



**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
CITY HALL  
8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301  
THURSDAY, July 16, 2020 6:30-8:30 PM**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>July 2020 – May 2021</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	1	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	1	0
Wendy Gonsler	P	1	0
Lisa May	A	0	1
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	1	0
April Jeff	P	1	0
Terry Large	P	1	0
Jennifer Lovell	P	1	0
Dr. Heather Munns	P	1	0
Tina Jaramillo	P	1	0
Colleen Lockwood	P	1	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	P	1	0
Vickie Melus	P	1	0
Christopher Relyea	P	1	0
Lillian Small	A	0	1
Rory Sponsler	P	1	0
Betty Shelley	A	0	1
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	1	0
Yolanda B. Francis	P	1	0
Tomislav Lukic	P	1	0

**Staff/Guests**

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale  
 Jamie Opperlee, Prototype, Inc.  
 Dr. Deborah Posner, Executive Director of Strategic Initiative Management  
 Dr. Deborah Gavilan, Director of Before and After School Child Care  
 Amy (Aymara) Schmidt, with the Broward County Public School District  
 Enrique Sanchez, Deputy Director of Parks & Recreation, Fort Lauderdale

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

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

**II. Attendance and Roll Call, 20 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum**

As of this date, July 16, 2020, 17 of the 20 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned there is no chat box during this Zoom meeting since Board members cannot discuss anything that might come before the Board in the future. This meeting is being recorded and will be accessible at [www.FortLauderdale.gov](http://www.FortLauderdale.gov).

Chair Dr. Zeman welcomed new member, Tomislav Lukic. Amy Schmidt, who is collaborating with the City on Joint Parks, was also introduced.

Ms. Saunders advised new member, Lisa May, was unable to participate this evening.

**III. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes – February 20, 2020**

Dr. Verdi-Knapp mentioned the following change:

Page 11, second paragraph, should read, "...Norbert Delz, Department Head of Kansas State University. ...touched 1,325 students."

Motion by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Ms. Coetzee, to approve the February 20, 2020 minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously. (17-20)

**IV. School Reopening Presentation by Broward County Public Schools (BCPS):**

**A. Guest BCPS Presenters:** Dr. Deborah Posner, Executive Director of Strategic Initiative Management, and Dr. Deborah Gavilan, Director of Before and After School Child Care

**B. Discussion**

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned the debate about returning to school this year and stated that Dr. Posner has been leading this effort for Broward County Schools. Superintendent Runcie has announced all schools will be returning on time with online learning.

Dr. Posner, Executive Director for Strategic Initiative Management (SIM) at the School District, indicated this is the most complex strategic planning she has ever had to do. She mentioned a Workshop held a few days ago and stated they are looking to accommodate populations where possible for campus learning for students with the most critical special needs. That topic of discussion will be at a Workshop next week, Wednesday, July 22, 2020. It was noted that all comments and ideas would be considered prior to the Workshop. Dr. Posner provided a brief slide presentation regarding the strategic plan, which is what guides them in a crisis; the plan does not pause but helps informed decision

making and prioritization of resources. An extensive stakeholder listening tour was conducted and risks involved were discussed with health experts locally and nationally; their analysis was the reason for the decision made this week. Constraints, concerns, risk tolerance, down to individual levels have been considered as well as balancing with student experience. They are trying to stay within the guidelines set by the CDC for guide control. The focus is on learning acceleration, which includes closing achievement gaps, which is a high priority in their strategic learning plan. The key to success will be the ability to be flexible and agile, and able to adapt to changing conditions. As demonstrated this week, any plans to reopen and be paused, so they can revert to an original model. E-learning in the fall will not look the same as in the spring; there will be a new and improvement e-learning model. Data presented in the Workshop was shown. The Department of Health dashboard showed the positivity rate is exceeding the rate of increase in testing, which is a worsening situation. CDC guidelines recommend at least six feet and the analysis conducted at the school level and these models will be revised once safe enough. A survey was launched to assess parents' preferences, which was very consistent across the counties; about one-third wanted each option. Currently, only the e-learning option is available. About 2% of the parents opted to change to Broward Virtual School versus e-learning offered by the local school. The survey is still available, and families are encouraged to participate.

The following points were highlighted:

- Models across the nation were reviewed and the common denominator being considered for reopening is that there is no right answer.
- The formula for rubric for evaluation options was shown.
- Equity versus opportunity was mentioned.
- Impact in terms of space, staffing, and costs were reviewed and it could not be done while maintaining distancing for 100% of the students, which includes buses. This will be revisited in the future.
- A phased approach will be taken, starting with e-learning, and then going from there as appropriate.
- There is a new normal where learning from this experience will be taken and those learnings will be adopted into the strategic plan.
- Successes were celebrated; teachers were heroic in working through Spring Break to convert their classes to Canvas, their online platform, and getting training needed to return to learning. Over 100,000 devices were distributed and over 240,000 books. They received national attention for the model implemented during the pandemic. Many key areas have been identified where improvements are needed.
- Differences were pointed out between schooling and e-learning and Broward Virtual School versus Florida Virtual School.

- A traditional approach to launching a program or managing a project is called Waterfall, which is a series of outputs leading to a large outcome at the end. An agile approach, which is a more modern approach for an implementation, is what they are seeking to follow.
- Operational plans are being developed towards reopening. Intensive work will be implemented in the e-learning model including acceleration and technology. New health and sanitation protocols will be in place for students to attend for special learning, safety and security protocols, food service, etc. Exceptional student and childcare will be big key gain plans to reopening if it is hybrid and not reopening.

Dr. Posner pointed out the website, [browardschools.com](http://browardschools.com), which has a link to submit comments, questions and ideas prior to the Workshop on Wednesday, July 22, 2020. Another Workshop is scheduled for July 28, 2020. She indicated there is no one right answer and no one size fits all model. They will continue to evolve and continue to be flexible and agile, they will continue to work with every labor group across the District as part of the ongoing stakeholder engagement model, and will continue to balance guiding principles of opportunity, equity, wellness, and flexibility. All of this within the framework of their strategic plan, which guides all the work at the District, whether they are in crisis mode or not. This is their commitment to everyone as their top priorities.

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked Dr. Posner and questioned if the School Board was aware that 31% of kids in Florida have already had Covid 19; if there would have been the possibility of a different decision if there were enough healthcare professionals, mental health counselors, and facilities brought together, and if this was an issue of money, if this was the best that could be done, or if there was a chance to provide greater State or Federal funds. Florida has a lot less money than other states; the ratio is huge at 3:1. There are public school District that have three times as much money as Florida.

Dr. Posner advised that with regard to funding, more money is always needed; more money would not necessarily have provided an opportunity to reopen, it was one of a series of constraints, which included space capacity and staffing levels. The risk tolerance levels, and family preferences were not linked to money; funding is below par, and they could do much better.

Vice Chair Ellowitz thanked Dr. Posner and the teachers for what they have done. She was not aware of the 31% of children already tested and understood there are no guarantees that kids cannot be reinfected. She questioned if that was part of the concern and she also questioned if there was an outlined set of criteria for Phase 2.

Dr. Posner stated it was part of the conversation with health officials and it was recognized that the risk is not worth it. Dr. Runcie put it best, "Safety is our #1 concern and we will never compromise on that". Dr. Posner indicated they are actively developing what criteria will look like. During the July 22, 2020 Workshop there will be a slide to show what

moving from Phase 1 to Phase 2 looks like.

Vice Chair Ellowitz mentioned a lot of teachers are concerned if schools go to a part-time model that they would potentially be doing two jobs without compensation.

Dr. Posner stated they might potentially have a co-teaching model, one for in class and one for online students. Their intention is not to not compensate teachers. Synchronous teaching may not be for all teachers, so there will not be an across the District expectation. They are looking to balance all those constraints.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned the Superintendent in Fairfax County gets a lot of media attention. They have done the parent and teacher choice; teachers get to decide whether they want to teach in person or online and students choose whether to return to school two days a week. Superintendent Runcie was in a New York Times article and said, "If discipline of other people over the last few months would have been different, the options would have been different". The impact is very real.

Mr. Lukic mentioned students who come from an economically challenged background where access to internet or laptops is not always assured. He questioned if those students would fall under the wing to attend school or what provisions would be provided to assure those children are getting a quality education.

Dr. Posner stated that special groups are being defined. They are also seeking out ways to overcome technology challenges because that is recognized.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that he would share Dr. Posner's email and phone number with Board members, and he requested further discussion about this topic.

Ms. Saunders thanked Dr. Posner for her leadership. Under her leadership, the District has come up with some good options. There has been a lot of collaboration; the City has been involved in multiple working groups regarding the school reopening. The City has been involved with the childcare group and with partnerships, to see how they could collaborate to expand home internet access. Attempts are being made to examine specific areas of most needs so they can try to create additional infrastructure in those areas.

Dr. Posner looks forward to establishing the City of Fort Lauderdale as a model for the rest of the cities throughout their District.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked Mr. Relyea if he could educate the Board on anything being missed.

Mr. Relyea advised that he was encouraged by the quality of leadership as it pertains to the Board and Superintendent. Dr. Posner is impressive, and he mentioned Dan Gohl

with the District as well. Mr. Relyea has two children, one in 10<sup>th</sup> grade and one in 7<sup>th</sup> grade, so he is involved deeply. He preferred the hybrid model at first as a father and teacher. His kids originally chose 100% in school if it were an option. The hybrid model will be Phase 2 at some point. He does not hear enough about elementary school agreed children that cannot be supervised during the week, they will have to go to childcare, which exposed them more. There is a unique health issue with the hybrid model, but the phased in is some sort of hybrid, which provides a unique health concern. As a teacher, he has the pleasure of being exposed to all those students. He mentioned elderly family members and stated when they go to that model he will probably quarantine.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated there are people who have to go to work and e-learning could be done in a different type of situation. There is no evidence that K-8 gets a lot of educational value out of e-learning; it is nothing like residential. Parents are trying to form pods of kids with parents rotating. He mentioned the European model where they got rid of the six-foot distancing and masks and the medical results turned out much better than expected. There are a lot of uncertainties. Some people are talking about half days, which would allow parents to work a few hours of the day.

Chair Dr. Zeman welcomed Dr. Deborah Gavilan, Director of Before and After School Child Care, and requested she talk about her work stream.

Dr. Gavilan reported there have been multiple conversations regarding concerns and they are trying to develop partnerships. They reached out to 31 other municipalities and sent a survey to Parks and Recreation to see how they might have considered working with students. They have a partnership with the YMCA of South Florida, the Boys and Girls Club, and are working closely with the Children's Services Counsel as well as the Early Learning Coalition. They reached out to United Way, the Museum of Discovery and Science, Junior Achievement and are working with childcare and licensing to make sure plans are guided appropriately. Other requirements are a little different that they follow by Statute, and those are based on the childcare model at off-site facilities. She provided a slide presentation. In working with the League of Cities, surveys were received and one thing they could offer is private providers of childcare, which are currently receiving funding and could assist some of the Cities. Dr. Gavilan and Ms. Saunders met with the General Services Counsel and they are happy to assist. The YMCA and the Boys and Girls Club will continue to provide services. The Early Learning Coalition has provided multiple locations throughout the County. Funding was increased to small daycare centers and childcare facilities around the County to increase the amount of space for working space for parents and they are not even near capacity. They want to maximize the space on campuses to provide school care first, which is the #1 priority. Before and after school will operate on every campus for a fee. Childcare is not free, and it is not funded by the State or Federal Government; some Cities offer additional support, but in most cases, there will be a fee. They will first do a provision as a zone basis. Quite a few schools in Fort Lauderdale are under-enrolled and they could provide a zone base facility, which

would allow the District and students of the general population to attend. Available rooms would be used after the school day ends for the public. The work stream progress is based on multiple things. A schedule will be developed and they are going to assist Cities, community partners, and childcare facilities with additional training that would possibly be face to face virtually and videoed to make sure those academic programs are applied to offsite programs. The Director of Food Services met with them today and they are working on challenges of how to provide food on campus to off campus sites. Free breakfast and free and reduced lunch are provided throughout the school year as well as dinner to over 112 sites across the District.

Chair Dr. Zeman requested the bottom line on childcare.

Dr. Gavilan did not think it was as bad as a lot of people think. Many parents are concerned about comingling their children; they are worried about exposure. Offsite facilities are concerning because parents do not know who those children have been in contact with. There are a lot of available sites and they are looking at other areas that can be opened to provide assistance to families. They have the manpower, but people are afraid of exposure.

Ms. Lovell thanked Dr. Gavilan and questioned if she had any recommendations for parents looking to team up with other people. She also questioned if there is a website.

Dr. Gavilan stated they are going to reach out to partners and childcare providers and provide a list of possibilities on the website. Standard operating procedure suggestions are going to be provided as to how children can be safe and what they should look for. When the hybrid model is done, childcare would be open. Superintendent Runcie announced that schools would not be open for any offsite vendors at this time; it would be some other location.

Ms. Lovell requested once something is put into place if it could be shared with Ms. Saunders because parents are asking what is going on.

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked Dr. Gavilan and noted that this Board is focused on Early Learning and Childcare. He requested that Dr. Gavilan let Ms. Saunders know when she wants to participate in another meeting.

## **V. Old Business**

### **A. Joint Use Parks Initiative Update**

Ms. Saunders reported they have been making significant progress in planning the Joint Use Parks Initiative. She recapped that currently in the City of FTL there are 11 active joint use parks and those scan across the four Commission Districts. There are

opportunities where schoolhouses and grounds are available for public use after hours. The goal is to make as many viable school facilities available to the community during non-school hours. With regard to long-term success, they are looking at feasibility and viability. Throughout the entire process, they are focusing on the voice of the customer, so they engage very closely with Principals and their next phase is to have more community members as they engage in this process. This work started in a discovery phase and information building. The Education Advisory Board was involved in providing some guiding principles. They also engaged with the Parks Advisory Board as well as to provide a preliminary framework as they approach this initiative. From there, a Working Group was assembled, and they were able to develop a Vision, which was communicated to the City Commission and to the School Board to always ensure alignment with our work effort. From there, asset inventory was conducted; 15 schools were visited, and a comprehensive analysis was done regarding amenities and features available at each site. After the asset inventory, they were able to go back to the Principals and have more focused one on one conversations with every school Administrator, trying to gather from them what their biggest priorities were for their school and to think creatively of opportunities to make their sites available. A lot of work was done in planning and coming up with criteria they felt would be fair to score the sites. Equity was a large focus for the Education Advisory Board as well as making sure any investment made by the City was done in a methodical, thoughtful, and fair way. They worked with Principals in validating scoring for the criteria. Ms. Saunders shared the criteria as follows:

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked Ms. Saunders. Making progress on an education initiative is difficult. Their Commission is in favor of using the Parks Bond in the most effective way possible and are fully supportive of not using just \$11 million, but coming up with creative solutions as to what could be done. Everywhere feasible, there should be a joint use park. It is a brilliant idea that the City of Fort Lauderdale works to meet standards the Education Advisory Board came up with. He acknowledged Enrique Sanchez, Director of Parks & Recreation.

Mr. Sponsler is advocating for his communities, an outlier in the City. They do not have joint use parks that are in walking distance and there is a major thoroughfare preventing access to the park. He questioned how the Parks Bond would impact the residents and communities he represents, which is Palm Aire Village East and West.

Ms. Saunders believed a large benefit would be around the Lockhardt Community Center where a play area could be developed.

Mr. Sanchez did not believe there were any joint school projects with the Parks Bond along that area, but the Lockhardt project is probably the biggest one with the Parks Bond. He noted there would be some redevelopment of Palm Aire Park and Palm Aire Village Park.

Ms. Saunders stated there are planned improvements beyond the school sites, but in that area of the City there are not many public schools; the closest is Floranada Elementary School, which is currently a joint use park. Fort Lauderdale High may be closer, so there are discussions at that location as well. In terms of the extensive usage many high schools get, there may be some limited access and those are things that will be considered. Perhaps the Fort Lauderdale Community School may be a viable option, which was not on the initial list for consideration. As suggestions come about, their team is open to exploring and pursuing whatever makes sense. When going into the next phase, the Return on Investment will be important. When thinking about developing a site they are trying to anticipate the usage because that will help them understand the community benefit and how to stretch the dollars to create the greatest benefit.

Mr. Sanchez indicated that the Parks Bond also allocated some money for land acquisition and development of those areas and they are actively working with their real estate firm CVRE to identify sites that are appropriate for future parks. Their goal is to have a park within a ten-minute walk of every residents, somewhere around a quarter mile walk.

Mr. Sponsler mentioned that kids have to cross 31<sup>st</sup> Avenue to get to the Palm Aire Park Mini Village and to Palm Aire Park. He noted that many children do not attend their designated schools and that this might be something the Board may wish to consider. Perhaps the City Commission could advocate. There are reasons why families in these communities are not choosing the public-school system and that is one reason he requested to join the Board.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if Mr. Sponsler could provide data from last year as to where children go to school and this could be discussed next month. There is a gap and the Education Advisory Board is concerned with Fort Lauderdale residents when we are supposed to be concerned with Fort Lauderdale schools. Broward County has that information. He requested that the information be send to Ms. Saunders about a week prior to the meeting if possible, so she could send it out.

Ms. Coetzee commented there is a similar situation in Sailboat Bend. Apparently, there was a property set aside for a park, but some of the City Commissioners voted against it. There is not a park anywhere in the Sailboat Bend area.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that this topic would be addressed at the next meeting to make sure the children are being represented. Parks and Recreation has a similar based methodology where they are trying to find and buy property to build parks. He recommended Ms. Coetzee attend the Parks Advisory Board and introduce the topic.

Mr. Sanchez advised there are about three or four parks in Sailboat Bend; they are small passive parks.

Ms. Coetzee stated those parks are not something where children can play.

Ms. Saunders thanked Amy (Aymara) Schmidt, with the Broward County Public School District, for attending this meeting.

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked Ms. Schmidt for all her efforts.

#### **B. Early Learning Centers**

Ms. Saunders mentioned the Early Learning Coalition is very involved in conversations regarding the reopening of schools and understanding the needs for childcare. Dr. Gavilan indicated that spaces were increased but they are not meeting their capacity. There is a lot of discussion about the 100% virtual model and if childcare agencies could be reimbursed during the school day particularly for older aged children.

#### **C. Aviation Training Facility**

Ms. Saunders advised that this Board partnered with Atlantic Technical College, the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance, and Broward College to launch a new program, the Avionics Systems Technician program based at Atlantic Technical College and supported by the City of Fort Lauderdale in collaboration with partnerships and tenants at the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport. The City of Fort Lauderdale is part of their annual action planning and an aviation training facility was established as one of their Commission priorities. This has been a big Commission effort by Commissioner Moraitis and widely supported by the Mayor and the entire Commission. Moving forward, they are looking to bring on a consultant to help them understand the next phase and part of the scope will be working with their existing partners, doing a feasibility study, analyzing student enrollment needs, basic needs, etc. to develop the overall operational and financial model. The Covid 19 pandemic has had a big impact on aviation and as they move forward and continue to plan a priority will be training students for high demand jobs. In broadening their scope, they are thinking about aviation and aerospace. More information will be available in the future, but that is part of the analysis because they need to have a full focus. There was discussion about working with other schools; however, most of the schools are zoned outside of the City of Fort Lauderdale. They have taken an intentional regional focus on this and are looking to create articulation agreements with their partners.

#### **D. Mindfulness Programs**

Ms. Saunders stated the School Board is focusing on mindfulness and is bringing together a lot of resources as they move into the next academic year.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp advised that the School Board is going to mandate at least ten minutes per day dedicated to social emotional learning and mindfulness and it appears this is going to take priority over other components. Academics are not going to happen if

students are not prepared; this is for teachers as well. There was some discussion about brining in the Wise Mind project as a component with some of the toolbox they are putting together that will be offered through learning management systems like Canvas, etc. There will also be some live engagements with teachers and students. It is critical all the time and beyond so now.

Mr. Relyea has been talking with Administration at his school and noted that there would not be any curriculum during the first week of school, it is all about what Dr. Verdi-Knapp discussed. They must take stock of where they are and walk through those things. The directive is that there are more important things to do first.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned SEL and they did some from March through May through Zoom. It was set up like an advisory where each teacher got a small group of students and teachers checked in with the students.

Chair Dr. Zeman thought the Board would be interested in that and requested Ms. Jaramillo write a page and send it to Ms. Saunders to distribute to Board members.

#### **E. Civic Engagement Initiative**

Ms. Saunders stated the City is focused on engaging youth and creating opportunities for them to be productive citizens. They had gov.chat a few months ago where high school students came to City Hall and engaged with Elected Officials. The biggest take was that students wanted more opportunities to be involved and to share their voice. As a City, we are committed to creating those opportunities to occur in meaningful ways. Prior to Covid 19, the plan was to reengage a group of students to help develop the City's long-term approach. There is a renewed focus and understanding as to how that looks and there will be many virtual components to that work. There is a commitment to engage with the youth and they are looking for more innovative ways to do so. She thanked Colleen Lockwood for her efforts.

#### **VI. New Business – None.**

#### **COMMENTS**

Chair Dr. Zeman was heartened by the attendance of 30 participants. This has been positive in getting more participation; people on the phone can buzz in and he will do what he can to keep the list current.

Ms. Jeff was listening and was glad to see everyone. She spoke to Ms. Saunders about some of her daughter's experiences while being home during the pandemic; she is in 11<sup>th</sup> grade at Dillard High School. She had a lot of anxiety and is in Performing Arts. She went from going to two classes to none and she was not able to go to her outside curricular activity. Her daughter wants to go back to school; dance is her joy.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated there are no winners in this pandemic, but some people are paying consequences. He mentioned all the athletes that cannot participate.

Mr. Lukic commented on previous points, primary and secondary education has only had a limited experience from March to May with online instruction. Nova has been doing this and is going into fall fully remote. He pointed out that AP and Cambridge classes are representative of college course work and it might be good to ask local universities, so the quality of education is on a college level.

Chair Dr. Zeman thought the Board should find a way to tap into Mr. Lukic's point.

Ms. Saunders announced the City Commission approved a Memo of Understanding with Broward College this past Commission meeting. That is an opportunity to expand the Board's partnership with Broward College. There are also many opportunities to partner with other universities.

## **VII. Closing**

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:29 p.m.

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