



**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
KATHLEEN C. WRIGHT
ADMINISTRATIVE BLDG.
600 SE 3RD AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301
THURSDAY, JUNE 20, 2019–6:30 PM-8:30 PM**

Members	July 2018 – May 2019		
	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	A	10	1
Robert Audet	A	7	6
Linda Barnett	A	6	6
Maureen S. Dinnen	A	6	7
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	11	1
April Jeff (arrived at 6:48 p.m.)	P	5	3
Terry Large	P	9	4
Jennifer Lovell (arrived at 7:11)	P	11	2
Vickie Melus	A	3	3
Dr. Heather Munns	A	6	6
Sarah Owen DelNegri	A	6	6
Lincoln Pasteur	P	9	3
Christopher Relyea	P	10	3
Betty Shelley	P	6	6
Rory Sponsler	P	3	0
Dr. Michele Verdi Knapp	P	11	1
Yolanda B. Francis	P	2	0
Lillian Small	A	1	12

Staff/Guests

Junia Robinson, Staff Liaison
 Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer
 Chris Lagerbloom, City Manager
 Arica Johnson, Structural Innovation Manager
 Ingrid Kindbom, Assistant Structural Innovation Manager
 Michael Kam, Analyst, City staff
 Pablo Calvin, Director with the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County
 Tatiana Guerrier, Prototype, Inc.

I. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance – Dr. Allan Zeman, Chair

This meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m.

II. Attendance and Roll Call, 18 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum

As of this date, June 20, 2019, 10 of the 18 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

III. Current Business

- **Action on recommendations made during City Commission Joint Workshop on Education**

City Manager Lagerbloom thought the Joint Workshop was very productive. It was a one of a kind first for the Education Advisory Board to meet with the Commission, which shows this Commission's dedication to further education in Fort Lauderdale. His experience highlights some of the Commissioners' worries, which is Fort Lauderdale is a great destination and we can recruit businesses all day, but families want a good school. Sometimes it is easier to move things forward quickly in a smaller environment, so he encouraged everyone to stay focused even though things may not move as fast as the Board would like.

Ms. Shelley commented that the Board always wanted Ms. Saunders' position and a meeting with the Commission. This is a great beginning and the interest is there.

Vice Chair Ellowitz indicated that Chair Dr. Zeman wanted the Board to review the draft Communication to the Commission and the three recommendations picked from the original ten. In listening to the presentation of the Neighbor Survey, it is already known that everyone's frustration is the quality of education or lack of in the City, which is not allowing enough legitimacy in getting businesses to come here.

Mr. Relyea mentioned that it is the perception; the quality is better than the perception.

Vice Chair Ellowitz has learned that schools rated the lowest have the greatest gains when measuring one-year growth. She distributed copies for review.

The Board is firm on the following three policies:

- Early Learning Centers.
- County Parks and City Parks combined with the schools to improve school playgrounds, but also to allow communities to participate and enjoy the amenities.
- Establish education standards about one-year learning gains.

Mr. Relyea referenced the third item, one-year learning gains, and stated that the data has already been drilled down by the State; 95% of the work is already present and verifiable.

Ms. Saunders indicated that understanding the school grade is important, but metrics also need to be understood. One point of clarification Chair Dr. Zeman had about a specific learning gain metric was that it is different by State, so there could be the perception that this measure looks like expectations are being lowered for students. It is very similar to how the State used to do learning gains before 2015 and they switched because even though students were getting learning gains, they never reached proficiency. She thought it would be important to explore those metrics because as a staff member the metric may not be ready to go live. The Board might want more opportunities to work with Principals to understand what this would look like to them. From a staff perspective, she wanted full transparency to give some of her reservations on this metric, but full support for the concept of focusing on growth of every student and recognizing that in a very comprehensive way, keeping in mind that the test would likely change along with the standards.

Mr. Sponsler mentioned perception and metrics. He follows real estate and noted that Realtor.com and Zillow, which are self-serve platforms for people to do a home search, use a system called Great Schools. Fort Lauderdale High School, by State of Florida standards, is an "A" school, but under Great Schools, it is a "C". There are outside forces grading and measuring schools that the City may not have control over, but it is out there in the public. Again, we may try to find out what their metrics are, so they can be used to help improve the quality of schools in our community.

Vice Chair Ellowitz stated that the Board is asking to get information to the Commission in order to be acknowledged for one year of learning gains and the metrics are to be determined.

Ms. Saunders suggested involving Principals because it might be helpful, depending on the grade configuration for the school.

Dr. Knapp advised that Principals want to be acknowledged and recognized for the fact that they have kids coming in, especially elementary schools, that are way behind.

Ms. Lovell indicated that she conducted interviews and found that teachers felt like they were already so far behind that they could not get ahead because of the system. He noted that while at Fort Lauderdale High School, staff was very concerned about how this gets implemented, so it would not backfire.

Mr. Sponsler advised that the Board is recommending the City put significant funds towards improving learning gains. He questioned if this Board was supposed to outline what actions would take place with the use of that money and the results of the learning gains based on the use of the money they are asking the Commission to consider using for that purpose.

Vice Chair Ellowitz stated that going forward this would be discussed more with Principals and others.

Dr. Knapp questioned if #1 and #3 were tied together, because if the City establishes the Early Learning Center and there is success around that, the learning gain gap would close.

Mr. Relyea thought proper implementation of #1 would affect #3, but #3 is more of a proper fixing of the perception problem. He did not think the Board was asking the City to implement some sort of education standard, they were asking the City to publish the results already happening, so they accurately reflect what is going on, which helps fix the perception problem. He advised that corporations and perspective home buyers need to be educated.

Dr. Knapp thought the wording for #3 needed to be more reflective of that because it says the City is going to improve the percent of students who achieve at least one year of learning gains.

Mr. Relyea believed they could say, "Through things like Item #1".

Vice Chair Ellowitz understood that #3 was about educating. There was a lot of discussion about working with real estate agents and brokers and informing them about the actual gains that have been seen in schools and not relying on grades seen on websites. The Board is asking the Commission to back them up in educating the public.

Mr. Relyea commented that would also address the steering issue, which is for all schools in the City, so it would influence realtors to go one way instead of another way. If it is made a City policy that every school in the City is going to get the drill down metric, then there is no steering issue.

Ms. Saunders spoke to the Chief Academic Officer regarding metrics against proficiency and growth. They would start to see a bigger dynamic of performance in those schools and there would be high proficiency in hybrid schools as well. That might accomplish a well-rounded view of incoming student population and the amount of progress students are making throughout the academic year.

Mr. Large questioned if there was an education page on the City of Fort Lauderdale website.

Ms. Saunders advised they are working on it.

Mr. Relyea commented that someone who might be considering moving to the City would go to that page and see that tab, which would be the source; we could educate them before people get information from other places.

Ms. Shelley mentioned that many people have an idea of Broward County Schools and Fort Lauderdale never played much of a part in the fact of recognizing the schools.

Mr. Pasteur mentioned that the City Manager looked at grades when he came here and questioned if he had seen learning gains and "A" or "B" schools if he would have considered sending his children to one of those schools.

City Manager Lagerbloom replied yes. He is a believer in public schools, but upon deciding to move down here, he was told that he should start with the private school route, so perhaps he was guided incorrectly. He does not know the difference between a real score and an MLS score.

Ms. Saunders mentioned magnet programs and innovative programs and noted that there are exceptional programs available in our schools, which would be helpful in showing the diversity of learning opportunities.

Ms. Lovell indicated that was a huge discussion as well as looking at other Cities and what they have in place. Other Cities have pamphlets to give people and the City of Sunrise has done a great job. Whatever the Board could do to help get this education linked on the website would be very beneficial.

Mr. Relyea questioned if people who rate their satisfactions identify as the source of information they refer to before making a judgment. He thought that driving perception would be an efficient way to use the Board's efforts.

Ms. Johnson stated that they could provide that information.

- **Plan for return to City Commission in 3-6 months**

Vice Chair Ellowitz advised this was the follow up after the Commission session to request another meeting in three to six months with this draft. It sounds like clarification is needed on #3 in terms of how it is written. She questioned if the best way would be to resend this to Ms. Saunders and have the Board provide input as to how to word #3.

Mr. Relyea suggested putting a timeline on this and moved to send the amended communication by a specific time as long as the amendments were approved. He would make a motion that the Board act on this and send it to the Commission as quickly as possible.

City Manager Lagerbloom indicated that the Board must be close to what they want to say because in voting as a group, you do not want to give someone the authority to make a lot of modifications that would change the message. After the vote, the communication would go to the City Clerk, who would put it on the next noticed Commission meeting. During the conference meeting, which is at 1:30 p.m., the first thing the Commission does is talk about Communications from the Committees. The meeting would be on July 9, 2019 and to make that meeting there needs to be a vote tonight. City Manager Lagerbloom advised that if the Board does not make the July 9, 2019 meeting, the next meeting would be August 20, 2019, because the Commission only meets once a month for the next two consecutive months due to summer break. Something could be worked into the motion that would give some latitude, so the Board could move to approve a Communication like this or the form attached or written would give a little legal room to change a word here and there.

Ms. Saunders stated that other opportunities are coming. The Board would be working with Principals over the summer to engage and understand this approach and to gain feedback. It is an opportunity to give different schools a little ownership over the final direction.

Mr. Pasteur suggested voting on the first two and postponing the third.

Vice Chair Ellowitz was hesitant to submit something not in its entirety.

Mr. Large suggested ways the City agrees they are going to work with Principals and the way the Advisory Board would set guidelines to improve education for Fort Lauderdale students.

Vice Chair Ellowitz mentioned something to the effect of establishing concise definitions of what growth is defined as.

Mr. Sponsler added, "And working with the Principals and parents".

Ms. Saunders believed the focus was on the importance of learning gains even though everyone did not have to come to the metric itself. The intent was to recognize that progress, so a percentage of the students achieve learning gains.

Mr. Relyea thought the Board should not get stuck on too many details just to show that a priority has been identified. Workshops do not have to be determined at this meeting. The Board needs to get it on record that these are the top three priorities and move now.

City Manager Lagerbloom suggested:

- Support the City establishing education standards.
- Support efforts to improve the percent of students who achieve at least a one-year learning gain.

Vice Chair Ellowitz commented that there was previous discussion about awards, which was something the Board had in mind to acknowledge the gains. The other thing discussed was if a motion could be made on the Communication tonight, so it could be presented at the July 9, 2019 Commission meeting with as many Board members present as possible.

Motion by Ms. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Large, to correct Section #3 to say that the Board supports the City establishing education standards by:

- All schools in the City achieve State grades of "A" or "B".
- Support efforts to improve the percent of students who achieve at least a one-year learning gain.

In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. (10-0)

Vice Chair Ellowitz questioned if there should be a motion introducing anyone or requesting or recommending that all Board members attend the July 9, 2019 meeting.

Ms. Lovell did not think a motion was needed.

Mr. Large requested that the date and time be emailed to the Board members.

Ms. Saunders advised that the time would be 1:30 p.m. and she would send out the details.

- **Approve minutes from June 20, 2019 meeting**

The following corrections were made:

- Page 10, first paragraph, should read, "There is a Social and Emotional Learning and Education requirement that must be delivered to students starting in 2019-2020, but there is no such provision for the adults who

- work on the campus**, so, maybe the Board could work at building the self-esteem of people in those places, which would rub off onto the students”.
- Page 2, second paragraph, should read, “Mr. Sponsler introduced himself. He teaches U.S. History, World History, and Travel and Tourism at Fort Lauderdale High School. He also **worked** in music therapy for students who are seriously emotionally disturbed”.
 - Page 5, Ms. Dinnen and Dr. Verdi Knapp volunteered should read, “**Ms. Dinnen volunteered**”. (Dr. Verdi Knapp did not volunteer, Vice Chair Ellowitz will confirm if it was Vickie Melus).

Motion made by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Dr. Knapp, to approve the minutes of the May 16, 2019 as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously (10-0).

IV. New Business

- **Neighbor Survey Results**

Arica Johnson, Innovation Manager at the City Manager’s Office in Fort Lauderdale, stated that one of the things they do every year is administer a Neighbor Survey, which has been done since 2012. The past two years, 2017 and 2018, in the fall, a Special Neighbor Survey was administered that focused on traffic, homelessness, and public education. These areas were identified because in the Annual Neighbor Survey these areas continually rise to the top as areas of low satisfaction and high importance for all neighbors. Ms. Johnson advised that Chris Tatham, with ETC, a firm in Kansas, was attending by phone.

Mr. Tatham focused on the results of the Neighbor Survey conducted last fall and only on the public school results. This survey is administered annually, and their goal is to get approximately 150 responses from each of the Cities for elected Districts. This year’s survey had 838 responses and 203 had school age children. The results are fairly accurate and have a margin of error or accuracy of about 3.5% of the 95% level of competence. They feel good about the geographic and demographic representation of the sample. About one-quarter of the people have children in grades K-12 living at home.

Regarding the 2018 City of Fort Lauderdale Special Survey the following information was found:

- 61% of the children were in elementary school, a little over one-third had children in middle school, and another third had children in high school.
- About 80% said their children attended schools in Fort Lauderdale and 22% said their children did not attend schools in Fort Lauderdale.
- About two-thirds of the children were going to public school.

- One-third of the children were going to private schools.
- 5% of the children were in Charter Schools.
- 1% of the children were homeschooling.
- When asked if the children attended their assigned public school, 69% said yes and 27% said no.
- When asked why children were not being sent to public schools 75% said because of the quality of academic curriculum.

With regard to the quality of schools, the following information was found:

- 39% of the elementary schools had excellent or good ratings.
- 31% did below average or poor ratings.
- With high schools and middle schools, 40% or more of the responses were poor ratings.

The survey was also conducted in 2017 and the overall trends were moving in a positive direction. Elementary schools were up from 36% to 39%, high schools were up from 20% to 24%, and middle schools were up from 19% to 23%.

In looking at ratings based on where people live, the quality of elementary schools were in the middle range throughout the City. As far as middle schools, Districts 2 and 3 were a little better than Districts 1 and 4. High school ratings for Districts 2 and 3 rated a little better than Districts 1 and 4.

Respondents wrote about 10 to 13 different characteristics or attributes that were provided in each school.

Priorities on each level were mentioned. Top priorities for elementary schools were high quality teachers, making sure children were safe from bullying, good teacher to student ratio, and making sure there is high quality active curriculum choices. When looking at middle schools, they made sure children were safe from bullying, having high quality teachers, and academic curriculum. As far as high school, they made sure children were safe from bullying and having high quality teachers.

People were asked about their thoughts regarding Charter Schools and survey results showed that one-third of the people did not have a real opinion, one-third said there should be Charter Schools, and one-third said there should not be Charter Schools.

In summary:

- The overall rating for public schools increased from 2017 to 2018.
- The top two issues were bullying and the quality of teachers.

- There were questions about developing Charter Schools.

Mr. Sponsler questioned if this survey took into account the customer service surveys provided by the District to the parents and students.

Mr. Tatham advised that this is a separate sample. They could look at these respondents who have their children in public schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale, but these results are from all respondents, some of which do not have children in Fort Lauderdale public schools. Usually, parents who have children in the schools are more satisfied.

Mr. Pasteur questioned if Mr. Tatham has found that the first two major concerns of parents are bullying, and quality of teachers is pretty much the same all over the country.

Mr. Tatham stated that is not unusual. The quality of teachers is usually at the top and the bullying is usually in the top three. He is doing a survey of a private school in Dallas and their top two issues were the same; however, concerns of having high quality teachers was much higher.

Mr. Relyea commented that while he was encouraged by the 2018 numbers relative to the 2017 numbers, the math shows that the alleged increase is pretty much the margin of error at the same time.

Mr. Tatham stated that there was a margin of error. The margin of error gets tighter toward the end of the spectrum, so it is reported as a plus or minus 3% or 4% level because every answer on the survey has a slightly different margin of error.

Mr. Relyea questioned how the general 40% dissatisfaction rate of all three levels of schools compared with similar Cities across the nation.

Mr. Tatham stated that across the board; 90% of the residents are satisfied with the schools and 5% are not.

Ms. Saunders questioned if it would be possible to share those results with this Board, so they could benchmark around other Cities.

Mr. Tatham advised that they do a direction finder, which is the annual labor survey for about 20 Florida communities. They do not have the detailed results, but they have a larger question of the overall ratings of public schools. Perhaps he could at least give the average of the other communities if he is unable to get the information by community.

Ms. Johnson introduced Ingrid Kindbom, Assistant Structural Innovation Manager, and Michael Kam, Analyst.

Mr. Sponsler requested a copy of the Neighbor Survey.

Ms. Robinson advised that she could send a link to the Neighbor Survey on the City website.

- **High level EAB Objectives for 2019-2020**

Not discussed.

- **School Ambassadors assignment process and roles & responsibilities**

Mr. Sponsler questioned who was assigned to what schools.

Vice Chair Ellowitz stated there are 28 schools and 19 Board members. Ambassadors would be the go-to person for Principals and find out what concerns they have and report back to the Board on their behalf.

Mr. Relyea commented that some people would have different availability if not willingness and then there are those who are in schools.

Ms. Saunders advised that there has been a lot of focus on how to include public perception in schools. A group of volunteers could be mobilized across the City to engage in educating the community on what the school is offering and to request informed input as to how the school could offer different programming or other electives that would make that school more compelling. That would be a way to help change public perception and get input on how to elevate the thought of schools and meet demands for parents who may be choosing to send their children to other places. People who may not be able to volunteer during the day might be able to volunteer in the evenings to host an education community forum. She would welcome support and volunteers.

Mr. Relyea suggested capitalizing in infrastructure that is already established, such as the Neighborhood Association meetings, rather than creating an event that does not already exist. Neighborhood Association meetings consist of involved community members by definition and the meeting, time and location are already there. Perhaps Ambassadors could identify communities rather than individual schools because one community might have an elementary school and a middle school.

Mr. Sponsler indicated that neighbors are asking if they can get their children into Fort Lauderdale schools.

Ms. Saunders suggested asking the neighbors what they like about Fort Lauderdale schools.

Vice Chair Ellowitz mentioned another way that was discussed aside from the Board becoming advocates for schools as Board members was having monthly Board meetings on different school properties. The reason would be to get the faculty and Administration involved, as well as the Associations involved in the community and parents, neighbors, and churches to make a presence, so there is an open forum for people to discuss their concerns.

Ms. Shelley commented that the Board used to do that, and it was a way to meet the Principals and figure out their needs, but that changed once meetings had to be recorded.

Mr. Sponsler suggested considering people who sent their children to a school or attended themselves at one time to become a voice for the City's perceptions. He has done a lot of school marketing in a previous school and even took the marching band to a celebration, which lifted moral of the kids going to the school as well as the parents who could not afford to send their kids to a private school. If the Board could reach out more to the community, he would volunteer to start a marketing campaign.

Ms. Shelley commented that a lot of influential people went to Northeast High School, but there were facility problems for many years.

Vice Chair Ellowitz questioned how meetings could be recorded offsite.

Ms. Saunders indicated that there are recording devices that could be used; however, the City Clerk's office does not encourage it. She can check with the City Clerk's office to see how to put the audio back onto the City website.

Mr. Relyea questioned if discussion was needed as to how often that would happen, where, and how it would be decided.

Vice Chair Ellowitz stated that a motion could be made to determine those details, but the idea was to have a meeting every month at a different location.

Ms. Robinson advised that the Board should reach out to the schools in advance to make sure they have staff, especially if it is an elementary school as opposed to high schools that have activities later in the evenings. A notice must be done in advance because the meeting would be at another location.

Vice Chair Ellowitz questioned if it would be good to have a motion to form a Committee to navigate 12 schools or even 12 or 6 locations if meetings were done every other month.

Mr. Large suggested sending out letters to different schools letting them know that the Board is willing to meet at their school and if they are interested to let us know.

Mr. Sponsler commented that the schools could advertise for the Board through robot-calls.

Mr. Relyea liked the idea of asking instead of forcing a meeting on them. He questioned if anyone was willing to put together a draft letter that might go out to all the Principals.

Vice Chair Ellowitz stated that she would draft a letter before the next meeting.

Ms. Shelley thought another idea would be to invite the Principals and some of the teachers to come here for the meetings.

Motion by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Ms. Shelley, to have Vice Chair Ellowitz draft a letter that would go to all the Principals to see if they would be interested in hosting; the draft would be reviewed at the July meeting; and then the letter would go out to Principals, so it would be on their desk at the beginning of the academic year. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. (10-0)

Ms. Lovell indicated that she heard repeatedly during interviews that Principals felt like the City of Fort Lauderdale did not care about them. Perhaps Board members could volunteer to be a main contact person for schools and Ms. Saunders could get a list and an email could be sent out.

Vice Chair Ellowitz commented that another idea would be to send a letter listing the liaison for a school assigned.

Ms. Lovell thought the best way would be to contact the school and reach out to them; she did not think a letter was necessary.

Board members volunteered to represent the following schools:

Dr. Knapp - Northside and Bennett.

Mr. Sponsler - Fort Lauderdale High and Sunrise.

Ms. Francis - North Fork.

Ms. Lovell - Harbordale Elementary.

Ms. Jeff - Dillard Elementary and Dillard High School.

Vice Chair Ellowitz - Walker Elementary.

COMMENTS

Mr. Sponsler indicated that he made an email request for the Advisory Board to consider the wage gap for the City of Fort Lauderdale teachers; they rank in the bottom sixth percentile in the country and yet this is one of the most expensive places to live. Walker Elementary made such a great shift and now it is gone; this must be addressed. He is going to ask Chair Dr. Zeman if this can be discussed at the next meeting. Perhaps the City Commission could take action because the pay scale is diminishing the quality of educators. When he was hired in 2001, there were 1,500 students and 125 teachers and now there are 2,200 students and 100 teachers. The faculty turnover in his school is over 15% a year.

Pablo Calvo, with the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County, explained that they handle all the State and Federal dollars for school readiness and Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten for the entire County. They contract with every Center, school, small home-based child care, and Montessori academies. According to House Bill 1081, every school receiving State funding must have evaluations; this is separate and is being done as a class assessment where a trained educator who has the credentials and background on how to administrate this examination is sent and they look at student teacher interaction. They have all the results and there was contact with over 650 child care and education centers. They hope to present something to this Board in person and in writing within the next two months. They want to make sure that all residents in every area have access to the best quality of early education.

V. Closing

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

[Minutes transcribed by C. Guifarro, Prototype, Inc.]