



Minutes of ESE Advisory Council meeting held Wednesday March 19th, 6.15pm, Lauderdale Manors

Call to order & chair's welcome: 6.31pm, Jacqui Luscombe (JL)

Roll call:

School Board appointees present:

- Melissa Ramos (for District 2, Rebecca Thompson)
- Stephanie Salisbury (for District 4, Lori Alhadeff)
- Nakisha Sukarichi (for District 7, Nora Rupert)
- Anabelle Rivera (for Seat 8, Dr Allen Zeman)
- Jenn Valliere (for Seat 9, Debbie Hixon)

ESE Advisory Board members present:

- Jacqui Luscombe, Chair
- Bach Todaro, Recording Sec
- Jenn Valliere, member at large

Membership quorum was not achieved.

Apologies for absence from ESE Executive Director Diane Eagan.

Chair's report:

- **Cameras in ESE classrooms update:** the state's three-year pilot program allowing parents of students in self-contained ESE classrooms to request a video security camera ended June 2023, ESE Advisory recommended prior to its expiration that BCPS continue the program itself. Supt & Board indicated support and initiated policymaking; ESE Advisory collaborated. Process is now on hold pending outcome of a state bill that, if successful, would set state policy on this. JL reported that she met w/the Supt 2/28 and urged that BCPS policymaking continue, as the state bill may fail or if it succeeds, the Board can tweak any policy differences accordingly. She read out an email from John Sullivan, Chief Legislative Affairs officer, received today to clarify the latest position: *"Thank you for your email and your patience regarding the cameras in ESE classrooms policy. I wanted to address your concerns and provide some clarity for your ESE Advisory meeting this evening. The bill still has the potential to pass this legislative session. The Superintendent wanted to ensure that the policy takes into account any changes that might arise due to this legislation. This consideration is essential to ensure that our policy aligns with any new requirements or adjustments. Rest assured; the Superintendent is committed to having the policy in place for the upcoming school year. We understand the importance of this policy to our parents and the broader community, and we are dedicated to making sure it is implemented effectively."*
 - Question from the floor re ensuring the camera initiative includes contract schools such as Baudhuin, ARC, BCC, etc.

- Discussion re the need for BCPS to communicate w/parents to update them, as parents were invited to request cameras at the start of the school year and when Advisory asked for communication to be updated in January, the email that went out did not explain it. JL asked if the ESE dept could work with us on crafting an email to update parents.
- Discussion re how many cameras have so far been requested, and the need to keep the process open for more parents to do so; 332 cameras in stock and 700+ requests received. Total ESE classrooms in BCPS: 1300.
- **BCPS calendar** August 2026 onwards: calendar committee will be working on two calendars simultaneously for the 2026/7 and 2027/8 school years, to improve forward planning.
- **Nursing concerns:** cases have been arising of nurses being removed by BCPS from medically fragile students; for discussion as separate agenda item later.
- **Bullying concerns:** BCPS retaliation against a parent who brought a discrimination complaint on behalf of a student; JL has asked district leadership and Board for explanation and for sight of the protocols around Policy 5900 on bullying that allowed this to occur. Has been told they cannot be provided without a formal public records request. Chair clarified that such material should *not* require a formal records request. Parent did a public records request and was told BCPS would charge \$40k for it. Central Regional Supt, Dr Ted Toomer: Policy 5900 largely addresses student bullying, “we want to get JL that information.”
- **Meeting recordings:** staff recording of our Feb Advisory meeting cuts off 50mins before the meeting ended due to a staff error, so discussion on the above bullying issue was excluded.
- **No camera** provided at this meeting.
- **Chair’s meeting with Supt:** also discussed IEP compliance, need for better behavior mgmt in schools to eliminate the practice of schools calling parents to take their child home, and interest by some parents in exploring the possibility of a district-managed Autism charter school.
- **Supt proposal to abolish/merge/realign Advisories;** proposal included merging ESE Advisory with ESOL, Multi-Lingual & Gifted Advisories. Proposal was then withdrawn; Supt said ESE Advisory’s inclusion in the proposal was a mistake. Supt has now formed a Task Force to examine structure of BCPS’s 19 Advisories and committees; some of its 11 members do not hold positions on Advisories; chairs of several of the major Advisories have been excluded from it including ESE.

ESE Advisory subcommittee reports:

- **Melissa Ramos, Autism:** next meeting April 17, Glades Middle, 10am. Autism Awareness Month. Topic will be: Transition and navigating next steps. Guests: Transition coordinator Stacy Wolfe & Pre-K Curriculum Supervisor.
- **Ellen Kay, Meaningful Inclusion:** last meeting Feb 27, guests were two college students who spoke about self-advocacy.
- **Bach Todaro, Down syndrome:** meeting tmrw, presentation/discussion with district ESE dept re matriculation. March 21st: World Down Syndrome today: Rock your Socks event.
- **Thank you tribute** to Ellen Kay, Meaningful Inclusion chair, for her years of service to ESE Advisory. She is moving out of state. Future of Meaningful Inclusion cttee TBD.

Nursing concerns:

- JL reported on multiple cases in which BCPS’s Coordinated Student Health Services dept has removed one-on-one nurses/aides from some students who are medically fragile or have individualized needs. This includes a student who has multiple complex medical conditions including quadriplegia, a spinal tumor, paradoxical breathing, an over-reaction of the central nervous system that can cause sudden and severe blood pressure changes and temperature regulation/sensory needs, and is wheelchair-bound. JL read out an email written and published with the parent’s permission, with the student’s identity withheld. School principal went along

with the nurse removal; Nursing dept staff placed themselves in an IEP meeting without parent invitation; no further outreach from BCPS to reverse it and get student back to school after weeks home due to the parent being fearful to have child in school minus nurse.

- No response from School Board members to emails; JL asked Board appointees to communicate this back to their Board members and urge follow-up.
- From the floor: another parent told of her experience with BCPS attempting to remove her son's skilled one-on-one nurse with an para. Concerns re no adherence to procedural safeguards, FAPE, and lack of training. qualification/appropriateness of turning over specialized care to a para.
- Discussion of concerns re why this has been done, how it's happened, impacts on families, potential endangerment of students, lack of process & lack of help to resolve it. To BCPS: It's alarming that you're putting each and every one of our kids at risk...I expect my son's needs to be protected" and "Our kids can die."
- Chair and membership urged a review of how this occurred. JL raised concerns that there had been pushback against discussion on this initially at BCPS. Dr Jodi Washington, Task-Assigned Director of Student Support Initiatives now conducting an internal look at how many affected, and how to rectify. She will attend April Advisory meeting to explain/discuss further.
- Concerns from classroom staff perspective too: changes in paras assigned to classrooms, concerns over their level of training, need to follow medical orders, teachers having to worry about overseeing para doing the right thing. Subs being tasked with medical responsibilities.
- Discussion re Type 1 Diabetes mgmt. refusal to allow cellphones for students to communicate w/parents on necessary medical-related issues. State has made clear this is permitted and overruled BCPS on a specific case; BCPS has been inconsistent. Testimony alleging staff having filed false neglect/abuse cases to Child Protective Services in retaliation for parents persisting with concerns. (CPS found no such abuse). From the floor: parent pointed out that parents can also report BCPS staff to CPS.
- Parents have pulled children from school over these T1D concerns and Nursing removals.
- Stephanie Acosta Castro, ESE Compliance Director: Dr Washington is heading review of paperwork to identify and address Nursing removal cases. Will be complete no later than April 15. Talking to families, holding meetings/calls with parents, liaising between depts. If Nursing services are withdrawn/refused, BCPS has to provide a notice of refusal and explain. BCPS's joint principal/ESE Specialist meetings addressing this: "We're also going to be doing a review at those meetings about what should be happening at that table at that conversation" and how to handle medical orders' district is responsible for fulfilling them. Compliance training on April 1 for Nursing staff.
- JL asked why Director of Coordinated Student Health Services would not attend this meeting. Why have some parents had no outreach. Why emails unresponded to. "Let's level with parents....how can they have confidence to have their kids here?"
- Dr Ted Toomer, Central Supt: Dr Washington will provide "real answers" at next meeting.
- JL: No quorum here to make a formal recommendation but suggested that we provide feedback by consensus. Invited input from the floor. Collective ask: Independent review of nursing services to include staffing levels, training, qualifications, best practices, communication with parents (including answers to questions in writing), compliance with IEPs and IDEA, info on how many Nursing removals, transparent process for how complaints are handled and consequences/outcomes for failures

Focus SSS concerns:

- Still no response from BCPS to Advisory re request for gap analysis to identify shortfalls between the previous ESE case mgmt. platform, EDPlan, and the new platform, Focus SSS. No timeline for addressing concerns; lack of dialog with staff and end users re what concerns even are.

- JL asked Dr Toomer to take this issue back to cabinet and ask for it to be addressed.

Just Do It Awards

- Overview of the annual awards ceremony for students w/disabilities
- Thanks to BCPS staff who organized, esp. Gwen Lipscomb from FDLRS for executing this for 26 years now
- Staff shared highlight videos from the event
- Three out of nine School Board members attended; needs follow up by appointees

Q&As

- Concerns incl from PE teacher re lack of inclusive practices at school. Lack of support by school leadership for adaptive PE. JL: every school should have an inclusion champion overseeing this.

Presentation:

Gail Moore, Family Services Manager, 211 Broward

One stop shop to connect families with health and human services in Broward County. Services include Special Needs Connections for families of children and young adults w/special needs. Family support, sibling support, counseling, respite care.

Meeting close