

## PLC AT MDCPS PTA

### MINUTES OF JANUARY 31, 2013 MEETING

Handouts: Proposed Bylaws Changes

Call to Order: The meeting of the PLC at MDCPS PTA was held in the cafeteria of the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Primary Learning Center. President Sandra Seals called the meeting to order at 4:37 pm.

Quorum: A quorum of ten (10) was established. See attached sign in sheet.

Welcome and Introduction: Ms. Seals welcomed all members and attendees and allowed the PTA Officers to introduce themselves: Natacha Janssens, Vice-President; Stacey Zuazo, Vice President; Michelle Hoyos, Treasurer; Karon Coleman, Recording Secretary; and Alice Mensch Raval, Communications Secretary. Ms. Seals announced the PTA's paperless policy -- that agendas and minutes appear on the website. However, she advised that if a member didn't have access to a computer, to please let one of the PTA officers know and paper copies would be made available.

Minutes: The minutes of the October 23, 2012 meeting were presented for approval by Karon Coleman, Recording Secretary.

**MOTION:** The minutes were moved, seconded and passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report: Michelle Hoyos, Treasurer, gave the Treasurer's Report. There is \$15,964.94 in the PTA's bank account, with several outstanding obligations such as wages to the Enhancement Care teachers and a few Think of Out of the Box grants. Ms. Hoyos indicated that approximately \$4,500 is available to make another contribution to the Primary Learning Center and will be discussed at a future meeting. Ms. Hoyos also indicated that there would be a full financial accounting at the annual meeting in April 2013.

PTA Grant Award to PLC Teachers. Ms. Seals was pleased to give an update on the grant awards. She indicated the teachers had made many different choices with their \$300 grants – field trip to the Little Farm; materials so that students could publish their own books; Accelerated Reader books; Time Magazine subscription. And that the \$400 award to the school as a whole had been used for Spanish Accelerated Readers.

After Care Enhancement Update. Natacha Janssens, Vice President, announced that there would be a Karate ceremony next week for the students taking karate. Also, the Spring Session would be starting soon and there would be some changes, such as combining some classes. She said to look carefully at the schedule and materials.

Bylaws Committee Update. Karon Coleman, Chair of Bylaws Committee. She announced that the Bylaws Committee met and developed several recommendations. There were copies of the proposed changes available for members to take home and review; and that the proposed changes would be posted on the website and on the bulletin board. The timeframe would be to discuss the proposed changes at the February 20, 2013 meeting and vote on the changes at the March 13, 2013 meeting. Ms. Coleman also introduced Marlon Moffett, member of the Bylaws Committee.

Miami-Dade County Council of PTA/PTSAs. Aileen Fan is the PLC PTA representative at the Council. She attended the Council's January 24, 2013 meeting and gave the membership this report. It was the annual Reflections awards ceremony. There were 43 winners and 18 honor roll mentions. She suggested that the PLC PTA look into it for next year, when the theme will be "Believe and Dream."

Ms. Fan reported that there was a presentation on the Miami-Dade County Public Schools Police Department's Truancy Prevention Campaign, designed to keep students in school and increase graduation rates. She indicated that the highest level of truancy is in kindergarten.

2012-13 PTA Executive Board. Ms. Seals stated that all officer positions will be available and that at the February 20, 2013 meeting, volunteers will be sought for membership on the Nominating Committee.

Book Fair/Valentine's Day. Ms. Seals announced the upcoming book fair – February 12-15, 2013. The hours would be 1:30 pm—6 pm on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday and 1:30 pm – 6:30 pm on Thursday. The students would be able to attend on Monday. The book fair will accept credit cards. It is hoped this will become an annual event.

Stacey Zuazo, Vice President, shared that the PTA would also sell carnations on the porch on Valentine's Day in the morning and that she was looking for volunteers to assemble flowers and sell flowers. Also, refreshments would be sold.

PLC Update: Mr. Alberto Carvalho, Superintendent and Principal of PLC, apologized for being late as he was on a conference call with United States Secretary of State, Ernie Duncan, discussing safety and security in schools. He believes that the PLC is one of the best schools in the state -- and possibly the country -- because of the teachers, the vision, experimental aspect, and because the "principal is so close to the seat of power of the superintendent" -- he joked -- and as a consequence, is less bureaucratic. He emphasized that the students are the most important component.

Mr. Carvalho stated that he visits with the teachers and individual classrooms, and that he has lot of interaction with the students. He does this because he is invested in the school and also because of its size. He added that he interviews for each teacher position personally. He touched on the following topics:

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*Future Expansion.* For School Year 2013-14: There would be a five classroom expansion toward the west, which will take over the rest of the first floor. There would also be a multi-purpose room for music and other activities. And finally, the receiving area where the trucks deliver and drop off will be converted into a mini-gym. For School Year 2014-15, there would be 3 or 4 more classrooms. And that would most likely be the extent of the expansion. He said he would make the architectural plans available for the next PTA meeting.

*School Name:* It has always been Mr. Carvalho's vision to have one single school from Pre-K through 12<sup>th</sup> grade plus two years of college. Therefore, it is planned to blend the PLC and the iPrep into one school. It would become:

iPrep Lower Academy (Pre-K through grade 5)  
iPrep Upper Academy (grades 6 through 12)

Students of the PLC/iPrep Lower Academy would be guaranteed a spot in the iPrep Upper Academy.

*Exterior Space:* Mr. Carvalho recognized the challenges of pick up and drop off. The street in front of the PLC should be closing in a few months. There has been a lot of progress with the City of Miami, but the neighboring building has posed some challenges. Drop off should be easier once the street is closed and there can be a one way drop off.

*Venting Sessions.* Mr. Carvalho indicated that he had been told that the parents want venting sessions. He said the parents already have EESAC and the PTA. He suggested that if the PLC does not suit a parent's needs, there are other schools. He stressed that he was going to adhere to his vision, although he did then indicate he is interested in hearing from parents.

*Gifted Program.* He said that the PLC accepts students with disabilities and students who are gifted. He stated that the PLC will have a gifted program, and that the PLC will have a respectful environment for all to be embraced.

*Safety and Security.* Mr. Carvalho touched upon the matter of safety and security, indicating that the PLC, iPrep and the building as a whole were being evaluated in terms of the ingress/egress. The new policy would be for all to gain access to the PLC through the main office first; all other access points would be closed off.

He also announced that the PLC would pilot some new security technology that would connect classrooms to the main office and law enforcement through a rapid response silent alert. Also, there would be the addition of closed circuit t.v. cameras.

He also touched upon some early detection training that would be provided to teachers. He felt that the PLC was safer than many schools. He said he was willing to listen to suggestions, recommendations about how to make the school safe and secure.

Mr. Carvahlo then opened the floor for questions from the PTA membership and meeting attendees.

*Expansion of outdoor space?* Yes, working on it.

*What is the iPrep concept and will it be brought to the PLC/lower academy?* No. At the younger ages, the socialization and high academic environment would continue to be utilized at the PLC level. The iPrep methodology will not be used at the PLC level. To understand the iPrep, it is better to see than to explain. It requires a flexible, independent commitment by the student and includes a service learning component. The Teacher-of-the-Year Runner Up teaches at the iPrep. There are 56 slots and 900 students applied. Each student gets an Airbook Laptop.

*Are there programs in place for students with disabilities?* Yes.

*What is the gifted program?* It is an enhancement activity. The teacher is leaving and they are trying to hire someone else. Dr. B is the transitional teacher.

*Are all students tested for gifted?* No. It is performed at the parent's or teacher's recommendation.

*Will there be a new fourth grade teacher other than Mrs. Rosario?* Most likely.

*Will there be any clubs?* Willing to listen to what you would like; Mr. Carvahlo would support anything that enhances the students..

*Will there ever be transportation?* No. This is a commuter school.

*Will language continue at iPrep since iPrep seems to have more of an emphasis on technology?* More popular language at iPrep is Chinese. Would parents be interested in having students learn Chinese (overwhelming response). How about Portuguese? (strong interest).

*Will more traditional activities such as band, drama and sports teams be added?* There is sacrifice at choice schools, and choice schools do not usually offer traditional activities. The policy right now is if a choice school does not offer an activity, a student may participate in that activity at his/her home school such as sports teams or band.

However, music is existentially important to him. Music is an important element and something that can be provided at the PLC. Also, given its proximity to the performing arts center, there are opportunities.

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He emphasized that he believes in demand driven reform, reform that emanates from parent, student or community demand.

*Will there be a traditional library in the expansion plans?* No. There will be multi-purpose spaces where students can access content. This will lend easily to individual literary excursions.

*What about school speed zone signs to warn drivers on N.E. 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue that there is a school?* It is a County road and the School Board has been in conversation with the County to try to accomplish this.

*What about closing off the access between iPrep and PLC so as to separate the teenagers from the smaller children?* Hadn't really thought about it. Something to consider. Would rather change behavior rather than build walls.

Adjournment: Meeting was adjourned at 6:14 pm.

Adopted by the PLC at MDCPS PTA membership on the 31<sup>st</sup> day of January 2013. KMC

Karon M. Coleman  
Karon M. Coleman, Recording Secretary

Approved as Presented: KMC Date: 1/31/13

Approved as Corrected: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_