



VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAINE EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

Minutes for meeting on Thursday, May 8th, 2025 – 9:30am

1. **Attendance:**

In person:

Laura Teran Zapata (Secretary)

Daisy Díaz (board member)

Oneida Mendia (board member)

Pedro Kono (board member)

Oscar Sardiñas – Village Council member and EAB liaison to Village Council

Jessica Drouet - Community Engagement and Communication Officer

Douglas Clark – Supervisor, office of Intergovernmental Affairs, Family and Community

Alejandro Perez – Regent Administrative Director for Miami Dade Public Schools

Mari Tere Rojas: Miami Dade County School Board Chair

Marlene Hernandez, Chief of Staff for Mari Tere Rojas

Others:

Ilse Binkah KB Disability Advisory Board, Marcos Lepre KBK8 parent,
Carolina Pacheco – KB resident, Jackie Kellogg – Vice President Miami-Dade County Council PTA and Chair of Gables High /KB resident

2. Voted to unanimously approve minutes for April 2025 without edits or comments from board members.

3. **Comments:**

- **Public:** Jacky Kellogg: wanted to come remind the EAB that Coral Gables is still the feeder program for KBK8 and wants the EAB to inform the Village Council that there is legislation being passed in Tallahassee that may change the standards of AP. IV, Cambridge programs, etc. in the public school system and recommends an education officer for Key Biscayne that may track these bills and advocate to subsidize public education in KB. Large amount of



VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAYNE EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

education program is being diverted to the voucher program. In 2010 11K were assigned per students, now it's down to 9K (Massachusetts 22K).

- **Oscar** will explore the possibility of tracking these changes and bills in KB, so we are educated.
- This year with the EAB back, we have been working closely with the district –Dr. Louis and Lourdes Diaz to open up and have workshops to define what is it that local schools require to increase enrollment in the public-school systems.
- Private schools are experiencing nearly a 100% increase in enrollment, largely attributed to the availability of voucher.
- Identifying and supporting special needs students remains a top priority for the board. We will utilize survey data to identify special needs and develop targeted programming and communication strategies for our local school.
- EAB needs to keep focusing on the two items – 1) identifying special needs programming, and 2) communication: letting people know we have an excellent school here in KB and an excellent feeder program.
- **Propose:** to set up a series of informational sessions to educate residents of feeder system – specially to let them know about Coral Gables High. Many families still think that the only option is MAST, and they are not even aware that Coral Gables is KB feeder school.
- **Mari Tere Rojas:**
 - Came to the meeting to let us know that she has been very actively involved with the MAST Academy issue.
 - Upcoming Miami Dade board meeting will discuss children diagnosed with autism and a proposed new center for them where all services and education would be provided in one location for all ages. (more than one center as Miami-Dade is very large n- North, Center and South)
 - Looking into providing programming in high schools for professions with massive shortage, like air traffic controllers, so kids can get involved and pursue their interest since high school



VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAINE EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

- Super intendant is coming with great recommendations on ways to help those in primary grades, so their foundation is solid by the time they get to third grade.
- MAST Academy update:
 - Waitlist is under 10 students and there is high confidence all will get in
 - Error in the system that cause the problem with acceptances has been rectified
 - KB will receive the 1100 promised seats at MAST
 - KB council is grateful for those parents who let them know of the problem and encourages the public to always contact your officials when they see problems
- Other issues:
 - June 12th – Dr. Louis will run a workshop (same date as next EAB meeting) 9-12pm – designed to bring out ideas on what type of programming our residents and faculty are hoping to see at the school, including special needs as determined by the survey conducted by EAB, sports etc.
 - Updated basketball courts at KBK8 are coming this summer
 - Encourage 3-5th grade parents to learn about the feeder program and maybe offer a symposium letting them know all that the other schools have to offer, and to remind them KBK8 has amazing programming
 - Data shows that students can and do gain admission to high school programs even if they did not attend the MAST in middle school. (30 students from Key Biscayne were admitted to Mast Academy in 9th grade this year).
 - The allocation of seats at MAST between middle and high school can be adjusted, as to increase possibilities of entering high school directly.
 - Importance of information:
 - Many families only applied to 1 school because they assumed it was a given that their children would be accepted to MAST



VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAINE EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

- Families did not know they had Coral Gables as an option.
- MAST is a magnet school so kids can come from all over the county
- Families can apply to more than one school
- Parents expressed the process is overwhelming and Mari Tere Rojas offered for people to call her office directly so they can be guided through the process – Contact Ms. Hernandez: (305)595-1344
 - EAB needs to help the school get the information out
 - Daisy: PTSA is having breakfast May 13th 8:30 am for the whole school for families to learn what they offer, and to hear what the parent's vision is and what they want to see for their child
 - PTSA will share the information with EAB
 - Daniel Mateo will be at the breakfast
- Overall school enrollment has dropped from about 1,300 students to just under 900, with the most pronounced reduction occurring in the middle school. The decline in enrollment is a concern and is being discussed as a priority for future planning and programming
- Bill 822 passed, and it says that if the school is underperforming, it can be converted into a chartered school
- The suggestion was made to have a centralized counselor or regular information sessions at the community center to help parents understand and access school options.
 - Office hours or a school counselor could provide personalized assistance, helping parents find programs that match their children's interests and needs

4. Survey:

- The recent survey provided valuable data on special needs and community requirements, supporting the board's efforts to tailor programming and support
 - The survey achieved a little over a 5% response rate, which is considered strong for this type of outreach and helps validate the board's assumptions.



VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAINE EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

- 186 responses were received, representing about 5% of the community
- 104 responses indicated the presence of special needs within families
- Results: 42% diagnosis – autism
- 73% zip code: 33149
- The analysis is based on 83 completed responses, with 17 families not answering the special needs section
 - a. Some families may not recognize or report certain conditions (e.g., ADHD, dyslexia) as special needs, contributing to underreporting and data gaps.
 - b. Stigma and confusion between disability and special needs affect survey participation and accuracy.
- Awareness and access to special education programs and funding are limited, with the application process described as complicated and confusing by parents.
- Only 50% of parents with special needs children apply for available programs, and only half of those applicants are approved.
- Some parents do not apply because their children are in public school or because services are unavailable.
- Parent feedback indicates the need for simplification and better guidance through the process
- Further weekly meetings will be planned to finish analyzing the survey

5. To do and conclusions:

- Attend workshop June 12th to discuss and brainstorm on programming ideas with KB residents and the administration at KBK8.
- Review final survey results
- The resolution of the waitlist issue at MAST has strengthen collaboration and communication between the board, the district and the community, and has let to renewed discussions about innovative programming for KBK8



VILLAGE OF KEY BISCAYNE EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

- With just preliminary results from the special needs survey, the School Board has agreed to start a Pre-K ESE Reverse Mainstream program at KBK8 starting Fall 2025

6. Meeting Adjourned 10:48 am