

**Office of Community Partnerships, Education & Business Access
 Family and Community Involvement Advisory Committee (FCIAC)
 PTHSBAB Conference Room 559
 Google meet <https://meet.google.com/xiy-swca-nsr>**

**January 12, 2026
 Minutes**

MEETING

Monday, January 12, 2026
 9:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

Attendance:

In person:	In-Person Non-Voting Members	Virtual:
Laura Creenshaw-Philpot	Lisa Thurber	Sheila Jackson
Beverly Heller	Ines Meras	Barbara Martin-Galego
Maria Paula De Carolis	Linda Amica Roberts	Reinaldo Palacios
Maria Ratti Jakoniuk	Meriel Seymore	Marylin Anderson
Sharon Watson	Tracey Crews	Wendy Fernandez
Kari Vidal	Ruben Gomez	Alina Gallego
Deborah Gonzalez		
Aundrey Adams		
Carolyn Nelson-Goedert		
Falicie Dirosier		
Tyler O'dneal		
Mirena Suarez		
Renee Williams	Mina Hosseini - Excused	
	Enrique Escallon - Excused	

Welcome and Introductions

- Meeting was called to order at 9.46 am by Paula De Carolis.
- Introductions were taken in best interest of time while quorum could be reached.
- The approval of minutes was tabled until quorum could be reached.

Customer Service and Promotion of M-DCPS, provided by Tracey Crews and Ruben Gomez

Customer Service:

- The District presented ongoing efforts to build trust and strengthen relationships with families, emphasizing that student enrollment and community engagement are closely connected.
 - The importance of positive school climate and culture was highlighted as a key factor in attracting and retaining students, alongside targeted enrollment strategies.
 - Initiatives such as **Stronger Together**, student withdraw surveys, and enrollment inquiries are being utilized to support recruitment and retention efforts.
 - Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) is conducting an internal review of enrollment inquiries, which have generated nearly **2,000 leads** from interested parents. The District is monitoring these inquiries to determine whether they result in new student registrations.
 - Marketing and outreach efforts include advertisements in movie theaters, YouTube, and social media platforms.
 - The **À la Carte Courses** program has contributed to full-time recruitment by engaging home education and private school students who attend virtual or in-person classes through takecourses.dadeschools.net.
 - Districtwide marketing initiatives aim to inform parents about the **1,071 choice programs** available across M-DCPS.
 - Students are being surveyed to gather feedback on programs and activities that are effective, as well as those needing improvement.
 - The District is working to strengthen the retention and recruitment pipeline from **Pre-K to Kindergarten**.
 - Public-private partnerships are being developed to expand educational opportunities for children ages 0-3
 - Storytelling initiatives, including **Parent Voices**, are being implemented to keep families connected and informed while promoting enrollment growth and retention.
 - Schools have been granted autonomy to develop their own marketing platforms and showcase their unique programs, recognizing that each school community has distinct strengths and identities.

Recommendations provided by members of the board:

- Consider messages delivered by parents whom the community already trusts. Parents bring credibility through meaningful, pre-established relationships built over time and grounded in mutual support.
- Know your community: Hispanic parents value face-to-face communication, and families new to the system often require additional guidance and personal outreach.
- Minimize changes to communication platforms and procedures so that families can access information easily and consistently.
- Members expressed concern about the costs associated with promoting schools; the District indicated a willingness to assist schools with their marketing efforts.
- Members emphasized that trust strengthens when multiple generations of families attend the same school.
- Strengthen partnerships with Community-Based Organizations, recognizing that charter schools have successfully relied on these relationships for recruitment
- Highlight the availability of well-trained, professional special education teachers within public schools.
- Utilize local private-sector children's events as opportunities to promote and showcase neighborhood public schools.
- Encourage the use of school spaces—such as community gardens—to bring families together, foster partnerships between neighbors and students, and build positive experiences connected to the school site.

Region updates and announcements

- Central Region Representative- Deborah Gonzalez
 - Controlled Open Enrollment Choice Applications window for 2026-2027 opens at the end of January for 1 month. All applications are approved if requested schools' utilization is 90% or below.
 - Parent Choice Applications for the 2026-2027 school year have been processed since October 2025. Parents interested in requesting a school other than the residence school for the 2026-2027 school year must complete the application via the Dade school's portal by selecting the admissions application and Choice programs to request the desired school. This process includes students new to our district without student ID#. Parents no longer have to register the student in the home school prior to completing the applications.
 - Our advocates, Ms. Delgado and Ms Heidelberg are assisting concerned parents with school issues such as registration and parental concerns daily at the Central Region Office.

- South Region Representative - Wendy Fernandez
 - The South Region Office continues to serve our schools, students, and their parents with a spirit of excellence and commitment.
 - Our Social Workers Wendy Fernandez and Kassidy Gamble work with the schools and parents to ensure Parent Choice Applications are processed in a timely manner. Our office collaborates with our ESE Service Center staff to ensure that students with an IEP or 504 plan are accommodated and access their education adequately.
 - Our parent advocates mediate daily between the schools and the parents with patience and understanding. Our advocates are available Monday through Friday 8:00 am -4.30 pm; the phone number is 305-251-4870

Updates:

- District 9 School Board Member Luisa Santos is hosting it's annual **A Night in D9** Saturday February 28th, 2026 2 pm – 6pm Coral Reef Senior High School.
 - **Clash of the Regions Victory:** The South Region won the competition for highest teacher sign-ups with the **Miami Loves Teachers** initiative, earning recognition and resources.
 - 1/24/26 at 9:00 am Multiple Locations: Learn CPR/AED at M-DCPS's **CPR Day Miami** <https://form.jotform.com/253104125353142>
 - MAGNET applications open for 2026-27 until January 15th – will be processed in march 2026
 - CHOICE applications currently being processed for 2026-27
- North Region Representative - Reinaldo Palacios
 - The Lawton Chiles Middle school boys' soccer's team won six of its nine matches this season and won a postseason game for the first time in more than 20 years. The six wins in 2025 doubled last season victory total.
 - MIAMI DADE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS 2025-2026 Testing calendar for grades Prek-12 is available online for parents at the district webpage. They need to click (bottom portion) on "Calendars" the "Testing Calendars".
 - Parents can go to the M-DCPS webpage "**Parent Portal**" and choose "**Choice Application**" tile, which takes them to the application page. Parents can visit the Federal and State Compliance Office (FASCO) webpage for information, procedures and step by step video in English, Haitian-Creole, and Spanish.
 - NRO Parent Advocates are available to aid NRO school parents with school related matters or concerns. Please contact:
 - Ms Shirley Watson M-TH 9.30 am to 2.30 pm 305 572-2800 EXT 2174
 - Ms Lidia Lechtman M-F 10:00 am to 3:00 pm 305-572-2800 Ext 2214

Approval of Minutes

- October 25, 2025, Minutes
 - Minutes were approved as presented.
- November 17, 2025, Minutes
 - Corrections: Fabiola Jean Pierre was present. Minutes were approved as corrected.

Approval of Bylaws:

- Name Changes: “Office of Community Engagement” to “Office of Community Partnerships, Education, and Business Access”
 - By laws were approved with name change. No substantial changes were made.

Standing Committee Reports:

- DAC (District Advisory Council) Title I Administration
 - Title I DAC General Meetings: The General Meeting is scheduled for February 12, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. at Booker T Washington Senior High School.
 - Title I DAC Executive Meetings: Title I DAC Executive Meeting is scheduled for February 5 2026, at 6:00 p.m. at Gateway Environmental K-8 Learning Center.
 - Empower and Engage Community Partnership Fair at MDC Padron Campus on January 27, 2026 from 9:00 am to 2:00 pm
- Head Start Program -Barbara Martin Galego
 - Head Start is actively enrolling and receiving applications for the 2026-2027 school year and identifying families that need their services as well as for current available spots through out the county.
- Superintendent’s Panel for Exceptional Student Education – Maria Ratti
 - All agencies are invited to attend the subcommittee meetings, parent voices are invaluable in helping shape services.
 - February 4, 2026 at 1:00 pm - Superintendent’s Mental Health Committee Meeting <https://meet.google.com/azp-hien-rhd>
 - February 5, 2026 at 9:30 am – Legislative Sub-committee (Superintendent’s District Advisory Panel for ESE) Department of Advanced Academic Programs. Contact person: Maria Sellek 305-9995-1934
 - February 5, 2026 at 10:00 am – Family Engagement Sub-committee (Superintendent’s District Advisory Panel for ESE) <https://meet.google.com/ery-qghz-jid>
 - February 5, 2026 at 10:30 am – Gifted Subcommittee (Superintendent’s District Advisory Panel for ESE) Department of Advanced Academic Programs. Contact person: Maria Sellek 305-9995-1934
 - February 6, 2026 at 11:00 am. Superintendent’s Secondary Transition Subcommittee Meeting. <https://meet.google.com/xwk-czdz-frg> Or dial: +1 864-660-3889 PIN: 588 313 983#
 - February 19, 2026 at 12:30 pm. Superintendent’s Financial Subcommittee Meeting. <https://meet.google.com/mpo-pcxk-wme>
 - February 26, 2026 at 11:00 am. Superintendent’s Educational Programs Meeting. <https://meet.google.com/acr-uesn-gae> Or dial: +1 319-449-2397 PIN: 276 726 201#
 - February 26, 2026 at 12:00 pm. Superintendent’s Awards Subcommittee Meeting. <https://meet.google.com/mgt-zukm-qxq>

- PTA – Sharon Watson
 - The Scholarship Program is preparing for awards in 2026
 - The nominating committee is preparing for elections of a new board.
 - The reflections program winners honored students whose artwork responded to the annual theme **“Accepting Imperfection.”**

- The Children’s Trust – Aundrey Adams
 - Innovations Grants will become available, innovations is any new idea that has not been replicated here in Miami-Dade County.
 - Book Club is available to any 0-6-year-old child who can get a new book every year and with that it is offered parental and child engagement activities.
 - If an event needs to be promoted, please access The Children’s Trust website under events page for advertising.

- Overtown Youth Center – Falacie Dirosier
 - **On- Med**, is a medical kiosk open M-F from 9:00 am to 6:30 pm at Overtown Youth Center (450 NW 14th Street Miami, FL 33136) where individuals can seek medical advice to a medic representative, nurse practitioner or doctor. Irrespective of medical insurance or immigration status (this will not be requested) the community can seek medical advice at the center.

- United Way Miami – Tyler O’dneal
 - Families in need of financial stability, please reach out to the organization. Services like financial coaching, assistance with taxes, are also available at no cost.

- Educational, Opportunity and Access Committee (previously DEEAC) - Beverly Heller
 - Police department provided a presentation at the last meeting.

- Citizen’s Coalition - Beverly Heller
 - Meets right after FCIAC at 12 noon.

- Parent Subcommittee on District and School Budget Priorities- Beverly Heller
 - Last meeting Minutes were shared with the Board.

- Community Access, Lisa Thurber
 - “Principal TODAY” is taking place the last week in October (27 thru 31), where community and business leaders spend a day as a principal to support Miami-Dade County Public Schools (MDCPS) and build partnerships.
 - Expanding All Pro Dad Chapter, for a target of 100 this year.
 - Fathers in Education was purposely moved to September, earlier in the school year, and phenomenal feedback has been received.

New Business:

- Update the Bylaws to reflect United Way Miami name change.
- The next meeting is scheduled for February 9 at 9:30 am.
- Revisit attendance log and discuss replacements for members absent two or more consecutive meetings.

Adjournment – Meeting was adjourned by Ms. Carolyn Nelson-Goedert at 11.30 am.