

MINUTES

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

Minutes of December 14, 2017

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

Members Present

| | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|---------------|
| Diane Adreon-CARD | Ernie Martinez | Miguel Suau |
| Sandy Ames-FCC | Lynn Miskiel-MCCD | Kathy Vergara |
| Ava Goldman | Elias Seife | |

Alternates Present

Maria Delgado (Martin Karp)
Maria Jakoniuk Ratti (Rosa Maria Barbara)

Members Absent

Magaly Abrahante
Rosa Maria Barbara
Lauren Bustos-PTP
Myrna Charlton-ARC
Elsa Clarke
Amara Condon (Easter Seals)
Enrique Escallon
Katherine Fuentes
Martin Karp
Linda Reiter
Elaine Silny (FLASHA)
Madeline Spado (Best Buddies)
Michelle Schladant (MCCD)

Honorary Members Present

Vickie Burley
Christine Reigadas

School Board Members Present

None

School Personnel Present

Jesus Aviles
Reagan Chalmers
Alina Gallego

Juan Carlos Gonzalez
Kelli Hunter-Sheppard
Laurie Malman – Alternate Dr. Lawrence Feldman
Robin Morrison
Vivian Nunez
Mary Lawson – School Board Attorney
Ann Marie Sasseville

Guests Present

Tanya Acevedo – State VR, Area 6
Carlos Puentes – State VR, Area 6
Rob Grimm – Parent Education Network – Family Network on Disabilities (PEN FND)
Ally Walford – Parent Education Network – Family Network on Disabilities (PEN FND)
Beverly Heller – Grandparent
Alison Hertog
Samuel Joseph – City of Coral Gables
Mary Palacios – Miami Dade Parks
Mark Thompson – Special Olympics

Call to Order

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

Introduction and Welcome

Ms. Kathleen Vergara, Panel Secretary, chaired the meeting in the absence of Rosa Maria Barbara, Panel Chair and the absence of Enrique Escallon, Panel Vice Chair. Ms. Vergara welcomed members and guests.

Approval of Minutes

Members of the Panel approved the minutes of the meeting of November 16, 2017 as corrected as well as the minutes of the ESE Family Engagement Committee, Low Incidence Exceptionalities Committee (report only), Panel Transition Committee, and Mental and Emotional Health Committee.

Ernie Martinez moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Sandy Ames seconded the motion. Kathy Vergara asked members to approve the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chair Report

In the absence of Rosa Maria Barbara, the Chair Report will be conducted during the next meeting.

Presentations

Family Engagement Activities/Resources – Parents Helping Parents

Juan Carlos Gonzalez and Alina Gallego

Kathy Vergara introduced Juan Carlos Gonzalez and Alina Gallego. Mr. Gonzalez said that the Department of Family Support Services was created to assist families needing additional guidance in navigating the complexities of this large district and accessing services. Their first project, Parents Helping Parents (PHP), has been designed to consider parent involvement versus parent engagement with the purpose for families to have a voice in their schools. The project is currently in thirty-seven (37) schools. Initially parent groups are asked to establish school values such as creating a welcoming physical environment that is ADA compliant and provides assistance from personnel if not accessible.

Another critical value is trust between school personnel and parents. This may begin with trusting another parent, then school personnel. Parents need to feel that their children are safe when they are dropped off at school.

The values of the Department of Family Support Services are as follows:

TRUST: Teamwork-Respect-Unity-Support-Transparency

PHP Video was shown to members. The Department is collaborating with Collier County's Share the Commitment Program to present webinars on such topics as language development, reading, relationships, and tiers of support. Presentations have been conducted on five topics in three languages to over one thousand (1,000) parent participants. The goal is to help parents understand policies and enhance their ability to advocate.

PHP is building relationships to help parents navigate the challenges of the school system. Partnering with community agencies is key to support the needs of the families. Personal connections and partnerships are necessary so referrals are smooth and appropriate. Parent liaisons host the events at each school. Their positions are hourly, averaging about ten hours per week.

Maria Ratti asked if webinars are accessible to parents they are not able to attend. Ms. Gallego said that the goal is to build parent connections, not just to provide information through webinars. Chris Reigadas suggested doing both so that parents would have opportunities to getting specific information when needed.

Ally Wallford said that they used Facebook Live for an event, which expanded their reach enormously. This kind of live event would support the goals of PHP.

Beverly Heller asked if PHP was collecting demographic data on parents in attendance. Ms. Goldman clarified that the schools are Title I schools, which speaks to the demographic. PHP is just one of many parent activities available through Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Mr. Gonzalez and Ms. Gallego presented a video about the first year of PHP services. Following the video, the suggestion was made to include male parents and those with disabilities. Members thanked Mr. Gonzalez and Ms. Gallego for their presentation.

Inclusion Week Activities and Update

Ava Goldman

Ms. Goldman reported that the District recently reported a five percent (5%) increase in inclusion rates when taken as a composite from across the district. Some schools have gone up, some down, some remain stable. A question was asked about what the District has implemented to support this increase in inclusion.

Ms. Goldman responded that the District has trained over five hundred (500) principals and assistant principals as part of their summer Professional Development "Academics" Program. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) was among the required sessions and the inclusion rate is part of each principal's "Accountability Dashboard". These issues are then addressed monthly and quarterly.

Ms. Goldman continued that other activities that are being engaged in to target inclusion are:

- Thirty school site trainings.

- Trainings for instructional coaches presented by the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN).
- Development and dissemination of an Inclusion Guide for Administrators Guide.
- Creation of classroom tools for teachers such as “Accommodations at a Glance”.
- Making real time data available to principals and schools on the LRE dashboard accessible through the Portal.

Ms. Goldman continued that the Department of Exceptional Student Education works to ensure that supports are in place for students in inclusion.

The video “Stand Up and Sit Tall for Inclusion” above Inclusion Week activities was shared with members.

Please refer to Ms. Goldman’s slides posted on the website for more specific information.

Maria Ratti asked for guidance as to how to assist students with specific disabilities such as physical or sensory (visual or hearing) who are placed in inclusive classrooms.

Members thanked Ms. Goldman for her presentation.

Transition Resources for Parents

Vivian Nunez

Ms. Nunez reported that they have been focusing on the importance of People First Language and disseminating information from the Florida Consortium for International Education to parents. They hope to develop links for university programs that offer programs that support students with learning disabilities.

Committee Reports

Awards Committee

Kathy Vergara/Ava Goldman

Kathy Vergara reported that the next meeting will be scheduled in January.

Education-Inclusion Committee

TBA/Reagan Chalmers

Laurie Malman reported that the Education-Inclusion Committee had not met yet.

ESE Family Engagement Committee

Ernie Martinez/Angel Rodriguez/

Kelli Hunter-Sheppard

Alina Gallego reported that the committee met on November 21, 2017 and reviewed their 2017-18 goals. The first goal is to continue to work with the Department of Family Support Services (FSS) in their role as supporters of Exceptional Student Education. The second goal is to expand partnerships with local agencies and other departments. The third goal is to assist families in four areas of need: access to technology, transition, early childhood, and mental health.

Early Childhood PreK Committee

Kathy Vergara/Marisol Diaz

Kathy Vergara reported that the next meeting has been scheduled on January 9, 2018 at 1:00 pm.

Low Incidence Exceptionalities Committee

Lynn Miskiel/Kelli Hunter-Sheppard

Dr. Hunter-Sheppard reported that the committee chairs met with DHH Itinerant Teachers on November 20th to review the development of a position description. The next meeting is scheduled for January 24th

to continue with the development of a position description for the DHH Itinerant Teachers.

This discussion began in October during a meeting with DHH itinerant teachers interested in reviewing the current needs of their positions and the academic standards students with hearing loss in inclusive settings are required to meet. How are the itinerant teachers supporting classroom teachers? How can itinerant teachers help administrators understand their role? How should schools use itinerant staff? This model will apply to other low incidence groups. The committee's goal is to develop a template to be used as a guide for all itinerant teachers that serve students with low incidence exceptionalities.

Panel Transition Committee

Chris Reigadas/Vivian Nunez

Chris Reigadas reported that the committee met on December 11 and developed four (4) goals as follows:

- 1) Develop/Connect outside resources for Early School Intervention Programs for Teens Drug & Alcohol Intervention.
- 2) Include People First Language with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE) instructors.
- 3) Create an ESE linkage to CTE website for industry certification and testing accommodations.
- 4) Develop connectivity to resources for college and employment.

The Minutes include a description of how the committee will address these goals. People First Language is included in the discussion and relates to the earlier discussion regarding how individuals with disabilities would like to be addressed.

Vivian Nunez reviewed a draft of an update of the Transition Website with the goal to make resources easily accessible. Includes a video of a transition meeting.

Mental and Emotional Health Committee

Robin Morrison/Rosa Maria

Barbara/Jesus Aviles

Robin Morrison announced that the first meeting of the Mental and Emotional Health Committee was on December 6, 2017. Dr. Morrison said that the meeting was an opportunity to discuss the need for mental health services for students with disabilities and to share resources in the District and in the community.

During the discussion about the resources available in the District, information was shared about services provided by Community Mental Health Agencies and the Student Services' Crisis Team, Risk Assessment, and Baker Act Best Practices. M-DCPS has affiliation agreements with community partners and The Children's Trust. Services are also provided through Florida International University and Barry University.

Professional Development and training for administrators and teachers was reviewed and the committee discussed Trauma Informed Care guidelines.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2018. Goals will be drafted and reviewed. There will be a presentation by SEDNET services and training.

Report as Needed Committees

Nominating Committee

No report.

Steering Committee

No report.

By Laws Committee

Kathy Vergara reported that the By Laws Committee met on December 13, 2017 to update the By Laws. The committee will meet again on December 19, 2017 and January 13, 2018. A report will be presented at the January Panel meeting.

Other

Laurie Malman announced that Miracle League Baseball will begin again on January 20. Players must be seven years of age and ‘buddies’ must be twelve years of age. Ms. Malman distributed a flyer providing additional information.

Chris Reigadas announced that Jonathan’s Day has been rescheduled for January 20, 2018 at Coral Reef Park. A flyer was distributed.

Ms. Reigadas announced that Nicklaus Children’s Hospital 53rd Annual Pediatric Postgraduate Course on Perspectives in Pediatrics has been scheduled on February 22-15 at the InterContinental, Florida. Please contact her for more information.

Ms. Reigadas announced that Nicklaus Children’s Hospital and Miami-Dade County Public Schools are conducting a session on bullying on January 20th. Please contact her for more information.

Mary Palacios said that Miami Dade Parks is looking for partners for their grant to The Children’s Trust for afterschool programs.

Maria Ratti announced that North Beach toy drive has additional toys and asked for suggestions regarding where to donate some of the toys.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 5:01 pm. Sandy Ames moved to adjourn and Lynn Miskiel seconded the motion.

Next Meeting

The next General Membership meeting is scheduled for January 18, 2018 at 3:00 pm in the School Board Administration Building – Room 559.