

MINUTES

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

Minutes of November 16, 2017

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

Members Present

Sandy Ames-FCC	Ava Goldman	Linda Reiter
Rosa Maria Barbara	Ernie Martinez	Elias Seife
Elizabeth Cramer-FIU	Janet McDaniel	Miguel Suau
Irenaida Diaz-AND	Lynn Miskiel-MCCD	Kathy Vergara

Alternates Present

Sara Dajer (CARD)
Maria Delgado (Martin Karp)
Maria Jakoniuk Ratti (Rosa Maria Barbara)

Members Absent

Magaly Abrahante
Diane Adreon
Lauren Bustos-PTP
Myrna Charlton-ARC
Elsa Clarke
Enrique Escallon
Katherine Fuentes
Martin Karp
Amara Condon (Easter Seals)
Myrna Charlton (Arc of South Florida)
Elaine Silny (FLASHA)
Madeline Spado (Best Buddies)

Honorary Members Present

Vickie Burley
Christine Reigadas
Michelle Suau (Former Student Representative)

School Board Members Present

None

School Personnel Present

Jesus Aviles

Alina Gallego
Kelli Hunter-Sheppard
Laurie Malman – Alternate Dr. Lawrence Feldman
Robin Morrison
Lourdes Linares
Vivian Nunez
Angel Rodriguez

Guests Present

Mary Palacios – Miami Dade Parks
Rob Grimm – Family Network on Disabilities
Odile da Silva – Parent
Brenda Lampoon – Vocational Rehabilitation
Susan Piscoya – Hope for Miami
Larisa Svechin – City of NB
Mark Thompson – Special Olympics
Alley Walford – Parent Training Information Center

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm.

Introduction and Welcome

After introductions, Ms. Rosa Maria Barbara, Panel Chair, welcomed members and guests. Ms. Barbara expressed her gratitude to everyone for coming and said that we have a wonderful, diverse group.

Approval of Minutes

Members of the Panel approved the minutes of the meeting of October 12, 2107 as corrected as well as the minutes of the Early Childhood ESE Committee, Low Incidence Exceptionalities Committee, and Panel Transition Committee.

Janet McDaniel moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Sandy Ames seconded the motion. Rosa Maria Barbara asked members to approve the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ernie Martinez asked about the status of Odile da Silva's membership application. Ms. Goldman responded that pending membership applications are on hold due to the need for revision of Panel By-Laws as a result of recent School Board recommendations.

As the newly appointed representative for The Advocacy Network on Disabilities, Irenaida Diaz asked about the agencies status on the Panel. Ms. Barbara explained that The Advocacy Network on Disabilities is a member agency of the Panel.

Chair Report

Rosa Maria Barbara reported that she attended the first Attendance Boundary Committee (ABC) meeting. She explained that every year members of the committee review the status of school boundaries. This review impacts programs for students with disabilities and, therefore, it is very important that the Panel is represented on this committee.

Ms. Barbara also attended the Family and Committee Involvement Advisory Committee, where she gave a report about the Panel. The committee requested a road map for families and parents of children with

disabilities. She would like the Early Childhood and Education Inclusion Committees to assist. Ms. Goldman said that representatives from Miami-Dade County Public Schools are updating resources for parents who are entering the system. Chris Reigadas said that Transition also has much information. They also asked about the legislative process and funding for students with disabilities. They were enthusiastic about the new initiative to collaborate with families of students who are gifted.

Ms. Barbara asked members to please consider participation in sub-committees. She reminded members that Inclusion Awareness Week is in December. Ava Goldman added that Inclusion Awareness Week is December 4th – 8th. This year three schools will receive recognition for their outstanding inclusion programs at the School Board meeting on December 6th. Ms. Goldman announced that the Inclusion Award of Excellence is being presented to Devon Aire K-8 Center in the South, Fienberg/Fisher K-8 Center on Miami Beach, and Rubin Dario Middle School in the North.

Presentations

Child Find: Kelli Hunter-Sheppard, District Director

Rosa Maria Barbara introduced Dr. Kelli Hunter-Sheppard who provided an update about Child Find services as they relate to children ages three to five. Dr. Hunter reported that Child Find meets the required Federal policy that requires school districts to locate and evaluate children who may have a disability. Children ages birth to three are referred to Early Steps for evaluation while children ages three to five are referred to Child Find through the Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) South. Children are evaluated by Prekindergarten Diagnostics. If determined eligible for services, children are referred to Prekindergarten Special Education for services.

The role of FDLRS is to accept parent referrals, provide screenings, facilitate evaluations, and provide information about resources to parents. The role of Prekindergarten Diagnostics is to conduct screenings, psychological evaluations, audiological evaluations, and therapy evaluations as well as provide information regarding available services. School placement follows if eligibility is determined.

JRE Lee Educational Center is the primary SPED Diagnostic Center. Others are located at Robert Renick Educational Center, Caribbean K8 Center, Thena C. Crowder Early Childhood Diagnostics SPED Center, and the South Satellite Center in Homestead.

In order to facilitate accessibility for families, evaluations are being conducted during the evenings and on Saturdays to accommodate parent's schedules.

Students who transition from Early Steps are staffed into Prekindergarten Programs for Students with Disabilities if needed. Students ages three to five are processed through Child Find. Students enrolled in Miami-Dade County Public Schools VPK Programs are referred to psychology through their school.

Ms. Goldman reported that the change in procedures has had a direct impact on numbers. In 2015 seven hundred sixty-seven (767) evaluations were completed while in 2016 one thousand twenty-five (1,025) cases were completed. Thus far in 2017, three hundred thirty-six (336) cases have been completed. The hurricane impacted services this fall.

Elias Seife noted that during the previous Panel meeting, he reported that the Ad Hoc Budget Committee compared the number of students with disabilities served in Broward County as compared to Miami-Dade County. In Broward, students with disabilities were twelve percent (12%) of the student population while in Miami-Dade County the number was nine percent (9%).

Laurie Malman thanked the District for adding Saturday appointments. Mr. Seife asked about the status of the final budget report. Ms. Goldman said that the report will be presented in December.

Ms. Barbara thanked Dr. Hunter and Ms. Goldman for the informative presentation. Ernie Martinez asked for a copy of the presentation.

After School Inclusion Discussion

Chris Reigadas initiated a discussion about the importance of after school inclusion. It was noted that Broward County has outstanding after school inclusion programs and will provide workshops. In Miami-Dade County, the Advocacy Network on Disabilities (AND) formerly CCDH leads the All Children Together program funded through The Children's Trust (TCT). Ms. Goldman added that TCT Summer Providers will attend MDCPS EXPO on March 17th.

Maria Ratti said that AND provided excellent support for inclusion in after school programs on Miami Beach. Odile da Silva said that the Miami Achievement Center for the Developmentally Disabled (MAC Town) has Behavior Therapists that go to afterschool care programs and to homes to help parents during the summer. Services are funded through Medicaid.

Committee Reports

Awards Committee

Kathy Vergara/Ava Goldman

Kathy Vergara reported that the Annual Award's Ceremony recognizes students with disabilities through the Student Award of Excellence. Four awards are presented to Prekindergarten, Elementary, Middle School & High School students. Employers are recognized by the Reno Cocchi Employer Award of Excellence presented to four employers nominated by student employees. This year, three schools will receive the Inclusion Award of Excellence. One Champion of Inclusion Award and one Champion of Parent Engagement Award are also presented during the ceremony.

Parent to Parent Budget Report manages the funds for the ceremony. In 2017 our expenses were \$3,198.00 leaving an available balance of \$1,012.72.

2017 Expenses: \$3,198.00

2017 Available balance: \$1,012.72

We need to raise at least \$3,000 to be able to continue to fund the Awards Ceremony. Maria Ratti and Ernie Martinez said that he will try to assist by finding some in-kind donations as

Education-Inclusion Committee

Reagan Chalmers/Laurie Malman

Alina Gallego reported that Inclusion Awareness Week is December 4th – 8th. As Ms. Goldman previously reported, three schools will be recognized at the School Board meeting for their outstanding achievements including students with disabilities.

ESE Family Engagement Committee

Ernie Martinez/Angel Rodriguez/

Kelli Hunter-Sheppard

Dr. Rodriguez reported that the committee is planning to meet on Tuesday, November 21 at 10 am. November is Family Engagement Month. Nine (9) schools have reported that five hundred (500) parents and caregivers have participated six (6) family engagement webinars.

He was pleased to report that the Department of Family Support Services is partnering with the Advocacy Network for Disabilities (AND), The Children's Trust (TCT), and Hope for Miami to inform parents about summer and after school programs for children with disabilities. They are also working with

Florida International University and the University of Miami to plan a Parents Helping Parents Conference.

Early Childhood PreK Committee

Kathy Vergara/Marisol Diaz

Kathy Vergara reported that the committee met on November 15, 2017. During the meeting, Marisol Diaz provided an update on the Department of Early Childhood Programs regarding program expansion, professional development, and vacancies. Ms. Diaz reviewed the Transition to Kindergarten practices in place and the possibility of partnering with other early childcare organizations to expand outreach. PreK ESE provided an update about procedures for hurricane displaced families and reviewed the procedures for Saturday evaluations. Updates were provided by Head Start and the Debbie School. The next meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 12.

Low Incidence Exceptionalities Committee

Lynn Miskiel/Kelli Hunter-Sheppard

Dr. Hunter reported that the committee chairs met with DHH Itinerant Teachers to review available resources and needed updates on October 27th. The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 20th to develop a position description for the DHH Itinerant Teachers.

Panel Transition Committee

Chris Reigadas/Vivian Nunez

Chris Reigadas reported that the first meeting has been scheduled for December 11th at JRE Lee Educational Center. The committee was successful in creating a link for SPED as per their goal from last year. In addition, the committee is focusing on bring back the priority to use People First Language.

Mental & Emotional Health Committee

**Rosa Maria Barbara/Robin Morrison/
Jesus Aviles**

Dr. Morrison reported that they will schedule a meeting in December and have invited many distinguished individuals from MDCPS and the community to be part of this committee.

Report as Needed Committees

By Laws Committee

Meet in December

Nominating Committee

Steering Committee

Committee Representation

Attendance Boundary Committee

Rosa Maria Barbara

See above report.

Family and Community

Rosa Maria Barbara

Involvement Advisory Committee

See above report.

Other

Chris Reigadas announced that the Pediatric and Adolescent mental Health Awareness meeting will be on Saturday, November 18th, at the Main Auditorium in Nicklaus Children's Hospital.

Chris Reigadas discussed Palmetto Bay Event and was happy to learn Miami-Dade County Public Schools will be participating.

Vicky Burley distributed information about the services provided through Hope for Miami.

Maria Ratti reminded members to donate to Miami Days.

Mark Thomson distributed information about the BOA Special Games in Miami Gardens at the Betty T Ferguson Recreational Complex on December 2, 2017.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm. Lynn Miskiel moved and Miguel Suau seconded the motion.

Next Meeting

The next General Membership meeting is scheduled on December 14 at 3:00 pm in the School Board Administration Building – Room 559.