

## **Broward ESE Advisory Council**

### **Meeting Minutes**

**Date:** Wednesday, September 17, 2025

**Time:** 6:15 PM – 8:45 PM

**Location:** Indian Ridge Middle School, 1355 S. Nob Hill Rd, Davie, FL 33324

#### **1. Call to Order**

- Meeting was called to order at **6:21 PM** by Chair **Jacqui Luscombe**.
- She welcomed attendees and acknowledged the competing community events that evening.

#### **2. Roll Call & Introductions**

- ESE Advisory exec board members **in attendance**: Jacqui Luscombe (*Chair*); Ana Corujo-Rhazi (*Vice Chair*); Bach Todaro (*Corresponding Secretary*). **Not in attendance**: Christina Gaskill (*at-large Board Member – arrived later*), Jennifer Valliere (*at-large Board Member – sent apologies*)
- School Board members' appointees **in attendance**: Maura Torrealba (*for Dist. 1, Maura McCarthy-Bulman*); Melissa Ramos (*for Dist 2, Rebecca Thompson*); Danilo Gutierrez (*for Dist 3, Sarah Leonardi*); Sara Tribaudino (*for Dist.4, Lori Alhadeff*); Seth Hyman (*for Dist. 6, Adam Cervera*); Anabelle Rivera (*for Seat 8, Dr Allen Zeman*). **Not in attendance**: Sheilynn Carrasco (*for Dist. 5, Dr Jeff Holness*); Jenn Valliere (*for Seat 9, Debbi Hixon*).
- **District 7 School Board member Nora Rupert** is still seeking an appointee.
- Chair explained voting eligibility: exec board, School Board member appointees, and members who have attended at least two of the last six meetings.
- **Quorum confirmed.**

#### **3. Approval of Minutes**

- August 2025 minutes were distributed. Motion to approve was made (Melissa Ramos) and seconded (Steve Moyer)
- **Vote:** Approved unanimously with no objections.

#### **4. Officer Elections**

- Chair announced two open roles: **Recording Secretary** and **At-Large Board Member**.
- Described duties: Recording Secretary to prepare minutes; both roles must attend executive board steering meetings (held online.)
- Nominations invited; members encouraged to consider or recruit others.

#### **5. Committee Reports**

##### **Autism Committee (ACE) – Melissa Ramos**

- Focused last meeting on **mental health support** for students.

- Guest: *Paul Jaquith*, CEO of Mental Health America - Southeast Florida, discussed the “Listener Program” (volunteer mentorship program to provide weekly support for students). Efforts underway to revive it post-COVID.
- *Steve Moyer* provided strategies for transition and compliance. School Board Member *Rebecca Thompson* attended, emphasizing importance of mental health initiatives.
- **Glades Middle School’s proposing to host an Autism Academy** as part of “Redefining Schools.”
- Next ACE meeting: **November 13**: focus on transition, compliance and follow-ups from Advisory.

#### **Down Syndrome Committee – Bach Todaro**

- Held 7th annual teacher training event; strong turnout. Gratitude expressed to staff & volunteers.
- Upcoming committee meeting: **Thursday, Sept. 27**. Topic: **IEPs, due process, and parent rights**; guest presenters will include FDLRS (Florida Diagnostic & Learning Resources System).
- Shared ongoing collaboration with a local artist on the spectrum, working with students with Down syndrome through art workshops at Coral Springs Museum of Art.

#### **6. Chair’s Report – Jacqui Luscombe**

- Reported on work with the **Technology Advisory Committee**:
  - Recommendation was made to the Superintendent and School Board to vote on the contract to expedite delivery of laptops to students.
  - Issues with Focus platform noted, particularly inability to access 504 plans. Focus has not built an interface between its system and Accelify, where 504s are stored, so student records are not all in one place as parents were promised. District considering resolution
  - AI technology rollout: teachers receiving training first; student usage controls planned.
- **Calendar Committee**: parents encouraged to complete surveys and advocate to Board members regarding changes
- **Redefining Schools**: encouraged parents to attend community forums and submit suggestions for partnerships/programs.
- Additional district-wide initiatives noted:
  - **Anti-vaping technology** to be deployed in schools.
  - Recognition of **Childhood Cancer Awareness Month**.
  - \$14k literacy and sports grant awarded to The Quest Center.

#### **7. District Updates**

**Saemone Hollingsworth, Chief of Student Support Services**

- **Redefining Schools:** enrollment declines mirror state and national trends; emphasized need for creative partnerships and community engagement. “Thought Exchange” survey open until **Oct. 3**; results to inform Board workshop on **Oct. 7**.
- **Attendance:** approx. 30% of Broward students chronically absent; campaign underway to improve engagement.
- **Hazel Health:** telehealth support continuing, with data showing improved return-to-class rates.
- **Transportation:** responding to Advisory’s **Aug. 20 recommendation**:
  - Reviewing outdated **bus attendant job descriptions and training**.
  - Plan to add stronger training on communication, de-escalation, and student support skills.
  - Negotiations are ongoing with unions on compensation and scheduling for training time.
  - Sabrina Flores suggested a good way to encourage bus drivers to receive training would be to adequately compensate them.
  - Though a spot through school choice forfeits the opportunity to receive bus transportation, there will be a window next month in which school choice children may have an opportunity to receive bus transportation should the route become available.
- **Class Size Rebalancing:** staffing adjustments are being monitored to balance student-to-teacher ratios without compromising support for students with disabilities.
- **Parent concern re handling of video threat at Monarch High:** parent was promised follow up

#### **Diane Eagan, Executive Director of ESE, & Team**

- Addressed staffing, training, and compliance updates.
- Emphasized ongoing monitoring of classrooms to ensure ESE support and services are delivered equitably across the district.
- Questions re how parents can track spending of IDEA funds and classroom/materials allocation. Needs follow-up and report back.

#### **8. Cameras in ESE Classrooms – Stephanie Acosta Castro, Director, Support/Compliance (ESE)**

- Progress update on the state requirement for cameras in self-contained ESE classrooms.
- Parents must return **written consent forms** for each student. Missing forms can delay installation for an entire classroom.
- Members urged to spread awareness to ensure timely compliance.
- Currently only 12 classrooms have qualified, with two classrooms being from one school.
- There are over 1,000 classrooms within Broward County Public Schools that could qualify

- Sabrina Flores proposed a **motion**: *“We recommend that BCPS makes data available class by class, to ensure that consents have come in, on a public facing portal.”* The motion was seconded and approved by all voting members.
- Stephanie Acosta Castro, ESE Compliance Dir, mentioned she is encouraging staff to submit forms as they are received, and not wait for all forms to be received within class.

## 9. Spotlight on Evergreen Report (2014 Review of ESE)

### Topic: Behavior Management, Behavior Support & Discipline

- **Kathy Keith (SESIR) & Dr. Jodi Washington (School Culture & Student Support):**
  - Shared district policies on suspensions, reporting, and incident documentation.
  - Stressed consistency and fairness in disciplinary practices.
  - Kathy Keith made her contact information available: 754-321-1655
- **Lauren Didrikson (ESE Behavior Specialist):**
  - Reviewed use of **Functional Behavior Assessments (FBA) & Behavior Intervention Plans (BIP)**.
  - Highlighted importance of parent participation and ongoing data collection.
  - Parent concern re first time ESE cluster teacher in need of additional support. Sabrina Sheib said teachers can be provided with 1:1 coaching if recommended by staff or parent.
- **Discussion points:**
  - Inconsistencies in discipline procedures across schools & parents being told to take students home early for behavior challenges
  - Need for more administrator training on behavior and disability law.
  - Equity concerns raised about disproportionate suspension of students with disabilities.

## 10. Redefining Schools – Community Concerns

- Parents and community members raised issues about:
  - Communication gaps between district and families.
  - Accessibility of new programs for students with disabilities.
  - Importance of protecting specialized programs while balancing enrollment.
- Feedback collected for submission to district leadership.

## 11. Open Forum

- Parents voiced personal experiences with transportation delays, inconsistent classroom support, and challenges with disciplinary actions.

- District staff acknowledged concerns and pledged to continue monitoring, training, and reporting.

**12. Adjournment: 8:45 PM.**

**Next Meeting: Wednesday, October 15th, 2025**

**Minutes prepared by:** *Sabrina Flores*