



CITY OF MIAMI SPRINGS, FLORIDA

The **Miami Springs Education Advisory Board** met at 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday, September 18, 2012, in the City Hall Council Chambers.

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

1) Call to Order/Roll Call

The following were present:

- Vice Chair Dr. John Salomon
- Michael G. Hunter
- Golnaz Sami*
- Dr. Mara Zapata

* Arrived at 6:34 p.m.

Also Present: Deputy City Clerk Suzanne Hitaffer

2) Approval of Minutes: May 15, 2012 Regular Meeting

Minutes of the May 15, 2012 meeting were approved as written.

Board member Zapata moved to approve the minutes. Board member Hunter seconded the motion, which carried 3-0 on voice vote.

3) Introduction of New Board Members

Vice Chair Salomon announced that Board member Hunter was introduced at the last meeting. He informed the Board that Chair Rob Gordon had resigned to spend more time with his family and his replacement had not been appointed yet. He is thankful for the time that Mr. Gordon spent on the Board.

4) Selection of Chair(s)

Vice Chair Salomon asked the Board members for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair.

Board member Hunter nominated Dr. John Salomon to serve as Chairman. Board member Zapata seconded the nomination, which carried 3-0 on voice vote.

Board member Hunter nominated Dr. Mara Zapata to serve as Vice Chair. Chairman Solomon seconded the nomination, which carried 3-0 on voice vote.

* Board member Sami arrived at this time.

5) Introduction of New Regional and Local School Officials

Chair Salomon announced that there were new school officials in the audience and he welcomed Central Region Superintendent Dr. Albert Payne. He said that Ms. Lubby Navarro from Miami-Dade County Public Schools is present to provide a report from the District.

6) District Presentation

Lubby Navarro, Director, Office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Grants Administration and Community Engagement for Miami-Dade County Public Schools distributed handouts on 21st Century Schools. She is looking forward to a great school year and working on many initiatives to provide resources and better partnerships between the City and the schools.

Ms. Navarro informed the Board that it would be beneficial to review the education compact in terms of the needs of the schools and to identify and survey the Principals to see what issues they want to bring forward, including projects to provide resources or partnerships with community business members.

Ms. Navarro stated that the key driver of any compact is working together with the community and to assist the principals and students. She explained that the compact would be a topic for a future meeting and reviewing it would be a helpful exercise. She added that the partnerships with the schools become very valuable during difficult budget years when there is a lack of funding from the Legislature.

Ms. Navarro reported that the District had embarked on the 21st Century Plan, which is based on bonds for schools. The School District has a \$2BB deficit in the capital program for the repair and routine maintenance of the schools, including technology.

Ms. Navarro stated that the State Governor signed a bill allowing the School Board to provide questions to the voters and the Superintendent prepared a proposal to the School Board for consideration. Part of the proposal requires, based on Statute, that projects throughout the entire County be listed based on a needs assessment of the schools and they were considered and approved by the Department of Education.

Ms. Navarro explained that the School Board voted in favor of placing a question on the November 6th ballot. The District has embarked on a public awareness campaign through community meetings and the Superintendent has spearheaded the effort by speaking to multiple community groups on a daily basis to emphasize the importance and the need for school repairs.

The Superintendent hopes to make the bond referendum very transparent in order to inform community groups and members about the progress of the projects, according to Ms. Navarro. The District is currently exploring a twenty member citizen group that will function as the oversight board and will track the progress of the bond, provide recommendations for projects and give briefings at School Board meetings after the bonds are issued.

Ms. Navarro stated that this opportunity will extend the current 1998 bond into the issuance of a new bond, minimizing the debt that current taxpayers and property owners will have to bear. The proposed \$1.2 billion bond referendum is projected to have a minimal impact on the homeowner of \$5.00 annually per \$100,000 of taxable property value in the first year. The School Superintendent said that in order for students to learn in the 21st century, they must be housed in 21st century buildings. There is a correlation between the facility and the learning that goes on in that facility and the schools must move forward with updated technology.

Ms. Navarro explained that the District hopes that the Board can support the public awareness issue and provide a recommendation in an advisory capacity to the City Council asking them to consider supporting the bond issue. She said that the cities are the heart of the community and they are asking for their support. She added that the program will create 9,200 sustainable construction jobs in the community.

Chair Salomon said that he received the information on 21st Century Schools today from the Chief of Staff for Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the impact to the property owners is very minimal. He feels that many students will benefit and that the Board should make a resolution to support the issue.

Board member Hunter asked if the bond were approved if there were any specific funds available that would be slated for renovation in the City of Miami Springs' schools.

Ms. Navarro replied that there are projects in every school that can be identified by the Principals and every school will benefit based on the needs assessment. There is no associated value because it changes over time; the projects are designated and they will go through the citizen advisory committee with final approval by the State.

Board member Hunter suggested that a list could be provided to the Board of specific projects that will be done in the Miami Springs' schools and the cost associated if the bond issue is approved. He said that a recommendation could be made to Council informing them that the projects will be done based on the approval of the bonds.

Ms. Navarro offered to provide a municipal list of projects through the Office of Facilities, although it would not include the associated cost. She added that the school Principals can report on the specific projects for their schools.

Vice Chair Zapata moved to make a recommendation to Council to support the public awareness of the bond issue based on the Education Advisory Board's support. Board member Sami seconded the motion, which carried unanimously on voice vote.

Ms. Navarro thanked the Board for their support and she hopes this will become a reality for the schools and the students.

Ms. Navarro announced that Region Superintendent Dr. Payne and Region Director Richard Vidal were present and even though there was a reconfiguration, the Central District has the same staff, except for the new Superintendent.

Chair Salomon told an inspirational story about a student at this school who was in a wheelchair and needed clothing. He spoke with the student's parents and learned that they were going through difficult economic times and that any help would be appreciated. Through his efforts, the efforts of the school nurse and other student clubs and organizations, he was able to provide an entire wardrobe for the kid who was very appreciative.

Chair Salomon said that there are moments like this when it is a qualitative experience, not quantitative, that happens within the educational setting; it is not about the actual learning and passing tests; it is these kinds of experiences that shape people. There is an opportunity each and every day to be a force of change in the City for the better. Actions and compassion for others can inspire colleagues and students and people can stand up for those who cannot stand for themselves. Most importantly, the torch of education can be raised higher than in the past as we build a culture that fosters community involvement in education.

Region Superintendent Dr. Albert Payne stated that he is not unfamiliar with Miami Springs, because prior to last year he was the Administrative Director of the Regional Center representing the City. He knows the City well and that the work of the Education Advisory Board is very important.

Dr. Payne noted that some very good questions were raised regarding the general obligation bond, how it would affect the Miami Springs' schools and how the students would benefit if the bond is approved by the voters. The bond will have a minimal cost per household based on the average value of a home at \$200,000, which is less than \$10.00, or \$5.000 per \$100,000. Miami-Dade County Public Schools is educating the community about the importance of the bonds based on the needs of the schools.

In regard to Miami Springs' schools, Dr. Payne said that they are wonderful schools with experienced leadership. He commented that Miami Springs Senior High School Principal Anna Rodriguez came from Ponce Middle School and the transition to the High School has been good for her.

Dr. Payne explained that the Regional Center supports the students and the needs of the schools and the community. He urged parents with concerns to contract the school Principals who have the ability to resolve issues or to contact Administrative Director Richard Vidal who is also available. Dr. Payne said that he can be contacted at 305.883.0403 and the Region Staff is available to serve the community.

Dr. Payne said that he spoke with Mayor Garcia regarding some concerns and they would be meeting to discuss the sidewalks at the High School. He assured the Board that Staff is available to serve the community and they would respond to any questions or concerns since the Regional Center is the direct link to the schools.

The Board members welcomed and thanked Dr. Payne.

7) Individual School Reports

Miami Springs Elementary School Principal Sally Hutchings reported on the base line and FAIR testing. Students are being grouped based on the results. She said that they are an "A" school and there was an increase in overall learning gains.

Principal Hutchings stated that enrollment is down by 90-100 kids at 544 students, which is 91% capacity. She continued to report on various field trips and programs. On behalf of the PTA, Principal Hutchings explained that the catalog sales have begun and they will continue to collect box tops and begin collecting Campbell labels. The PTA will host a Back to School dance and a Halloween dance.

Ms. Hutchings also reported that High school students will volunteer for the after school program. The school is still working on class size; the majority of the classes are "green." The school is partnering with Papa Johns, Chuck E. Cheese, Milam's Market and McDonalds.

Dr. Zapata asked about the after school care and if the students are working on Math and Science.

Principal Hutchings confirmed that the High School Math students are working with the students in the after care program. This is the first week of the enrollment for the enrichment and they were not able to find any advanced science students.

Springview Elementary School Principal Mayte Dovale reported that the school opening went smoothly. She reviewed the various activities, including the Open House, Parent Drop-in Day and the school's ability to earn the points to maintain an "A" in the FLDOE grading scale. Data chats are being held with teachers based on the student assessments and they are working to create the strategies and meet the goals for the School Improvement Plan.

Ms. Dovale said that the school currently has 462 students enrolled and the self-contained gifted program continues for grades 2-5, while first grade is a content based program. She continued to report on the various PTA activities and several events for the month of September, including Grandparents' Day, the Book Fair and PTA Movie Night.

Ms. Dovale reported that the school was awarded the Five Star Award for community involvement and the Golden School Award for volunteerism. The school will receive \$1,000 from Target.

AIE Charter School 5th grade teacher Mara Fenton reported that last year the school enrollment was for grades K-3 and now it is for grades K-7, with a total of 310 students, including the South Miami campus. She said that the Open House was held and the PTO Board was elected. She reviewed the various programs that were implemented in the classrooms, including Success Maker, Think Central, Pearson Science, Reading Plus, the website, etc.

Ms. Fenton added that a playground was built over the summer with the help of more than 300 volunteers. They also planted gardens, installed a stage with a podium and three outdoor classrooms. The PTA is fundraising for a canopy for the playground.

Ms. Fenton continued to report on the success of the Rosetta Stone language program, the various upcoming field trips, school activities, fundraisers and events.

Chair Salomon asked about the number of students who reside in Miami Springs and Ms. Fenton estimated that there were 40-60 kids.

Board member Hunter asked how many kids are Miami Springs' students out of the 310 students, including the South Miami Campus and it was estimated that there are 30-40 students at the South Miami campus and 270 in Miami Springs.

Board member Hunter asked if Reading Plus and Pearson Science were on-line programs that are being used as an additional tutorial methodology.

Ms. Fenton responded affirmatively and added that the programs are used for interventions throughout the day by all students, including those who are in remediation.

To answer Board member Zapata's question, Ms. Fenton clarified that the science program is additional to the hands on experience the students are getting; they conduct labs and are planning to form a Science Club. She also confirmed that the school is using the state adopted science materials, the same as other schools.

Miami Springs Middle School Principal Javier Diaz reviewed some of the school curriculum highlights. He reported that the FCAT school grade is a "C" with the new standards, even though the overall points improved. The most improvement was in the in the lowest 25% and 58% making learning gains in reading.

Principal Diaz commented that the school painting project was completed during the summer; two computer labs were added bringing the total to eight labs. In addition, eight honor class sections were added to the master schedule for this year. Class size is under 30 now. He continued reporting on the fall sports programs, school events and PTSA projects, including the future installation of a canopy over the outside patio area.

Principal Diaz reported that student enrollment is 1,551 students or 40 less than last year and the school capacity is around 115%.

Miami Springs Senior High School Principal Anna Rodriguez reported that the School Superintendent visited the school to initiate the only ITECH program in Miami-Dade County. She said that the program would not have been possible without everyone's support and their belief in the school leadership. In four years, students will graduate with all types of industry certifications and be able to write computer programs and applications. There are nineteen students that were initiated into the program.

Principal Rodriguez announced that for the first time the school has a Cambridge Program with thirty-six students and they are entering the world of competition with the other schools. She is proud to report that the school moved 60 points on the FCAT and the school grade has not been issued, but there was growth in every area.

Principal Rodriguez said that the award winning Mu Alpha Theta Math Club travels the entire nation under the supervision of the great Sam Koski. She mentioned that Pablo Hernandez is the first Hispanic President of the Club; Henry Laney is a National Merit Scholar semi-finalist. The Anchor Club is collecting cans as part of Pledge and Service Week and toys and uniforms for an elementary school in Little Haiti.

Principal Rodriguez reported on the upcoming Homecoming activities, the FEA Club, Parent/Senior Night, athletic accomplishments, and Saturday tutoring. The school now has wireless "hot spots" for students to be able to use their own computer devices. Students in the ITECH program will receive a laptop to take home.

To answer Chair Salomon's question, Ms. Rodriguez replied that last week the total student population was 1,898 or approximately 80 students less than last year. The school is at approximately 96% capacity.

Board member Hunter asked about the number of Cambridge classes the school is offering.

Principal Rodriguez responded that the Cambridge program began with a solid language arts class and they are planning to build the program in other areas. The program was approved in July and they are hoping to open four additional classes next year.

Board member Sami asked if the ITECH program will be on the magnet application and Ms. Rodriguez responded affirmatively.

To answer Vice Chair Zapata's question, Ms. Rodriguez clarified that most of the ITECH students are from Miami Springs and the Cambridge program is an advanced program that is comparable to Advanced Placement (AP).

Vice Chair Zapata commented that she had always wondered why the schools in Miami Springs do not participate in the AVID program for those students in the academic middle that have huge potential. This program is proven through years of research and data and she would like to see it used in the Miami Springs' schools.

Principal Rodriguez explained that the school has seventeen new AP sections this year for those students who are in the middle and need motivation.

All Angels Academy representative Terry Alexander stated that school began after Labor Day. She reported on the sports programs, PTO meetings, the "We the People" competition, the Florida History Fair, the Farmers Market and the academic enrichment after school programs. She said that the enrollment is 95 students and the school has capacity for more.

8) PTA/PTSA Reports

This item was discussed in conjunction with the School Reports.

9) Education Advisory Board Goals

Chair Salomon asked for comments or suggestions for the Education Advisory Board goals for this year and the needs of the school Principals.

Springview Principal Dovale said that volunteers are always needed to assist in media center and to work with the students. The school has wireless connectivity, smart boards, and document cameras, but there is an issue with mounting the projectors in twelve classrooms, which is estimated to cost \$7,000 to \$8,000.

Lubby Navarro recommended the identification of businesses and stakeholders in the community who could sponsor and partner with the schools. She said that businesses should be invited to visit the schools and the Chamber of Commerce should be invited to the Education Advisory Board meetings. She said that Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce holds an annual fundraiser for schools and the partnership comes through the committee with the help of City resources.

Principal Dovale presented a recommendation from the school Principals to reduce the number of Education Advisory Board meetings because it would allow them to bring more items to the table. She suggested meeting every nine weeks.

Board member Hunter agreed with Ms. Navarro's suggestion to review the education compact as a group and to look at what the compact enables the board to do; it seems that fundraising might be included. He would like to solidify a specific purpose as opposed to just receiving meeting notes from the Principals.

Chair Salomon asked Ms. Navarro if she could highlight significant points in the education compact and distribute it to the Clerk of the Board.

Ms. Navarro responded that she has a running matrix that is her working document. In some cities, they structure their committee agendas with the headers in the compact, based on their projects for the year. She used student achievement as one example and reiterated the importance of identifying business partners and reviewing the education compact. She suggested that the Board should identify a working project that is a staple item on every agenda. The Principals know first hand what the schools need and the Education Advisory Board should support their recommendations.

Vice Chair Zapata asked if it would be helpful for any of the Board members to participate in school committees or in the development of the School Improvement Plan (SIP). She felt that this would allow a tangible awareness of what the plans are and how the Board can support those plans.

Ms. Navarro responded that the Board should identify the needs of the students and it could be based on the recommendations in the SIP. She was hoping to hold an informal study over the summer to lay out this year's project and student achievement should be the driver behind the work.

Chair Salomon asked for suggestions from the Board members in order to move forward.

Vice Chair Zapata suggested that the focus should be on the individual schools. The elementary school students are from this geographical area, the middle school has different needs based on students coming in from other areas and the High School may also have different needs.

Chair Salomon asked the school Principals if they could prepare a document listing the major needs.

Dr. Payne said that he liked Dr. Zapata's suggestion to focus on the individual schools because it is important to identify the needs. He will ask the Principals to develop specific goals for their schools and this information can be passed on to the Education Advisory Board. The Principals should meet with their Staff and give some consideration to what their needs are and the specific goals to address. He said that there should not be too many goals; the goals should be possible to achieve and ones that will make a difference for the students.

Board member Hunter commented that he would like more than a "shopping" list. He would like to know the strengths that can be built upon so that Miami Springs can be identified with areas of excellence, like mathematics. There should be a coordinated plan to feed the program into the future by developing students from the 1st grade and higher who will participate in ITECH or the Cambridge Program. He would leverage the strengths and reach out to the community for support.

Chair Salomon felt that Board member Hunter raised an interesting point and perhaps the strengths and deficiencies of the schools should be addressed in order to create a plan. He reiterated that he would like a copy of the compact matrix in advance of the next meeting.

Board member Hunter added that he would like a complete copy of the education compact.

10) Other

Board member Sami suggested discussing the status of the Youth Advisory Council. She asked how many applications were received and the Board Secretary informed the Board that only one application was submitted from a non-resident.

Board member Sami stated that the Board should readdress the issue and Board member Hunter suggested that the school Principals could help with implementing the Youth Advisory Council.

Chair Salomon clarified that a system was put in place last school year for the Youth Council and he does not know why there was an issue with attracting students to participate. He said that this could be an item for the next agenda.

Ms. Sami explained to the Principals that the Youth Advisory Committee is comprised of a student from each school in the fifth grade or higher and they must be a resident of Miami Springs. She has applications for any of the schools that might need them.

Chair Salomon summarized the following items requested for the next meeting:

- A copy of the education compact, including the matrix and the complete version.
- Information from the Principals listing the strengths and deficiencies of the schools.
- Discussion on how to involve the Chamber of Commerce through the City Council.

11) Adjourn

There was no further business to discuss and the meeting adjourned at 7:54 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,


 Suzanne Hitaffer
 Clerk of the Board

Approved as written at meeting of: 10-16-2012

The comments, discussions, recommendations and proposed actions of City Citizen Advisory Boards do not constitute the policy, position, or prospective action of the City, which may only be established and authorized by an appropriate vote or other action of the City Council.
