



## ***CITY OF MIAMI SPRINGS, FLORIDA***

The **Miami Springs Education Advisory Board** met at 6:30 p.m., on Tuesday, February 19, 2008 in the City Hall Council Chambers.

### **1) Call to Order/Roll Call**

The following were present:

Chair Mindy McNichols  
Vice Chairman, Eduardo A. Molliner  
Libby Manning  
Maria Mitchell  
Debra Sheridan

Also Present:

Council Liaison Rob Youngs  
Deputy City Clerk Suzanne Hitaffer

### **2) Approval of Minutes: January 15, 2008 Regular Meeting**

Minutes of the January 15, 2008 meeting were approved as written.

**Vice Chair Molliner moved to approve and Board member Manning seconded the motion, which carried unanimously on voice vote.**

### **3) Individual School Reports**

Principal Mayte Dovale reported the following for Springview Elementary:

- Award assemblies for the second marking period begin this week.
- The "McGruff" detective dog from the Police Department will make a safety presentation for the kindergarten and first grade students on February 25<sup>th</sup>.
- Books are being distributed to the second graders by the Media Specialist as part of the Reading is Fundamental (RIF) Program that is funded by a District grant.

- Attendance for the second marking period was 96.29%.
- A portion of the parking lot was refurbished and the media center construction was put out to bid.
- The school received the smart boards that were funded through the ERP initiative.
- Projectors are being installed with the assistance of Principal Villalobos.
- Fifty-five laptop computers are scheduled to arrive this month.
- Saturday academies will be held for reading and math on February 23<sup>rd</sup> and March 1<sup>st</sup>.
- A Parent Academy will be held on February 23<sup>rd</sup> to ease any testing concerns the parents may have.
- There was 100% attendance for the fourth grade FCAT writing test on the first day and only one absence on the second day.
- Tae Kwon Do and Art classes were added to the after care enrichment program.

To answer Chair McNichols' question, Principal Dovale explained that the Saturday academy teachers are paid hourly from FCAT enhancement monies. The school has \$5,000 in the FCAT hourly account.

Chair McNichols added that the Parent Academies are privately funded through donations from the community.

Principal Dovale informed the Board that ten students were selected for "Spot Success". She said that it is a nice incentive to award students for good behavior and it ties in with character education.

Chair McNichols explained that the Spot Success Program is part of the revised Code of Student Conduct.

To answer Board member Mitchell's question, Principal Dovale explained that the laptop computers will be used by the teachers as part of the District grade book initiative.

Principal Sally Hutchings reported the following for Miami Springs Elementary School:

- Students were recognized with a plaque for placing third in the district United Way Campaign.

- Gifted teacher Ms. Mejias was recognized at the Science Teacher of the Year at the Science and Engineering Fair. Students Sofia Bolaños and Gunner Kortenbach were recognized for their science projects that were submitted at the Miami Children's Museum.
- The parent drop off area needs further funding to bring it up to regulations and standards.
- The Latin American Orchestra performed for the FCAT pep rally, which was covered by the River Cities Gazette.
- Milam's Math Night will be held on March 5<sup>th</sup>.
- Four Saturday school sessions are scheduled to target third graders and teachers participate on a volunteer basis.

Miami Springs Middle School Principal Dr. Gail Quigley reported the following:

- 533 students were tested for FCAT writing.
- Saturday school is being held for nine weeks with 300 children participating.
- Three students participated in the math competition with the High School students and all three received trophies.
- Students participated in the African American History Brain Bowl.
- The Orchestra is preparing for next week's evaluation.
- Students won three places in the Title One Chess Tournament.
- Healthy Week was held the last week in January with special activities related to fitness. The school will be adopted by an Olympiad who makes a five year commitment to work with the kids on health and fitness.
- Students will participate in the upcoming Relay for Life fundraiser for Cancer. They have already raised \$3,000.

Miami Springs Senior High School Principal Rafael Villalobos reported the following:

- The school tested 100% for Florida Writes Rights, with one student invalidated.

- Interim assessments are being conducted to address the strengths and weaknesses in the FCAT scores.
- EESAC approved a grade incentive for every student who passes the Science FCAT exam, as well as \$25.00 gift certificates for any school sponsored activity.
- Reading Plus is the software program being used at all Region 3 schools and the program is being monitored to make sure students reach forty-five lessons.
- The Girl's Soccer Team made it to the State competition, but did not win the championship.
- The Basketball Team and one wrestler made it to the District competition.
- Four athletes were signed to universities.
- Mu Alpha Theta Math Club and the Thespian Club have had many successes.
- Spot Success has been successful and the students are spotted by teachers and administrators for citizenship, responsibility, excellence, etc.
- The school is third among all high schools for attendance.
- Contractors are on site and construction will begin with the demolition of the gym and the auditorium.

Discussion ensued regarding the revised Student Code of Conduct that was adopted in November 2007, which is available on the [dadeschools.net](http://dadeschools.net) website.

Board member Manning asked if there was any news regarding the Math/Science/Technology Academy.

Principal Villalobos explained that Mr. Hunter had presented a proposal based on Coral Park's Engineering Academy and they will sit down to go over the details.

Discussion ensued regarding the value of gifted programs.

#### **4) Region 3 Report**

Regional Center 3 Director Robert Kalinsky stated that it is getting very difficult, especially on the elementary level, to offer resource programs due to the class size reduction. He said that very bright kids who never qualify for gifted are in honors classes, while kids in the gifted program cannot qualify for honors programs. This means two separate classes in the master schedule. The High School programs are extensive and this is why gifted is not emphasized.

Mr. Kalinsky said that the Springview media center construction would go out to bid in April. He assured the Board members that funds are budgeted and it will be a beautiful facility.

Mr. Kalinsky reported that construction is ongoing at the High School and the portables would remain in place for the rest of the year. The Middle School construction will begin in May with interior/exterior painting and window and door replacement. He said that there is \$3.5 million in the budget for the Middle School.

To answer Chair McNichols' question, Mr. Kalinsky clarified that the funds are in the capital budget.

Mr. Kalinsky announced that Superintendent Dr. Rudy Crew received the National Superintendent award, which is a nice reflection on the school system.

Mr. Kalinsky said that the budget cycle will begin at the school level and Miami Springs Senior High School will have a reduction in their budget based on the number of students.

Mr. Kalinsky announced that Miami-Dade County Mayor Carlos Alvarez is holding the State of the County address at the Westland Hialeah High School on Wednesday, February 20, 2008.

The Equity and Access Plan will develop programs to provide equal opportunities for all students in Miami-Dade County Public Schools, according to Mr. Kalinsky.

**5) Old Business:**

**5a. Status of Capital Construction Projects**

This item was discussed under the Region 3 Report.

**5b. Equity and Access Plan Affecting Miami Springs**

Chair McNichols stated that the Equity and Access Plan was presented to the School Board by Superintendent Dr. Crew and he did not receive any negative comments. The proposal is to divide the county into three transportation sectors, Miami Springs is located in sector one and the map shows the three sectors.

Chair McNichols said that proposed actions begin on page seven of the report and a map shows the current and proposed high demand programs, which are K-8, International Baccalaureate (IB), advanced studies, dual language and bilingual (BISO) programs. She noted that a K-8 program is proposed for Lorah Park Elementary, which could provide relief for Miami Springs Middle School.

Mr. Kalinsky explained that the Science and Engineering academy would extend from the Middle School to the High School. The Dual Language program at Lorah Park will be established at the Middle School and the idea of a K-8 Center would solve many problems and provide equitable programs.

Councilman Rob Youngs suggested that the City could make copies of the Equity Access Plan in color for each Board member. He stated that high demand programs like the International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge programs will be placed in each transportation sector to allow access and reduce transportation costs.

Councilman Youngs stated that the Education Advisory Board and City Council should have an input as to which programs and where they should be located in the sector. He suggested an agenda item for discussion at the next Education Advisory Board meeting.

Councilman Youngs added that the City of Miami Beach contributes to the School Board in order to make IB programs available in their schools, and it is a possibility that the City of Miami Springs might be interested in doing something similar. For many years, there has been discussion about making the Miami Springs' schools and adjacent schools smaller "academy like" schools where academic excellence could be emphasized.

Councilman Youngs suggested an evaluation to determine if an IB or Cambridge program would be a recommendation for Miami Springs even though it is difficult timing in terms of tax revenue. He felt that it is important to consider this idea as a long-term window of opportunity.

Chair McNichols mentioned that the recommendation could tie in with the proposed compact between Miami Springs and Miami-Dade County Public Schools.

Councilman Youngs stated that currently Linda Brown with Miami-Dade County Schools and City Manager James Borgmann are working to exchange ideas for the proposed compact and he would also meet with them in order to put together a proposal for the Board's consideration. He explained that Council would also like advice from the Education Advisory Board and the idea is to include goals that can be accomplished by specific times.

Chair McNichols said that Miami Springs is a small city and it might be better for the compact to include a few goals that can be accomplished based on what the community would like to happen. She said that the draft compact she received with the agenda included items that had already been done and some of the other items are too general.

Board member Manning said that the compact should include a relief school or plan for Miami Springs Middle School.

Councilman Youngs suggested that an Education Advisory Board member could attend future meetings with him, the City Manager and the School Board representative in order to develop a specific draft.

Board member Sheridan was appointed as the Board's representative to attend the compact meetings.

Chair McNichols commented that the compacts are spearheaded by the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Office of Intergovernmental Affairs and they are busy with the upcoming legislative session.

Chair McNichols stated that the Taxation Commission is an appointed body that can place questions to amend the constitution directly on the ballot. She explained that there are five issues, including private school vouchers and other alternatives to break up large school districts. She said that she would bring the specific proposals to the next meeting.

### **5c. Middle School Boundaries**

Councilman Youngs reported that the Attendance Boundary Committee (ABC) was presented with a plan for changes affected by the Equity and Access Plan and it might not be necessary to change any school boundaries to adapt to the program changes. He explained that each Region had presented its recommendations for boundaries and the plan follows budgetary and program changes.

Chair McNichols commented that Dr. Crew removed the repurposing item involving ten schools from the table. He said that the schools should be looked at in the next two years for boundary changes.

Councilman Youngs explained that the recommendation from Region 3 was not to put Miami Springs Middle School on advised status this year. He said that the school could be targeted next year and Region Superintendent George Nuñez asked to wait to see what happens after checking addresses and transfers.

~~Chair McNichols stated that she would like to see the proposal from Mr. Nuñez in writing.~~

Councilman Youngs suggested that Mr. Nuñez or Mr. Kalinsky could present a report on the proposal. He said that it seems they are in control of the situation.

Mr. Kalinsky confirmed that the Region is addressing the issue of overcrowding at Miami Springs Middle School with an aggressive effort to verify addresses. He added that the Lorah Park K-8 could have a significant impact over a three-year period. The kids coming into the magnet program must meet certain criteria and those that are unsuccessful in the program should go back to their home school.

Vice Chair Molliner asked how long it would take for the Lorah Park K-8 to become a reality and Mr. Kalinsky clarified that the reality is there is no funding.

Chair McNichols explained that the School Board rule would have to be changed because currently Parent Teacher Associations and EESAC's can propose K-8's and the proposal is coming from the Superintendent.

Mr. Kalinsky offered to report back on the student numbers and the proposals on a regular basis.

Chair McNichols said that the Board wants to know what reduction in the enrollment would get the number down to 100% capacity.

Councilman Youngs stated that the Education Advisory Board must be ready when the attendance numbers come out in late September or early October. He said that the ABC Committee would respond to a citizen initiative to target Miami Springs Middle School and the City Council and the Education Advisory Board can interact with the Region Office to see what can be done.

Mr. Kalinsky reiterated that he would provide a monthly report on this issue.

Chair McNichols clarified that a motion was made at the last meeting on January 15<sup>th</sup> to recommend that the City Council ask the School District to target a boundary change for Miami Springs Middle School.

Board member Mitchell felt that the Region is proposing a reasonable plan, which is a long term goal. She feels that reducing the overcrowding at the Middle School will help the High School to maintain high standards.

Board member Manning agreed that 143% capacity is outrageous and although the proposal is good, it is time to push harder.

Councilman Youngs stated that Region Superintendent Nuñez and interested citizens could speak to the City Council. If the goal to reduce the capacity to 100% is not likely to be achieved by the proposed measures, the City Council could adopt a resolution asking to put the school on targeted status for 2008-2009 to be effective in 2009-2010.

To answer Vice Chair Molliner's question, Mr. Kalinsky clarified that the enrollment is currently 1,850 or 140% capacity and 100% capacity would be less than 1,500 students.

Councilman Youngs explained that the results of a boundary change are not certain and he would not want to risk changes that would force students who live in Miami Springs out of the feeder pattern. There are a number of schools to the east of Miami Springs that are under enrolled and a boundary change could result in transferring students to those under enrolled schools.

Mr. Kalinsky reiterated that the Region would like an opportunity to see what can be done to re-work the situation in order to benefit Miami Springs Middle School.

Board member Sheridan commented that she was surprised to see that checking addresses for the High School caused a significant reduction. She added that the solution was opening a new high school to reduce overcrowding, not a boundary change. Ms. Sheridan felt that it would behoove the Education Advisory Committee to do more research and understand the opportunities in order to avoid a potentially worse situation for the citizens of Miami Springs.

Chair McNichols requested a thorough report for the next meeting with all the numbers, including how many transfers, which schools feed into Miami Springs Middle, how many schools touch the boundary, etc.

Further discussion ensued regarding the ABC Committee and boundary change proposals.

#### **5d. Proposed Compact Between Miami Springs and School Board**

Councilman Youngs suggested that the Board members could ask the City Manager to provide a progress report on the proposed compact for the next Education Advisory Board meeting. He said that one example would be an IB program or a Math and Science Academy that is within a reasonable distance for the students of Miami Springs. The compact would put the City in a stronger position to negotiate with the various committees.

#### **6) New Business:**

##### **6a. Budget Issues**

Chair McNichols stated that the District cut \$32 million in October and there will be another \$15 million reduction in March that could affect approximately 1,000 positions. She explained that Representative Marco Rubio is proposing another Constitutional amendment to cap property taxes at 1.35%, which would mean another \$65 million cut, although this could be two years away.

Chair McNichols reported that the United Teachers of Dade rejected the District's health care proposal, which means the lowest bid that was received is going to cost an additional \$36 million for employee health care. She said that economic recovery statewide is not predicted until 2010 or 2011 and the Florida Legislature keeps proposing a dangerous idea to substitute the property tax base for the sales tax.

Board member Sheridan urged parents or P.T.A. members to attend the Dade Legislative Days. She said that in addition to the statewide budget cuts for education, Miami-Dade County has seen a 50% budget cut over the last three or four years, while other school districts that do not have the same needs have seen 50% increases in their budgets. She emphasized the need to advocate for the fact that Miami-Dade County has been paying for several years.

Chair McNichols said that it was interesting that Governor Crist supported the January 29<sup>th</sup> tax cut and at the same time he presented a budget that means local school districts would have to increase their tax in order to pay for schools.

Vice Chair Molliner explained that misinformation is circulating within the community because people seem to think the slot machine revenue will help Miami-Dade County. The reality is that the funds will be shared with the entire state and Miami-Dade will have the negative effect of the gambling.

#### **6b. Legislative Issues**

Chair McNichols stated that she would present the legislative issues at the next meeting.

#### **7) Other Business**

Chair McNichols announced that School Superintendent Dr. Crew is holding Town Hall meetings in every region and the Region 3 meeting is scheduled at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, February 27<sup>th</sup> at Miami Northwestern Senior High School at 6:30 p.m. Additional information is available on [dadeschools.net](http://dadeschools.net).

Vice Chair Molliner presented a proposal for the Police Department to make a presentation to parents at the schools regarding the new threats to children on the Internet. He explained that because of his request, the City of Hialeah Police Department is implementing a program at the Hialeah schools to provide information to the parents through a workshop presentation.

Vice Chair Molliner recommended that the Miami Springs Council could authorize the Chief of Police to design a workshop presentation that would inform the parents at the local schools of the internet threats to their children. He said that parents have a false sense of security because they think the software is providing protection, which is not true.

Chair McNichols suggested that the Community Policing Office could look into the recommendation and Board member Mitchell said that the program could be coordinated through the P.T.A. who would contact the parents.

Board member Sheridan added that the workshops could branch out into other programs because cyber bullying is another huge issue, especially at the middle school level. She said that the Miami-Dade County Public Schools website has a hot link for students to report bullying.

Vice Chair Molliner stated that the information could be circulated through Parent Academy workshops and the school principals are very interested, as well as the parents who want to be informed.

Vice Chair Molliner reported that the City of Hialeah would be making a PowerPoint presentation at North Twin Lakes Elementary at 7:00 p.m. on Thursday, March 20, 2008, and they might be willing to share the information with the City of Miami Springs. He added that the school principals could offer incentives to the students in order to make the parents attend.

Councilman Youngs asked Mr. Molliner to attend the City Council meeting on Monday, February 25<sup>th</sup> to make the recommendation to Council during Open Forum. He explained that if Council agrees, they would direct the City Manager to involve the Community Policing Office.

**Vice Chair Molliner moved to recommend that the City Council authorize an educational presentation to the schools in Miami Springs regarding the ~~threat and~~ threatening aspects of the internet. Board member Sheridan seconded the motion, which carried unanimously on voice vote.**

Board member Sheridan suggested that once the program is presented to the schools that the River Cities Gazette should be invited to attend.

Vice Chair McNichols distributed a copy of the Stakeholder Feedback and Strategic Initiatives from Superintendent Dr. Crew (attached for the record). She explained that it outlines the strategic initiatives for next year.

Councilman Youngs asked the Board members to review the program descriptions on page 9 and the chart on page 11 of the Equity and Access Plan because time is limited.

Chair McNichols stated that the Board members should be prepared to make a recommendation at the next meeting scheduled for March 18, 2008.

**8) Adjourn**

There was no further business to discuss and the meeting adjourned at 8:24 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Suzanne Hitaffer  
Clerk of the Board

Approved as amended at meeting of: 3-20-2008  
Page 3, last paragraph  
Page 7, paragraph 7  
Page 11, paragraph 3

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