

## MINUTES

Parent Subcommittee on District and School Budget Priorities  
Family and Community Involvement Advisory Subcommittee  
Miami-Dade County Public Schools  
1450 N.E. 2 Avenue, Room 916  
Miami, FL 33132  
Monday, January 28, 2019

**Members Present:** Mr. Eddy Barea, Ms. Anita Berg, Dr. Nancy Lawther, Chair, Ms. Tiva Leser, Ms. Laura Philpot, Ms. Lorraine Real, Ms. Karen Rivo, Dr. Lisa Robertson, Mr. Elias Seife, Ms. Zoraida Serret, Mr. Thomas Spaulding,

**Members Excused Absent:** Ms. Isabelle Exume, Ms. Beverly Heller, Mr. Wade Jones, Ms. Meriel C. Seymore, Ms. Belkis Veliz

**Others Present:** Mr. Ron Y. Steiger, Ms. Iraida Mendez-Cartaya, Ms. Martha M. Diaz, Ms. Sally Alayon, Ms. Sara Walkup, Ms. Andreina Espina

**I. Welcome and Introductions:** Dr. Lawther, Chair, called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m. she welcomed committee members and staff.

**II. Approval of Minutes for March 12 and April 9, 2018:** Mr. Steiger initiated the approval of the minutes for the March 12 and April 9, 2018 Parent Advisory Subcommittee meetings. Mr. Barea made a motion to approve the minutes, the motion was seconded by Dr. Lawther.

**III. Update on Legislative Platform:** Mr. Steiger opened the floor to Ms. Iraida Mendez-Cartaya, Associate Superintendent, to provide the M-DCPS update on Legislative Platform, Ms. Mendez-Cartaya began with telling the committee that the 2019 Legislative Session had already started the previous week, they completed the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of interim committee meetings, the governor was sworn into place and as it relates to education he outlined a couple of priorities, these were: the expansion of the voucher program in the state of Florida and the expansion in career and technical education.

Ms. Mendez-Cartaya spoke about the Marjory Stoneman Douglass public safety commission report released in January. The Miami-Dade County Public School (M-DCPS) administrative team is reviewing the report to find out where we are, based on the recommendations. These recommendations will be submitted to the Florida Legislature. Ms. Mendez-Cartaya explained the implementation of the Guardian Program. They are encouraging school districts to implement this Guardian Program as it was originally written into Senate Bill 7026. This program consists of having some school personnel volunteer to carry a gun to protect the school. Two school districts have implemented this program as it was originally written in the state statute, there are some other districts that have a hybrid version of the Guardian program. The money for the Guardian program will provide for training and the necessary equipment stipulated in the state statute. M-DCPS, along with most of the other school Districts, has decided to have sworn law enforcement officers on school campuses. Through partnerships with municipalities they have been able to cover all schools.

She mentioned that due to the teacher shortage in the state of Florida there is an intent to eliminate the General Knowledge test in order to make it easier for teachers to be certified in our classrooms. This action is viewed by some districts, including our district, to be lowering the standard for teachers.

Ms. Mendez-Cartaya explained the Term Limit bill for School Board Members, this bill has been filed in both chambers. A joint resolution to change the constitution, authorizing the Florida Legislature to create a Homestead exemption for school taxes for individuals that are 65 years and older who have held the same homesteaded property for 25 years or more. Those who qualify will not pay school board taxes, regardless of the value of the property and individual income. The initial bill requires three votes of the Florida Legislature of each of the chambers and ultimately must show up on a ballot, she estimates that the first time this bill will be placed on the ballot is in 2020. She explained that the impact right now is undeterminable, but it will pull funding away from Public schools. If they were to limit the value of the property to \$250,000 and the individual can not make more than \$30,000 a year, then the Property Appraiser estimates the impact at around \$8.3 million.

Ms. Mendez-Cartaya continued by providing information on the District Cost Differential (DCD), two years ago legislation supported a study of the DCD calculation, the study was conducted by OPAGA, which is the audit arm of the Legislature. They completed the study, but the results were never released to the public. As a result, businesses from our community funded another DCD study. This study was conducted by a reputable firm with experts in the development of price indexes. This study made some recommendations and criticized the formula currently used. One of the legislative priorities during last year's process was to have a DCD study funded by someone outside of Florida. There was a study done by the Valmora Group, which is within the State of Florida. The study came out in January and substantiated everything we have been stating for the past 14 years. The report mentioned a lack of transparency and inconsistency on how the formulas were being applied from year to year. They recommended the Legislature consider using a comparable wage index in lieu of the amenities factor index that is currently used. This would be more consistent and would provide a better measure to connect expenditures with salaries. With the current DCD calculation M-DCPS became a donor district, before we used to receive 62% of the funding from the State and the remaining 38% came from local property taxes, now it is the opposite. Ms. Mendez-Cartaya emphasized that this year is the time for all the community to advocate very strongly to the members of the Dade Delegation about the DCD calculation. In terms of priorities, the first one is to increase the base student allocation. In order to do that we need for the State to not roll back the RLE like they have been doing for the past three years, which statewide has been over a billion and a half of potential revenue that has been left off the table and will never be recovered. The second priority is the issue of equity which involves the district cost differential and the new compression adjustment. The new compression adjustment created last year provided extra funds if your per student allocation was below the statewide average and didn't factor in the type of student the district is serving. We feel that in districts such as ours where we serve a larger number of ELL and ESE students, the per student allocation should have been higher.

**IV. Mental Health:** Ms. Sally Alayon, Assistant Superintendent, Mental Health Services, provided an overview of the Mental Health program and explained that Senate Bill 7026 brought lot of funding to all school districts across Florida in the way of safety and security and mental Health.

Ms. Alayon stated that our district was given \$7.8 million which includes charters schools. Charter schools had the opportunity to be a part of our plan or write their own plan. Only one charter school went ahead and wrote their own plan. Therefore, of the \$7.8 million, \$1.5 came out and went to the charter school and MDCPS received \$6.3 million. They worked on developing a plan to determine how to use those funds. The plan had to be approved by the School Board and the Florida Department of Education.

Ms. Alayon mentioned that the first step was to establish the Mental Health Services Department to best support the students in this area. The key to make sure schools work together with all of the different agencies comes down to planning, coordinating and collaborating. The Mental Health Service Department consists of two administrators and four curriculum support specialists. They work very closely with the schools, regions and all the agencies with which we are contracting. They also hired 30 mental health coordinators. Each coordinator services 5 schools. They are out in the schools working very closely with students. They are covering 150 schools. After an analysis of all the schools it was found that many schools have help through the Children's Trust, some schools have health connect services through 6 different agencies already, the service was provided to the schools that had the very least services in the area.

Ms. Alayon informed the committee that 12 Request for Proposal (RFP) for contracted services with outside agencies were approved by the Board in December, this is where additional funding is going this year. The services include screening and assessments, substance abuse, individual counseling, family counseling, case management. The school's staff is trained to work with students but to a certain level, these services are for those students that are at a highly intensive level.

Senate Bill 7026 requires that all school staff get trained in mental health first aid, the training is for any adult who works with children, it teaches them to look closer at the signs, symptoms of the child and if they are experiencing a mental health crisis, they will be able to guide them to get the appropriate help they need at the school. We have used funds to create a professional development three days course, we trained 60 trainers within our district and those trainers have trained about 3,000 individuals, each school has at least one or two employees trained; this is an ongoing training. They did three grand trainings one in each region in early December, as they presented to the principals, they were also doing individual presentations for Parent Teacher Associations.

She mentioned that all schools must have a threat assessment team through Senate Bill 7026 and they all do. These teams and her office will continuously work with the child, parents and if needed it will follow-up with outside agency to make sure everyone is planning and coordinating together for the benefit of that child.

**V. Elections:** Vote for Chair and Vice Chair resulted in the election of Dr. Nancy Lawther for Chair and Mr. Elias Seife for Vice Chair. These nominations were accepted unanimously.

Dr. Lawther welcomed three new members: Ms. Tiva Leser, Dr. Lisa Robertson and Ms. Zoraida Serret, these nominations were accepted unanimously.

**VI. Items for FY 2017-18 Carryover:** Dr. Lawther led the review of the carryover items, the committee agreed to discuss at the next committee meeting after the governor's budget would be available and at which point we would know what the governor was suggesting for the base student allocation and per pupil funding.

**VII. Calendar for FY 2018-19:** The committee approved Monday, February 25, 2019, March 18, 2019 and April 29, 2019, as the next meeting dates.

**VIII. New Business:** Mr. Barea proposed a Motion to remove some of the members that are not attending the meeting, Mr. Joseph Gebara and Ms. Jacqueline Perez will be removed from the committee. Ms. Rivo seconded the motion.

A motion was made by Ms. Rivo to change the bylaws to: if a member is absent, (unexcused absences) for three consecutive meetings, the members present can remove that member from the role, this motion was seconded by Mr. Barea.

Committee made a motion for a presentation on the allocation of computer equipment at each school at the next scheduled meeting.

**IX. Adjournment:** Meeting was adjourned at 7:28