



**Nautilus Middle School Tour**

(Superintendent's Visit To Nautilus Middle School)  
4301 North Michigan Avenue  
Miami Beach, FL

April 1, 2014

Attending from the City of Miami Beach:

Mayor Philip Levine  
Commissioner Michael Grieco  
Commissioner Joy Malakoff  
Commissioner Micky Steinberg  
Commissioner Ed Tobin  
Lauren Carra – Aide to Commissioner Deede Weithorn  
Brett Cummins – Aide to Commissioner Jonah Wolfson

City Manager Jimmy L. Morales  
Assistant City Manager Kathie G. Brooks  
City Clerk Rafael E. Granado  
Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld, Chief Learning and Development Officer

Also in attendance were:

Members of the City of Miami Beach Committee for Quality Education, including Chair Jill Swartz  
Members of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, including its President and CEO Jerry Libbin  
Parent Teacher Student Association (PTSA) members  
Other Community Stakeholders

**NAUTILUS MIDDLE SCHOOL TOUR MINUTES**

Meeting commenced at 10:07 a.m.

**I. Welcome**

- a. **Principal's Remarks** - Principal Bellmas welcomed everyone to Nautilus Middle School, and introduced the dignitaries present. As the principal of Nautilus Middle School, Mr. Bellmas strives for academic excellence. He places a great emphasis on raising student achievement by empowering them with the necessary tools to be successful in all curricular areas. The school's mission is to provide students with a safe, academically challenging and culturally diverse environment that fosters the development of strong character and intellect.

b. **Board Member's Remarks** - Dr. Martin Karp, District 3, member of the School Board of Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) spoke on the recent student achievements in Miami-Dade, including:

- Broad Prize Winner: M-DCPS was named the winner of The Broad Prize for Urban Education, an annual award that honors urban school districts across the country that are making the greatest progress in raising student achievement. This is the fifth time that M-DCPS had been recognized as a finalist.
- Leader in AP: M-DCPS leads the country in Advanced Placement (AP) exam scores among Hispanic students. The school district ranks first in the nation in three categories including, the number of Hispanic AP exam scores of three or above, as well as the total number of AP exams taken by Hispanic students. Miami-Dade is also seventh in the country in African American/Black AP exam scores of three or above.
- M-DCPS Chief Alberto M. Carvalho named Superintendent of the Year: The School Superintendents Association named Carvalho as the 2014 National Superintendent of the Year.

Dr. Karp introduced Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho.

c. **Superintendent's Remarks**

Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho welcomed the Mayor and Commissioners, the City Manager, the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce, the PTSA and the Committee for Quality Education. Superintendent Carvalho stated that the Miami Beach Education Compact, which is looked at as a national model in education, has created a unique partnership between the City and the Miami-Dade County School Board in order to achieve quality education, including the development of a Citywide International Baccalaureate Program.

Superintendent Carvalho stated that he takes pride in:

- Being the highest performing school district in America. (See above, Broad Prize Winner.)
- Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho announced that M-DCPS has surpassed the State in the percentage of senior high schools earning a school performance grade of "A." Among the District's accomplishments:
  - Sixty percent (60%) of M-DCPS' senior high schools (34 schools) received an "A." Florida averaged 48 percent.
  - M-DCPS outperformed the state in the percent of "A" and "B" senior high schools.
  - 86 percent of M-DCPS' senior high schools (49 schools) received either an "A" or "B."

- Ninety-five percent (95%) of M-DCPS' high schools received a school performance grade of "C" or better.
- For the third consecutive school year, M-DCPS has no "F" senior high schools.
- For the second year in a row, M-DCPS' graduation rate is above that of Broward County, and for the first year M-DCPS' graduation rate is above the State and National levels. Superintendent Carvalho stated that graduation rate is the most important student outcome measure for senior high schools.

Superintendent Carvalho expressed that M-DCPS will achieve "digital equity" in the district, irrespective of zip code, by August 2014. This is years ahead of President Obama's directive. The District is investing in new computers and mobile digital devices for student use. As part of the District's Digital Conversion endeavor, students will be able to access the web and educational content anywhere they carry their digital devices, and schools will be transformed into "virtual" neighborhood hubs with the capacity to provide free internet access, particularly in underserved communities.

## II. Classroom Visits

The following classrooms were visited:

- Mr. Peter Hickey – U.S. History
- Mr. Cotabarren – Spanish
- Mr. Fernandez – World History
- iPrep Math<sup>1</sup>
- Ms. Foote – Science

## III. Presentations, Dialogue And Closing Remarks

### A. Presentations

- Mr. Jaime G. Torrens, Chief Facilities Officer, Office of School Facilities spoke.

Mr. Torrens provided a profile of Nautilus Middle School.

- Built in 1995
- Approximately 170,000 square feet of total area

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<sup>1</sup> Clerks Note: Students in grades 6 through 8 who are interested in participating in iPrep Math will be enrolled in the iPrep Math learning center during their mathematics class. This voluntary program allows children to participate in a 21<sup>st</sup> Century learning environment where mathematics instruction will be delivered in a personalized and technological setting. iPrep Math student are offered a variety of educational experiences such as access to online, research-based, mathematics content that is aligned to the State standards. iPrep Math students drive their own learning, engage in critical thinking skills and participate in project-based activities. \$309,000 has been spent at Nautilus Middle School on equipment and classroom upgrades related to the iPrep math program.

- Capacity for approximately 1,050 students
- Currently operating at 98% of capacity with 1,025 students as of 2013

Mr. Torrens provided an update of General Obligation Bond (GOB) Projects at Nautilus Middle School.

- In addition to technology enhancements, the GOB Program allocates approximately \$530,000 for facility improvements at Nautilus. Architectural designs are anticipated to start in the second quarter of this year, with construction anticipated in late fall. The improvements, which are funded in FY13-14 include:
  - Exterior Painting
  - Replacement of skylight assembly in administrative area
  - Flooring replacement in the auditorium, lobby and administrative areas
  - Ceiling and lighting improvements
- Dr. Sylvia J. Diaz, Assistant Superintendent, Innovation and School Choice, Office of Academics and Transformation, spoke.

Dr. Diaz provided a technology update District-wide and at Nautilus Middle.

- February 2014 – District-wide Wireless capability was completed in all schools
- March 2014 – Nautilus Middle School – Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) infrastructure changes at Nautilus will be completed
- The cost for technology upgrades to Nautilus Middle School is \$206,000

Dr. Diaz provided an update of GOB Technology Projects.

I. Promethean ActivBoards:

- February 2014 – 10,000 Promethean ActivBoards were ordered District-wide
- August 2014 – Installation will be completed District-wide
- Forty-eight (48) classrooms at Nautilus Middle School will be equipped with Promethean ActivBoards at a cost of \$104,000

Dr. Diaz provided an update on Non-GOB Technology Projects (Bank of America Loan)

I. Mobile Device Initiative:

- March 2014 – 15,000 HP Elite Pad tablets ordered District-wide
- April/May 2014 – Tablets arrive in schools and Civics and History teachers receive training District-wide
- Nautilus Middle School will receive \$58,000 of tablets and carts

**B. Dialogue and Closing Remarks**

Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Jerry Libbin inquired if the ceiling lights improvements included changing the current light bulbs to LED and

replacing windows to hurricane impact glass. Mr. Jaime G. Torrens, Chief Facilities Officer, Office of School Facilities, responded that the windows would be changed to hurricane impact glass, and light bulbs would be changed to LED as major renovation took place. Mr. Torrens explained that LED technology is still very expensive.

Mr. Libbin also commented that the improvements, successes and achievements at Nautilus Middle School are not being publicized. The community must be made aware of the accomplishments at Nautilus Middle School. There is a lack of publicity and public relations.

Mr. Libbin asked Principal Bellmas what he needs to improve the school (his wish list). Principal Bellmas stated that he needs to replace some of the obsolete technology, including getting replacements for outdated computers and laptops. Outside of technology, furniture is needed for the computer lab.

Discussion continued.

Members of the Nautilus Middle School PTSA commented that the school has an undeserved negative reputation.

Mr. Michael Goldberg of the Miami Beach Chamber of Commerce offered to provide free space in their newspaper to publicize Nautilus' successes. **Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld to handle.**

Jill Swartz, Miami Beach Committee for Quality Education in Miami Beach member spoke. Ms. Swartz explained that there is a problem attracting substitute teacher to Nautilus Middle School. As a result, when teachers call out, students are taken to other classrooms not in the same subject matter. These students are usually taken to a physical education class, to pass the time, and no learning takes place. This leads to an overcrowding condition, which in turn leads to safety issues. As the school is in two hour blocks (block schedule), this results in the equivalent of two days not learning a particular subject. Principal Bellmas responded that they are working on this, but that the attendance of teachers at the school is improving, and that when students are forced to combine classes due to the lack of a substitute teacher they are sent to other teachers teaching the same subject, so the time is well spent. Superintendent Alberto M. Carvalho thanked Ms. Swartz for bringing this matter to his attention, and he will work to correct it.

Commissioner Ed Tobin stated that our new Mayor's places a great deal of emphasis on providing excellent customer service. If the students and parents are the customers of Nautilus Middle School, Commissioner Tobin inquired of Principal Bellmas what he is doing to focus on the customers. Principal Bellmas stated that he has an open door policy, and is always available to parents. Most of what he hears from parents focuses on improvement to technology and seeing more professional development. Parents are also focused on the difficulty the school has in attracting substitute teachers. Commissioner Tobin stated that they must also listen to the concerns of the kids.

PTSA representatives stated that a grievance box has been placed in the Student Uniform Store, so students can voice their concerns.

Discussion continued as to how to involve more parents and children.

Superintendent Carvalho, in response to Commissioner Tobin, stated that his administration does listen. However, the vast amount of criticism received of the school system is made by those individuals who do not have a stake. One hundred years ago, the ratio of public school to private school attendance in the United States was 90% to 10% respectively. The same ratio exists today. Superintendent Carvalho explained his belief in “personal choice.” Six (6) out of ten (10) students today attend non-traditional schools, such as charter and magnet schools. Parents prefer any curriculum that is international – such as those that focus on foreign languages. Miami-Dade County Public Schools aspire to engage and prepare all our students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) to ensure our community has the next generation of inventors, explorers, innovators and leaders. His administration is responsive, and believes on demand driven reform. Further, the School District listens to what the Cities want. For instance, in Miami Beach it was the IB program. Further, every parent and teacher in Miami Beach, at the end of the school year, is surveyed to see how the School District can improve.

Superintendent Carvalho stated that Nautilus Middle School is a good school, but his administration will not miss an opportunity to improve it.

City Manager Jimmy L. Morales inquired about the residency rates. In response, Principal Bellmas stated that 90% of students at Nautilus Middle School reside within in the school’s area. The remaining 10% are transfer students.

Discussion continued regarding safety concerns when children leave the school to visit the nearby Burger King. Principal Bellmas explained the actions the school has undertaken to prevent such off campus visits.

Tour/Visit concluded at 11:45 a.m.

Handouts/Reference Material:

Agenda

Letter from Superintendent of Schools Alberto M. Carvalho

Nautilus Middle School Brochure

Statistical Highlights 2012-13

Copy of PowerPoint Presentation

Copy of “Shark Bites” – the Nautilus Middle School newsletter

Miscellaneous brochures on mentoring

LTC – 085-2014

See also LTC-102-2014 - Nautilus Middle School Focus Group Report