

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 916 & Google Meets
Miami, FL 33132**

Monday, September 29, 2025

Voting Members Present:

Ms. Paula De Carolis	Ms. Mina Hosseini	Mr. Elias Seife
Ms. Isabelle Exume	Ms. Janielle Murphy	Ms. Meriel Seymore
Ms. Johanna Folland	Ms. Carolyn Nelson-Goedert	Ms. Nadeige Theresias-Joisil
Ms. Beverly Heller	Ms. Laura Philpot	

Voting Members Absent:

Ms. Nicole Crooks
Ms. Maria Norton
Ms. Ana Rosa Ramirez Toft- Nielson

New Members:

Ms. Dannielle Boyer (in lieu of Mr. Antonio White)

Others Physically Present/Via Google Meets:

Mr. Jose Dominguez	Mr. Toni Ullivarri	Mr. Len Zwerling
Ms. Ines Meras	Mr. James Desgouttes	Mr. Alberto Bec
Mr. Ron Y. Steiger	Ms. Holly Zwerling	Ms. Peggy Joseph

I. Welcome and Introductions:

The meeting was called to order by Ms. Beverly Heller at 5:30 PM. A quorum was established. Attendees introduced themselves, including new members and representatives from various community organizations and advocacy groups.

II. Election of Chair and Vice Chair:

Ms. Beverly Heller was nominated and confirmed as Chair for the 2025 – 2026FY. Ms. Laura Philpot was elected Vice Chair following a vote among voting members. Both candidates shared brief remarks about their commitment to the committee and their goals for the upcoming year.

III. Approval of Minutes from June 30, 2025

The minutes from the previous meeting were reviewed. Minor corrections were suggested regarding phrasing in the legislative priorities section. With those amendments, the minutes were approved.

IV. Legislative Priorities Update:

Mr. Ron Y. Steiger, Chief Financial Officer, opened the floor to Mr. Tony Ullivarri to provide the legislative priorities update.

Mr. Ullivarri presented on the district legislative priorities for the 2025 – 2026 school year. The presentation covered both operating and capital budget items. Key operating budget requests included a 5% increase in the Base Student Allocation (BSA), funding for Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK), protection of advanced academic supplements, increased funding for mental health and student safety, and additional support for students with exceptionalities. The committee discussed the importance of maintaining funding levels despite inflation and rising service costs.

Capital funding priorities focused on expanding the use of impact fees for renovations, advocating for the inclusion of community hub usage in space utilization metrics, and opposing the elimination of impact fees without a stable revenue source provided to replace the revenue currently provided by impact fees. The committee also discussed the implications of what is being proposed related to property taxes and its potential impact on school funding. Mr. Ullivarri emphasized the district's lobbying efforts in Tallahassee and the importance of community advocacy.

Miami-Dade Schools Budget Cuts & Challenges

Mr. Ron Steiger provided an update on student enrollment trends and emphasized that the district is experiencing a significant decline in enrollment, with approximately 14,000 fewer students than last year due to changes in federal immigration policy. Since Florida adjusts funding based on actual student counts, the district will receive less money than budgeted. Austerity measures have already been implemented, including restrictions on overtime, travel, and central office spending. The district is using reserves to mitigate the impact but anticipates a difficult fiscal year. Members discussed the implications of declining enrollment on staffing and programming.

Educational Initiative and Policy Updates

The district is pursuing initiatives to support students and staff. Workforce housing projects are being developed on school-owned land to help recruit and retain teachers. There is a push to include Pre-K staff in the definition of instructional personnel, allowing access to classroom supply funds. Concerns about salary compression for mid-career teachers were addressed, with referendum funds being used to support equitable pay. Members expressed concern about the lack of medical personnel in schools and the reliance on clerical staff for medication administration. The district clarified that while some schools have nurses through Health Connect partnerships, others rely on trained staff or contracted nurses for students with IEPs. Mental health services were also addressed, with updates on the advocacy of funds and hiring of mental health counselors and additional safety staff.

Florida Budget and Educational Funding

The committee discussed the broader implications of Florida's budget and education funding. The district is lobbying for increased support for advanced academic programs, mental health services, and special education. There is concern about the potential dismantling of the U.S. Department of Education, which could lead to federal funds being converted into block grants managed by individual states, reducing oversight and consistency. This change could jeopardize funding for Title I (low-income students), Title II (professional development), Title III (English learners), and Title IV (Safety and enrichment) programs. The district anticipates losing up to \$10 million in federal funding if these cuts proceed, particularly affecting Title II and III programs. While Title I and IDEA funding are expected to remain stable, the overall impact could be severe, especially if combined with property tax reform at the state level. The district emphasized the importance of advocacy and staying informed, noting that parent-led efforts have successfully influenced policy decisions in the past.

Community Advocacy and Engagement

Committee members emphasized the importance of advocacy, especially in Tallahassee. Last year, parent-led efforts successfully prevented a 50% cut to advanced placement funding. Members were encouraged to stay informed and engaged, and to coordinate with district officials to influence policy decisions. Ms. Paula De Carolis shared information about the Citizens Coalition Facebook page, which provides updates on legislative and budget matters. Members were encouraged to attend related meetings and participate in advocacy efforts.

V. New Business:

The next meeting was scheduled for October 20, 2025. Members were invited to submit agenda suggestions within two weeks. Topics proposed for future discussion included school zoning, arts and music programming, and enrollment dashboards.

VI. Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 PM. Members expressed appreciation for the informative presentations and commitment to continued advocacy and collaboration.