

MINUTES

**Parent Subcommittee on District and School Budget Priorities
Family and Community Involvement Budget Advisory Subcommittee
Miami-Dade County Public Schools
1450 NE 2nd Ave, Conference Room 559 & Google Meets
Miami, FL 33132**

Monday, January 26, 2026

Voting Members Present:

Ms. Paula De Carolis	Ms. Mina Hosseini	Ms. Nicole Crooks
Mr. Jose Dominguez	Ms. Meriel Seymore	Ms. Johanna Folland
Ms. Beverly Heller	Ms. Laura Philpot	Mr. Elias Seife
Ms. Janielle Murphy	Ms. Ana Rosa Ramirez Toft-Nielsen	Ms. Carolyn Nelson-Goedert

Voting Members Absent:

Ms. Maria Norton	Ms. Carolyn Nelson-Goedert	Ms. Nadeige Theresias-Joisil
------------------	----------------------------	------------------------------

Voting Members & Participant's Physically Present/Via Google Meets:

Ms. Milagros Hernandez	Ms. Isabelle Exume	Ms. Peggy Joseph
Mr. Ron Y. Steiger	Mr. James Desgouttes	Mr. Tony Ullivarri
Ms. Ines Meras	Ms. Martha Diaz	Ms. Lissette Fernandez
Ms. Dannielle Boyer		

I. Welcome and Introductions

The meeting was called to order by Chair Ms. Beverly Heller at 5:30 PM. A quorum was not initially present; therefore, introductions and the scheduled legislative updates proceeded until quorum was established later in the meeting.

II. Legislative Updates

Mr. Ron Y Steiger reviewed priority legislation and contextualized how several measures intersect with district finance, operations, and governance. He first summarized Senate Bill 318 (Family Empowerment Scholarship), explaining that the district's listed enrollment (~382,000) currently includes ~72,000 private-school scholarship students, complicating funding calculations; the bill aims to separate scholarship counts from district enrollment and clean up payment timing by moving dollars to a separate pot. He noted that the Senate unanimously approved SB 318, while the House has not yet shown willingness to hear it, leaving next steps dependent on House leadership or budget negotiations.

He then highlighted educator certification changes in SB 1718/HB 561 (e.g., easing subject-area exam requirements and authorizing temporary certificates while credits/in-service are completed), and described SB 206 (ASD/Down syndrome/behavioral disabilities) requiring EPPs to train on evidence-based practices and creating an Autism Educator Loan Forgiveness program (up to \$17,500 over five years),

which advanced unanimously in its second committee and awaited an appropriations hearing.

The update also covered HB 583/SB 1104 (religious expression protections for students/personnel), SB 320/HB 963 (administrative efficiency/deregulation, such as removing the uniform assessment calendar submission), and the broad HB 1071/SB 1090 package (purchasing restrictions, limits on spending for DEI/political activism, a streamlined K-12 math instruction system, and DOE oversight/intervention triggers). Members later referenced amendments requiring cooperation with law enforcement and expanding “educational emergency”. HB 1071 advanced 12–5 on party lines. SB 1216/HB 1187 (compensation provisions) was also summarized.

Mr. Steiger flagged an unusual proposal labeled “job engine charter” (SB 1100, House sponsor Rep. Rizo), noting language that would direct tax revenue generated within a charter’s attendance boundary to that charter, diverging from Florida’s current equalized funding model. While unlikely to pass, he stressed the significant implications for municipal charter growth and loss of economies of scale if it were to advance.

Regarding Schools of Hope, he reported that the DOE held a rulemaking workshop earlier the same day but did not publish draft rule text; questions were anonymous. He said two priorities emerged: correcting one-sided cost-burden rules (e.g., custodial/security/facility costs falling on districts) and addressing process integrity concerns stemming from recent operator tactics. If DOE’s forthcoming rule does not address these points, legislation may follow. A member asked about SB 424 (a full rollback of last year’s expansion). Mr. Steiger characterized it as unlikely to pass this session.

Member Q&A Highlights: Members asked about the path forward for SB 318 without a House bill (possible House floor pick-up or inclusion in budget talks) and about VPK/SB 512, to which Mr. Steiger said he had no new updates and observed that items requiring new dollars face headwinds given the tight fiscal year. A member asked whether current co-location issues would be addressed by rule versus statute. Mr. Steiger said rule changes are expected first, with legislative fixes only if needed.

III. Approval of Minutes

After quorum was established at approximately 6:05 PM, a motion was made with minor changes to approve the prior meeting’s minutes.

IV. Budget Updates

Mr. Steiger reported that the Third Calculation (FEFP) released the prior Friday confirmed a loss of more than 13,000 weighted FTE, producing an \$86 million current-year reduction and an additional –\$15 million prior-year adjustment; scholarship allocations also increased by close to \$10 million, making the total negative impact exceed \$100 million. He stated that district reserves will fall below 3%, and his operating goal is to keep reserves above 2% to avoid deeper state scrutiny. He attributed the enrollment decline

primarily to steep reductions in newly enrolled foreign-born students (from ~22–23k two–three years ago, to ~12k last year, to ~2,800 this year). He noted that the vacancy rate in positions is much lower, which aids instruction but reduces lapse savings, further tightening the budget. With House/Senate proposals still unreleased, he cautioned that the Governor’s ~1.5% signal may be the high-water mark, and he will return with options to close an expected \$100M+ gap (including class size and master scheduling changes among other strategies).

Members asked about school police and whether costs could be reduced. He explained that the Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School Public Safety Act & Related School Safety Legislation requires an armed presence at every school, making elimination non-viable. The district has relied on the referendum to fund most officers. He added that, should the November 2026 referendum fail, district-wide compensation reductions would be unavoidable given the magnitude (~\$500M) of lost revenue; although some base salary adjustments could occur, they would not offset the full supplement loss. He described the late-cycle public campaign strategy that has been used successfully in prior cycles, while cautioning that broader property-tax discourse on the ballot will influence outcomes beyond the district’s control.

V. Schools of Hope – Local Status Update

Mr. Steiger stated the district received 90+ applications and deemed ~68 valid after eligibility checks. The district found material impracticability at a majority of sites; approximately five co-locations are likely to proceed where resistance is not feasible. KIPP expressed no interest in co-location, preferring to occupy vacant buildings at its own expense (to avoid shared-use conflicts experienced previously). Success Academy was identified as the primary driver for co-location and is regarded as a “student acquisition machine,” anticipating lotteries/waitlists for ~300 K-1 seats in year one; the district is working to place sites on senior-high campuses to reduce direct competition with elementary schools. Regarding Phyllis Wheatley ES, the district asserted material impracticability due to an anticipated larger redevelopment linked to the board headquarters property, envisioning a new Phyllis Wheatley facility (with potential housing component) and changes involving iPrep; members discussed historic significance and facility condition.

VI. Community Engagement

Members raised several questions and engaged in an extended discussion regarding legislative advocacy, district stability, and how community voices can best support public education. Members asked which top three legislative priorities they should elevate when meeting with elected officials. In response, Mr. Steiger emphasized three primary concerns: first, the importance of excluding school districts from property-tax reform, as any change that reduces revenue without replacement funding would create severe budget shortfalls that cannot be offset through efficiencies; second, the need for the Legislature to prioritize K-12 funding increases that at minimum keep pace with inflation,

especially as districts statewide face declining enrollment and rising costs; and third, the urgency of addressing technical issues within the FEFP and the scholarship system, such as those targeted by Senate Bill 318, to ensure that funding formulas function predictably and sustainably.

Members also asked about widely circulating rumors of a potential state takeover of certain Florida school districts. Mr. Steiger clarified that the law contains vague provisions that could allow intervention if a district's fund balance falls below two percent and that Florida has no historical precedent like state takeovers seen in cities like Houston or Oakland. He reiterated that such action has never been exercised in the state and that the comment circulating publicly came from a standalone gubernatorial remark rather than any official communication or established process.

VII. Conduct

Due to a request regarding procedure, the chair agreed to provide a response at the February meeting.

VIII. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 PM. Members reaffirmed their commitment to advocating public education and collaborating on solutions to address fiscal and policy challenges.