



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

VIRTUAL EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING  
CITY HALL  
8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM  
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE  
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301  
THURSDAY, December 17, 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	6	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	5	1
Lisa May	P	3	3
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	6	0
Heather Brinkworth	P	1	0
April Jeff	A	2	4
Dr. Heather Munns	P	6	0
Tina Jaramillo	P	6	0
Colleen Lockwood	P	6	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	P	6	0
Vickie Melus	A	4	2
Christopher Relyea	P	6	0
Lillian Small	A	2	4
Rory Sponsler	P	5	1
Betty Shelley	P	4	2
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	6	0
Yolanda B. Francis	P	3	3
Tomislav Lukic	P	6	0

**Staff/Guests**

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale  
 Martha Steinkamp, Parks and Recreation Board  
 Ericka Franceschi, Assistant City Clerk  
 Jeff Moderelli, City Clerk  
 D'Wayne Spence, Assistance City Attorney  
 Veronica Cloyd, Resident  
 Joseph Beck, Broward County Public Schools  
 Jill Young, Broward County Public Schools  
 Danielle Smith, Principal of Bennett Elementary School  
 Jenni Morejon, Fort Lauderdale DDA  
 Robert Runcie, Broward County School Superintendent  
 Mayor Dean Trantalis  
 Alex Collazo, President of Poinciana Heights Civic Association

Sarah Leonardi, School Board Member  
Jamie Opperlee, Prototype, Inc.

**I. Welcome and Introduction of New Members – Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair**

This meeting was called to order at 6:31 p.m.

**II. Attendance and Roll Call, 19 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum**

As of this date, December 17, 2020, 16 of 19 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

Chair Dr. Zeman introduced new members, Heather Brinkworth, and Dr. Jean-Jacques Rajter.

**III. Chair's Minute**

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked Mayor Dean Trantalis for keeping everyone safe. He also thanked Superintendent Runcie for his facts and science about opening schools and doing everything he could to get students back into traditional learning. Tonight, the Board will discuss Bennett Elementary School and a new facility desperately needed after 70 years of use, and the equity education issue where there is a diverse education achievement between East and West Fort Lauderdale.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that over 100 people were registered for this meeting.

Ms. Saunders welcomed everyone and advised that the Education Advisory Board is looking to promote this type of collaboration.

**IV. Strategic Planning Session, Mayor Dean Trantalis, Superintendent Robert Runcie, and School Board Member Sarah Leonardi**

- Bennett Elementary School

Chair Dr. Zeman invited the Mayor and Superintendent to say hello and give some introductory remarks to the two topics being discussed at this meeting.

Mayor Trantalis advised that it has been a difficult year and education has hit some bumpy roads with attendance and many children not able to adapt to the changes; some missed out on a whole year of teaching through no fault of anything but the fact of dislocation services between politics, government, and the education system bouncing them from one place to another. The children became victims, and we need to make up for that. As a City Commission, a lot of time has been spent focusing on the need to improve education in the City of Fort Lauderdale. The major step was hiring Ms. Saunders and

they are applying resources to organize the availability, talent, and ideas to promote what they can throughout the community to ensure a well-rounded education experience for the children who attend their schools. The School Board, Superintendent, and staff are the ones who direct what goes on throughout the day, but there are so many things that can be done as a City in terms of participating in planning discussions and afterschool activities. He mentioned that the City of Fort Lauderdale was able to work with the Inter Miami Beckham Organization to provide practice soccer fields and a football stadium for two of the high schools that did not have one. Sports are part of the education experience and the City of Fort Lauderdale, its Administration, and the Government feel they can play an important role in trying to endure the full experience of an individual student who is trying to advance themselves both athletically as well as scholastically to ensure when they leave high school that they are going to go well-prepared for advanced education. He lives across the street from Bennett Elementary School and has promised residents in the neighborhood who are asking when they are going to get an improved school that the focus is on the school. He thanked Chair Dr. Zeman, Ms. Saunders, and the Board members for their commitment and sacrifice.

Superintendent Runcie thanked Chair Dr. Zeman for the work he has done with the Education Advisory Board. One of the best moves the City has taken was hiring Ms. Saunders; it has been a huge plus to have a point person at the City who can work with them to plan, think, and continue to push many things forward to help improve their schools and community. He also thanked Mayor Trantalis for his leadership in moving forward with the Joint Use Program for the parks. The City invested around a quarter of a million dollars for a playground at Bennett Elementary School, which will benefit those children as well as the community. He understood there is probably another \$11 million of investment in new City funded playgrounds on school properties and they look forward in continuing to work with the City on that as well. He and Mayor Trantalis agree on how critical the success of their schools is to the vitality of their communities, so they are committed to working with the City and others who want to make sure this happens. He mentioned the record number of absentees and truants the School Board has observed as well as the significant rise in students with "F" grades on assignments and tests. E-learning may work for some students, but there are many students struggling to connect and be successful in this environment. Schools are relatively safe because of precautions and protocols that have been put into place around cleaning and technology. Going into the next semester starting in January, families are being encouraged to send their children back to school. A direct outreach is going to be done with letters and phone calls to students who are not making adequate academic progress or who are chronically and habitually truant. Everything possible will be done to connect to those families and have them come in to meet with school Administrators and Counselors. If parents choose not to send their children back to school, they will sign a document acknowledging the education risks associated with that. They have to do everything possible to close the Covid side of the academic impact as well as the mental health and social emotional impacts this situation has created. He looks forward to continuing to work with the City and everyone to help get the students back on track to the greatest extent possible and

he believes the City of Fort Lauderdale is a great model as to how Cities can engage with public schools and work to make their schools better. They are focused on Bennett Elementary School and want to meet with the Principal and School Administrators to consider some ideas of how to bring additional innovative opportunities to the school to make it attractive and meet expectations families are looking for.

Chair Dr. Zeman presented a brief Power Point Presentation. Bennett Elementary School is a Strategic Initiative for the Board this year and they will continue working with Principal Danielle Smith. It was important to note that Bennett Elementary School was named after the longest serving Broward County School Board Superintendent and the building was established in the 1950's. A lot of time and money has been spent trying to keep the building up and multiple repair trucks are there daily to make sure the school is operable. There have been some puts and takes in the school; replacement projects were guaranteed that were pulled out during a recession, there was a Smart Bond that did not include what was important in the Castaldi Report, which made it clear from an engineering perspective that Bennett Elementary School should not be renovated anymore, it needed to be demolished and rebuilt. The status is that Bennett Elementary School is allocated a little renovation/repair money to take care of some things to make sure they can continue educating students, but they are not included in the Smart Bond to replace the buildings that are almost 70 years old. The Castaldi Report is an important part of the process and fundamentally, that designation says a school is either a replace or renovate and Bennett Elementary School was clearly one of the replace and rebuilds. The Board is going to continue to press hard and they are glad the Mayor and Superintendent have promised to pay attention to this.

Heather Brinkworth and others have pointed out in the past that while the building itself is important, there is significant evidence that people will look at the school once a new school is built and perhaps reconsider why they are not going there or why they are not living in the district within the boundary so they can take advantage of the school. He mentioned North Fort Lauderdale School and Harbordale Elementary School, both of which got new schools and there was a big flip flop in the enrollment of students in boundary versus out of boundary.

Many people have been working on a strategy that is about outside and inside; it is about how to fix the facilities, so it is a first-rate series of buildings designed and modernized for education. As far as the inside, it is about how the City helps Dr. Strauss and Principal Smith get to the point where the inside is as good as the brand new outside building. The Cambridge program and other things have been going on inside the school for the past several years, which have already led to some significant learning gains. The inside is already building momentum to get better, the programs and leadership is already seeing educational achievement improvements that are going to continue being mitigated in a negative way until the building is rebuilt. Chair Dr. Zeman thanked Principal Smith for her commitment to education and to the school.

Principal Smith advised that she enjoys attending these meetings. Bennett Elementary School recently implemented the Cambridge program, and she is proud of their feeder program, which goes from the elementary school to Sunrise Middle School, to Fort Lauderdale High School. Bennett Elementary School is a small boutique style school with about 330 students, so teachers know every child. Over half the teachers have had Cambridge training, but with Covid, the rest of the teachers have not been trained, so they have done an in-school trainer model and through this pandemic they have been focusing with the e-learning environment to ensure that students and teachers are engaged. Of the children, only 50% are neighborhood students and the other 50% are on reassignment. This is a key factor that shows only 70% to 80% of the students are Fort Lauderdale residents, which shows that people want to attend their school as opposed to their home school because of what they can do for the children and families. As far as teacher attention and recruiting, they focus on high-quality tier 1 instruction, which is being improved each day with collaboration. She is fortunate to have a great support staff as well as a Math and Literacy Coach who works with the teachers to collaborate and do instructions focus, framework, and calendars; they are continuously progress monitoring. Last week, she showed Sarah Leonardi around the school and she saw some of the projects that have been put on hold due to Covid, but things they plan to continue. She mentioned the Smart Bond project and noted that the City has been a great asset to the school because they have been able to reach out to the community in ways that she has not been able to do. With the help of the Education Advisory Board, they took on a task like no other and she appreciates all their hard work. She mentioned the phenomenal playground and court the City did for the school and she is looking forward to the ribbon-cutting ceremony, so they can truly celebrate the greatness, inside and out.

Ms. Saunders indicated that the City of Fort Lauderdale has been working closely with Broward County Public Schools to align their engagement strategy. Bennett Elementary School came to the Education Advisory Board because of the timing of decisions needed for the Smart Bond planning for the school. Starting in June, the Board has been engaging the community, using every forum available and social media outlets to connect the community to this project and provide opportunities for residents to give input in a way that would shape the future direction of the school. The Board is looking to understand additional ways to get further input needed for the School Board to make their decision on the future of Bennett Elementary School and the project of the building. The Education Advisory Board has been very intentional throughout this process and they are looking at the next phase of community input to provide specific prioritization on possible projects and opportunities that will be voted on by the School Board. The Board is continuing to engage in community outreach efforts and the result would be to provide a comprehensive community report of their findings to the School Board in alignment with their timing on the vote for Phase 2 of Bennett Elementary School.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that the Education Advisory Board's plan in working with the County and others is to try to put together their report by late spring, early summer, and he questioned if they would be on time or if they needed to accelerate.

Ms. Brinkworth thought that question would better be answered by the Superintendent. She noted that before a vote, the request would come to a Workshop for conversation about how they would move forward.

Superintendent Runcie advised that Ms. Saunders' timeline would work with the District. They try to start a process in the spring where there are conversations with the community and ideas about redesigning schools. The conversations are then taken into the fall to try to make decisions before winter break because when they return, that is their School Choice period when parents and families begin to look at schools and different options. They need to figure out how to collaborate more closely while going through this process.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that the Board continues to want to know the kind of information that would be helpful in the design of what is being done inside the school. The Education Advisory Board interviewed many people regarding Bennett Elementary School.

Mr. Lukic thanked the parents he interviewed and acknowledged Veronica Cloyd's attendance at this meeting. He interviewed parents who send their children to Bennett Elementary School and those who send their children outside the District. For those whose children attend outside the District of Bennett Elementary School, but live around the school, parents felt they did not have the third-party validation of the school; the story most often reported was that they did not know any children in the neighborhood who attend, and they did not see that as favorable. Secondly, there seemed to be a pervasive perception that the school grade is lower than what it is, and many parents see that as the school not being up to the level. Parents who do send their children to Bennett Elementary School do so because of the school programs; the ESE program was highly recommended by one of the parents who greatly stressed the excellent teaching capabilities of the teachers. Similarly, another parent said it feels like a family school, they had several children attend the school and felt a family link to the school. Parents were asked what they thought of the infrastructure and facilities and most of them, unfortunately, had only a superficial impression of the school as they have never been inside, so feedback was limited; the school could use a paint job. The only parent he interviewed who has been in the school for several years agreed there was room for improvement within the classrooms.

Ms. Munns stated that she interviewed one parent who has four children, 11 years old and under. The parent said he has plenty of options of where to send his kids, but it would always be Bennett Elementary School. He said the school is trying to keep up with the age of the building and doing the best they can to provide a safe environment, but it

is not good enough. He felt the communication and trust has been far better than any experience he would have elsewhere but having four children attending the school says a lot about his ability to overcome what he can see because of the staff who is committed to the education of his children. Ms. Munn also spoke with three teachers.

Vice Chair Ellowitz recognized Amy Rubin, Guidance Counselor, and thanked everyone she spoke with at the school. Teachers repeatedly echoed the same values when ranking school attributes on a scale of one to ten, which was safety, physical condition of the school, and afterschool enrichment. What really struck her the most about the comment by the Math Coach, who said when kids come to school, staff has an obligation to send them home to the parents in the same condition they received them, not just physically but emotionally. One thing she continuously heard was that they have the child's best interest at heart. When asked about programming, one of the teachers stated that a program is only as good as its implementation. Teachers said they are a small diverse, but individualized boutique type school and they are a hidden gem. Teachers feel empowered to express what they like and do not like as a staff collectively to each other and they talked about how that leads to not only growth, but individual growth as well. She heard the teachers ask for verbal support and social media and one of the teachers said, "Brag about us, spread the good news about good things that are happening here".

Ms. Brinkworth commented that the teachers know each child by name; they know their interests and want to help more children. Only so much value can be created with what you have; they have so much pride and respect for their environment and culture they are in; they feel safe but feel like they deserve more.

Ms. Coetzee advised that she interviewed Amy Rubin, School Counselor, Sue Wilcher, the Literary Coach, Ms. Wilcher, the third-grade teacher, and Dr. Tiffany McCahill. The overall impression she received was that because the school is so small it did not matter what grade the school was operating under because in the teachers and counselors' minds, they are an "A" grade school because they give individualized attention to the little ones, which you cannot get in an "A" grade school with 150,000 students. Ms. Wilcher said she left another successful school to come to this school because her teaching makes a difference. Ms. Wilcher thought it would be lovely to get reading books from a small scale up to the level of grades and noted that just having correct reading material for the children instead of using old books would be an easy fix. She also said that many people do not know the school has the Cambridge program.

Vice Chair Ellowitz stated she contacted Carey Villeneuve, member of the Civics Association in Victoria Park. She questioned there was any possibility that City funded playgrounds could be used after hours for the community; she believed it would benefit the community.

Superintendent Runcie thought the parks could be used after hours by the community and they essentially put a moratorium on community partners and organizations utilizing school building facilities because of the pandemic, but this request is to use the actual playground and areas surrounding the school, which does not present the same kind of challenge, it is after school. The City has made a significant investment in partnering with this, so the answer is yes, they will coordinate with the City to make sure it happens after winter break. He wants to touch base with Principal Smith and if there are no concerns, it is a thumbs up.

Chair Dr. Zeman introduced Alex Collazo, President of the Homeowners Association right next to Bennett Elementary School in Poinsettia Heights. He asked Mr. Collazo to share his thoughts about the need for a new facility at Bennett Elementary School.

Mr. Collazo indicated that his son attends Bennett Elementary School, and his wife, Monique, is the President of the PTA; they are here advocating for the school. He thanked the Board for enlightening all the non-educators and for reaching out to collaborate on several endeavors including allowing the Association to use the school for their meetings until this unfortunate pandemic came into play. From dealing with faculty and staff, Bennett Elementary School is a great school, and they recognize its needs. As parents, one of their main concerns is safety and security, as well as the education, and they want to make sure those things do not get overlooked. They understand the concern of the cost of a new school and the Civics Association is advocating for Bennett Elementary School to hopefully set the precedence of what is to be expected of schools in this new age we are living in. He was in favor of a new school at Bennett Elementary School.

Veronica Cloyd, former Broward County certified teacher, and current Poinsettia Heights resident, commented that her two elementary age children go to private school. Many people who live in Poinsettia Heights do not send their children to Bennett Elementary School and advised her against it. About four years ago, she called Bennett Elementary School to schedule a tour of the school and was told they do not do tours and that was the end of her consideration with the school. She understands Bennett Elementary School has undergone a huge overhaul via staff and programs in recent years and was excited to hear everything she learned at this meeting. They have the need and families who want the sense of community and an outstanding public school in their neighborhood; they need to see the change and when they do, they will be there 100%.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp advised that she spoke to realtors, five top producers on the east side market from three of the top real estate companies. The first question on the survey was, "Is the quality of the local public school a minor, medium, or major factor in your client's decisions to purchase a home?" Unequivocally, without hesitation, all of them said, "Major". The real estate market and education are connected; parents who have school-age children are looking for areas in which they can send their kids to a good school. One

of the other questions from the scale included safety, physical condition, school grade, educational and academic programming, electives, and after school enrichment and safety, and without question or hesitation, it was a ten for all of them. The other question was about the physical condition of the facility, which ranked high as did the school grade; the other issues were not as important. Many stated that perception is reality and as realtors, they tell their sellers that the moment the client drives up to the house the first thing they see is curb appeal and they are going to know whether they are going to want to go further into the house. The interior can be spectacular, but if they go up to the house and it does not look good from the outside, many times they will not walk in the door, and it is believed that is a lot of what is happening with Bennett Elementary School. A school appearance can give the appearance of safety if it does not look updated, well kept, or up to current standards. Most of the agents hovered around what percentage of the clients were looking for in that geographic area in which Bennett Elementary resides, which is also where Bayview and Coral Ridge are located, and there is a division between Bennett Elementary School and Bayview Elementary School. Of the realtors surveyed, all of them had 60% to 100% of their clients looking in those areas and when they found out they were not going to be assigned to Bayview Elementary School, 20% still chose to go into the same home because the price point was still lower than the homes slated for Bayview Elementary School. Clients would weigh the costs and if they were paying less for their home, they could afford to go to private school. If clients did not choose Bennett Elementary School, some decided to pay for private school, or they moved elsewhere. If This can be made a wonderful, beautiful, appealing location to draw parents, the school will get them in the door to see the incredible things going on inside.

Vice Chair Ellowitz thought the positive and uplifting thing about this meeting and initiative was that there were parents who did not send their children to Bennett Elementary School, but they were still willing to participate in a discussion about why and how this could be improved. Our City is privileged to have a web of citizens who are not only thoughtful and committed, but well educated, financially privileged, have diverse talents, and willing to share with the students; one even said they would be willing to facilitate afterschool programming on financial literacy based on her own area of expertise. Many of these people are empty nesters and have successfully raised and launched their own children. They are privy to what worked with their children and are willing to accept and implement what each considers to be their civic obligation to publicize and promote education, but they need to be told what to do and say. Some suggested financial awards in the form of scholarships, sponsorships, or other merit awards that would recognize exceptional students.

Ms. Lockwood indicated that education is a critical component and when businesses are considering relocating to South Florida they are competing against Los Angeles, New York, and other major metropolitan areas. Businesses look at external variables; they investigate before they come here for a tour; they look at school grades and safety

records, and when they arrive, they take a tour. From that standpoint, physical appearance matters. They are also looking through the lens of schools for their children, but longer-term future talent. They want to come here because they can find good college graduates, so they pay attention to the higher end space. The other distinction is that the CEO and Senior Management may afford private school if they want to live Downtown, but they consider quality of the schools for their employees. The factors that education comes up against are tax structure, quality of living, and major catastrophic weather events. This comes up in every business relocation conversation; it is one of the top considerations and the exception to the rule. The Alliance's job is to attract and retain job creators; people are coming here to stay and build a life.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned what else Ms. Leonardi would like to learn and if there was another group the Board should talk to, to make sure she is fully informed about this decision.

Ms. Leonardi thanked the Board for all the work they have done. District 3 encompasses many Cities, and nothing is comparable to this Education Advisory Board. She is interested to go forward and think about the kinds of programming the community wants to see. Principal Smith has done a lot of work and she thinks it is going to be important when talking about continuing to revitalize the school. We need to see what business leaders are looking for in the education system and what is valuable to the parents who hope to send their kids to Bennett Elementary School.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned testimonials and read five quotes from parents regarding Bennett Elementary School. He stated that the Education Advisory Board would continue to do this for another couple months and noted that he would like to conduct more interviews.

Ms. Saunders reported that the City of Fort Lauderdale is expecting 7,000 new housing units, 6,600 of which will be in the Downtown area. The Commission has set a Strategic goal to support the increase of public-school enrollment and they see the importance with the population growth of that effort. There is a waiting list of over 1,000 students for magnet programs and reassignments. That data says there is a high demand for specialized programs that have proven to create appeal and add value to student learning. There is a great opportunity to make improvements to infrastructure of the building of Bennett Elementary School. The goal is to collaborate with the schools and community and to create awareness of the program offerings available in schools and to connect with partners and explore new innovative ideas to add new programs that create a wider appeal. As part of this effort, they had a collaboration with the Downtown Development Authority.

Ms. Morejon commented that this was a rewarding discussion to listen to and be a part of. She is in favor of the Danielle Smith Award and hopes to attend several more meetings. Many people look at the Downtown Development Authority and think they are in the business of promoting new private development, but they have been trying to build a world-class livable urban destination for residents and employees. One of the pivotal factors for companies, CEO's, and employees to determine where they want to move is where their children will go to school. While there are only probably less than 10% residents in Downtown under the age of 18, there is more than a third that are ages 13 to 34, which means prime age for families and the City wants them to stay and keep coming. Bennett Elementary School can be a showcase school for these families to choose and beyond that, they are excited to look at the entire network of elementary schools surrounding the Greater Downtown. The Downtown Development Authority is here as a partner and their Board of Directors is committed to working on schools as a top priority over the coming years. She was pleased to be invited to this meeting and to show strong support for focusing on education for current and future residents and employees in the Greater Downtown. She thanked Chair Dr. Zeman for attending their Board meetings and looks forward to participating.

- Equity in Education

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that this is an important issue to put into the context of Bennett Elementary School. Bennett Elementary School is an East Fort Lauderdale school, and it is the only one that is not an "A" school in East Fort Lauderdale. Equity in education is a bigger issue than Bennett Elementary School; it is an issue about two-thirds of Fort Lauderdale students who go to school in a place where education achievement is not the same as it is in East Fort Lauderdale. The goal is to have equity in the sense that everyone is equal at an average point, but what needs to be the singular goal of this initiative is the quality at the same level of educational achievement as East Fort Lauderdale. This issue is bigger in scope and will take longer to put together; it is not about one school or one construction project; it is about fixing two-thirds of Fort Lauderdale. It is the same systems and same City that could invest in West Fort Lauderdale and get to the same level of academic achievement. They have been studying the Harlem Children's Zone and have been informed by the Tamarac Institute in Canada that has eliminated poverty in seven Cities in Canada through some amazing management techniques, and we are going to launch a West Fort Lauderdale Initiative to work on the two-thirds of Fort Lauderdale that does not have the same level of achievement as the one-third east of Fort Lauderdale.

Ms. Saunders stated this is one of the topics that will be required, very sustained focus, collaboration, and participation with all stakeholders. Quality means every student gets the same thing and equity means they get what they need to be successful. We must understand what supports need to be under each individual student for them to achieve their full potential. There should be some equity training; there are many people in the

community who can be part of that and help to strengthen their approach and create a consistent framework in terminology and understanding to tackle this pressing issue. One thing to look at specifically is poverty; national trends are compelling and show that neighborhood poverty has a significant impact on a child's ability to get ready for school and to be successful in college and a career. Data is strong in saying that students from poverty tend to enter Kindergarten behind grade level, so they are less ready to start school than their affluent peers and that gap continues to widen throughout their education and career and creates a larger gap between low income and high-income students. There are also higher absentee rates and students are less likely to graduate from high school and more likely to stay in poverty through their lifespan. The Harlem's Children Zone is a place-based approach, and staff is going to go block by block and infuse education services and support in a targeted geographic region known to need more support and resources, which has proven to be effective. There are a couple key components; early investment to make sure every child has access to early literacy programs and providing support for the entire system or the family unit. High performing schools are putting the center of work around with youth programs that provide extended learning and opportunities. This is a community building effort and a community change approach that bases education as a central focus understanding that is a pathway to be able to seek out new opportunities and break the inner-generational cycle of poverty. For so many of the Principals who are doing the work of bringing in partners to make sure the children have resources they need, that approach needs to be taken on scale and as many resources, partnerships, and other avenues should be brought in to provide a holistic comprehensive approach that is mindful of the influence of poverty and educational access, opportunities, and outcomes. She encouraged everyone to look more at this model to learn from that approach. The City of Fort Lauderdale is trying to understand where there are high concentrations of poverty within the City. A preliminary map highlighted 30% or higher poverty rates. They are seeking to understand the impact of poverty within the community and understand from a school perspective some of the challenges and unique opportunities available to create a localized approach that works for every student within the community. They are looking to achieve equity and outcomes so no matter where a child lives and no matter what their parents' income is, that they have an opportunity to be successful in school, to start school ready, and to have access to great programs, allowing their educational journey and into a fulfilling career. That work is starting, and the City of Fort Lauderdale has partnered with Broward College to be a Broward City, which means in their Community Centers, college level course will be offered, which breaks down some barriers to access to college. The idea is that there is access to college and to quality schools down the street. This is a big role and will not happen overnight. The community needs to take shared ownership over the educational results of the students and ultimately achieve consistent high performance at every school and create pathways for the students to get out of poverty and take on opportunities they may have not known about had these types of educational programs not been available.

Chair Dr. Zeman was happy the Education Advisory Board put this together. If successful, it will take a lot of members of the Coalition, all of which have been contacted in the context of a West Fort Lauderdale Education Initiative, trying to find equity throughout the entire City. This has been done in other places, not just Cities; it has been Early Learning Coalitions and organizations dedicated to things that go from cradle to college. They are wrap-around services and deal with things like Dr. Verdi Knapp and her interest in mindfulness, because so many people have interests in Parks and Recreation because of its contribution to learning, mental health, and social and emotional learning. It is trying to find a way to get everyone interested in lifting this group of students to a level the City of Fort Lauderdale already has. This is being done with full support of the City of Fort Lauderdale Commission. The political leaders who appointed members to this Board are demanding that they must be equitable and deliver in an equitable way across the entire City.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned the January agenda and stated that a significant amount of time would be spent going back through this as issue #1. Perhaps Principal Smith will join again and there will be seven meetings in a row with her to discuss Bennett Elementary School. The Board will also talk about the awards for one Administrator and one Teacher nominated in Fort Lauderdale to remind everyone there is plenty attention on trying to make everything great.

- Update on other EAB Strategic Initiatives & City Priorities

Ms. Saunders provided a brief update on Joint Use Parks. Scoring criteria has been developed to help prioritize the projects, which was done in coordination with the Principals, and key opportunities have been identified that create win-wins for the school and community. They are currently working on some of the short-term projects and making those accessible as well as thinking about long-term projects that will be part of the Bond process. Community forums will be developed to finalize the scope of projects and there should be updates in January.

#### **V. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes:** November 19, 2020

Dr. Verdi Knapp referenced Page 14, Paragraph 2, which should read as, “**Dr.** Verdi Knapp”.

Page 14, middle of page, should read as, “**She also mentioned at job fairs for teachers, there were long lines for high performing schools and that the lower performing school Principals were trying to encourage potential teachers to visit and consider their schools as an option**”.

Mr. Lukic mentioned Page 5, last paragraph, which should read as, “**Aice** Diploma”.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned Page 13, second line, and noted it should read as, “...**two system opportunities**”

The last sentence on Page 13 should read as, “**There will be a discussion about what the Board is happening with all 30 schools all 20,000 students, all 7,000 new residential units being built in Downtown**”.

**Motion** by Vice Chair Ellowitz, seconded by Mr. Lukic, to approve the November 19, 2020 minutes as amended. **Motion** passed unanimously. (16-0)

## **VI. Closing**

Superintendent Runcie advised that he plans to bring their Facilities Team to Bennett Elementary School in January to do a tour of the school. He will invite Chair Dr. Zeman, Ms. Saunders, and the Mayor to take a firsthand look to see what could be done to prioritize and expedite some things.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

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