

MINUTES

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

Minutes of November 17, 2016

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

Members Present

Magaly Abrahante	Odile Da Silva-CCDH	Lynn Miskiel-MCCD
Diane Adreon	Enrique Escallon	Christine Reigadas
Sandy Ames-FCC	Ava Goldman	Elias Seife
Rosa Maria Barbara	Ernie Martinez	Kathy Vergara
Elizabeth Cramer (FIU)	Janet McDaniel	

Alternates Present

Jerold Blumstein (Martin Karp)
Maria Jakoniuk Ratti (Rosa Maria Barbara)
Michelle Schladant (MCCD)

Members Absent

Lauren Bustos-PTP
Eric Cintron
Elsa Clarke
Myrna Charlton – ARC
Katherine Fuentes
Martin Karp
Yubeda Miah
Linda Reiter
Camila Rocha-Easter Seals
Elaine Silny-FLASHA
Madeline Spado-Best Buddies
Miguel Suau

Honorary Members Present

Vickie Burley

School Board Members Present

None

School Personnel Present

Reagan Chalmers
Marisol Diaz
Kelli Hunter-Sheppard
Laurie Malman – Alternate Dr. Lawrence Feldman
Robin Morrison
Vivian Nunez
Mary Paz
Angel Rodriguez
Ana Maria Sasseville

Guests Present

Nicole Attong – FIU
Brenda Lampoon – Vocational Rehabilitation
Mark Thompson – MDCPS Special Olympics

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 3:05 pm. Rosa Maria Barbara explained that the October meeting was cancelled because of congested traffic issues due to the visit of President Barack Obama.

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 September 15, 2016 as presented. Enrique Escallon moved to approve the minutes and Chris Reigadas seconded the motion. Rosa Maria Barbara asked members to approve the motion as presented. The motion passed unanimously. The following committee minutes were reviewed during the meeting: Inclusion Education Committee (10-10-16), Parent Engagement Committee (10-17-16), Parent Engagement Committee, and Ad Hoc Budget Committee (10-14-16).

Chair's Report

Rosa Maria Barbara reported that she attended the ABC Committee Meeting. The committee is in the process of establishing recommended boundary changes for this year. She also attended the October FICC Meeting. The meeting included a detailed legislative report. Access to the internet is critical for families to stay informed. Enrique Escallon will summarize the legislative report later in the meeting.

Ms. Barbara reported that the MDCPS Family Forum and Exposition held at Robert Morgan Educational Center on October 29th was wonderful. The Department of Exceptional Student Education did an incredible job organizing the event. It was fantastic. Members who attended congratulated Ms. Barbara for her fantastic presentation at the beginning of the conference and said that Mariana Barbara's presentation was incredible. Everyone would like to see more parent involvement. She asked members to remind parents to attend the next Family Forum scheduled on November 19 at North Miami Beach Senior High School.

Presentations

October Disability History and Awareness Weeks

Ava Goldman, Administrative Director

Rosa Maria Barbara introduced Ava Goldman. Ms. Goldman began by reporting that Winston Park K8 Center was presented with a Proclamation by School Board Member Lawrence Feldman in honor of their recognition by the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel as the recipient of the Annual Inclusion Award. The event was a wonderful opportunity for members of the School Board and the community to become aware of the Panel's contributions to Exceptional Student Education.

Ms. Goldman continued to share information about the many wonderful events conducted throughout Miami-Dade County Public Schools in honor of students with disabilities. For example, Miami-Central High School had a wonderful Parent Coffee for approximately thirty (30) parents. The students were great hosts and hostesses for the event. The District did as much as possible to support the many events held throughout the District in celebration of October Disability History and Awareness Week.

Maria Ratti reported that Fienberg/Fisher K-8 Center had an amazing event.

Rosa Maria Barbara said that School Board Member Martin Karp has been very supportive of this initiative, which began about two years ago. School Board Member Lubby Navarro has also been a great supporter of our ESE students and parents.

Ms. Goldman said that many, many schools participated and it was a wonderful tribute to children with disabilities. Enrique Escallon said that Disability History and Awareness Weeks have been very effective. Maria Ratti emphasized the importance parent participation.

Department of Family Support Services Presentation

Dr. Angel Rodriguez, Family Liaison Officer Department of Family Support

Dr. Magaly Abrahante reported that reason we now have the Department of Family Support Services is because the Superintendent proposed the creation of the Department of Family Support Services and the School Board approved his proposal. She continued by stating that Dr. Angel Rodriguez was selected to lead the new department in the position of Family Liaison Officer (FLO).

Dr. Rodriguez explained that the purpose of the Department of Family Support Services is to work with community agencies such as Parent to Parent to support parents. The Department is beginning by linking thirty-seven (37) Title I Schools with community agencies. There are thirty-one (31) elementary schools and six (6) K-8 schools. Parents from these schools are being recruited, hired, and trained to become Family Support Specialists (FSS). To date, seventeen (17) parents have been hired. The only requirement is that the parent have experience with exceptional student education. The positions are part time (10 hours per week) and are paid through Title I funds. The training is forty-two (42) hours. Mark Thompson from Special Olympics remarked that this is a very exciting program. Dr. Abrahante said that this program has been approved to be rolled out during a three year period. Maria Ratti expressed a desire to take the training. Dr. Rodriguez said that perhaps he could share the modules with her.

Dr. Rodriguez expressed many thanks to Ernie Martinez for his assistance with the project as Co-Chair of the Parent Engagement Subcommittee. He said that Odile DaSilva has also been a tremendous help.

During next month's meeting, Rosa Maria Barbara asked Panel agencies to report about how they could help parents through the Department of Family Support Services.

**MDCPS Family Expo: Exceptional Student Education Family Forum and Exposition Update
Dr. Kelly Hunter, District Director**

Dr. Hunter reported that the first Family Expo held at Robert Morgan Educational Center went very well. Of the one-hundred and thirty-seven (137) individuals who attended the conference, one-hundred and twenty (120) were parents. Survey results revealed that families were very interested in attending sessions about behavior management. This area of interest was also a priority in 2015. Families reported that they found the small group sessions to be very helpful and they especially enjoyed the large group general session. Last year, M-DCPS hosted one conference attended by three-hundred and seventeen (317) individuals.

One-hundred percent (100%) of participants were satisfied with the facilities. The most popular event was the Exhibition Hall. Families valued the opportunity to talk with individual exhibitors. Some families reported that they wanted longer sessions while others wanted more interactive type sessions.

Dr. Hunter reminded everyone that the second Family Expo will be on Saturday, November 19, at North Miami Beach Senior High School. The goal is for families to attend the general session and small group sessions during the morning and visit the exhibits during the lunch hour.

Rosa Maria Barbara expressed special thanks to Dr. Abrahante and Ms. Goldman for their support of the Family Expo. She said that the simultaneous translation equipment was incredible. Members agreed and congratulated Ms. Barbara for her presentation. Ms. Goldman said that Mariana Barbara's presentation was inspirational. In addition, parents enjoyed the Karate performance.

Maria Ratti asked how to download the Family Expo Program. Dr. Hunter responded that the presentations should be available via google docs.

Committee Reports

Awards Committee

No report

Kathy Vergara/Ava Goldman

D/HH Committee

Lynn Miskiel reported that Linda Reiter will not be as active on the committee as she has been in the past.

Lynn Miskiel/Linda Reiter

Education & Inclusion Committee

Janet McDaniel reported that the committee met on October 10, 2016 and reviewed last year's goals for achievement and inclusion. The overall inclusion rate went down from 51.9% to 51.7%. Plans are to review samples of high achieving schools to see which schools are near the state benchmark for ELA/Math in order to identify which schools are doing well and which schools need assistance.

Janet McDaniel/Raegan Chalmers

Another goal is to increase participation in the Inclusion Award. Last year only six (6) schools applied and the committee would like to increase the number of applications.

Ava Goldman suggested that perhaps the committee should rethink the requirements for the award. It is important to look at inclusion and achievement percentage data throughout the District. Winston Park was outstanding in all areas. Dr. Abrahante supported this suggestion and said that it is important to look at other data to demonstrate outstanding qualities. Perhaps, the committee should establish data points to select school. Therefore, the school selected would be rewarded for their performance and would not be required to stress over the submission of an application for the award.

Mark Thompson asked for clarification. Dr. Abrahante said that the goal of the Florida Department of Education is for eighty percent (80%) of students with disabilities to be successfully included. Every school's performance plan has inclusion as a measurement of success. Mr. Thompson said other criteria to consider are the inclusion of programs such as Best Buddies and Special Olympics in the schools. Ms. Goldman added that we do not know about general inclusion of students with disabilities in extracurricular activities. Regan Chalmers said that parents need to understand the importance of inclusion. Mary Paz said that it is also important to look at progress and improvement. Enrique Escallon reminded members that we must not forget to consider students that have more challenges and cannot be included. In addition, it is very important to recognize the teachers in these programs. Ann Marie Sasseville suggested looking at categories of schools.

Ms. McDaniel concluded that they would like to add an award for general education teachers who embrace inclusion.

ESE Family Engagement Committee Ernie Martinez/Angel Rodriguez/Kelli Hunter-Sheppard
Angel Rodriguez reported that the committee met on October 17, 2016. Committee goals are as follows: 1) Hiring parents of ESE students as Family Support Specialists (FSS) at the 37 initial schools implementing the Parents-Helping-Parents (PHP) initiative; 2) Linking the 37 initial PHP schools with outside agencies affiliated with the SAC as appropriate; 3) Generate a list of relevant topics discussed as the SAC that can be part of the ongoing training for the FSS parents hired at the PHP schools; and 4) Actively engage members of the SAC and partners in the dissemination of information regarding early identification, diagnosis, and intervention for children with developmental delays.

Early Childhood PreK Committee Kathy Vergara/Marisol Diaz
Marisol Diaz reported that the first meeting of the Early Childhood PreK Committee will be on November 29, 2016 in the School Board Administration Building – Room 552-A.

Panel Transition Committee Chris Reigadas/Erie Martinez/Vivian Nunez
Chris Reigadas reported that the Panel Transition Committee met on October 20. Vivian Nunez explained that her responsibilities are to coordinate transition services for students with disabilities throughout the school district. She said that the committee established the following vision:

Our Vision is to provide recommendations to the Superintendent's District Advisory Panel for Students with Disabilities to facilitate the movement from school to post-school activities, including postsecondary education, vocational education, integrated employment (including supported employment), continuing and adult education, adult services, independent living, or community participation.

One of the committee goals is to bring back People First Language. Another goal is to include

information about the transition process including information that will help students and parents prepare for transition.

Mary Paz is researching information about the number of students per school receiving services as well as number of professionals per school. It is now possible to gather statistics about this issue.

Rosa Maria Barbara asked Ms. Nunez to explain how parents and Panel members can access information about transition via the MDCPS Website. There is not an accessible link on the MDCPS website to access information about services for students with disabilities. Robin Morrison said that a link is needed on the home page. Dr. Abrahante volunteered to assist in making this happen.

Ad-Hoc Budget

Elias Seife/Dr. Magaly Abrahante

Dr. Abrahante reported that at the October and November meetings, the committee looked at actual budget numbers to determine the sources of discrepancies. They discovered that funding for Gifted Programs was excluded in the amount of \$68,000,000 as well as funding for the McKay Scholarship Program in the amount of \$40,000.

Dr. Abrahante followed up saying that it is important to report this information to the Panel every year. As a result of this committee, the budget office now understands that we are interested and expect information. An Annual Budget Report will be generated by the budget office and will be presented to the Panel at the beginning of each year.

Nominating Committee
Steering Committee

Jackie Needleman Report as needed
Report as needed

Bylaws Update

Report as needed

Rosa Maria Barbara said that she wanted to review the Bylaws. A meeting will be scheduled in January 2017.

Legislative Update

Enrique Escallon

Enrique Escallon reported that there will be many challenges moving forward regarding funded for public schools. The major issues are 1) funding increases do not match cost of living increases; 2) funding Charter Schools is depleting funding for public schools; and 3) budgets do not include costs for infrastructure improvements. This year the Miami-Dade Delegation is outstanding. Anitere Flores is the Senate President Pro Tempore and Jeanette M. Nunez is House Speaker Pro Tempore. Carlos Trujillo is Chair of the House Appropriations Committee and Michael Bileca is Chair of the House Education Committee while Manny Diaz is Chair of K-12 Appropriations. The District cost differential has really hurt Miami-Dade County. This is a wonderful time to visit legislators and to get involved.

Committee Representation

Attendance Boundary Committee
See Chair's Report

Rosa Maria Barbara

**Family and Community
Involvement Advisory Committee**

Rosa Maria Barbara

See Chair's Report

Transition Task Force

Vivian Nunez

Robin Morrison reported for Vivian Nunez and said that twelve (12) agencies attended the first meeting with MDCPS Transition Specialists. The meeting was very successful. The group plans to focus on the successful transition of individual students with disabilities. The next meeting will be in January.

Rosa Maria Barbara thanked members for their report and reminded committee chairs to send meeting dates and locations to the membership so that members who are interested will have the opportunity to attend.

Other

Rosa Maria Barbara asked if anyone knew if People First Language was on the website. It was first created in 2011 and endorsed by School Board Member, Dr. Martin Karp. Vicky Burley said years ago Panel members were asked to add the logo to their websites. Chris Reigadas reminded everyone that we had pins to represent People First Language. Dr. Abrahante said that this fits well with the inclusion initiative.

Laurie Malman reminded members that Palmetto Bay's Unique Abilities Fair will be on December 3rd at Coral Reef Park from 10:00 AM to 1:00 PM. Chris Reigadas said that AOA would be represented at the event and that Palmetto Bay will planning to become first prototype for disability community. Four tents have been reserved at the event for M-DCPS Programs. The Panel will be represented as well. Thirty-one (31) programs have signed-up.

Arts for Wellness Day will be held on November 5, 2016, at Pinecrest Gardens from 11 AM – 3 PM.

Odile Da Silva requested a first responder and police training presentation regarding students with disabilities. Nicole Attong reported that FIU has an excellent training about individuals with disabilities for first responders.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:15 pm. Elias Seife so moved and Enrique Escallon seconded the motion. Rosa Maria Barbara wished everyone a Happy Thanksgiving.

Next Meeting

The General Membership meeting is scheduled for December 15, 2016 at 3:00 pm in SBAB Room 559.