



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**VIRTUAL EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
CITY HALL
8TH FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301
THURSDAY, January 21, 2021 6:30-8:30 PM**

Members	Attendance	July 2020 – May 2021	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	7	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	6	1
Lisa May	P	4	3
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	7	0
Heather Brinkworth	P	2	0
April Jeff	A	2	5
Dr. Heather Munns	A	6	1
Tina Jaramillo	P	7	0
Colleen Lockwood	P	7	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	A	6	1
Vickie Melus	A	4	3
Christopher Relyea	P	7	0
Lillian Small	A	2	5
Rory Sponsler	P	6	1
Betty Shelley	P	5	2
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	7	0
Yolanda B. Francis	P	4	3
Tomislav Lukic	P	7	0
Dr. Jean-Jacques Rajter	P	1	0

Staff/Guests

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale
Dr. Lori Canning, Executive Director for Early Learning Language Acquisitions
Dr. George Makiya
Mark Strauss, Cadre Director
Kelly Raben, Executive assistant to Sarah Leonardi
Danielle Smith, Bennett Elementary Principal
Dr. Charles Dukes
Dr. Sharon Darling
Sharonda Bailey
Deniece Williams
Cormic Priester, Rock Island Principal
Michael Billins, Thurgood Marshall Elementary School Principal
Dr. Rosalind Osgood, Broward County School Board Chair

Crysta Parkinson, Recording Secretary, Prototype-Inc.

I. Welcome

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

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

As of this date, January 21, 2021, 14 of 19 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

III. Chair's Minute

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that over 100 people participated in the last meeting and there was a robust discussion about education in Fort Lauderdale, Equity in Education, as well as updating the Board's Strategic Initiatives and progress they have made. A tour of Bennett Elementary School was rescheduled for February 5, 2021. On the National front, parties have agreed to provide funding from the Federal Government to pay for some things Superintendent Runcie and others have been asking for. He mentioned principles the Board has discussed for a long time that are not official, but have been gained by consensus, not by any motion or vote, but they are important. The Board seeks to have participatory initiatives whether visiting a school, attending a PTA meeting, coming to an Education Advisory Board meeting, or interviewing Principals or others; everyone they talk to is important. It is critical that the Board think about what they are doing in a way of capturing greater participation, not less. The second principle the Board has discussed was the idea of collective impact; that when you improve a school or a City of schools, the impact is not just on the students, but to the well-being of everyone who lives there. This meeting is a discussion and furthering of the Board's goals about equity in education. A considerable amount of time will be spent talking about what equity means to Principals and what it would mean to move 13,000 students forward. The Board is interested in reaching the highest levels of education they already have in Fort Lauderdale. He has engaged 12 people since last month's meeting on this topic about an initiative to improve education across Fort Lauderdale and 12 out of 12 either signed up to participate or offered to help in some way and several of those people are in attendance tonight.

IV. Equity in Education Framework

Chair Dr. Zeman advised they would begin with a summary of listening sessions Ms. Saunders put together.

Ms. Saunders indicated that during the month of January, the City hosted listening sessions for Principals to attend, so they could begin to explore definitions of equity and education to understand where there are opportunities for the City to contribute to that

effort. As discussed over the past year, education equity is a multi-fold challenge and requires a multi-fold solution. As a City, they have an opportunity to engage in this effort to look comprehensively at designing a system that supports the needs of children knowing that schools alone cannot address all the factors that impact a student's academic performance as well as out of school factors. They are seeking to create an integrated strategy to combine neighborhood revitalization efforts with school improvement efforts that builds upon strengths, resources, and assets of the community. Many organizations are looking to engage in this work, and she acknowledged their efforts. Many of the Education Advisory Board members are involved either professionally or on a volunteer basis promoting equity in education and she looks forward to having more conversations about how their work is helping strengthen this approach to create this interconnected system that provides support across the lifespan. During the listening sessions, 23 Principals plus the Cadre Director, Dr. Mark Strauss, participated.

She discussed equity and equality, specific challenges the Board has identified and addressed relating to quality Early Learning Programming, challenges Principals have identified with students who do not have access to basic necessities, equitable distribution of funding, possibilities to bring new resources through partnerships to maximize the collective impact of work underway, Principals encouraging the City to identify non-academic measures of success, trust and building authentic relationships, supporting schools and bringing in partnerships, the perception of Fort Lauderdale being divided into two Cities, and effective strategies.

Ms. Saunders stated the broad theme that came out of this work was developing a platform that recognizes the work underway at the schools, creating that pride, showcasing the learning that is happening, and recognizing the diversity of resources and programs the District currently offers. The challenge is connecting those with additional community resources to further enrich these experiences. It is important to note that students are grappling with social justice and many groups are involved in this effort because it is important for students to engage in deep important conversations. The Board wants to think boldly on strategies that are going to promote transformative change, which takes sustained effort and time, so they want to create a balance of identifying this and short-term opportunities to make a measurable impact. In discussions with Principals, the Board can identify some concrete steps and collaborations opportunities that can further enhance equitable learning experiences for the students.

The following points were highlighted:

- School Resource Centers
- Parent and Job Training Resources
- Partnerships
- Joint Use Parks
- Broadband Internet Access

Ms. Saunders advised that the City is continuing to have this collaboration; being able to create forums where they can engage in discussion is a big element as to how they can co-develop solutions to challenges they face. When thinking about systematic change, the discussion to focus on racial equity and acknowledge some of the structural and systemic challenges in the society need to expand.

Principal Cormic Priester commented that this is the first step for everyone to come together and the step of collaboration. Everything mentioned is in alignment with their goals of supporting families, but one thing she shared was that as a community, the two Fort Lauderdale areas, east and west, must merge to help all scholars within the community. It is a pleasure to be part of the 33311 in Broward County and she wants to share the amazing talents within their community. She noted that collaboration is important to bring the community together.

Dr. Mark Strauss stated his takeaway was that this was the beginning; the first step of an important conversation that can transform not only education, but life in the City of Fort Lauderdale. It is extremely important to recognize the fact that the City of Fort Lauderdale is in many ways two separate Cities that often do not act in a positive way. The fact that we, as a group, are willing to look at that ugly truth and begin to address it, takes courage and he applauded the Board and Principals for being willing to discuss things that are not always comfortable. He looks forward to the opportunities of partnerships, looking at schools not in isolation, but as part of a broad community, and how they can engage and wrap around to meet the needs of all students and families.

Principal Michael Billins shared the same things as Principal Priester and he thanked this Board for taking on the initiative. The consistency to have these types of conversations is a great start, but they need to continue to see the change in areas of Fort Lauderdale. Not until recently did he ever think about Fort Lauderdale having an east and west, he just thought of it as Fort Lauderdale. Being a Principal for the past eight years, he sees differences between east Fort Lauderdale, which is east of Andrews Avenue, and west Fort Lauderdale, west of Andrews Avenue.

Dr. Rosalind Osgood thanked Ms. Saunders for the information and the City of Fort Lauderdale for prioritizing education. Education is always last on the agenda and is an afterthought in most Cities; people leave it to the School District, and they cannot do it on their own. She is the School Board Chair this year and is meeting with Superintendent Runcie, so she needs to make sure there is not another Board member because she has to think about the Sunshine Law.

Kelly Raben, Executive Assistant to Sarah Leonardi, was on the call, but under the attendees instead of the panelists.

Ms. Saunders indicated that she coordinated with the District and got counsel from Barbara Myrick that two Board members can be on the call, but only one can contribute

to the conversation and the other will listen. In the future, she can look at public noticing so both can contribute.

Dr. Osgood requested Ms. Saunders help her with a routine schedule because sometimes she cannot respond at the last minute. Equity is good; the School District started three or four years ago and now they have an Equity Department and Equity liaisons in many schools and they just approved another initiative around equity. Equity means equal opportunities and they want to give the same opportunities to all students. When she looks at discipline, referral, and attendance data, equity is still not getting them where they need to be. She mentioned there is a 10% disparity in the graduation rate between black and white students and she can go through the data with the reading scores. She thinks we must get serious and look at becoming an anti-racist School District and anti-racist municipality while working in an aggressive way as leaders to use adaptive problem solving to weed out systemic racism that is in a lot of the systems in the way they operate. She has always been aware of the east and west Fort Lauderdale and noted that the line is moving further to the east near Federal Highway. To work from an anti-racist perspective would allow them to address issues like poverty and go to the Fort Lauderdale Chamber to ask for help. Economic barriers are needed to help families be sustained and the District needs to work on putting kids on a course where they can succeed academically. She liked everything she read and was glad the Principals were involved. About 71,000 students are back in school as of today and many of the AP and Honor students are not doing well online. There will be a robust winter and summer program, but they do not know how test scores are going to be used. She questioned if they will be used for retention or in a punitive way towards teachers' evaluations. While working on a local level, they must strategize on making policy changes. She hopes the Board will come up with the best practice model that can be taken to the League of Cities to get other municipalities on board. The District has done a great job getting students into AP and Honor classes, but there are too many three-year-old children that need to be in school. She questioned how they should talk to service providers to strengthen Head Start and Early Childhood Development at the same time they are fighting with the government to allow teachers to be paid and receive bonuses and incentives the same way as other teachers. This Board is detail oriented and she thinks they need a policy part of this group to help work on local policies within the School Board. She appreciates Ms. Saunders and the City for making this investment to education. She shouted out to Betty Shelley and thanked her for the many years she has supported education.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated that Dr. Osgood's comments were consistent with the two-year conversation the Board has had. The change is that they are done talking; they have had the conversation, seen the evidence, and are aware in very measurable terms of two Fort Lauderdale areas. Their model is like the Harlem Children's Zone, which has been a resounding success like in the Tamarac Institute of Canada who eliminated poverty in seven Cities. The Board does not believe this is going to be called Equity and Education, it is going to be something different and will be focused on what the Board is chartered with, which is educational achievement. The City of Fort Lauderdale has proven they can

do world-class education in this City with these students, parents, streets, and beaches and now they need to spread the news; it is spreading from east to west. They need to spread the excellence to all citizens they care about and so far, they have gotten amazing support. The model of change they chose seems to be one that has lifted Cities out of poverty and lifted School Districts up in achievement, not just schools. As they make progress over the next five years or so, the effects will not be just in education. As other people mentioned, it is the backbone of the community.

Ms. Saunders invited Dr. George Makiya to share some of the work he is spearheading in looking at this comprehensive approach to promote social mobility.

Dr. Makiya stated he was excited to share the concept the Board has adopted at Broward College. As Ms. Saunders mentioned, he has the privilege of serving as Chair of the Prosperity Broward's Data Working Group. He wants to embrace the concept of social value, which is a new way of looking at collective impact, but from a new lens, which goes together with partnerships that addresses the entire continuum of a lifecycle. He provided a brief Power Point Presentation: A Strategic Model for Inclusive Upward Mobility. He indicated that Broward County has more than 15,000 non-profits; individuals who have thought of issues and challenges that face Broward County. When looking holistically at this continuum, it is seen that life is pretty much broken into several segments and each of the non-profits serve one small portion of that lifecycle, but no one assumes responsibility for the outcome. When talking to the organizations, they find that their missions and initiatives have a good impact data, but it is not collective framework. This framework is one they are sharing generously with groups that are willing to band together in a collective fashion, creating a holistic impact. The true measure is investment; people are making investments whether they are volunteering, giving financial support, or non-financial support, and then there is a return to end users. In speaking with Ms. Saunders, she thought it was in line with what she was doing with the City. They are looking at a new model looking beyond the individual impact and at the shared impact and the collective impact with the community and how that can holistically be measured.

Chair Dr. Zeman opened the floor to Board members.

Ms. Jaramillo thought equity and education and a lot of things touched on was the idea of stakeholders and getting the community involved. As Dr. Osgood said, education sometimes is the last thing people focus on within the community, but once there is community engagement, that could be the buy in for moving forward with equity. Everyone knows kids must be held to the same rigorous academic standards regardless of race, gender, and ethnicity, and when that is done, students have the opportunity not only to succeed, but to thrive in their school environment and later within their communities. She thought it was important to recognize that outside of school, when students go back to the community, those who have access to equity are prepared for careers and end up having a broader understanding of civics, social justice issues, and have more civic engagement and maybe they will come back and sit on a Board like the Education

Advisory Board or other Boards within their community to give back; they also have more of an economic mobility that brings more money into the communities and strengthening the local economy. She thought it was important to have the stakeholder buy in so people understand the connection from education into the larger impact into the communities.

Mr. Relyea mentioned accentuating the strengths of the schools and students rather than addressing the weaknesses. He fully supports identifying and closing the gaps, but accentuating those strengths is a way to entice people for buy in. He stated there is such a tremendous amount of talent and excellence happening in schools that have a different kind of perception than the public believes. The reality is that this is a very wealthy City, there is a ton of power, money, influence, and ingenuity and the Board must figure out a way to harness it and focus it on the single biggest issues facing the community, which is the education issue. If the education problem is fixed, every other problem in the City gets mitigated. They must make the people who have those resources care and the way to make them care is to take the strengths the kids have in the schools and shove it in their faces, so they cannot help but care and dedicate their resources to help solving this problem.

Vice Chair Ellowitz mentioned the benefits to the City if they are to achieve this very achievable goal. On Martin Luther King, Jr. Day she heard this quote, "A movement is how we come together when things fall apart". At first, she thought it was relevant to the conversation because it looks like the schools on the west side have fallen apart, but it is not that they have fallen apart, it appears they have never really been put together in the same fashion as the schools on the east. The Board has had many discussions regarding discrepancy between the schools east and west of Federal Highway in terms of Census, school grade, and individual academic achievement. Last month, the Board talked about some areas of the City and the concentration of about 30% of the community living in poverty, which COVID has exasperated. Board members know that a great City consists of a great education system and there are elements of that throughout the City. Achieving equity and education is an investment that yields one of the highest returns on their investment. The City becomes so much more enticing and will ultimately attract businesses that want to relocate or develop here. The Board has also talked about how they want to create a solid, stable, local workforce they can draw from. There is a big difference when there are people in the community who work in the community and know and love the community who are not transplants from six months ago. Drawing from a pool of people who already live here who are familiar with the area will reduce poverty and crime. Many Board members, their kids, and people they know have been privileged to get a quality public education, or maybe a private education or both, but many are here with the intention of improving the public school system for other peoples' children, not just their own; luck and good fortune should not be what dictates a child's future. When there is a relative in need, we go above and beyond; we give that child every resource possible to assure their outcome and that should be done as a community for all the kids no matter what.

She mentioned the Harlem Children's Zone. From a systemic perspective as a Social Worker, that entire concept is a 97-block radius that is addressed individually by a tiny region to give kids in that community what they need. Other members of the Board can also augment this list in detail in terms of Early Childhood Education benefits, because that is a huge component they are talking about. The Harlem Children's Zone benefits students, the community at large, including the parents, and they provide services during off-school hours, weekends, and summers. It is important to note that many of these services are already provided within the community, the problem is they are being provided after the fact, when kids are older and have already experienced deficits for years.

The following are components of the Harlem Children's Zone:

- A series of workshops for parents of children age 0-3.
- All day Pre-Kindergarten.
- Extended day Charter Schools.
- All day Pre-Kindergarten.
- Extended day Charter Schools.
- Youth violence prevention efforts.
- Social Services such as Foster Care prevention.
- College admissions and retention.

Vice-Chair Ellowitz stated the question is if we want to provide services to children and young adults after they live in a gap for close to two decades. They have already developed an awareness of being marginalized, realizing there has not been equity for them and they exist in a cohort of young people who already know the rights and privileges some of us speak of in terms of how they live their day to day lives have not applied to them.

The Board conducted interviews to engage parents, faculty, community members, and stakeholders, and she interviewed Homeowner's Associations. During those interviews, she discovered those who live in the most desirable areas and have already raised their children and people who live in those areas who never had children of their own were more than able and willing to do anything she asked and were willing to suggest things like scholarships on behalf of their Homeowner's Association to acknowledge civic or academic achievement. Not only were they willing to help monetarily, but everyone she spoke to was willing to help in kind and with their time. On the cusp of the Parks initiative, the Board is in a fabulous position to continue to educate the public and cultivate this groundswell of support for the initiatives they have. Continuously, she mostly heard from people who said, "We want to help, but we do not know what you need and do not know how to share the information, they were not well enough informed". She could not explain how this initiative has impacted her and stated what a pleasure it has been to learn and to educate as many people as possible and hopefully get them as excited as her to participate and contribute in some way.

Mr. Lukic thanked Ms. Saunders for putting together this amazing document. The area interesting to him was at the bottom of Page 2, the Effective Strategies, and Importance of Partnerships. As someone who has recently gone through the education system in Fort Lauderdale, this resonates with him, as there are many instances where the schools are excellent in terms of both teachers being motivated and materials provided, but it is that little bit that is missing that cannot be bought. Community participation cannot be bought. Some of the bullets stand out, such as bringing community members into the schools and taking field trips. They live in an incredibly rich area of the Nation and there is both the willpower and ability, not just materially, to open the consciousness of students to everything that exists and to make them realize they can achieve it. The Board's participation within schools and bringing members of the public to schools is precarious, but he thought if they start working on it now, by the time COVID clears up, they have a running start.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp indicated one of the things that struck her was speaking to the intrinsic value of these students and for every one of them to know their value and worth. It is so unfortunate because when growing up in this community or any community where there is a lack of equity, you know it, see it, and are faced with it day after day. Where do you end up when you are constantly faced with, "I am not as valuable as they are?" She liked Vice Chair Ellowitz's point of focusing efforts on places that need it. She mentioned Mr. Relyea's, building on what is valuable and working already. Everyone is a genius, but if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid. We must build on the value of these children and what they bring to the community aside from what they are achieving on the test scores. How can we build on the intrinsic value of these students? If you evaluate and look at the economies across the world that are successful it is because everyone feels like they have a chance and an opportunity, which is what makes a viable economy. If they are going to speak to the values of the community and they understand they live in a very wealthy community, then speak to their values and let them understand how increasing the intrinsic value in all students makes us all better. If this is not invested in now, it is going to continue to cost the City in the most negative ways all the way around. She mentioned Dr. Strauss saying this is the beginning. One thing she has learned during the short time she has been on this Board is that they are a Board of action and she is proud to be part of this. The Board needs to make sure they do not spend five to ten years talking about this, they need to use their resources, do what needs to be done, and take action.

Ms. Francis agreed with what has been said. Equity is remembering that we are not going to get the same thing. The Board needs to think more of the universal divide for learning where barriers are being removed, so everyone can have equal access, so they can make the achievement. Students can do the work; they need preschool, and she agreed with Early Education. This is a Board of action and this has been discussed long enough; members are ready to get to work.

In response to Chair Dr. Zeman, Ms. Shelley advised she has been involved in education her whole life. She stated, "The better the schools are, the better the City".

Ms. May commented that she appreciates the depth of research and believes if education were better, all the other society ills would be relieved, such as poverty, domestic violence, gangs, and drug addictions; she thought all that was tied to lack of opportunity. She believes very strongly that there must be a sustained presence for teaching social and emotional wellness within the schools. Students are going to do as well as they are doing personally and when they are doing poorly personally, when their life is more than they can manage, that change is seen in their grades. She asked to be a part of this Board because she believes passionately that they must also equip students with conflict resolution and communication skills, so when they are out of the classroom, they are able to manage their personal life, so they have a chance with their educational life.

Chair Dr. Zeman advised Superintendent Runcie is a big advocate and has continued to move positions and money in that direction from things like Ms. May described to mental health, so Social Workers and Counselors recognize many schools in the County are the social fabric. If students do not get their food, counseling, medications, etc., from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., they will not get it; they do not get it on weekends or on breaks and that is where the City can help. Dr. Makiya's guidance on collective impact is important; the question is how to put so many people and organizations together who want to contribute and recognize that great Cities all have great public education. There is a strong culture of helping other people, but it needs to be organized. The City is big enough to organize this and they could do so in a way where they are not telling people what to do but helping them get organized, so they are all successful. Dr. Osgood talked about developing best practices and they are on the way to building partnerships. The City has a sustained staff member and five would probably be more appropriate to the mission because there is an opportunity to fill so many gaps the County is not funded to do. There are opportunities to do things better, some will not be fixed with money and some may need money. They have an opportunity to do something to make the City better.

Ms. Coetzee agreed with all the comments. She would like to see how to educate parents to be more involved. Schools in the east have a lot of parent involvement. She understands parents do not always have time because they are working two or three jobs, but parental involvement helps the child as well as the school and it builds a stronger community; it could be a positive force all around.

Ms. Brinkworth commented how excited she was about the opportunity they have in the City of Fort Lauderdale. It was mentioned earlier that the Board has had this discussion and nothing moved forward, but part of that was not having a City Commission standing next to them, ready, willing, and able, and she believes that is quite different. One thing to remember is that there are teachers and Administrators in the schools who are working as hard as they can, some could do better, and some are making huge impacts on the lives of those children and they are making academic gains. The difficulty she sees is

resources that are very siloed; duplicate efforts are happening, and people are not communicating. This City faces issues of rising tides, literally, and questioned how a conversation about the rising tide or equity across the schools is as important, if not more important, than the conversation about why public education in the City is a critical component to having a great City and having everyone talk about that is going to be a game changer. The influencers are going to have to bring all the other influencers to the table to make sure that is what everyone is talking about and is focused on.

Ms. Saunders requested Ms. Lockwood share some of the work she is doing with Bridge to Life, which is creating a collective impact model and promoting college and career access.

Ms. Lockwood mentioned change is needed as well as becoming an anti-racist system and support structure. She referenced Dr. Osgood's comments and stated the idea of participatory and collaborative conversations around this are terrific. Collective impact work is difficult; collaboration is not hard and is not new; there are a lot of examples of partnerships, networks, and joint efforts. There are three programs in Broward County that define themselves as collective impact: Bridge to Life, Broward Up, and Prosperity Broward. To be successful, structure is needed, and successful collective impact requires that goals are delineated, and objectives are clear.

She asked the following questions:

- Who are we serving? The City's approved Legislative agenda is that the City endorses and advocates for Early Learning and Workforce Development, but the rest of the K-12 space is not addressed, nor is targeted populations, zip codes of low-income families, or students of color identified. It was noted that every student is seven months behind on a National basis and the problem is disparity by ethnicity. Students of color are behind ten months versus six months of a white student, but it is the worst for low-income students who are a year behind. College enrollment is down across the board; a 29% decline in enrollment for low-income students. They desperately need to tackle where all students are in the middle and high school space.
- What are we up to do here? There is near term and longer term. Systemic change is a different pathway to more localized tactical deployments of new ideas and solutions that are partnerships in nature. There are three Superintendents in the South Florida region, all men of color. For this to be participatory, they want to be inclusive and include stakeholders. A few key components missing are the Equity Department; David Watkins should be part of this conversation, and she would invite the Board to have youth at the table for these conversations as they are the consumer of their product called education and they want their input.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated the Board is there in the sense that is the next step. If Board members want to do this, there is a lot of strength; there is a lot of family, colleagues,

people, and organizations who want to help, but the core group is needed, which the Board envisions the Education Advisory Board to be. This month's conversation was important and next month's conversation will be more about structure and the expertise, that the Board, as a group, needs to make sure they can carry.

Dr. Rajter commented about the reference to Einstein about the fish and climbing and stated that he would change that around and say, "Why do people expect all fish to climb a tree?" To have the same expectations of every child is unreasonable, every child has different strengths and weaknesses; expecting the same from all children is unreasonable and it is a set up for failure. He thought they need to reassess; access to education is important, but there are many other issues that impact those outcomes. There are issues regarding family units, which is the key in education. Without having a family unit there is poverty, a lack of resources, and a lack of people who will stand by the child when the child needs it. Unless that is addressed, they will have no success at any of the endeavors the Board is looking at. Poverty will result in poorly performing children, but again, it is the expectation they need to set. One issue mentioned was about the schools' expectation about providing food, medications, and social support. He would not discredit that all these issues are of incredible importance in raising children, but the question is if that is the responsibility of the school. There needs to be a separate Task Force who provides those social services to the children so the children are taken care of for their basic needs and then the Board can return to what needs to be done and focus on education. He was not discrediting the importance of all the other issues, but the Board is going to be stuck because they are trying to fix social issues, which he thought was far beyond their scope.

Chair Dr. Zeman thought that was a fair point and to Ms. Lockwood's point, the Board needs to address the structural conversations. Existing organizations exist and some might need to be created to handle other pieces that are not related to education while everyone who has looked at education points out that poverty, family units, mental health, and daily medical care are required to get great educational outcomes. Those services are often provided through the schools because they are the provider of last resort, not the provider of first resort. The Harlem Children's Zone did a lot of the social services until social services grew and they were able to take back those things. They did them because they were required to get to great educational outcomes. People sometimes want to debate these things, but if a participatory repour is taken and everyone listens before acting, they will realize sometimes there are transitions and schools will provide things that are not actually educational issues because they are required to get educational outcomes. Another big issue to address is the idea of organizing. As an Education Advisory Board, members can do a lot, but they are a City Board and governed by what the City Commission wants to do, and they can continue to fill gaps in what the County could be doing because that is what Cities in Florida do. There may be other structures and organizations, some existing and some not, that could be developed and would allow a much better likelihood of long-term success. They must go through those conversations and make sure what is being done is built for success not just for speed. The Board has adopted this as their Strategic Initiative, and they have gotten lots of people to join. They

will go through the process of figuring out a structure and many other things while going down this long journey. The Harlem Children's Zone did not happen in a year or two; they got started after a lot of study, organization, and premeditated work to make sure they had a good idea of what success might look like over the decades it took to get them to the levels of success they have enjoyed. This conversation will continue at the next meeting on February 18, 2021.

V. Old Business

- Strategic Initiatives
 - Bennett Elementary School

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated this is an issue in which the Board has had robust and amazing discussion. He noted they still have the Danielle Smith Award going and Principal Smith is on her eighth month in a row.

Principal Smith advised that so much was shared last month, and all the feedback filled her heart. All the different viewpoints coming from a different perspective was extremely helpful. The Mayor and Superintendent brought up great conversation. She stated that effective last week, the park at their school is now open on the weekends for the public. This is a Board of action and while taking on other initiatives, there is a lot of collaboration and she knows they will make a great impact on the City of Fort Lauderdale. The site visit is on February 5, 2021 with Superintendent Runcie and the Mayor, as well as a few others, so they can review the plans of what has been done and what construction has already taken place regarding the Smart Bond. She requested everyone follow them on Twitter; they have great artwork the Kindergarten students recently did.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated that one question was asked of the Superintendent and he stated, "Yeah, we will get that done" and on January 15, 2021, a memo was distributed that opened all playgrounds where Principals could do it. It was noted that this would become a model for other schools. The City continues to spend money building playgrounds and they will continue to have openings for everyone to enjoy the benefits of a Joint Use Park. He was fortunate to visit the courts and playground that were built on Bennett Elementary School prior to last months' meeting and it is heartwarming to see that the City would come in and build such high-quality things. It has such a huge impact on the students, and could have a big impact on the area, which turns out to be a park desert; there is not enough parks in that area, and this is perfect for the right age kids in that neighborhood.

Mr. Lukic questioned if the walk-thru is open to the Board.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that unfortunately rules prohibit Board members from going places together. There is a presumption they would be talking about business, so it is

not something they can open to others. The Board will get a full report and he and Ms. Saunders will attend and take pictures. Part of this is also due to COVID restrictions, only essential parties can enter the campus. In the past and in the future, they will have meetings at schools when COVID restrictions are gone, probably in the fall. Those meetings have been very productive, and it is a totally different meeting because of the participation of people who go way beyond traditional meetings.

- Joint Use Parks

Ms. Saunders reported that the next phase is moving into the public input phase, which will be approached in a two-pronged path. School sites with currently active Joint Use Parks are going to go through the eight-week process where there is going to be a website open for public input the full month of February. For the schools that are new, they will be hosting meetings with the school community and surrounding neighborhoods and the Education Advisory Board will be made aware of that schedule so a representative can participate. The Joint Use Park is an example of a part of the collective impact model. The intent of the City is to build community and what they are doing with the park initiative is building community around the school's needs and interests. While talking about the educational equity initiative, in many respects it is a community change effort that is placing education as a centrally important vehicle for prosperity in the community and the attractiveness to the community, residents, and businesses. When thinking about the City, they are engaged in many different efforts. They could be able to maximize those efforts for educational benefits if they intentionally look that way; that does not mean the Education Advisory Board needs to be involved in all decisions, a lot of this is a mindset around how to build community around the school needs. They think about the neighborhood revitalization within the context of how it can benefit students and their educational experiences. She encouraged everyone to think broadly around that. Regarding the collective impact models operating in the County, the City of Fort Lauderdale is actively engaged in convening all those entities to understand how they can provide full impact across the lifespan. There is a lot of interest in how to create this interdependent and interconnected system that is intentionally focused on how it impacts children and learning. Joint Use Parks is one example, and this Board is visionary in thinking about that opportunity as to what the benefit is for that educational opportunity. If they take that lens with every City initiative, they can truly activate resources in new ways to promote learning, which can also be achieved while working with other organizations outside the City.

- Early Learning Initiative

Ms. Saunders stated that Early Learning continues to be a priority.

Dr. Canning reported they have made some strides with the expansion of the Early Learning program. She presented on Westwood Heights and being able to move the Early Head Start classes there; they now have infants and toddlers at that location. They

are looking to expand the VPK programs and continue with Head Start programs. Another grant was written to expand the Early Head Start program to add more infant and toddler classes and Fort Lauderdale was one of the focused areas. Working with the City over the years has helped them create those goals of expanding the program along with supporting literacy throughout the schools in the District.

VI. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes: December 17, 2020

Vice Chair Ellowitz referenced Page 5, last paragraph, fourth line from the bottom, and noted that it should read, "**Community outreach**" efforts.

Ms. Saunders mentioned Staff and Guest on Page 1 and noted that Vice Mayor Steven Glassman and Celia Gisleson from his office should be deleted; they were not in attendance.

She referenced Page 11, first sentence in the last paragraph, and stated that it should read, "**Stakeholders**".

Motion by Dr. Verdi-Knapp seconded by Mr. Relyea, to approve the December 17, 2020 minutes as amended. **Motion** passed unanimously. (14-0)

VII. Closing

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked everyone for their comments. He hoped the Board members' time is rewarded with significant change in the outcome. He noted 40 people were in attendance tonight and he expressed personal gratitude. At the next meeting they will get into the structure of what is being done and into points brought up from Board members about how to build for success rather than to hope for success.

The next meeting is Thursday, February 18, 2021.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.

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