Broward County Public Schools
North Area Advisory Council
GENERAL MEETING
MONARCH HIGHSCHOOL
September 18, 2025
6:15-9:00 PM

GENERAL MEETING MINUTES

Email: NorthAreaAdvisory@gmail.com   Website: http://northareaadvisorycouncil.ch2v.com/

Chair- Nicole Morst   Vice Chair- Michael Pezzicola   Recording Secretary- Nicole Kearney
Corresponding Secretary- Lucie Dicapua   Communications Chair- Karla Figueroa

Ask Questions During the Meeting: **Follow Us on Facebook!**
https://forms.gle/29BCuvXHTwTnYw296

A. **Call to Order** - Chair calls the meeting to order at 6:21 p.m. Good evening, everyone. My name is Nicole Morst, I will be your chair for this school year.

B. **Introductions** - Mike Pezzicola will be our Vice Chair, Nicole Kearney will be our recording secretary, and Karla Figueroa, our outgoing Vice Chair, is now our Communications Chair. With us from the North Region Office is Todd LaPace, Director of Teaching and Learning in the North Region, bringing greetings from Dr. J. Fleming, not in attendance, highlighting that letter grades went up in the North Area, as well as student data went up. Also introduced are Meredith Weiss-Schnur, Melissa Gurreonero, who is new to the team, Ricardo Santana, and Michelle Stein, assistant to the North Region team. Also in attendance are April Wyche and Dawn Mucil from the City of Coral Springs, who host monthly Parent Education Meetings for all Coral Springs SAF chairs and other parent representatives.

C. **Ice Breaker** - All members in attendance are asked to share their names, schools they represent, and what brought them to North Area and SAF - many share experiences, and some were just asked to come

D. **Elections for Open Positions** - We have several open positions for other committees and the District Advisory Council that need to be filled. The first is the Facilities Task Force Chair - Nomination of Muriel Theophin-Atilus by Nicole Morst, and second by Karla Figueroa - no other nominations from the floor - Nomination PASSED with none opposed.
Next position we have is a Teacher Representative, they must attend District Advisory Council meetings - Nomination of Sara Marta by Nicole Morst and second by Cynthia Dominque - no other nominations from the floor - Nomination PASSED with none opposed.
Next positions are Parliamentarian, ESOL representative, ESOL meetings happen at the same time as North Area meetings, a High School Representative, and a Citizen at Large
For Citizen at Large - Nomination Jose "Joe" Morera by Nicole Morst and second by AnneJeanette Washington-Collins - no other nomination from the floor - Nomination PASSED with none opposed.
No other nominations for open positions were given - remaining positions will be advertised again.

E. **ESE Advisory/ Jacqui Luscombe** - To start, a little about the **ESE Advisory Council**. We are a board-established group that serves as a voice for students with disabilities and their families in Broward County. We address issues within the ESE community that need solutions, improvements, or updates. These issues can range from outdated policies that negatively impact students to challenges related to services and supports. ESE is a complex area because of the many layers involved: heavy caseloads for specialists, the responsibilities teachers carry, and the need to follow detailed federal requirements. Parents often get tangled in these complexities, especially if their child's IEP isn't being followed or if services aren't being provided.

One issue we recently discussed at our meeting involved "backdoor suspensions. Sometimes schools call parents to take their child home due to behavioral challenges, framing it as a meltdown or a situation they "can't manage." Unless the child is truly sick or in danger, this is considered an improper suspension and must stop. We had

productive conversations with district staff about how to address this, and they are working on providing schools with resources, professional development, and support to handle these situations appropriately.

Transportation is always challenging, especially at the start of each school year. The council passed a recommendation at our August meeting that led to collaboration between departments to address recurring problems. One key fix was specialized training for ESE bus attendants, particularly those interacting with non-verbal students or students with behavioral challenges. This training helps attendants better understand and support the children they work with.

Cameras in ESE Classrooms - A major initiative right now involves cameras in self-contained ESE classrooms. From 2021 to 2024, Broward participated in a state-run pilot program. Parents of students in ESE self-contained classrooms — called clusters in elementary schools and SVE classes in middle and high schools — could request a camera in the classroom. Cameras record audio and video, but there is no live streaming and no monitoring. Footage can only be accessed if a parent or staff member reports a concern, such as unexplained injuries or incidents involving non-verbal students. The pilot program ended, and ESE Advisory recommended that Broward continue it independently, and the district **approved it**.

Challenge: Parent Bill of Rights requires written consent from every parent in a classroom before a camera can be activated. Previously, cameras could be installed automatically, but now staff must collect forms from every parent. This has caused delays. **Spread the word: these cameras are an important safety measure for our most vulnerable students, and parental consent is critical to making the program successful.**

Other Ongoing Issues - We've also discussed class sizes, behavior management, and improving customer service. These must remain top priorities for Broward schools. Stressed the importance of persistence, sharing a guiding mantra from a former Chief Academic Officer:

"Be polite, be persistent, be patient — but do not be patient forever."

Sometimes strong advocacy is needed to create real change. Never be afraid to speak up for your child, your school, or your community.
Q: Is there a specific criteria for which classrooms can have cameras?
A: Cameras are only allowed in self-contained ESE classrooms — clusters for autism, emotional/behavioral disabilities, intellectual disabilities, or SVE classes. These are classrooms where students cannot advocate for themselves or rely on peers to do so.

Technology and Data Management Challenges - FOCUS Platform Issues: FOCUS was introduced as a new student information system to unify data and give parents access to all their child's information in one place. However, 504 plans are still managed on a separate platform (Excelify), which is not integrated with FOCUS. This disconnect causes problems for both staff and parents trying to access critical information. The issue arose because, while the district contracted FOCUS to connect to other systems, they did not negotiate with those outside vendors (like Excelify) to build proper bridges. At District and Technology Advisory meetings, this has finally gained attention, and departments are now discussing how to resolve it.

Behavior Threat Assessments (BTAs): Currently tracked in the Focus SSS module, which was never evaluated for suitability. The module is inadequate, leading to recording and management issues. A transition to a state system is planned for later this year to improve tracking and reporting.

Q: For the cameras in ESE classrooms, how long is footage stored?
A: 30 days.

Q: Could the storage period be extended? Asked because sometimes parents become aware of a repeated or ongoing issue and are only able to view the previous 30 days.
A: ESE advocated for 90 days, but the district's standard for security cameras is 30 days. While server capacity could be expanded, the cost is a factor. Additionally, data from the state pilot program showed that all but one request for footage was made within 30 days. The School Board discussed extending storage but chose to maintain the 30-day standard for now.

Communication and Advocacy - The parent of every student with an IEP or 504 plan* should receive emails from the ESE division with important updates and meeting information. Check spam folders to ensure these messages aren't missed.

ESE Advisory Council Resources:
Website: http://browardeseadvisorycouncil.com
Facebook: Broward ESE Advisory Council — nearly 9,500 members sharing resources and support.
Meetings: Third Wednesday of every month - Calendar is available online and on the School Board website. Copies are sent to families of all students with IEPs and 504s.

Closed by reminding everyone that **persistence matters**. Even if it takes years to see results, staying vocal, organized, and connected with others leads to meaningful change for our students.

F. **Focus/Danny Tritto** - FOCUS is the district's student information system, implemented two years ago to replace an outdated platform. FOCUS allows: Real-time grade updates — when a teacher enters a grade, parents and students can see it immediately. Viewing schedules, test scores, attendance, and other data. Access to announcements and upcoming events. To use FOCUS, parents must create a Parent Portal account. All resources and guides are available at browardschools.com/focus.

Setting Up a Parent Portal Account
1. Go to the Parent Portal section on the FOCUS website.
2. Choose one of the following: Create a new account (if you don't already have one). Link your child to an existing account.
3. Enter required information, which must match exactly what is in the school system, including: Parent name and email, Student name, Student ID number, and Student date of birth. **If the information doesn't match, the system won't connect the parent to the student.**
**Important note for district employees: Teachers cannot use their district email address for Parent Portal access. A personal email (e.g., Gmail) must be used instead.

Q: Why didn't I know about the Parent Portal before now?
A: Some parents, especially those new to the district, aren't aware of the need to create an account or to obtain their child's student ID. This can prevent them from signing up. Suggestion: automate the process of sending student ID numbers to parents during registration.

Q: Is there a difference between the app and the website?
A: Yes. The BCPS Connect app is good for quick, essential information (e.g., grades, schedules), but FOCUS online has much more detailed information. Concern raised: Parents feel misled when the app doesn't match what's online.

Q: Can both divorced parents have accounts?
A: Yes, multiple parents can have access, as long as each is listed as a custodial parent. If there's a conflict or legal issue, the school must follow any court orders on custody and access.

Q: Can schools track which parents have registered?
A: Yes. Schools can see which parents do not have accounts and should reach out to help them sign up. Suggestion: Use district communications to push this information out, possibly even create a competition between schools to get more parents registered.

Back-to-School Form Issues - At the start of each school year, parents must complete a Back-to-School Form in the Parent Portal before they can access other features. The form updates: Parent contact information, Emergency contacts, Permissions (e.g., photo releases), Health information, and Code of conduct agreements
Concerns raised by parents:
● Duplication: Some parents complete the form online, then are asked to also complete paper versions.
● Delays: IMTs (Information Management Technicians) must verify submissions before they are finalized, which can slow things down.
● Health care delays: School nurses can't access updated health information until forms are approved.

Q: Why can't some parts of the form, like health information, be processed immediately?

A: The system currently does not allow partial approval. The IMT must verify the entire form at once. Parents asked if this process could be streamlined or split into separate parts.

Q: How long should approval take?
A: Ideally, within a few days, though this depends on how quickly schools process submissions. Parents experiencing delays should contact their school.

Moving Away from Paper Forms - The district's goal is to eliminate paper forms, but there are challenges:
- Some parents don't have accounts or don't use computers.
- Schools sometimes send paper forms anyway, which causes frustration for parents who have already completed everything online.

Q: Can schools print hard copies from FOCUS if needed?
A: Yes, schools have the ability to generate reports and print emergency contact forms as needed. However, access depends on staff roles and permissions.

Q: Can schools target communication only to parents who haven't completed the form?
A: Yes, schools can search and identify families who haven't submitted forms or created accounts, then send direct reminders.

Conflicts Between Parents - When parents disagree on information (e.g., photo permissions, school choice): The parent who originally registered the information remains the default until the issue is resolved. The school will follow court orders when provided.

G. **Banners/Jeff Bold** - Discussion began with a recap of past discussions regarding school banners. Over the summer, there was a virtual meeting about changes to the district banner policy. Schools were required to take down all banners by July 1st due to updates in the rules. The policy is still being finalized, but most details are close to being resolved. A flyer was provided during the meeting to help everyone understand the current guidelines and answer common questions.

Banner Design Guidelines:
- Maximum size is 4x8 feet - banners may not be larger - there is no minimum size
- Consistency is key: Templates must be uniform in color and design - samples provided on flyer.
- Mandated language must be included: "Thank you to our partner in education" as sponsors are partners with schools, not using schools for advertisement
- Template not mandated, but must be consistent at each school
- Full color business logos are permitted - business may use their official logos regardless of school banner color
- No advertising is permitted - No lists of services (e.g., dentists listing procedures, lawyers listing practice areas). No photos of children or unrelated images as part of the design.
- Family Banners are allowed - no size limit - must be consistent. For example: "The Smith Family" or "The Jackson Family" - Student names may be included for recognition, but they are optional.
- Other information to be included is phone numbers, website, other contact information, and QR codes are allowed and can link to a business's website, where additional details may be provided.

Ongoing Discussion: Photos of Individuals - One of the biggest unresolved issues is whether individuals (e.g., realtors) can include their own photo on a banner. For some industries, a personal photo is a key part of branding, such as realtors, caterers, or barbers. The district initially said no photos, due to legal concerns connected to a prior lawsuit. The school board later pushed back, wanting to allow photos for certain professions. Final approval is still pending and will be discussed further at an upcoming workshop. For now, banners with photos are not yet approved. Updates will be provided once a final decision is made.

Q: Is there updated pricing for banners?
A: Pricing depends on the vendor used, as there is no district-mandated vendor. Schools are free to work with any vendor they choose.

Confusion About the Transition - Several participants expressed frustration about the process:

Comment: "It's frustrating that the district required all banners to come down by July 1st before the policy was finalized. Some schools spent significant money to remove and replace banners, only to have the rules change again days later. It's a hardship for schools with limited budgets."
Response: This concern is valid. Some schools took banners down too early or redesigned them, only to have to redo the work due to policy changes. The process should have been finalized before implementation.

Q: Why are there so many banners for a certain restaurant chain on fences across schools?
A: Some businesses approach principals directly, offering free meals or lunches for staff in exchange for being allowed to display their banner.

Principals have final say over what is displayed on their school's fence. If a banner is approved by the principal but does not meet district code, the vendor will not replace it for free if it later has to be taken down.

Q: Can my banner include my official business logo even if it doesn't match school colors?
A: Yes. School colors are not required for business logos.

Q: Can I include a photo of a child, like in a karate school banner?
A: No. Photos of children are strictly prohibited as part of the design.

Q: Can a QR code be included?
A: Yes. Businesses may include QR codes that direct to their websites.

Q: Some schools display banners celebrating internal achievements, such as "A-Rated School", "Gold School", and "Magnet of Excellence." Are these types of banners included in the new rules?
A: No. Internal school banners are not considered sponsorship banners and are not part of this policy. The new rules apply only to external business sponsorship banners. Other Examples: Safety Patrol hosting a car wash, or the school selling Papa John's pizza to raise funds. These fundraising banners are internal and not subject to the sponsorship rules.

H. **School Nurses/Cynthia Dominique** - Discussion focused on school nurses, staffing challenges, and student safety concerns.

   Background and Concerns: In the North Area, school nurses have been discussed multiple times over the past years. Previous concerns focused on education levels and training due to issues such as:
   Parents are not being notified, or forms are not being filled out on time.
   Health plans for students with asthma or other chronic conditions are delayed until January.
   Instances of medical emergencies, e.g., a student having an anaphylactic reaction that the nurse did not recognize, require 911 intervention.

   Policy: District-hired nurses require two years of experience, but contracted nurses have no minimum experience requirement. Recent updates: training for contracted nurses is being revamped to be more robust, though experience requirements remain unaddressed.

   SAF Chairs: This year, 57 schools do not have a nurse (previously 63). Parents should ask their principals:
   1. Do we have a school nurse?
   2. If not, who are the trained personnel available to help students in the clinic or administer medications?

   Each school is required to have at least two trained staff members capable of: Basic clinic skills and administering medications. Often, these staff members also handle other duties such as answering phones, registration, front desk coverage, and lunch supervision, which may impact their availability during emergencies.

   Cluster Model of Coverage: Schools without dedicated nurses are supported by clinical nurses who supervise clusters of ~15 schools. Example: One clinical nurse covers schools from North Lauderdale to Parkland, which is a significant distance. Responsibilities of clinical nurses include: Immediate care in the clinic, reviewing and maintaining health plans, and emergency plans for students with chronic conditions
   Impact: Without a nurse, students may not have an emergency plan in place until months into the school year. Nurses with lighter clinics attempt to support schools without a nurse, but gaps remain.

Legal and Health Requirements - State Statute, Chapter 1003 outlines nursing requirements:
- Students with asthma, allergies, pancreatic insufficiency, and diabetes require monitoring.
- Students needing daily monitoring by a licensed person must have a nurse.
- Registered nurses typically run school health programs, but schools use unlicensed assistive personnel (UAPs)** such as health techs, med techs, or EMTs, under supervision.
- Nurses are responsible for delegation, and staff must receive training in:
    - Asthma recognition and management
    - Anaphylaxis recognition and response
    - Diabetes management
    - Other chronic conditions as needed

Q: Why aren't all schools staffed with a nurse?
A: Board decisions prioritize other operational needs, e.g., $1.7 million spent on sports fields. Estimated cost for a nurse in every school: $3 million.

Q: How many nurses cover schools?
A: Each clinical nurse covers ~15 schools. The North Area has ~67–70 schools; some schools do not have dedicated nurses. Question for district: What is the nurse-to-student ratio?

Q: What can parents do in the interim?
A: Ask schools who the trained personnel are and how many are available. Discuss concerns at SAC or staff meetings.

**Students K–12 can self-carry medications (rescue inhalers, EpiPens, pancreatic enzymes, glucagon, insulin) if forms are completed properly. Medication authorization details: Forms must match the prescription label exactly. Any licensed prescriber can fill out the form. Rescue inhalers may require specific spacers to match instructions.

Safety Concerns - Staff may not recognize medical emergencies (e.g., seizures, anaphylaxis). Response times for 911 may not be immediate, posing safety risks. Example: a student in the cafeteria had anaphylactic shock, with hives up to the eyes and oxygen saturation of 70%, before being properly recognized by a parent. Experienced nurses are critical because fresh graduates may lack judgment in urgent situations.

Historical Context - Pre-COVID: Many clinics lacked nurses. During COVID, funding allowed every school to have at least one nurse; some schools had two, and certain students had 1:1 nursing support. Post-COVID: Some schools lost nurses again due to budget decisions. Clinical and contracted nurses work bell-to-bell, leaving no hours before or after school to complete health plans or other tasks.

Administrative Decisions - Nurses were sometimes removed if no students were listed with medical conditions, even if students with conditions were enrolled. New staff were to be trained to handle emergencies, though concerns remain regarding adequate coverage.

We MOVE that the District place a dedicated registered nurse in every single school in Broward County, regardless of student medical necessity, each day during supervised school hours? - Moved by Cynthia Dominque - second by Desiree Guell - Motion PASSED with no opposed.

Discussion emphasized this is a critical student safety issue and encouraged parents to advocate to the school board. Important considerations: Clinical nurses' hours are limited to instructional time only. Any tasks not completed during these hours may go unaddressed.

Hazel Health is available in all schools - uncertain how it is facilitated in schools without a nurse

Q: Does Hazel Health charge your insurance company?
A: Yes

Health Screening - Advise your parents that if they opt out of Mandated Health Screenings, they are required to write to the school that they are opting out, in addition to checking the box on the form. Opting in for clinic services automatically opts students in for Health Screenings, and charges to students' health insurance can incur.

I. **School Lunches** - Free school lunch will end on **September 22.** SAF Chairs pay attention to how students without lunch money are treated at school, whether they are being provided a substitute lunch. District is supposed to be working to create a substitute meal that does not highlight students' inability to pay. Schools should be working with school counselors to assist parents in applying for free and reduced lunch and identifying students with unique needs.
COMMENT: Some PTAs are creating funds to provide for students in need.
COMMENT: Some parents, especially those new to the District not aware of how to pay for lunch and how to access the MySchoolBucks App. SAF Chairs help parents get this information. Chair requested T. LaPace to see about providing notice to parents where lunch should be paid for.
The School Board has directed principals to set up a budget to provide for students. - Some parents report schools are unable to due to funds.

J. **Vape Detectors** - Discussion focused on implementing vape detectors in schools. Vaping is a significant issue at both middle and high school levels. The district has funds from a lawsuit settlement with Juul to implement vape detectors, which have already been adopted by charter schools. These detectors use AI technology to identify vaping and detect keywords related to fights, drugs, weapons, or other concerning behaviors. When an incident occurs, the AI sends an alert to school security. The rollout is scheduled to begin at middle schools, but concerns were raised about prioritizing high schools, which have fewer schools but triple the vaping incidents compared to middle schools.

Questions were raised about why high schools were not being prioritized, especially since vaping is currently recorded under tobacco incidents and not specifically as vaping.
COMMENTS: Concerns were also expressed regarding AI monitoring of student communications; in one instance, students were wrongly targeted because the system lacked human oversight. While AI is useful, safeguards need to be considered to prevent misidentification or privacy issues.

It was agreed that further discussion is needed before making a motion, and the conversation will be tabled for a future meeting to allow input from staff meetings and principals regarding rollout, student discipline, and identification procedures.

Questions remain regarding implementation, safety, and prioritization, and the discussion will continue at a later date.

K. **Social Media** - Discussion focused on social media use by students, particularly in relation to high school and middle school sports teams. Parents were reminded to ensure that coaches do not require students to use social media. While some families are comfortable with their children being on social media, not all are, and it is not appropriate for coaches to mandate access.

Specific concerns were raised about cheer and basketball coaches who were sharing routines exclusively on Instagram, requiring students or parents to access accounts to see them. This practice is not only against school policy, which restricts phone and internet use in certain contexts, but it also conflicts with state law, which requires children to be at least 16 to have a social media account. Parents were advised to monitor these situations and address them at their schools if necessary.

For reporting or providing examples before the next meeting, parents were encouraged to email northareaadvisory@gmail.com, so the advisory team could follow up and gather more details for discussion.

L. **Redefining** - Discussion about how all parents should be concerned about the redefining, even if your school is not listed. Example: Coral Springs High School is not on the list; however, if the District chooses to close Forest Glen or they make it a 6-12, it could impact enrollment to the feeder school at Coral Springs High School, which is already under-enrolled. Every school in your community will be impacted by this. SAF Chairs pay attention to the community meetings. Look at the feeder patterns. It's important.

Additional discussion about the educational and behavioral impacts that students displaced by closed schools could experience. Sited to studies state that students' learning loss will not be regained even with significant efforts and will equate to loss of post-secondary educational opportunities and future earnings. Stated that while the District has financial struggles, they should be closing administrative buildings, not schools, and as a last resort, could close

schools with a phase-out process or other soft process. SAF Chairs: ask questions about how plans for redefining with mitigate potential displaced students loss of learning. Ask questions and say no to school closures.

M. North Region Updates - None.

N. Old Business/Past Initiatives - None.

O. Upcoming Dates/Important Reminders - Next District advisory meeting will be on October 8 at 6:15 pm - The next North Area General Meeting will be on October 16 at 6:15 pm - SAF Training will be on September 29

P. Adjourn - <mark>Motion to Adjourn - moved by Nicole Morst, second by Michael Pezzicola - Motion PASSED with none opposed.</mark>

DISTRICT ADVISORY GENERAL MEETING AT KCW	OCTOBER 8TH AT 6:15 PM- 8:45 PM
NORTH AREA GENERAL MEETING MONARCH HIGH	October 16th at 6:15- 8:45 pm

Important Links
- **North Area Budget Training Presentation:**
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1FPte4xxTtaIwQEoBLxIEC8iTaOs2rUT6/view?usp=sharing
- **Title 1 Funding Presentation:**
  https://drive.google.com/file/d/1nCUCaCTFasoGMdL6aqBvHrLLFafNRyQg/view?usp=sharing
- **School Board Meetings, Agenda Packets, and Recorded Videos:**
  https://www.browardschools.com/Domain/12453
- **Student Performance Data:**
  https://legistarweb-production.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/attachment/pdf/3154422/Presentation.pdf
- **School Improvement Department and Plans:** https://www.browardschools.com/page/35378
- **School Accountability and Improvement Policy:**
  https://schoolinfo.browardschools.com/bcpsweb/displaypdf.html?filename=Policy_1403
- **School Accountability and Improvement Guidelines:**
  https://schoolinfo.browardschools.com/bcpsweb/displaypdf.html?filename=Policy_1403
- **School Advisory Forum Policy:**
  https://schoolinfo.browardschools.com/bcpsweb/displaypdf.html?filename=Policy_1.3.pdf

Respectfully submitted,

Nicole Kearney
Recording Secretary
North Area Advisory Council