

## MINUTES

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

Minutes of November 15, 2012  
School Board Administration Building – Room 916  
3:00 P.M.

### **Members Present**

Mariana Barbara	Ava Goldman	Christine Reigadas
Rosa Maria Barbara	Trini Lora	Liliana Salazar
Lourdes Bravo	Stephanie Mintz	Miguel Suau
Dean Crews	Lynn Miskiel	Kathy Vergara
Isabel Garcia	Linda Reiter	

### **Alternates Present**

Kyle Bennett

### **Honorary Members Present**

None

### **School Board Members Present**

Laurie Malman – Alternate Dr. Lawrence Feldman

### **School Personnel Present**

Jill Brookner  
Rosalia Gallo  
Kathy Maguire

### **Guests Present**

Nicholas Koulouka – Parent to Parent of Miami  
Todd Lee – CCDH  
Alan Rigerman – Community District 13 Commission on Disability Issues (CODI)

### **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order at 3:10 pm.

### **Introduction and Welcome**

Ms. Chris Reigadas, Panel Chair, asked members to introduce themselves. She welcomed members and guests.

### **Approval of Minutes**

Members of the Panel approved the minutes of the meeting of October 18, 2012 as corrected. Stephanie Mintz noted some typographical errors. Lynn Miskiel moved to approve the minutes as

corrected. Stephanie Mintz seconded the motion. Chris Reigadas asked members to approve the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Agenda Items**

STEPS Conference Update

Rosa Maria Barbara, Chair  
Jill Brookner & Rosalia Gallo, Instructional  
Supervisors

Chris Reigadas introduced the presenters and congratulated everyone again for planning such an outstanding conference. Rosa Maria Barbara distributed brochures to the members. The STEPS Conference, which took place on October 13th, was the product of the efforts of a wonderful team. Ms. Barbara was honored to work with so many great people. The team from Miami-Dade County Public Schools was incredible. The conference targeted children with disabilities ages two (2) to twenty-two (22) and took place at Miami Edison Senior High School. Conference attendance was fantastic and there were more than fifty (50) exhibitors.

Stephanie Mintz asked if they were able to identify any specific trends as a result of the conference. Ms. Barbara said that she did not have any specific information yet but the feedback was very positive. Everyone loved the conference. Jill Brookner added that the conference was not designed to be a forum for feedback regarding parent concerns.

Ms. Barbara continued by stating that the Conference Committee Meetings started in February 2012. She thanked the team, Ms. Goldman, and all volunteers for their outstanding contributions and dedication. Donations from Food and Nutrition were fabulous. The ROTC volunteered to provide security. Childcare was provided.

Chris Reigadas thanked everyone who participated in planning the conference. She repeated that everyone went above and beyond to plan a great conference.

Jill Brookner said the Conference Committee started with \$525 carried over from past transition conferences. Two hundred thirty-six dollars and twenty-three cents (\$236.23) will be carried over to the 2013 Conference.

The Program consisted of Four Tracks: Early Intervention, Social Emotional, Secondary Transition, and Achievement. Ms. Brookner reported that five hundred forty-eight (548) people registered and two hundred fifty-four (254) attended on the day of the conference. The majority of participants were parents. Although the conference was tri-lingual, five hundred ten (510) of the registrations were in English.

All but one-hundred thirty-two (132) registrants learned about the conference from the M-DCPS website, the child's school, connect education messages, and e-mail. Discussion followed about where the other registrants learned about the conference. Ms. Goldman noted that the conference was advertised on the radio. There were one thousand three hundred sixty-nine visitor clicks (1369) recorded on the website.

Exhibitors were listed in the program and on the PowerPoint presentation.

One hundred twenty-four (124) participants completed satisfaction surveys. Only one person was

dissatisfied. There were many positive comments about the conference including increased knowledge, great presentations, variety of presentations and topics, great food, exhibits, and opportunity to interact.

Ms. Brookner said that next year they may reduce the number of sessions. Participants could only attend three (3) and there were seventy-seven (77) sessions provided. Some parents were frustrated because they could not attend more of the sessions. Miguel Suau suggested posting the presentations on the website. Ms. Barbara said that there was a need for more Creole speakers.

Panel guest, Alan Rigerman, arrived late and asked for a review about what the conference was about. Jill Brookner provided a brief overview. Mr. Rigerman said that in the future the Commission on Disability Issues (CODI) should receive information about the STEPS Conference.

Rosalia Gallo said that it would be important to gather more specific data from families regarding their interests. Some families wanted more information about what to do after their children leave the school system. Ms. Barbara said that there was an interest in more information on behavior and social skills. Discussion followed about space issues.

Ms. Barbara said that everyone was so pleased that three School Board members, Dr. Lawrence Feldman, Dr. Wilbert Holloway, and Ms. Raquel Regalado, attended the meeting. Dr. Holloway and Ms. Regalado expressed an interest in visiting one of our Panel meetings this year.

Lynn: Miskiel asked if they had any information about repeat attendees. Ms. Brookner responded that yes they had that information. Ms. Barbara commented that there were many positive comments about the sessions. Everyone loved Liliana Salazar's presentations.

Jill Brookner said that they did not send out a call for presenters. Private invitations were sent out and the committee thought that this process worked well. Dean Crews asked if specific disabilities were included in the presentations. Ms. Brookner and Dr. Gallo responded that there were presentations on specific disabilities.

Rosalia Gallo presented information about participant comments. She thanked Parent to Parent for managing the funds. Ms. Barbara said that they created twenty-one (21) gift baskets and had numerous door prizes to distribute at the end of the meeting. There was no charge to exhibit.

Ms. Barbara thanked Ava Goldman for her support and thanked Ms. Brookner and Dr. Gallo for their presentation. The next step will be to schedule a debriefing meeting.

Jill Brookner distributed a brochure on Resources for Individuals with Disabilities Ages 22+.

## **Committee Reports**

### **Awards Committee**

### **Kathy Vergara/Jill Brookner**

Kathy Vergara distributed the minutes of the Awards Committee meeting held on November 13, 2012 in the School Board Administration Building Annex. Mary Paz is working on updating the application and will have it translated into Spanish and Creole. The application will be sent out to schools in January 2013. Completed applications will be due to Parent to Parent on April 1, 2013. The event will be held at Ruth Krusé Educational Center on May 9, 2013 at 12:00 noon. The next meeting will be on December 4<sup>th</sup> at Parent to Parent of Miami.

**D/HH Committee****Lynn Miskiel/Linda Reiter**

Lynn Miskiel reviewed the minutes of the meeting on October 24, 2012 at FDLRS. There was a discussion about how to increase participation on the committee. The meeting focused on identifying the committee's objectives. Ms. Miskiel and Ms. Reiter reported that there was much discussion about program placement for students with hearing loss, particularly when they transition from middle school to high school. Ms. Miskiel asked Jill Brookner to describe how students with hearing loss can transition into the programs she coordinates. Ms. Brookner volunteered to present at their next meeting, which will be in January 2013.

Another concern was raised about the initial evaluation and placement process for students with hearing loss who are new to M-DCPS. Do they need to have a psychological evaluation before they can be determined eligible for special education? Rosalia Gallo responded that these students do need a psychological evaluation. Visually impaired students can receive special education services without a psychological evaluation while students who are deaf or hard of hearing require a psychological evaluation before eligibility is determined. Ms. Reiter asked if it was possible for these students to receive temporary services based on their audiogram while waiting for the psychological evaluation.

Ava Goldman will ask Sue Clifford to attend the next meeting to further explain the guidelines.

Dean Crews asked if American Sign Language was offered as a course for students with hearing loss. His daughter's first language is American Sign Language (ASL). English is her second language. To his knowledge, there are no classes offered in Miami-Dade County Public Schools for students with hearing loss to explore the grammatical structure of American Sign Language. Ms. Goldman responded that courses offered are required to be on the designated State of Florida list of available courses. She said that she needs to explore this question with the Bureau Chief. It was noted that ASL is classified as a foreign language. Ms. Brookner suggested that the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind may be able to provide insights into this question.

Lynn Miskiel reported that a presentation about the Deaf Bill of Rights was presented at the Florida Summit on Childhood Deafness. The Deaf Bill of Rights promotes implementing an official Communication Plan for students who are deaf or hard of hearing to accompany the IEP. Several years ago Barbara Chotiner asked M-DCPS to authorize the use of a Communication Plan.

Ms. Miskiel asked Trini Lora if CCDH would present to DHH Committee sometime this year. Ms. Lora said that CCDH would be happy to arrange a time to present to the committee.

**Panel Secondary Transition Committee****Lourdes Bravo/Jill Brookner**

Jill Brookner distributed the minutes of the meeting on October 29, 2012. There was a long discussion regarding the role that Adult Education plays in the services of students with disabilities once they leave the K-12 system. It was suggested that a presentation from Adult Education would be a good starting point.

The minutes of Kevin Mintz' presentation at the May 2012 meeting were reviewed and discussed. Stephanie Mintz said that it is very important for high school students to receive more information about what to expect when they go to a college or university. A workshop for this purpose may help students as they prepare for post secondary education.

Ms. Brookner suggested that the transition team should be responsible for delivering this information. A good time to meet with college bound students to help them with the next steps is near the end of the year. Ms. Mintz said this is too late. The education process needs to begin when they enter high school.

Isabel Garcia suggested reviewing the Individual's with Disabilities Act (IDEA) to see if we can change law to require more supports to help students transitioning to post secondary education.

Alan Rigerman said that it is very important to inform kids about Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Stephanie Mintz said that he is bringing up a good point. Laws change when children leave secondary education. Mr. Rigerman briefly discussed his suit against Miami Lakes. Chris Reigadas suggested that he attend the AOA Committee meeting.

Lourdes Bravo, Rosa Maria Barbara, and Miguel Suau would like to be invited to attend the Transition Taskforce meeting to discuss this issue. Ava Goldman said that it would be possible to bring in M-DCPS Guidance Counselors from Student Services to assist with this project

Ms. Barbara suggested presenting college fairs. Ms. Goldman reminded everyone M-DCPS has a college fair in February. Information for students with disabilities should be included. Fortunately, one person from Exceptional Student Education has been transferred to Student Services and will be able to assist.

Lynn Miskiel asked how we know that the thread is followed so that support is provided from middle school through high school to target transition to secondary education. Ms. Brookner responded that the website, ConnectEDU, is a very helpful tool for this process.

Kyle Bennett asked about what happens to students with disabilities when they get to college? Ms. Brookner responded that they need to know how to access the self advocacy and self determination offices. Students have to be able to initiate and advocate for themselves. They need to be informed that they need to be the initiator.

Ms. Brookner said that the Summary of Performance is being revised so that it will be easier for teachers to complete. Now it is compliant but not useful. FIU and Miami Dade College are assisting with this revision. Kyle Bennett agreed that this is only the beginning. Self advocacy is the critical piece of the puzzle.

Isabel Garcia asked about the e-mail addresses of students. Ms. Goldman responded that much information is available through the student portal.

Dean Crews said that his daughter is a student at DASH. Everyone at DASH is absolutely fantastic. He is concerned because his daughter does not get e-mails from M-DCPS. Sometimes students need to be inspired to self-advocate. It is important to recognize that some students do not have the confidence for self advocacy.

Rosa Maria Barbara suggested that maybe this topic should be included in the next STEPS Conference. Jill Brookner clarified that there was a session at the STEPS Conference.

Ava Goldman responded that she has heard a myriad of questions. She said that she would review the information and respond at the next meeting.

Lourdes Bravo said that we do have counseling through CAP advisors. She suggested that perhaps in the future students with disabilities should be targeted in the eleventh grade to attend the annual college fair. Liliana Salazar said that it is important for all of the counselors, not just CAP Advisors, to be involved. Ms. Salazar said that she and her staff are very empathetic about these concerns. Marianna Barbara offered to speak to her college counselor about these issues and Ms. Salazar said that she would help. There is a CAP Advisor at every high school.

Jill Brookner asked Stephanie Mintz to attend Transition Task Force. Ms. Mintz said that she would be happy to be a member. The committee meets from 12:00 – 2:00 every other month. The next meeting will be held in January. Lourdes Bravo said that she would like to attend, as well.

The next meeting Panel Secondary Transition Committee is scheduled for December 5<sup>th</sup>.

**Education/Inclusion Committee**

**Trini Lora**

Trini Lora had the leave the meeting. In her absence, Ms. Reigadas reported that Ms. Lora was planning to have a telephone conference in December.

**Family and Community  
Involvement Advisory Committee**

**Chris Reigadas**

Chris Reigadas reported that the Committee will meet again in January 2013.

**Attendance Boundary Committee**

**Yolanda Herrera**

No report

**Other**

Chris Reigadas and Miguel Suau attended Association of Agencies (AOA) Committee Meeting about the Miami-Dade County's Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program (EEAP). The EEAP is designed for individuals living at home that need assistance with evacuation. Families of individuals with disabilities can register through the EEAP registry to be part of the program. The Registration Form is on Office of Emergency Management website. It is important to inform families of students with disabilities about this program. Alan Rigerman commented that he was not aware that there was limited coordination of services. He agreed that it is a good idea to centralize an Emergency Evacuation Assistance Program for families of individuals with disabilities.

Ms. Reigadas continued to report that Community Emergency Response Teams are trained on specifics regarding setting up and working at shelters that can accommodate individuals with disabilities. It was suggested that one of our meetings take place at the Emergency Operation Center (EOC).

Rosa Maria Barbara reported that she and Ava Goldman were invited by Florida State Board of Education, Vice Chair, Roberto Martinez, to attend the State Board of education Meeting in Palm Beach. They were asked to report about the successful STEPS Conference sponsored by Miami-Dade County Public Schools. It was a wonderful meeting and they were honored to have been invited. Jill

Brookner said that two students presented at the meeting. One was Marianna Barbara and she did a terrific job.

Laurie Malman expressed concerns about transportation issues that are impacting opportunities for children to attend school. Ava Goldman asked for specific information to help resolve these problems. Ms. Goldman and Ms. Malman are planning to meet to discuss the specific incidents.

Alan Rigerman introduced himself and said that he has extensive experience working with students with disabilities through Wildlife Education LLC where he brings exotic animals to schools for educational purposes.

Isabel Garcia introduced her guest, Nickolas Koulouka, who is a member of the Board of Directors of Parent to Parent of Miami.

Laurie Malman recommended the “No Place for Hate Curriculum” by the Anti Defamation League. Ava Goldman said that the bullying prevention curriculum now being used in M-DCPS is “Student Voices.” Workshops are presented by Kathy Hirsh.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 5:18 pm.

### **Next Meeting**

The General Membership meeting is scheduled for December 13, 2012 at 3:00 pm in Room 916 of the School Board Administration Building.

Respectfully submitted,  
Kathleen C. Vergara