

**MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
FINAL OFFICIAL MINUTES  
Mayor's Task Force on School Readiness**

Miami Springs Recreation Center  
1401 Westward Drive  
Miami Springs, FL  
November 21, 2011  
As Advertised

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Board of County Commissioners

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**CLERKS SUMMARY AND OFFICIAL MINUTES  
MAYOR'S TASK FORCE MEETING ON  
SCHOOL READINESS IN MIAMI-DADE COUNTY  
NOVEMBER 21, 2011**

The Task Force convened in a meeting on November 21, 2011, at 2:00 p.m., at the Miami Springs Recreation Center, located at 1401 Westward Drive, Miami Springs, Florida. The following members were present: Modesto Abety, Susan Angulo, Sandra Anseime, Eddie Berrones, Richard Chisholm, Julie Edwards, Tonya Ferguson, Andre Hall, Cynthia Hereford, Cindy Lederman, Iraida Mendez-Cartaya, Gladys Montes, Susan Neimand, Terry Rutherford, Franklin Sands, Rick Signori, and Dr. William Zubkoff.

The following staff members were present: Mr. William (Bill) Busutil Sr., Office of Management and Budget (OMB), Senior Advisor to the Mayor Lisa Martinez; and Deputy Karen Harrison.

Ms. Lisa Martinez welcomed the committee members and she noted the intent of today's (11/21) Task Force meeting was to identify the final recommendations to be used for the Mayor's Task Force on school readiness. She urged the committee members to post any recommendations on the board and to include concerns or implementation challenges discussed within the individual groups.

**Committee No. 1**

Mr. William (Bill) Busutil, Business Analyst, OMB, explained that the focus of the sub-groups was to identify additional recommendations such as benefits costs. He noted the regulatory requirements had not been reviewed, and he asked each group to determine whether any regulatory requirements might present some restrictions on the recommendations made regarding the following subject areas:

- Professional Development Recommendations
- Implementation Models Recommendations
- Alternative Approaches for 2012-2013 School Year
- Process Improvements

Members of the Mayor's Task Force Committee divided into the foregoing sub-groups for discussion.

**Review of Sub-Group Recommendations from Committee No. 1**

**Alternative Approaches for 2012-2013 School Year**

- Benefits in sending Request For Qualifications (RFQ) in December:
  1. Ability to identify the qualified providers in advance
  2. RFQ would address the diversity issue in the classroom and staff
  3. Reduce future education costs regarding requirements for September 2013 deadline to provide a certain credential level and avoid qualification issues
  4. Prevent displacement of children and continue service in certain neighborhoods

- Benefits of recommending the use of a research based curriculum:
  1. Best practice would prove positive outcomes for families and children
- Benefits of future recommendations:
  1. Immediate concerns would be resolved with the Head Start Program before attempting to resolve issues concerning school readiness efforts for the entire community.
  2. Identifying a better approach for entire process

It was noted that the following item be listed as a recommendation, rather than a benefit:

- Subcontracts: Training, assessment/evaluation, reimbursement and account responsibilities

### **Professional Development Recommendations**

The following additional recommendations were made:

1. Assessment of the Training Program to include a showcase to communicate successes of the program to the community
2. A follow-up training to be required for low performing teachers and staff in addition to the academic qualifications of a four year degree for school readiness for teachers (Challenge: Identifying enough time for process).

Members of the sub-group identified the following benefits of the professional development recommendations:

1. Benefits of School Readiness staff receiving Head Start training: Using the same training resources, but multiplying the effect in different areas.
2. Benefit of funding structure analyzed by experts outside of South Florida: Recommended changes would be received to resolve complicated funding structure.
3. (New) Recommendation: Retaining quality of highly trained teachers with County level salaries. Benefit: The quality of instructions from teachers was directly connected to the teacher's compensation. (Challenge: Identifying funding from County budget to commensurate salaries with training)

Mr. Busutil noted a recommendation was made by Committee No. 2 to consult with representatives from Kansas City. He noted the work efforts of simplifying the funding structure was discussed and further details would be investigated.

There being no further questions or comments, Mr. Busutil commended the members of Committee No. 1 for their input and recommendations and introduced the City of Miami Springs Mayor Xavier M. Garcia.

City of Miami Springs Mayor Garcia welcomed the members of the Mayor's Taskforce to the newly built community center.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Ms. Lisa Martinez reviewed the process regarding how presentations would be presented, noting all the recommendations had been evaluated and was ready to be developed into a Power Point presentation. She also noted Dr. Gail Gregg, Florida International University (FIU), was unable to attend today's meeting, but she offered to be a part of the sub-group that would develop the initial Power Point presentation. In response to Ms. Martinez' request for more volunteers to develop the Power Point presentation, three individuals volunteered. She explained the process following the development of the presentation and noted a working session with this group would be held on December 5, 2011 at the United Way in Miami to make revisions and finalize the Power Point presentation.

Mr. Busutil advised the members of Committee No. 1 that their comments and recommendations were documented and the information would be distributed electronically tomorrow from Mayor's Office.

Ms. Martinez noted she would provide a template containing the same information as the second committee for the Power Point to the members of the sub-group that would develop the presentation.

## **Review of Group Recommendations from Committee No. 2**

Ms. Martinez provided an overview of charge of Task Force Committees. She noted the work efforts on developing recommendations on specific items within group discussions would form a new plan for a full delegation as well as provide a process for integrating PVK, School Readiness, and Head Start Early Programming more sufficiently.

Mr. Busutil noted the focus for today's meeting was to address the areas that had not been discussed regarding the potential benefits of recommendations, and the challenges in implementing those recommendations, etc. He explained the process for each sub-group to add benefits to the recommendations by paraphrasing both and placing the information on the chart.

Mr. Busutil reviewed the chart noting the sections called "Community Outreach and Program Coordination" and "Process Improvements and Proximity of Facilities" had been completed. He noted today's focus included the following guideline questions:

1. Governance
2. Budgetary Issues and Staff Qualifications

Mr. Busutil also noted that staff had worked on the section called "Regulatory Requirements"; however, he wanted both groups to identify any regulatory requirements based on the recommendations made within the guideline questions that may need revisions to comply with some of the new standards.

## **Governance Recommendations:**

The following additional recommendations were made:

1. Promote quality and governance through a continued evaluation process to improve children services and address issues in advance
2. An Alternate recommendation was to have a revision of the composition as needed to ensure fair representation

## **Budgetary Issues and Staff Qualifications**

The following benefits were identified regarding the proposed recommendations:

1. Benefits of Standardizing Salary Schedules with Qualifications: Equal qualifications would be more justifiable as to why certain teachers made received a higher level of salary. Maximizes the use of dollars (Challenge: Some providers would be financially impacted by the adjustment).
2. Benefits regarding Request For Qualification (RFQ) for Services: Increased diversity at centers.
3. Benefits of Standardizing the Unit Cost Reimbursement Rate per Child: This would create a formula for the individual allocations for students, rather than allocating random expenditures; Formula: Funding from Miami-Dade County for Head Start, minus the administrative cost, those allocations divided by the number of eligible students, equals the total unit reimbursement cost. (Challenge: Allocation of funding would not be an equal distribution across the board).

Discussion ensued regarding the average cost per child totaled approximately \$6,342 for Head Start in the State of Florida.

4. Benefits of the Miami-Dade County Mayor's Office contacting the Mayor of Kansas City to use their method as a model to blend the entire early care and education funding, which included Title I, Pre-K, subsidized childcare, and Head Start: A higher quality of children services (Challenge: Model had to be adopted by Miami-Dade County; Length of time for children to receive those services).

Members of this sub-group requested to add "other services subcontracted by the County" to the recommendation regarding "Privatizing maintenance, vehicle repairs, and other General Services (GSA) services."

## **Regulatory Requirements**

The members of this Taskforce group noted their focus had been on Head Start, but would include other requirements related to PVK and School Readiness.

The following additional recommendations were made:

1. The grantee should establish a standard rate per child because the regulations did not establish the rates
2. The Request For Application (RFA) should include the language specifying the requirement of teachers and the mandate to submit Bachelor's degree by September 30, 2013
3. Better clarification of regulations versus the law for Head Start to address new changes
4. The grantee needed to strengthen administration's grading portion of the program and program monitoring to ensure compliance if the PVK, School Readiness and Head Start funding sources were combined.
5. The language in the RFA should include: Delegates must comply with all Federal regulations

6. Language in RFA should clarify to providers that the regulation requirements for the Head Start Program require applicants to be public or private Head Start non-profit operators.
7. Encourage leveraging of Head Start, School Readiness, PVK, and the private paid programs by mixing the programs, which would be more beneficial financially. Benefits children by exposing them to other cultural educational experiences.

Later in the meeting, the discussion ensued among the committee members regarding the RFA qualifications requirements to be for 2013-2014 to allow delegated agencies to have a preparation period and limit funding problems.

Mr. Busutil noted for clarification that the RFQ and RFA mentioned by the members of the Taskforce were the same documents, but was initially called an RFA.

The following benefits were identified:

1. Benefits of standardized cost per child: Reduces disparity among delegated agencies; May result in additional slots and more resources to enhance staff qualifications. (Challenge: Increased number of slots was uncertain, which reflects the need for additional funding to support increased monitoring methods and staff; Designation renewals required grantees to compete for funding, which was entitlement versus competition).

Discussion ensued regarding the uncertainty of a system for the renewal designation of Head Start Programs; however, it was anticipated that all Head Start Programs would require a competitive renewal process.

2. Benefit of demonstrating high quality services would result in greater success of maintaining the status of the grantee by ensuring current and prospective Head Start providers were capable in meeting the Federal space requirements of 35 square feet per child indoors, and 75 square feet of playground area per child.

## **Conclusion**

Mr. Busutil commended the members of the Taskforce groups for the excellent recommendations and comments. He reiterated that all comments and recommendations have been documented and would be distributed by the close of business tomorrow.

Ms. Martinez advised that three members from Committee No. 1 were selected to develop their Power Point presentations, and once finalized, it would be shared with the full committee at the December 5, 2011 meeting. The intent of this meeting would be to discuss the presentation, revisions, and to ensure it was acceptable before making a presentation at the next full Taskforce meeting and to the Mayor, Ms. Martinez noted.

Ms. Martinez asked for three volunteers from Committee No. 2 to work in a sub-group using the information discussed in today's meeting. She advised that the sub-group would be provided with a template to Power Point to ensure both groups were working with the same backgrounds.

Ms. Martinez noted the Power Point presentation should be submitted by December 2, 2011 in order to be distributed that evening and prepared for the December 5, 2011 full Task Force Committee meeting.

Following the process of selecting volunteers, Ms. Martinez reviewed the schedule of the working session to prepare the Power Point presentation, noting that both presentations from Committee No. 1 and No. 2 would be made on December 7, 2011 at the full Task Force meeting. She also noted that during this meeting Task Force members would have the opportunity to discuss concerns, or provide input on any recommendations, which would be documented and presented to the Mayor on December 9, 2011.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, the Task Force meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.

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Chairman, Mayor's Task Force