asked about mobility issues and how the system makes accommodation on such an items as the "clicking" on a field to build a graph. It was suggested that maybe just revert to paper/pencil or unique accommodations. The IEP team for each student would need to determine the accommodations needed.

Mr. Escallon commented that parents need to be educated regarding what is needed for the FSA so can

they will know to ask for the accommodations. Ms. Goldman stated that they are planning to have cross-training with counselors and staff prior to testing so the variety of types of accommodations are known. Ms. Miskiel asked if a list of accommodations that would be appropriate for specific item types is available. The focus is on having the students practice with accommodations prior to test. Ms. Barbara pointed out the amount of practice needed to utilize accommodations may be substantial. Dr. Shay stated that the website is available and students can practice as much as they want. Ms. Barbara is concerned about educating parents regarding the need for this practice.

Dr. McDaniel noted that student specific accommodations may not get as much practice time as the accommodations that are being used by the whole class. Ms. Goldman emphasized that they will develop parent materials that can be available through the Portal and can be shared with families in other ways. Dr. Abrahante reinforced that this will be available.

Mr. Martinez asked if the Panel could formalize a list of needs as discussed above.

Ms. Silny noted that not all parents are able to do the work at home that would support this use of accommodations. Ms. Barbara noted that at the GIFT conference parents requested some training. Most schools provide something to support additional practice. The schools are also working with The Children's Trust (TCT) in their after school programs to provide practice support.

Mr. Martinez asked about the cost of the after school programs. TCT require 10% of their total enrollment to be students with disabilities. Easter Seals noted that for them to offer after school programs through TCT is prohibitive because of the TCT requirements. Dr. Abrahante would like them to align their requirements with M-DCPS requirements.

Ms. Brookner was investigating the rate of presentation question from earlier and found out that, yes the rate of speech can be adjusted. There is also a "Text to speech" options but it must be practiced and if it is not intelligible to the student they are switched to the paper-based test.

Amara Condon reported concern from the teacher perspective that it is very difficult to find the time to practice the test items and accommodations.

Alternate Assessment

**Jill Brookner, Instructional Supervisor
Programs for Students with Intellectual
Disabilities, Physical Impairments, Transition
Services, and Assistive Technology**

Ms. Brookner's Power Point will be made available to the Panel and contains more details regarding information presented. The Florida Standards Alternate Assessment (FSAA) is the new name that includes two alternatives to assess students. There is the Performance Task Assessment and the Data Folio for those students with very significant needs. If the student has no formal means of communication that would be an example of how to make that student eligible for the Data Folio. It is an IEP team decision.

The FSAA has the same vendor as in the past, Measured Progress. For this year the test is paper-based but next year there will be a computer-based option. An area of concern is the Operational Field test of a writing section. It requires a great deal of open writing and will be piloted this year. Math exams will be done with End of Course exams (EOC).

Mr. Seife asked the difference between the EOCs and the Florida Standard Assessment. The EOCs only assess course specific class content and is individual to each class. There are two assessment windows, February through April for Elementary and for the high schools, April 4-29 for the EOCs only.

Teacher training for the FSAA is in progress but practice materials are late coming out because of changes to the tests.

Teachers are being asked to test in different sessions to keep the specific process clear.

1. Adaptive- stop testing when student are not able to answer.
2. Non-adaptive-continue presenting all questions.
3. Writing-field testing this year.

There are no more bubble sheets which is a good thing. Teachers will administer test and then click the response on the computer that the student gave. Practice materials will be paper-based and online materials will be available also so students can access both versions and the IEP team can determine which one the student would be more successful with.

The Data Folio is in trial stages and M-DCPS is very involved. There are three periods of uploading student work samples. The first upload was just completed. Miami, Orlando, and Tallahassee are participating in the trial.

Eligibility for taking the FSAA is the same as it previously was, that has not changed.

Ms. Barbara suggested that the Panel members take the sample tests to be better informed regarding the tests. She asked how higher level thinking skills were addressed regarding students with disabilities.

Safety in Our Schools

Officer-Shannell James, Mental Health Liaison Community Relations M-DCPS Police Dept.

Officer James provided a handout to the Panel.

Maria Ratti asked if she could video tape the presentation as she would like it to share with a K-8 school training in order to help the school have more sensitivity awareness. Officer James declined but suggested Ms. Ratti extend an invitation for her to present at the school. Ms. Ratti agreed that this was a good suggestion.

Officer James reviewed a list of initiatives from her handout that are being used to support a safe school environment. These include:

Campus Shield- To monitor digital traffic to try to forestall events that may occur.

Site Security- Officers infiltrate campuses undercover to see how far they can get on campus before someone notices them.

Safety patrols- this is for younger students so they can see how they can contribute to safety reporting.

To address the students with special needs there is a 40 hour training course. There is more training for students who are "mentally disabled" and not as much training for students who are physically disabled. The officers depend on classroom staff to help with the students who are physically disabled. They rely on the teacher who calls the police to inform them when they arrive regarding the needs. Officers are expecting to respond to criminal behavior and expect to treat everyone the same so need

teachers to be primary person and assist the officers.

Mr. Martinez asked about the situation for students with hearing loss as they appear to be non-disabled. How do the officers approach these students and how do they restrain them? Do they use handcuffs? Officer James responded that yes they use hand restraints if needed as a safety measure. They rely on the teachers to inform them and assist. If student is alone they depend on the officer being observant to the situation. They always have paper to write on so that can help in this type of situation. The decision to handcuff in the front or back of the student is decided on based on the situations and accommodations are made to suit each situation. Ms. Goldman stated that training has been conducted with officers specifically for student with hearing loss to heighten awareness that some students communicate with their hands. They are now working to offer updated training in this specific issue and other more specific diagnosis. In addition all teachers who have students with restraint on their IEP have to be trained and receive updates to apply proper restraining techniques.

Mr. Martinez expressed concern about everyone being on the same page. Ms. Goldman discussed that student's privacy rights regarding disclosure of their disabilities must be honored.

Mr. Escallon discussed that he is not as concerned about those who have been trained but he is concerned about principals who might be the one who makes the call regarding bringing officers in or requesting a Baker act procedure or involuntary transfer. Or that other teachers who aren't trained are involved in these decisions. Ms. Goldman stated that the police makes these types of decisions. She noted that all principals are trained but not in the 40 hour course. Administrators are trained in how to deal with a crisis situation and an involuntary transfer. The officer involved would be doing the restraining and would follow procedures. Officer James noted that the police decision is based on the information they have at the time. Parents may not be in agreement that this is the best decision. Efforts are made to give the parent the chance to respond to the school incident before resorting to a Baker Act procedure. The officers rely on school personnel who know the student to help make these decisions.

Diane Adrean noted that the UM Center for Autism and Related Disabilities has an on-line training module on this topic that is available to everyone.

Ms. Ratti noted that there was an incident at the K-8 and that is why she wants to train the staff appropriately in the case of a sensory melt down. She noted that many high functioning autism kids can "lose it" when they have sensory overload. Particularly the flight response kicks in and nothing can stop the behavior. She would there to be an understanding of the condition and strategies that could be implemented to defuse the situation such as not making eye contact. Officer James suggested that the school can pre-train school security so they know the situation. Ms. Ratti agreed that this is important and that the CARD training is a good resource. Ms. Goldman noted that during the 40 training the appropriate M-DCPS staff is involved. This was also done for bus drivers and aids and that appropriate staff are providing these trainings.

Dr. Adrean presented brochures regarding the Wallet Card project which has two goals; 1. teach students with ASD how to disclose their disabilities and 2. To provide training materials to the police.

Ms. da Silva asked who on the side of the children during these incidents? Officer James replied that parents need to be notified and they count on administration to contact parents to handle situations particularly when they involve young children. Dr. Abrahante noted that on the other side of the issue is that lawsuits have occurred when authorities were not called in.

Mr. Martinez made a motion that the Panel review the current process of restraint and seclusion to make recommendations to the Superintendent, if needed. Dr. McDaniel seconded the motion. Discussion followed. Ms. Goldman stated that the policy is reviewed by the Florida Department of Education and this policy is separate from a specific incident that police might be called to. There are criteria and procedures when police are called. This is different than when a student has restraint/seclusion on the their IEP.

Mr. Escallon stated that state laws regarding these issues are being reviewed and he suggested tabling this item pending the changes in state law. Ms. Goldman suggested that a presentation on the specific procedures and policies and also the statistics regarding restraint could be included at a future Panel meeting. The presentation will include both crisis situations and what might be included on a student's IEP. Mr. Martiniz would like to review the current law and Mr.Escallon stated that it is available on-line.

Mr. Martinez agreed to table the motion pending the presentation.

Ms. Reigadas stated that she has been in the position of having a child Baker-Acted. She was very pleased with how the situation was handled at the school level and hospital level. As a parent felt it was handled very well.

Ms. Barbara summarized that there is a consensus that the procedures are in place but interpretation in real time can vary. Better understanding will come following presentation and perhaps at that time the Panel will have recommendations.

Ms. Barbara expressed gratitude for police protection and their work for the students in the county.

Ms. Ratti brought up the topic of bullying and Ms. Barbara expressed that this can be addressed at a later date. Officer James stated that there is an anti-bullying program.

Committee reports are tables because of the time (5:26pm). Panel members can review minutes that were submitted.

Committee Reports

Awards Committee	Kathy Vergara/Jill Brookner
D/HH Committee	Lynn Miskiel/Linda Reiter
Education-Inclusion Committee	Janet McDaniel/Rosalia Gallo
Panel Secondary Transition Committee	Chris Reigadas/Ernie Martinez/Jill Brookner
Ad-Hoc Budget Committee	Elias Seife/Dr. Magaly Abrahante
Nominating Committee	Jackie Needleman – Report as needed

Steering Committee

Report as needed

Bylaws Update

Report as needed

Committee Representation

Attendance Boundary Committee

Rosa Maria Barbara

**Family and Community
Involvement Advisory Committee**

Rosa Maria Barbara

Transition Task Force

Jill Brookner

ESAC

Other: Announcements & Updates

Day of Giving -see link and handout.

Adjournment

Lynn Miskiel motioned to adjourn the meeting and Linda Reiter seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 5:27.

Next Meeting

The General Membership meeting is scheduled for Thursday, December 10, 2015 at 3:00 pm in the School Board Administration Building – Room 559, 1450 Northeast 2nd Avenue, Miami, Florida 33132

Respectfully submitted,

Lynn W. Miskiel