



ESE ADVISORY GENERAL MEETING, December 18th, 2024, 6.15pm Indian Ridge Middle School

MINUTES

Meeting recording: <https://shorturl.at/mvzty>

Call to order 6.30pm (no quorum)

Presentation/discussion: Progress Monitoring data for FAST testing for Students with Disabilities

- **Richard Baum, Director of Educational Assessment, Analysis & Research, BCPS**
- **ESE Curriculum Director Sabrina Sheib**
- **Followed by Q&As**

Tests given in fall, winter and spring. The FAST (Florida Assessment of Student Thinking) is the test used to measure student performance. The state transitioned to new assessment to correspond with change from old Florida standards to the Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking standards. Fall and winter are for informational purposes only; spring is for formal accountability, school grades, promotion, etc.

See www.edudata.fl DOE.org - this state tool can be used to pull past performance data by district, school, sub-groups, year, etc.

Are we starting off each year with a baseline that's better than the year before? (PM1): yes, including for students with disabilities (SWDs), though there is a significant gap between SWDs and non-SWDs.

PDF presentation is at: <https://shorturl.at/ROssq>

Video recording at: <https://shorturl.at/mvzty> (this item is on the recording from minute 15 to the 1hr 46 min mark, including Q&As)

Chair's report: Jacqui Luscombe

1. Student attendance: The chair has repeatedly raised concerns at BCPS Calendar Committee meetings that the school calendar shows one thing but reality is another when it comes to student attendance requirements/expectations. Many parents - particularly in 9th grade, the first year of high school - are caught out by finding that their children are not expected at school all day on certain days during testing and/or that there is no instruction or educational activity provided. Many students go home after a test, yet it is a full day on the district calendar. Expectations vary from school to school and communication about when students can leave school early on testing days can be misleading, giving the impression that students should not be in school unless they have a test, and that they should leave after the test is completed.
2. Also, are schools meant to be banning/confiscating backpacks - and even lunchboxes - during testing week this week? Task-assigned Chief of Safety, Security and Emergency Preparedness is not aware of any directive on this yet some schools are unilaterally doing it.

Dr Ted Toomer, Central Regional Supt, promised to take both matters to Cabinet for fact-finding and discussion.

3. ESE Advisory policy (1.22) & bylaws: Subcommittee of ESE Advisory has carried out a School Board-required review in order to harmonize ESE Advisory policy 1.22 and bylaws, and to bring them into accord with revisions that were made to School Board policy 1070. The committee worked on a draft policy matrix showing current policy and proposed revisions, which included amending membership rules to make it easier to achieve quorum at meetings. However, we do not have quorum present again tonight (under the existing rules) for the full ESE Advisory membership to formally review and agree this and pass it forward to the School Board for consideration. Also, the School Board is now proposing new revisions to Policy 1070, the overarching policy that governs Advisories and committees; those proposals could now undo the results of an 18-month review by the BCPS Policy 1070 Committee that the Board had agreed two years ago, potentially now impacting the ESE Advisory policy redraft.
4. Calendar Committee: 2025/6 calendar is now approved by the School Board. Available on www.browardschools.com/calendar
5. Issue arising from yesterday's School Board meeting: the Board agreed changes to the job description for BCPS Behavior Technicians in schools that means they are no longer required to have training in de-escalation when they are placed in this role but have up to six months to complete it. The Chair pointed out that according to School Board documents, the Compensation Dept (Human Resources) recommended this six-month period; she asked what had been the recommendation of the ESE dept because she understood it was only three, and previously this position required that training sooner. ESE executive director Diane Eagan: "We were going with three to six months.... to say everything would be exactly within that three months wouldn't be reasonable..." Sabrina Sheib, ESE Curriculum Director: Currently techs come once a month for three hours to Arthur Ashe (ESE dept site) from all over the district; we're trying to get that to be a series of trainings that go beyond the six months. It's not that they're not getting any training in that six months; it's an ongoing cycle. BCBA meets them monthly and provides ongoing guidance.

District updates: updates on topics requested by the Chair (*Note: awaiting Powerpoint for attachment to the minutes*)

1. **Cameras in ESE Classrooms - Stephanie Acosta Castro, ESE Compliance Director.** The state-mandated three year pilot program that allowed parents to request a security camera in self-contained ESE classrooms ended in June 2024. ESE Advisory asked the School Board to consider continuing the program itself; the Board indicated that it would do so and policy was drafted to support its implementation. Policymaking requires 'looping' that draft to stakeholders for feedback. The draft was looped to ESE Advisory, Technology Advisory, and to District Advisory. The feedback now goes back to a School Board workshop on Jan 28th 2025 for consideration. Florida Dept of Education Bureau for Exceptional Education and Student Services contacted BCPS wanting more. The ESE Advisory chair said that parents were surveyed on this by BCPS last year and had not had an update since' she asked if communication be sent out to update them. Ms Acosta Castro: Will send one after the holiday break.
2. **Closure of the AM/PM Speech/Language program - Sabrina Sheib, ESE Curriculum Director.** The Chair explained that the program closed last year in 13 of the 16 schools where it was provided, with no forewarning/pre-discussion with Advisory, the Board, affected families or SLPs who ran it. She had asked for data several times before but none had been forthcoming. This model provides a half-day ESE program providing speech/language services for pre-K students. Ms Sheib presented data: there were 65 students at 13 sites; of those, 11 are now in a different AM/PM program (the three still open), 34 are now in a full-day program (VPK/Headstart); 20 now in a full time ESE class. In 2024/5 to date the number of students

evaluated at pre-K assessment center is 1,057 of whom 16 were offered an AM/PM program; 12 of those 16 chose it and the others pursued private options (private services/private schools). Also looking to increase inclusive preK programming.

3. **Feeder patterns for ESE program schools or 'clusters'** - Chair outlined parent concerns that some students are being assigned to clusters beyond their own school's feeder pattern and therefore ending up even further from home and that no written criteria exist for determining how those assignments are made, rather than assigning a student to their closest cluster. Ms Sheib: decision is made by IEP team and has to be determined according to existing transportation routes. Programs are being added according to need; for example, if a school has a preK ESE program but no ESE program beyond that for them to move into, BCPS considers where programs can be added as a priority, or whether additional sites are needed. Parents are informed which school the student will move to at the matriculation meeting. Ms Sheib offered to work with ESE Advisory and its Autism subcommittee to discuss further "because we are hearing that people like the idea of their home school."
4. **ESE dept visit to South Florida Autism Charter School, Miami-Dade:** The Chair explained that suggestions had been brought forward by parents that BCPS should consider having one of these schools in Broward (in which BCPS, not an independent charter organisation, would be the managing entity, thereby retaining students as BCPS students with district-exercised managerial oversight). The Chair said that she had taken the suggestion to the previous Supt, Dr Licata, and that the current Supt, Dr Hepburn, had also expressed interest in finding out more info when parents also brought it up to him at the Sept 2024 ESE Advisory meeting. The ESE dept was asked by Dr Hepburn to find out more and set up a visit; ESE Chair was not invited but one of the parents supporting this idea was and has brought positive feedback. Two ESE directors, Ms Sheib and Andrea Ciotti, made the visit. Ms Sheib reported: "The school is comparable to our ESE separate day schools...with some differences." In BCPS ESE program schools, students have mixed ESE eligibilities; the Autism charter is for only Autism eligibilities. BCPS ESE day schools offer standards and off-standards; the Autism charter just has students on Access Points. BCPS ESE day schools don't cap enrolment; the Autism charter caps it at 18 students per grade level, split over two classes per grade, and has a waiting list. Over 80 students at the Autism charter in Miami-Dade are from Broward. Discussion to be continued at January Advisory meeting.
5. **SLP recruitment:** At the Sept School Board meeting, the ESE dept lodged a budget request for \$35m to hire contracted SLPs from independent vendors. The ESE Chair spoke at the meeting to suggest there needed to be a plan for how BCPS would ramp up its hiring of *staff* SLPs and reduce reliance and expenditure on contractors. Andrea Ciotti, Director for ESE Specialised Instruction: 22k BCPS students receive language services and over 15k have speech services. Providers are in short supply nationally. BCPS has filled all positions this year; last year had 52 per cent BCPS staff and 48 per cent contracted vendors to help make up missed services that were the subject of a state complaint. This year: 397 SLPs, of which 205 are BCPS employees and 192 contracted vendors (*note: doesn't add up*). Only 160k SLPs nationwide. Only 319 programs nationwide providing training for masters level speech and communication disorder personnel. Only ten colleges in Florida offer the program. Need to increase recruiting at those colleges and unis but we contract to fill the gap. Goal is to have 100 per cent BCPS employees, aiming for 67 new staff SLPs a year. So far this year, hired 21 as BCPS employees and 14 spring interns (college students finishing masters that will be in BCPS schools after winter break under supervision of masters SLPs, with hopes of permanently hiring them when qualified. Some are from NY and Boston. Developing a 'grow your own' SLP pipeline program, with bachelors personnel provided tier support and working side by side with masters SLPs while completing grad programs. Diane Eagan, ESE exec director: even though we asked Board for \$35m for contract SLPs, we flip that money to hiring staff when we can. Ms Ciotti: We're building communities, support, encouragement to attract new SLPs. Board wants to ensure we have a recruiting plan and best efforts to hire as BCPS staff. All those 192 positions currently filled by contract vendors remain posted; until we can hire, we have to use contractors. "Working through details" of a plan.

6. Remainder of presentation deferred to next meeting (Jan 15th).

Meeting closed 9pm

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