



**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
CITY HALL  
8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301  
THURSDAY, December 19, 2019–6:30-8:30 PM**

<b>Members</b>	<b>July 2019 – May 2020</b>		
	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	4	1
Linda Barnett	A	1	4
Rachel Coetzee	A	0	1
Maureen S. Dinnen	A	4	1
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	5	0
April Jeff	A	2	3
Terry Large	P	5	0
Jennifer Lovell	P	3	2
Dr. Heather Munns (attended by phone)	P	2	3
Tina Jaramillo	P	3	0
Colleen Lockwood	P	2	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	P	5	0
Vickie Melus	P	1	0
Christopher Relyea	P	5	0
Betty Shelley	A	3	2
Rory Sponsler	P	4	1
Dr. Michele Verdi Knapp (arrived at 6:37 p.m.)	P	4	1
Yolanda B. Francis	A	1	4
Lillian Small	A	2	3

**Staff/Guests**

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale  
Brigitte Chiappetta, Prototype, Inc.

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

This meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated there was a need for an abbreviated meeting and asked if there was any objection to adjourning around 7:30 p.m. It was noted that Ms. Saunders has a critical update for a handful of critical issues they have been working on and these reports will be given monthly.

## **II. Attendance and Roll Call, 19 appointed members; 11 needed for quorum**

As of this date, December 19, 2019, 12 of the 19 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

## **III. Current Business**

- Update and Next Steps on:

Chair Dr. Zeman advised there have been meetings, including a meeting with the City Manager, over the past month to discuss issues identified last year. Some ways in which Board members could participate in the Parks Initiative were discussed as there are a lot of schools and activity, so it makes sense to deputize people to do the Commission's business to go out and meet people and be informed, so information can be shared monthly.

Ms. Saunders stated the EAB gap analysis she has been given over the last year has informed the strategic direction of the Education office and priorities moving forward. All those recommendations were pulled together as early as June and it was proposed to the Commission. Many areas were identified where the City could play a unique role in supporting education outcomes. She wanted to put in context that those recommendations informed the overall vision and direction of where the Education office is headed. Subsequently, the City Commission adopted in the 5-Year Strategic Plan, education metrics, that range from third grade reading, Kindergarten readiness, school enrollment, and a percent of neighbors with an Associates Degree or higher and those education metrics are infused across multiple focus areas in the Strategic Plan. There are some infrastructure measures that play overall with education space, mainly with the respect to parks. She encouraged everyone to look at the Strategic Plan; it is very intentional that education is infused in multiple areas throughout the Plan. The Comprehensive Plan will go in front of the City Commission in January for approval and many recommendations brought forward from this group are incorporated. In several documents, many efforts will be seen from the Education Advisory Board in informing their next steps. As it relates to the three recommendations, this group has narrowed them down and she will start with the Parks Initiative.

- City Standards

Certain education metrics have already been incorporated as part of the Strategic Planning documents. The recommendation has gone in front of Commission three times and the last time they indicated that establishing standards was outside of the purview of the City and it seemed more like a School Board function. Ms. Saunders and Chair Dr. Zeman want to create a Resolution that is most advantageous and would be supported. The Board needs to think about this in terms of the educational framework and what a unique role a City could play in supporting schools to achieve "A" and "B" status. She

challenged this group to help think through how to approach that differently in a way that seemed more aligned to the Commission with the purpose and scope of the City being engaged with education. She had some conversations with the Strategic Planning Division about the possibility of including metrics as part of the 2035 Vision Plan and there have been preliminary conversations about that with Broward County Public Schools. This is something that could be explored while thinking about what we are trying to achieve by establishing these standards and where it fits within the scope of the City's role in partnership with Broward County Public Schools.

Chair Dr. Zeman thought the Board would be interested in understanding the influence of the Strategic Plan and questioned if the Strategic Plan was effective in guiding decisions of actions the City makes or if it was a Plan that collects dust.

Ms. Saunders indicated that any memo or communication that goes before the Commission must show direct alignment with the Strategic Plan and Vision Plan. Anytime there is an initiative or partnership opportunity, it is imperative that she identifies that connection.

Chair Dr. Zeman thought the Board should have discussion about how they go to the City Commissioners. Perhaps there should be some direct communications about the reason for the long detailed and specific plan around metrics. It is simple and easy to understand because Principals cannot remember much more. There was discussion last year about how this Board was going to change the conversation around education in Fort Lauderdale and there were preliminary conversations with the Board of Realtors about including something that said the grade of the school as well as, "Learning gains both in reading and math are going up every year". The Board should discuss the opportunity to remind the people who asked them to serve on this Board that the City has every right to set standards just like they do for water, air quality, and transportation. We need to be able to tell the County these things matter, and the Board has two things they would like to tell the County. He questioned how this Board could get back to their Commissioners and if they would be notified ahead of time when they are voting on this. He also questioned the right document type.

Ms. Saunders will explore a resolution and once they get closer, Legal would be involved in drafting, so if there were shifts, they would be communicated. She also understood the resolution would come up during an evening Commission meeting and if there were a preference to discuss it during a conference, which she thought would be helpful, she could advocate for that.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that it would come up if voted on during the Commission meeting.

Ms. Saunders stated it could either come up in a conference one week and be voted on two weeks after. The Commission typically likes to have some time in between the conference and the vote.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned some of the members were not in the middle of this robust discussion last year and questioned how they would like to influence the Commissioners in terms of being aware of thinking and the intention behind this.

Mr. Relyea indicated there was discussion about how the new Strategic Plan and education was woven through many different places and questioned how that compares to last year and five years ago. He also questioned if the increase of education was measurable, saying that education plays everywhere and if it is decidedly more different visually now than last year or the year before.

Ms. Saunders thought that question would be helpful to bring in their Strategic Team. They reworked how the Strategic Plan was done to focus more on core metrics that were felt could make an impact. She understood the previous Strategic Plan was much lengthier in scope and had many different types of metrics, but overall, that is probably a conversation that would impact all areas.

Mr. Relyea questioned if it was safe to say that the Strategic Plan is cleaner, narrow, more focused, and more purposeful. He mentioned Ms. Saunders' job, which connotes a willingness by the City to address this head on. Using traffic as an example, the Commission cannot say it is not their purview.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated he would call Commissioner Steve Glassman, who is a former teacher and a big advocate, and have a frank conversation. He questioned who else represents Robert McKenzie's District.

Ms. Melus stated that she would contact Commissioner McKenzie to discuss this topic.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned that the issue was that this Board does not run the school system, we support the schools in many ways, maybe more than most people think they do, but they are the City and economic development of the City, and the well-being of the residents that live here depend on having great public schools. The Board feels these are good standards and they meet all the other criteria, and if they can get real estate listings to start to report "C" school, but positive growth in reading and math, which is a fundamentally different story than a "C" school, go read the State standards. They want to find an honest way to communicate growth and waiting for a "C" school to become a "B" school is too hard; it takes a long time to do that well. He mentioned Commissioner Moraitis.

Ms. Lovell stated she would talk with Commissioner Moraitis.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp stated that there would be no problem discussing this with Mayor Trantalis; they have already had some interesting conversations.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated he was not only trying to ask those five people to engage the Commissioners who appointed them. If anyone knows other Commissioners, feel free to engage them. He would suggest that about a week before it comes up that Board members start the emails and phone calls. He will attend the conference afternoon session and questioned if other members could attend.

Mr. Relyea questioned when the Commissioners should be contacted if they want this to be on the front of their head.

Ms. Saunders advised about a week before it is published for their view.

Ms. Lockwood advised they would look at the January dates for the conference meeting and back it out a month before going to the Commission.

Ms. Saunders did not know the timing and needs to work with Legal to get guidance. She emphasized this Commission is very focused and committed to education and thought it would be helpful to bring this back to the Vision Plan and noted that the framework is one of the desired outcomes of equity to close the opportunity and achievement gaps resulting in all schools improving or maintaining at high levels of achievement. That goes beyond "A" and "B" and is also looking at growth.

In response to Chair Dr. Zeman, Ms. Saunders advised that the Strategic Plan is published, and the preliminary framework is going to guide or direct to the launch of the Education office, which will be shared and has been communicated with the Commission. It lays out the City's role in helping to achieve collective impact in a way that will promote equity as measured by all schools achieving at higher levels. The key piece is bringing it back to the City's role. We have a unique opportunity to leverage our assets to partner, to convene players, and to support schools in a way that will help enhance and sustain schools at high levels.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that these standards do not obligate the City to spend any money and they do not tell the County how to get involved in doing things they need to do in terms of hiring teachers and promoting Administrators. The standards enforce that the Commission believes education does matter and the City has a sincere and genuine interest in schools being great in Fort Lauderdale. This was coordinated with the City's Education staff and Ms. Saunders, and what is being proposed is aligned with the Strategic Plan's initiatives.

Ms. Saunders stated it is aligned with the education framework; that is something she can share.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated those members who have a chance and have the interest will provide the date and ask roughly a week ahead of time to email and try to get proactive conversation saying this is something the Board has worked on a long time and think it will have an influence. They know from the County, who has encouraged Cities to do this, that it does have a direct impact on their decision making and Weston was mentioned as an example. He noted that real City resources are being redirected toward education and to him, which reinforces more than anything else, that this Commission is made up of three former teachers.

Ms. Jaramillo questioned if the City of Weston put forth any Resolutions and if that was a way to make an impact.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that the County does not say the City is responsible, but they point to the fundamental production of education quality, which is kids who show up under prepared for Kindergarten. They talk about the potential for growing about a year and a half per year, which is the max for any large number of students. It is about how to fix the underlying issues; this is more like poverty than education. Poverty is only solved by multiple levers and multiple organizations working together to try to lift everyone. Research has not been done on what Cities have done because it seems like there is much more to it, but there is a significant effort in political concern, and it is a matter of how to translate the political concern into action.

Mr. Sponsler questioned if it would be something as simple as adding, "In conjunction with the Broward County Schools" to the Resolution. He also questioned if the Commission was balking at the Standards Resolution and they were being a little tepid.

Ms. Saunders stated she would get some guidance but believed there would be language on partnering or supporting. She believed the Commission was questioning if this was a School Board or City's role to establish the standards; she thought the framing was around how this connects to the City's role in education.

- Early-Learning Centers

Early Learning has been adopted in terms of strategic goals and objectives within the element of the Comprehensive Plan. The City recently funded the Early Learning Coalition, which showed a renewed commitment to this area. Our Police Department is continuing their reading program and are expanding to add an additional school, which will be starting in January. That program is a weekly interaction with students, and they feel out consistency with third-grade classes. Our Fire Department is also launching a

reading program, which will begin in January. In terms of the long-term possibility of expanding Early Learning Centers, she has coordinated with Dr. Canning, and there may be an opportunity to pursue a grant called the UCF Community Partnership Schools Grant, which would be available in the spring. This was the grant awarded to the Gulfstream Early Learning Center and it would fund a Community Partnership School Officer. As we continue to explore that possibility, we will be looking at the waiting list at existing VPK sites and understanding where there might be space at under-enrolled elementary schools. Northside is launching their Family Strengthening Room on January 7, 2020 and it would be great to bring the Principal in for an update. Dr. Verdi-Knapp has been very involved.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp commented that she was at Northside yesterday doing the big toy giveaway.

Ms. Saunders advised there is an initiative called Prosperity Broward, which is designed to promote economic mobility in distressed communities, looking to convene aligned organizations in support of this work. The outcomes are focused on workforce development, but there is a big understanding around the barriers to education attainment and job placement, so there is a component looking at access to childcare, which fits in as well and aligns to where the need would be focused in economically distressed communities.

- Joint-Use Parks

This is making sure the School Board and City are coordinated in efforts as to how they are going to move forward. In their first information building phase, additional input was collected from the Education Advisory Board, then went to the Parks Advisory Board as well. The Education Advisory Board representative is Chair Dr. Zeman and the Parks Advisory Board has also selected a representative. Input then went into a staff working group meeting and they are trying to understand some of the logistics and operational considerations. They are reviewing the content of existing agreements, scheduling, etc. The next step is to conduct site visits at schools and once a scope of work has been defined for participating schools, it will be brought forward to a stakeholder meeting, which would include representatives from the Education Advisory Board, Parks Advisory Board, Council Civic Associations, Principals, the City, and Broward County Public School staff. One of the key things done after consolidating all input from the Education Advisory Board, Parks Advisory Board, and the City was to define a three-prong approach; making viable school facilities available to the community during non-school hours, to invest in improvement to school facilities for communities where City funding is available, and to enhance educational and recreational programming through existing and planned joint-use parks and shared facilities. The goal is to expand the use of public infrastructure for the benefit of the community at large, creating more opportunities to learn and play all day in the City of Fort Lauderdale. Any projects related to the Parks Bond will go through

a separate timeline as the Parks Program Manager is brought on board. A memo will go out in January if not before, outlining the work for this group and identifies that this initiative grew out of a recommendation from the Education Advisory Board to accelerate planning with Broward County Public Schools to make joint-use parks available. To date, seven joint-use parks have been established on Broward County Public School property and are open to the public outside of school hours. Additionally, two joint-use parks have been established on City-owned properties to support school recreation during school hours.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned the Board's discussion for the past 18 months and noted that programming part of the Park system has not been part of their discussions. There has been a tremendous need to try to simplify to keep momentum going and not to delay things and he questioned if this new kind of thrust on programs related to parks is going to slow things down.

Ms. Saunders did not think anything would be slowed down. It would be organized in such a way that it could be parallel, but there would be pieces that could be addressed immediately and others that might inform programmatic enhancement later. As it relates to collecting input around the schools' priority and if they are focusing on the arts or if there is an opportunity to infuse arts programming in the afterschool program where many students participate is probably a longer-term strategy. While at the table and having these discussions, she thought it would be helpful to identify some of those programmatic aspect; some may have more of an immediate opportunity and others may be longer range.

- Approve minutes from October 17, 2019 and November 21, 2019 meetings

Mr. Relyea indicated that the date on the minutes needs to be changed to October 17, 2019.

**Motion** by Ms. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Relyea, to approve the October 17, 2019 minutes as amended. **Motion** passed unanimously. (12-0)

Ms. Lockwood stated she did not officially join the Board until last month, so absences shown on the October and November minutes are not accurate and should be adjusted.

**Motion** by Ms. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Relyea to approve the November 21, 2019 minutes as amended. **Motion** passed unanimously. (12-0)

#### **IV. New Business**

- EAB Connectors to 1-2 Schools: Roles, Responsibilities and Program Name (e.g. Ambassadors or some other name)

Chair Dr. Zeman advised that it was agreed a while ago for Board members to have a relationship with one to two schools. This has not been defined very well and needs to be defined well enough so members can start. If Board members know how to do Step 1, information can be brought back next month and talk about how it went, what the Principals wanted, etc. We need to make sure we know how to cover the first meeting and the name needs to be discussed. There are debates whether Ambassador, Advocate, or EAB Board member assigned to the school is better. Ambassador was being considered because that seemed to be a minor consensus when this was first brought up, but he questioned if there was a better term besides Ambassador.

Mr. Relyea suggested liaison and Mr. Large suggested advocate.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated that liaison seemed to be the consensus, so he suggested members think of themselves as EAB Liaisons to make sure they are connecting it to this Board and not to the City. He requested active verbs and questioned what a liaison would do in a school and the following ideas were mentioned:

- Dr. Verdi-Knapp stated a liaison would advocate by expressing their needs, concerns, intentions, and visions, and bringing that back to us, so it could be communicated to the Commission.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented this is a listening function; if you are an advocate you know what the school needs, thinks they are going to get from the State, County, grant, or City, and that information would be brought before the Board for discussion, so the Commission could be advised.

- Ms. Jaramillo the liaison could connect with the Principal between faculty and Administrative needs.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated he would be worried about the Board being seen as an arbiter within a school; they may end up being a venting post. He was nervous about the perception that they would mediate between groups.

- Mr. Sponsler mentioned advocate and stated they could try to get the alumni involved in the school. They could advocate for support and find out what the school needs. He thought they could promote and market the schools.
- Ms. DelNegri suggested communication or cooperation and close working relationships with people.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if members were aware of next upcoming step in the Parks and Rec system and if it would make sense to feed the Principals information.

Ms. Saunders mentioned the next phase was having a tighter coordination. Once communication goes out about Joint-Use Parks, this group would have that information and she could create a summary statement, so if there were questions some of the key points would be listed to reinforce, which would be very helpful. As liaisons, members could help reinforce messaging and if there are any questions, confusion, or pushback, let her know. Perhaps once the memo is finalized, she could send out an email for in terms of things to reinforce.

Mr. Large advised that he called the school he works with, told them he had a decal cutter, and then delivered it to them.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned how it went when he introduced himself to the school.

Mr. Large stated it was wonderful; he told them he was there to hear their story and share it with the Board. He noted that he shared the e-book idea and they liked it.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated he wants this liaison role to be successful long-term and questioned if it would make sense for the list to get published within a week, so everyone could call their schools before the next meeting, to make an introduction and suggest that they would like to meet with them at some point.

Ms. DelNegri found it helpful to promote our Board during the back to school event. She questioned if they could host an event where they could introduce this concept, so everyone understands it.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that the Board has moved forward significantly since that point, and now people come to meetings. He is trying to balance the amount of time it would take to have such a meeting with a positive gain that would happen in the interim. He is incredibly moved by the talented members on this Board. We could start slow, then contact the schools again at another time, and role play a little to make sure everything is right. He would like to make sure everyone understands the top five things not to do.

Mr. Large suggested all members do a three-line video, send it to him, he will incorporate it into a video, and we could introduce ourselves to the Principals and tell them why we are doing this. Then we could post it on U-Tube and send it to all the schools.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that he would get the list out by the end of the week. He suggested contacting the Principals, introducing yourselves, and going slow, so this can be long-term. It is much better to call a Principal and ask to meet with them in a week or two than to ask if you can see them tomorrow.

Ms. Saunders suggested asking for the office manager to schedule. She commented that the video concept could be compelling, but we would need to coordinate before posting.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated there is a balance. If you are talking about yourself that is not business that could ever come before this Board. He was not sure if permission was needed to post something.

## **V. Staff Update**

Ms. Saunders advised they are purchasing a table for the Caliber Awards, so please let her know if anyone is interested; it is first come first serve. The Caliber Awards are hosted by Broward County Public Schools and it is on Thursday, January 16, 2020 at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Sponsler indicated that the Caliber Awards are for Teachers of the Year and Administrators of the Year.

Ms. Saunders stated there are finalists from Northside Elementary, Harbordale Elementary, Floranada, and Fort Lauderdale High School. She noted a conflict with the January 16, 2020 meeting and noted it could be moved.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated he would sign up first and anyone who was interested should contact Ms. Saunders.

Ms. Saunders advised there are ten seats and she needs to make them available to the Mayor and Elected Officials. Let her know who is interested and she will finalize everything.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if the Board would agree not to meet on January 16, 2020 and find an acceptable Thursday alternative; either January 23, 2020 or January 30, 2020.

Ms. Saunders advised she would check on an available date.

**Motion** by Ms. Lovell, to change the January meeting to January 23, 2020 or January 30, 2020, seconded by Mr. Relyea. **Motion** carried unanimously. (12-0)

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned that when the assignment to the schools are received, they would have contact information; he requested everyone contact the schools prior to the next meeting.

Ms. Saunders announced they are doing a Youth Civic Engagement event on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 from 4:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. This is a way to pilot how we can continue to connect youth to our Elected Officials. It is called Govchat Engaging Youth Leaders.

Chair Dr. Zeman requested Ms. Saunders share her announcements by email.

Mr. Sponsler reminded everyone that schools are closed until January 6, 2020.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated that this format would continue between the City and Board activities for a while, so things can be shared. A City influencing education is difficult, but this Board has been effective and now that we have a new CEO and a more mature Board, he is anxious to see the next three initiatives they are going to tackle. He requested Ms. Saunders add the liaison initiative to the agenda, it would be the fourth item to discuss monthly. He suggested members come up with questions for Ms. Saunders.

## **VI. Closing**

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 7:40 p.m. The next meeting will be held on January 16, 2020 at City Hall.

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