

MINUTES

**Parent Subcommittee on District and School Budget Priorities
Family and Community Involvement Budget Advisory Subcommittee
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
1450 N.E. 2 Avenue, Room 916 & Zoom Meeting
Miami, FL 33132
Monday, November 1, 2021**

Members Present: Mr. Eddy Barea, Chair, Mr. Scot Evans, Ms. Isabelle Exume, Ms. Beverly Heller, Ms. Mina Hosseini, Dr. Nancy Lawther, Mr. James Lopez, Ms. Janielle Murphy, Dr. Lisa Robertson, Mr. Elias Seife, Ms. Zoraida Serret, Ms. Meriel C. Seymore, Ms. Nadeige Theresias-Joisil.

Members Excused Absent: Ms. Maria Norton

Members Unexcused Absent: Ms. Laura Philpot

Others Present: Ms. Zahirah Calloway, Ms. Martha M. Diaz, Mr. Ron Steiger, Ms. Sara Walkup, Dr. Antonio White.

I. Welcome and Introductions: The meeting was called to order. A quorum was established. Those present introduced themselves. Committee members and staff were welcomed.

II. Approval of Minutes for October 4, 2021: Ms. Mina Hosseini, Vice Chair, asked for the approval of the minutes for the October 4, 2021, Parent Advisory Subcommittee. The minutes were approved.

III. Update on Legislative Platform: Ms. Mina Hosseini, opened the floor to Dr. Nancy Lawther, Chair, to present the update on the legislative platform via Zoom. Dr. Lawther informed the committee that the week of November 15, 2021, the governor called for a Special Session, in order to address among other things COVID protocols and mandates. She spoke about Senate Bill 506, related to the Hope Scholarship Program, by Senator Manny Diaz, in essence this bill suggests that Hope Scholarship Vouchers can be made available to any student in a district that is being sanctioned by the Department of Education (DOE). She explained that it does not specify why the district will be sanctioned, whether this will be a question of infectious disease protocol or financial. She emphasized that this bill could have an enormous financial impact if Miami Dade County Public School (M-DCPS) were to be sanctioned. The other thing that could have a potential financial impact came out of the House K-12 appropriations subcommittee. It pertains to funding for Virtual Education versus in-seat education. One particular district was homed in on since it had more virtual students which were from outside the district than students in the district. This was deemed improper. M-DCPS came into the spotlight with respect to Juvenile Justice Education. It was mentioned that M-DCPS was using the Juvenile Justice Education Program as a cash out. They were stating that M-DCPS was spending \$25,000 per this type of student versus other districts that only spent \$6,000. A representative from Broward defended M-DCPS, stating that she worked with these types of students and said that some of these students have unique abilities, and they will get extra money for these. If the Juvenile Justice students are English learners or were being taught workforce educational skills, they are also paid at a higher rate. She mentioned that M-DCPS was doing an excellent job in Juvenile Justice Education and that other Districts should follow that trend. Dr. Lawther added that a bill was introduced by senator Keith Barry proposing Florida Colleges should offer Juvenile Justice Education under contract with the Department of Corrections, there may be a move to steer Juvenile Justice students towards a provider different than school districts.

IV. Budget Process Presentation: Ms. Mina Hosseini, opened the floor to Ms. Martha Diaz, Chief Budget Officer. Ms. Diaz addressed the committee with a presentation that showed the overview of the budget process. She informed the committee that the Legislative session began on March 2, 2021 and ended on April 30, 2021. She explained that M-DCPS revenue is based on the following funding sources: Local, State and Federal. Local: in the general fund, this is mostly made up of property taxes. State: these funds mainly come from sales taxes. Federal: which are mostly grants. Some of these grants are in the General fund, others are in the Contracted Programs, and now we have all the Federal Relief funds. She showed the committee a Summary of Funds for FY 2021-22, that consist of the General Fund, that is made of operating revenues & expenses. Special Revenue Funds, that are made up of food services, contracted programs, stimulus funds, law enforcement trust, special events, and Internal funds. Debt Service Funds are basically used to report all the debt that the district incurs and is made up of payment of principal, interest and related costs on long-term general obligation debt and

certificates of participation debt. Capital Outlay Funds, report any remodeling, new schools, capital construction, furniture, fixtures and equipment. Internal Service Fund is basically where they record the activity related to health insurance coverage for their employees and retirees. She added that they don't have a lot of flexibility as to the use of these funds, it is basically dictated already. Only the general fund has discretionary funds. The Pension Trust Fund is a fund that was set up to report moneys that are owed to retirees which accepted an early retirement package.

The next slide showed in detail how the State has systematically reduced its portion of revenue to the General fund and has shifted the burden of funding related to M-DCPS' Florida Education Finance Program revenue from state to local sources. In another slide she showed the members the Expenditure Trends of the General Fund. As salary and non-salary expenditures have decreased in recent fiscal years, required payments to charter schools and undesignated reserves have increased. She explained that assigned balance means that the money is already spoken for, encumbrances, commitments, purchase orders. These funds are committed to a vendor. The budget is already taken and not available, but we are obligated to carry it forward in order to pay the vendor for its goods or services. Unassigned fund balance are funds which can be used to cover any unanticipated increases and expenditures. Ms. Diaz continued explaining how Charter schools are on an unequal playing field. All Public Education Capital Outlay (PECO) funds now go to charter schools. Since FY 1991-92 the PECO allocation for M-DCPS has dropped from \$89.2M to \$0 since FY 2011-12. Charter schools are not required to meet the class size amendment but receive Class Size Reduction funds. They regularly turn away Special Education students. As a result, M-DCPS' spending on these higher cost students makes up 13% of the General fund budget. They must provide the services that these students need. She also explained to the members how the Scholarship Trends are affecting M-DCPS' FTE. The Family Empowerment Scholarships (FES) have doubled within the first two fiscal years of inception and they are estimating that the number of students will continue to grow.

Ms. Diaz told the committee members most of the information she spoke about is available to the public through their web site: <https://financialaffairs.dadeschools.net/#!/rightColumn/1665>. In this web site they can see the School Allocation Plan, this book has the basis of how the funds are allocated to schools. Also available are the State Budget forms, they provide the actual budget that was adopted as reported to the State.

The committee discussed, provided comments, expressed concerns and questions and concerns were addressed by Ms. Martha M. Diaz.

V. ESSER III – ARP Update: Ms. Mina Hosseini opened the floor to Mr. Ron Steiger, Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Steiger began by telling the committee that in March, President Biden signed into law, the portion of the American Rescue Plan that is referred to as ESSER III, the State has now released the application form. Since we were already spending these funds with the assumption that they would be reimbursed nothing has changed, we are in a good place. He mentioned that by January they will be able to see an interactive report of all the ESSER funds. It will be on a separate web site because it is not going to be in a pdf format, instead they will be able to click and see the how much is being spent on the different categories. This project is part of the strategic plan and hopefully they will have it up and running by mid-December, but they committed to have it by January 2022.

The committee discussed, provided comments, expressed concerns and questions and concerns were addressed by Mr. Ron Y. Steiger.

VI. New Business: Ms. Beverly Heller proposed a motion for the acceptance of a new member: Dr. Antonio White. Ms. Meriel Seymore seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

VII. Adjournment: The Meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m.