



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
BENNETT ELEMENTARY
1755 NE 14th STREET
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33304
THURSDAY, September 19, 2019–6:30-8:30 PM**

July 2019 –

May 2020

Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	A	1	1
Robert Audet	P	2	0
Linda Barnett	A	1	1
Maureen S. Dinnen	P	2	0
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	2	0
April Jeff	A	0	2
Terry Large	P	2	0
Jennifer Lovell	A	1	1
Vickie Melus	A	0	2
Dr. Heather Munns	A	0	2
Sarah Owen DelNegri (arrived at 6:37 p.m.)	P	2	0
Christopher Relyea	P	2	0
Betty Shelley	A	1	1
Rory Sponsler	P	2	0
Dr. Michele Verdi Knapp	P	2	0
Yolanda B. Francis (arrived at 6:39 p.m.)	P	1	1
Lillian Small	P	1	1

Staff/Guests

- Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer
- Tatiana Guerrier, Prototype, Inc.
- Dr. Mark Strauss, Director
- Alex Collazo, Poinsettia Heights
- Pablo Calvo, Community Engagement for the Early Learning Coalition of Broward County
- Colleen Lockwood, Fort Lauderdale Civic Association and Middle River Terrace
- Robert Ayen, Middle River Terrace
- Russell Clement, Strategic Information Management (SIM)
- Richard Baum, Strategic Information Management (SIM)
- Dale Schmidt, Strategic Information Management (SIM)

I. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance – Vice Chair Amy Ellowitz

This meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m.

II. Attendance and Roll Call, 17 appointed members; 9 needed for quorum

As of this date, September 19, 2019, 10 of the 17 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

III. School & Community Engagement

Vice Chair Ellowitz advised that there would be dialogue and conversation after Principal Smith speaks. In her perspective, this is a solution focused collaborative approach to aligning ourselves with one another in a way that supports teachers, men and women who are dedicated to empowering our children to become Fort Lauderdale's finest citizens and be poised to thrive in a global community. As we lead, we must never forget that every one of our students is a child often scared by what the world tells them they should be no matter what the rest of the world tells them they should be. We should always provide them with hope, undivided attention, unwavering belief in potential, and consistent expectations.

- **Bennett Elementary Presentation, Principal Danielle Smith**

Principal Smith provided a brief Power Point presentation and highlighted the following about Bennett Elementary:

- Over 60% of students are in reassignment and the majority are from other parts of Fort Lauderdale.
 - About 50% of neighborhood students attend Bennett Elementary.
 - There are currently about 350 students attending Bennett Elementary, which is over their projected number.
 - Bennett Elementary houses all the Exceptional Student Education for the Pre-K programs at their school. They have eight different classes in Pre-K classrooms with different exceptionalities.
 - Bennett Elementary is currently a "C" school and the goal is to get to a "B".
- **Community Discussion**

Mr. Large questioned what a reassignment school means.

Principal Smith explained that a reassignment school is where there is an opportunity to apply for a reassignment if you do not want your children going to their home school. Broward County focuses on school choice because they do not want to lose children to private schools or homeschooling. Bennett Elementary is not a magnet school, but they are an innovative program school and are in the process of becoming of a Cambridge school that aligns to the Fort Lauderdale zone alignment piece. It was noted that there is a literacy block; Science and Social Studies integrated into Language Arts and Math, which are high quality instruction. Their goal in the literacy and math blocks is to ensure that teachers are enriching and remediating. They also have RTI, which is Response to

Intervention, which keeps children from falling through the cracks. They are working to meet the needs of every child and meet on a weekly or bi-weekly basis with students who have behavior or academic concerns. The other focus is on the lowest quartile for Language Arts, ELA, and English Language Arts for are students who scored a level 1 on last years' assessments.

In response to Mr. Calvo, Principal Smith indicated that there are about 78 ELL students; the percentage can be seen online. There is an increase of ELL students in first grade and Kindergarten this year.

Principal Smith continued with the Power Point presentation as follows:

- There has been a large increase in first and second grade neighborhood students.
- The Debate Program is being implemented into fourth and fifth grade classes, which is being integrated into the literacy block. They are working with teachers from McNab Elementary.
- Bennett Elementary is thankful for the new playground being provided by the City of Fort Lauderdale; the pre-construction meeting is planned for October 7th or 8th. All Board members were invited to the ribbon cutting ceremony.
- Student Council is being implemented. The Media Specialist and Art teacher will have fourth and fifth graders run for different Officers and then there will be a representative from each group come together and work on different things. Their first big project will be the Harvest Drive.
- The mentoring program was mentioned. Not only do they have the Pre-K children, but they also have three classes for the Center for Intellectually Delayed Students. They are each paired with one to two children in general education and they do bi-weekly events with each other.
- They are working on PTA and partnerships. Over 25 parents attended the PTA meeting last night.
- There are over ten volunteers for the Book Fair, which is the week of October 10, 2019.
- Family Night is on October 16, 2019.

Vice Chair Ellowitz explained that many large companies have considered moving into the area to open businesses but pass because of our school system. The public opinion is that the City of Fort Lauderdale is not doing well because we rely on this grading system. From what has been learned in the last year and a half, the grading system is not completely accurate because there are other ways to show growth, which is what is motivating the Board to get out in the community and form partnerships and educate the public about good things that are happening. Board members interviewed all Principals in the City of Fort Lauderdale and asked what their school needs were. The interviews lead to a gap analysis in which ten things were identified to focus on and those ten were narrowed down to three; having more before Preschool Early Learning Centers; opening

school playgrounds to the community after hours; and metrics to measure growth and proficiency. A Comprehensive Plan draft is available on the City of Fort Lauderdale website. Vice Chair Ellowitz questioned what Principal Smith needs from the Education Advisory Board and how they could serve her.

Principal Smith stated that they are excited about the playground. Volunteers are needed with a specific focus. Currently, the biggest need is reading; someone is needed to sit with a child one on one.

Vice Chair Ellowitz indicated that an Ambassador will be provided from the Education Advisory Board; every member is going to commit to at least one school and will be the direct liaison to the school. She questioned what Principal Smith was looking for in an Ambassador.

Principal Smith advised that she would like someone who could bring a community perspective, who would be collaborative, and to work beyond the front areas.

Comments and questions were made by George, Mr. Collazo, Mr. Calvo, Mr. Baum, Mr. Strauss, and Ms. Lockwood regarding PTA, volunteers, Reading Pals, the State grading scale, student testing, learning gains, playgrounds, green space, reassignments, life skills, and the peer mentoring Inclusive Friendship and Leadership Club.

Principal Smith advised that the playground will be ADA accessible and it is two playgrounds in one. There is a divider, so there is a primary playground and an intermediate playground. They are also getting a court with basketball, hopscotch, etc.

Mr. Relyea indicated that there must be a way to make the previously observed video accessible, because the "C" grade will hurt the school. His goal is to have an open house, not for families or parents, but for community members and partners. He mentioned that Civic Associations are invited to meetings held at City Hall as well as to meetings held at the schools.

Ms. Dinnen suggested putting the video out for the Greater Broward Alliance and the Broward Workshop.

IV. Current Business

- a. Approve minutes from August 15, 2019 meeting

Ms. Dinnen referenced Page 12, fourth paragraph, and noted that it should read, "Ms. Dinnen commented that the School Board used to do that, and it was extremely effective, then they *stopped due to* budget cuts".

Motion made by Ms. Dinnen, seconded by Mr. Audet, to approve the minutes of the August 15, 2019 as amended. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. (10-0).

Plans for EAB meetings in schools 2019-2020 (Communication to Commission Required)

Vice Chair Ellowitz mentioned the Board's request to the City Commission to change the Board's City location.

Motion by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Ms. Shelley, to change the Board's City location. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously. (10-0).

b. Standards (Growth Metric)

Ms. Saunders indicated that during conversations it was learned there are three different metrics; learning gains as defined by the State of Florida; a year's growth in a year's time defined by Broward County Public Schools and their Strategic Plan; and then a separate local growth measure proposed by the Education Advisory Board. A description of the three metrics was enclosed with the packets for review. Ms. Saunders briefly reviewed each of the metrics as follows:

- Learning gains as defined by the State requires improvement on one or more achievement levels, maintain level 3 and level 4 and improve a scale score point and level 1 and level 2 must improve in a subsection.
- A year's growth and a year's time is a metric that Broward County Public Schools came up with. The idea is to provide a consistent measure of growth for all students regardless of their scale score position with any level. It also incorporates an understanding of mastery.
- The local growth measure proposed by the Education Advisory Board, which is maintaining a level 2, 3, 4, and 5 and level 1 students improving one scale score point. This model is likely to inflate overall learning gains because of the complexity as to how learning gains are described, and it varies from one grade level to the next.

Ms. Saunders met with Dr. Zeman and there will be further discussion. The recommendation is to move with Broward County Public Schools metric because it seems to best capture the consistent growth we are looking to recognize for students. It also has been formally adopted as part of their Five-Year Strategic Plan and Dashboards are available for Principals to track progress as well.

Discussion ensued and it was noted that all three of the different measures were based on the Florida Standards Assessment, the same test used to create the school grade. The following information and answers to questions were provided by Mr. Clement, Mr. Baum, and Mr. Schmidt:

- Broward County proposed a mastery regrowth measure.
- FSA scores and ranges were mentioned as well as achievement levels the State uses to compute the percentage of students that have a three or above.

- Broward County has started computing a master index, which takes the ranges from the achievement levels and shows the different ranges from 1.0 to 5.9.
- The master score is more descriptive and easier to understand.
- A graph display depicting mastery and a year's growth in a year's time in English and Language Arts was shown.
- Calculations for writing and reading did not start until 2015-2016. If the test were to change significantly, they would have to start over.
- It is difficult to understand where the range cutoff is.
- This is important work that helps decide what kinds of interventions need to be provided to the schools.
- The District wants to understand that they are successful for the students. There are many applications for this data, and it is taken very seriously.
- When calibrating school grades, only students present for two survey periods are counted; there is an October and February survey period. For school grade purposes, a student must be present in October and February and then test at the school.
- Transient students are not currently calculated, but there is the capability of doing so. Dashboards are historical and show past information.
- One of the limitations to this kind of analysis is that the same student is being looked at along with two years of their assessment scores to see the growth in that same student. Unfortunately, when a student takes a U.S. History exam, they do not take it the next year the same with Science, Civics, and Biology.
- Test scores are not only being looked at in isolation, they are also looking at attendance, behavior, discipline, etc. There are additional needs to look at to see what is happening.

Mr. Relyea commented that after counting 28 or 29 schools, Bennett Elementary had the sixth best growth metric when it came to ELA and fifth best growth metrics of the schools when it came to math. He suggested highlighting the process.

Ms. Saunders advised that no one metric would fully communicate the great things happening at the school. Learning gains is a good measure to show progress, but she hoped more of a balanced scorecard approach would be made, so other data points could be brought in. The Board wants to highlight programs and other data points, so they need to be very thoughtful about specific metrics chosen. She thought the value in the year's growth in a year's time was that it focuses on equity, which has been a big priority for the Education Advisory Board, in that a consistent measure could be seen for every student at every level and it is also actionable. The Strategic Management and Research Team have done a lot of work in correlating some of the interim assessment data used to the end year data, so there are ways this can help drive continuous improvement throughout the school year. Plotting is helpful because one thing we do not want to lose sight of is mastery. We want to make sure students are growing, successful, and able to graduate high school.

Ms. Saunders believed the County has received many of the metrics, but the big question is how to operationalize that. She and Dr. Strauss have had some preliminary conversations, and they want to involve Principals in this process before anything goes on a website or on a banner. All recommendations are being taken and they are being very thoughtful and strategic about how to involve Principals and informing the ways in which this is promoted. The intent is for this to be positive and to promote our schools, avoiding any unintended consequences.

Ms. Dinnen commented that before things go on a website, concerns must be addressed, and the public must be advised that this is only measuring particular areas and other information would be provided in the future about other programs the schools offer.

V. New Business

- School Ambassador Assignments & Protocols

Vice Chair Ellowitz mentioned that there was discussion at the last meeting about who was going to be an Ambassador at each school. The following selections were made:

- Dr. Verdi Knapp – Bennett and Northside
- Vice Chair Ellowitz – Walker
- Mr. Large - Stranahan

Due to the fact some members could not recall which school they chose, Ms. Saunders suggested sending out an online form so Board members could sign up.

Vice Chair Ellowitz mentioned the school at the airport.

Ms. Saunders advised that a vision was established for an Aviation Academy in partnership with Broward County Public Schools, Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport, Broward College, Atlantic Technical College, and six business partners who have businesses at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport. She provided the following information regarding Aviation:

- A 23% increase is expected in Aviation jobs over the next five years. That projected job growth in Broward County is two times more than Miami-Dade and eight times more than Palm Beach.
- The average wage for workers in the Aviation industry is considerably higher than the average wage of a Broward County worker.
- Aviation overall is a great economic engine for our State; the State of Florida is ranked second. There is an incredible shortage of pilots, mechanics, and all areas of aviation at a National level. Locally, that trend is continuing.

- The Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance conducted a skills gap analysis and Aviation was one of the biggest needs we need to focus on. The City of Fort Lauderdale is well positioned to support this effort.
- Miami International Airport is the fastest growing International Airport in the country.
- The City of Fort Lauderdale owns and operates the Executive Airport, which is the fifth busiest General Aviation Airport in the country and is one of the only General Aviation Airports that has a 24-hour watchtower.
- Over the last three months, we have worked closely to form a Steering Committee, which consists of the City of Fort Lauderdale, Broward County Schools, Broward College, Executive Airport, Atlantic Technical College, and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance.
- An Avionics Program through Atlantic Technical College is being offered, which will start in January 2020. Students will take classes at Atlantic Technical College in a state-of-the-art lab and will have hands on experiences at the Executive Airport through our business partners. There will be about 20-25 students, both adults and high school students. The long-term vision is a full pathway for middle school to high school, post-secondary, all the way into a career and continuing education. This working group will be exploring other funding opportunities.

Ms. Saunders made the following announcements:

- An Inaugural Career College Expo will be held at the Museum of Discovery and Science on Saturday, October 12, 2019.
- Bridge 2 Life “The Sound of Success”- There will be 25 tables for employers and 25 tables devoted to college. If you pre-register you get in for free; otherwise, the cost is about \$15.

V. Staff Update

- Education Elements of City’s Strategic & Comprehensive Plans – None.

VI. Closing

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m. The next meeting will be held on October 17, 2019 and the location will be determined.

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