

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Thursday, October 27, 2021, 6:30 P.M.
CITY HALL, 8th Floor Conference Room
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

Members	June 2021 – May 2022		
	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	3	0
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	3	0
Heather Brinkworth	P	3	0
Ruchel Coetzee	A	0	3
Yolanda B. Francis (left early)	P	2	1
Leah Polhemus Hopkins	A	0	3
Tina Jaramillo	P	2	1
April Jeff	A	1	2
Colleen Lockwood	P	1	2
Tomislav Lukic	A	2	1
Lisa May	A	2	1
Vickie Melus	P	1	2
Dr. Jean-Jacques Rajter	A	0	2
Christopher Relyea	P	3	0
Betty Shelley	A	1	2
Lillian Small (left early)	P	1	2
Rory Sponsler	P	2	1
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	3	0
Moises Acosta	P	2	0
Denia Perloff	A	1	1
Suzanne Dean	P	1	0

Staff

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale
 Crysta Parkinson, Prototype, Inc.

Guests

In Person

Thomas Harrison, Stranahan High School Athletic Director
 Mark Strauss, Cadre Director
 Esthel Brennan, President, Riverside Residents Association

Online

Michele Padura, Stranahan High School Principal
 Sarah Leonardi, Broward School Board
 Ryan Thomas, Community Outreach Director, District 4

Commissioner Ben Sorenson

Kamara Sanon

Sam Bays, Construction for School Board

Rick Chiappelli

Natalia Allen

Ann Whatley

Gregory Boardman, Project Manager, School Board

Denise Lawrence

Ellis Jenoure

Mary Fertig, Fort Lauderdale resident and Education Community Activist

Warren Whatley, Vice President of the Local Resident's Association Board

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:34 p.m. by Dr. Allen Zeman, Board Chair.

Attendance and Roll Call, 21 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum

As of this date, October 27, 2021, thirteen(13) of the 21 members were present, which constituted a quorum.

Communication to the City Commission

1. We encourage Broward County School Board to continue to review all options for the construction of cafeteria at Stranahan High School, which is a critical construction requirement in the City of Fort Lauderdale.
2. We recommend they acknowledge the less expensive reuse option, which is predicted to be completed and open roughly one school year earlier and cost less than a new construction and design option, as their preferred option.
3. We ensure the eventual cafeteria meets the dining, restroom, and all other requirements for Stranahan High School.
4. Our recommendation is based on our belief that the reuse option will be faster and is more likely to be completed, but if these constraints did not exist, we would prefer a new design cafeteria.

Motion by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Vice Chair Ellowitz, that the City Commission approve the Communication. The **motion** carried unanimously. (11-0)

Board Chair's Minute

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated there are always fascinating opportunities to do good government, which is a theme being addressed tonight. This is the plan setting aside \$11 million so the City's funding goes to pay for parks Countywide. He thinks they are converging on a good solution and there are options to consider. Stranahan High School

is another opportunity for good government to come together and the last opportunity is for an internal Education Advisory Board exercise talking about networks and who they are connected to. Sunshine rules are discussed during meetings since there is not an opportunity to do so outside of a publicized meeting. The purpose and mission of the Education Advisory Board was briefly reviews and it was noted that a few years ago, the Board received training in schools and focused on strategic initiatives. Suzanne Dean was introduced as a new Board member.

Ms. Dean indicated she reached out to Ms. Saunders a year ago and expressed interest in getting involved in local government. She has two young children in private school and has seen some issues with the public schools. She has a PhD in Industrial and Organizational Psychology. She has been building a community of moms across various social media channels, Mommin' Like a Savage, and they talk about things that have to do with motherhood and challenges with childbearing, etc.

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked Mark Strauss for his service as a liaison; he is retiring at the end of the year.

Ms. Sarah Leonardi commented that she was looking forward to the Stranahan High School presentation and getting feedback from the Board.

Mr. Ryan Thomas, Community Outreach Director, District 4, thanked Commissioner Vince Sorenson's office for the invite.

Stranahan High School SMART Bond Update

Ms. Saunders provided an update regarding the Stranahan High School SMART Bond. As a City, they are in a good position. Several months ago, there was discussion about a renovation for the cafeteria, which this Board has discussed at length as a Castaldi designation. A lot of focus by the Board and community has been championing a replacement option. The Education Advisory Board sent a Communication to Commission in April and the Commission agreed. After further discussion with the community in May, a Resolution was adopted in support of a replacement option. Next, it went to the School Board Workshop and there was a renovation on the table for a vote, and the School Board aligned themselves with the community and said it was important for staff to look at replacement options. Later, there was another School Board Workshop where a replacement option was considered. There was unanimous support at the School Board to replace the cafeteria and there was a lot of conversation around the appropriate scope. At that Workshop, the Board asked staff to look at other options that could reduce cost and capacity and that is where they are at this point. The School District is still exploring options as to what the best thing is to move forward. A reuse option has come up, which has a potential to reduce the time involved in getting the cafeteria up and running and to reduce cost. There are other considerations to look at different replacement options. Today, the conversation is to think about what considerations are important as they come into play and advocate what is in the best interest of family and the high school. Stranahan

High School is going to get a brand-new cafeteria and they are weighing in on what factors are most important and what concessions make sense and still deliver the desired priorities for the school. An overview was sent of many things already seen and the updated presentation of the reuse option along with more information about possibilities. There has been a lot of focus on this idea since the last meeting. A specific project is being put forward that District staff is recommending as far as specifications. Many community members visited the school, which was well received in terms of meeting the objectives, but there are still some questions. This meeting is to walk through those options and understand the best path forward. She thought it would be helpful to invite the school to identify their perspective of the priorities as they look at different design options for the cafeteria at Stranahan High School.

Ms. Michelle Padura, Stranahan High School Principal, thanked the Education Advisory Board, the City, and stakeholders; they need the support and appreciate it. They have scored a huge win at this point and are grateful for the School Board decision to grant a new cafeteria; it is long overdue. The cafeteria was built in the 1950's, suitable for an elementary school. It is short in capacity and lacks the appeal they are looking for. Most students eat outside under a covered tent. Her point of view is always to be what is best for the students and staff; it is always about protecting and ensuring the focus is about what the students need. Ultimately, they are looking to make sure there is capacity for at least 500 students inside in an air-conditioned space and that there is an outdoor facility with 200 seats in a covered eating space with fans since many students opt to eat outdoors. Restrooms have also been a topic of discussion because they want an opportunity for the students to use restrooms connected to the cafeteria. A new facility would provide the opportunity for a staff lounge and restrooms attached. There is currently discussion about the best course of action for the Board to take. Time is of the essence for Stranahan High School; there are many projects in the works, and they lack so much. The sooner this can be accomplished and available to the students, the better.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked if the reuse option provides 500 seats inside.

Greg Boardman, Project Manager with the School Board, advised that the prototype meets the requirements Principal Padura described earlier; it has interior seating for approximately 584 students and currently there is a design for about 200 seats outside. Restrooms, staff restrooms, an outdoor seating space, and an outdoor concession area are also included; almost all the features included in specifications for a new cafeteria.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned the difference in construction time between reuse and going to an original design.

Mr. Boardman estimated the difference to be between ten to 12 months. The main savings is in the design side is because they do not have to go through three different reviews, they only go through one review, which is a site update review, and then do some offsite work regarding the Drainage District. It was noted that tree mitigation would have to be done onsite. A slide of the schedule was shown.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned the reuse option and questioned if the projected date to reopen was fall of 2024 and if an original design would be completed in the fall of 2025.

Mr. Boardman replied yes. As the design gets old, revisions are made and those are unknowns that cannot be calculated.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if there were any other differences Mr. Boardman would like to highlight between an original design versus a reuse.

Mr. Boardman stated the advantage to a reuse is that it can be seen, visited, and touched. The other advantage is that it has already been built, so the contractor has identified all the unforeseen change orders and incorporated them into the plan. There are some disadvantages as well; it is not tailor made for the site. This plan is live with what you get, but there are advantages in the cost and time.

Chair Dr. Zeman was curious about the reuse coming with modifications, so there must be some ability to tailor what was built to meet some of the site location things at Stranahan High School. He questioned if it was 50% or 10% and asked how the customization works of the reuse to fit the site where it will be built in Fort Lauderdale. He also questioned the cost savings.

Mr. Boardman indicated that question was asked to the State of Florida, and they said it must be economically viable. Regarding cost savings, a new spreadsheet with costs was submitted to the Board.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned how much the State says they are going to save with reuse.

Mr. Boardman replied they did not know because they did not have a set of drawings to quantify what they are; square footage numbers are being used to compare. He thinks the Architect of Record could do some good design work to reduce the numbers, but based on square footage, the reuse in this scenario is the smallest of the version; and therefore, would carry over into a cost per square foot that is lower on this reuse than other options.

Chair Dr. Zeman again questioned how much the cost is to do a reuse.

Ms. Saunders enlarged the spreadsheet and stated that a combination of options were proposed by the Architect and the reuse option, along with additional considerations from ones put forward are between \$16 million and \$20 million for new construction new design.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that the estimate for reuse is \$14.3 million.

Principal Padura mentioned that Mr. Bays had his hand up and she was sure he could bring some valuable information and insight.

Sam Bays, Construction for the School Board, referenced the Capital Program and stated that Mr. Boardman did an accurate and thorough description. A selection has not been made as a District and they are pushing to weigh the options carefully. He believed there might have been a misunderstanding over schedules because the schedule referenced in the slides shows the original building in 2024 and the reuse in 2023. They think of it as a school year; it may be less than 12 months and it might be 9 months. They are going to continue looking at this and try to make an intelligent best decision for the District as soon as possible.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if a staff recommendation has been put together.

Mr. Bays replied no, not yet.

Chair Dr. Zeman recognized Commissioner Sorenson.

Commissioner Sorenson thanked the Board, community, and Principal for all their work. As he has been advocating from the beginning, they need to make sure they are taking care of the students and doing the right thing even if it means spending more money to get the right fit.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated the Board would put together the facts and forward their thoughts. It is a trade-off between time and design specifically for a site and money. A Communication will be sent after this meeting.

Commissioner Sorenson requested the Communication be sent by November 16, 2021; he would like to bring it up for a robust discussion at the Commission meeting. He thought it would be helpful for Chair Dr. Zeman to be there as well, to help educate the whole Commission, so they could be clear on what they are looking for.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked Mr. Boardman and Mr. Bays if a staff recommendation would be made before or after the November 16, 2021 Commission meeting.

Mr. Bays thought something would be presented to the Board before that time.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated regardless of how quickly the Communication gets to Commissioner Sorenson, it will be public record, so at least the Education Advisory Board's views will be known to the School Board, and it will be up to the individual Commissioners as to how they advocate to Board members.

Commissioner Sorenson commented that the Mayor, and other Commissioners are interested and want to support the school.

Ms. Leonardi shared a little context and her comments at the last Workshop. At the last Workshop she wanted to make clear that she was in support of not sparing any cost for Stranahan High School. This school is long overdue on many improvements. She was

a vocal supporter doing right by the school to make sure they spend whatever is needed to get an adequate cafeteria the students deserve and one that is equitable compared with other schools around the District. She was not in the majority of that opinion; cost savings are important to many of her colleagues, but she did not feel that was the place to cut corners. Staff said they have not made a formal recommendation yet, but she understood that a formal recommendation was made and requested clarification.

Mr. Bays clarified that he was referencing that they have not brought something for a vote, which would be the recommendation from staff.

Chair Dr. Zeman thought there was a staff recommendation for the reuse option.

Mr. Bays replied no, they have not brought a recommendation to the Board for a vote; there is no recommendation at this time. He and Mr. Boardman made a presentation at one of the meetings, which was a good option to consider, but staff includes higher chain of command up through the Superintendent, and that recommendation has not occurred.

Ms. Saunders questioned if Mr. Bays would be presenting a variety of options when the recommendation goes to the School Board for a comparison.

Mr. Bays stated it was his understanding they would have a recommended course of action that would be a singular item.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that perhaps presentations were made, but not a formal staff recommendation. He questioned when the formal recommendation would be made.

Mr. Bays indicated it was possible the recommendation would go to the November 9, 201 meeting.

Ms. Leonardi advised she was told differently about a staff recommendation, but maybe she was wrong. She mentioned that she spoke with Principal Padura and members of the community who went to Miami to see the reuse option, which they were very impressed with. She thinks a quicker timeline is important and getting something passed before the Board, which would include cost savings, is important to many of her colleagues. She was at this meeting to hear feedback from the Board.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked Ms. Brinkworth to share how these things go about. Ms. Leonardi pointed out that getting the School Board to vote to get to yes has its own value and a year of use has value. There is always the opportunity they say yes and come back and say no, then put it on hold. Stranahan High School has been funded twice and had construction statements pulled back after being approved by many different authorities. Ms. Brinkworth explained when the expansion and renovation project was voted on by the School Board to do the Stranahan High School cafeteria in that manner was the best they could get at that time. She is happy for the opportunity that presents itself now and has listened to the conversation about this topic. Ms. Leonardi is correct in thinking the

School Board is cost conscious and they will not look favorably on a more expensive option. She reminded everyone when they voted to add \$6.8 million for an expansion and renovation, which was three years ago. Time is of the essence; they do not know what the dynamics of the School Board will be through the next election cycle, and if they do not seize an opportunity to get a new cafeteria while they have an opportunity, her fear is they will not get one.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned what Ms. Brinkworth's recommendation would be as a member if she could only choose between the original and the reuse.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned capacity and cost, which were brought up many times. She would say if an option were brought back that is a better cost or similar for a shorter timeline and addresses the capacity concerns, which is what would be approved. She is fearful if staff goes back to the School Board with more expensive options that do not address capacity issues because the Board will be inclined to vote it down.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented there is high risk recommending the original design option that takes a year longer and costs between \$2 million and \$6 million. Every meeting this drags on there is a chance the money will dry up or politics will change, then they get nothing. He asked if anyone disagreed that the reuse option meets Principal Padura's requirements.

Dr. Nathalie Lynch-Walsh, with the District's Facilities Task Force, indicated that they do their own research. The size of a cafeteria is dictated by ESRAF. She distributed a handout for review and pointed out the following highlights:

- Renderings from Architecture records were included regarding the analysis.
- Statutory requirements are related to funding and deviation from ESRAF.
- The Board can deviate from ESRAF by putting it on the record and passing a Resolution.
- The net square footage based on capacity of the school is 28,353.
- It was believed a design to the budget passed for Option B was listed at \$18.5 million, and the Board already approved \$17.5 million.
- There is a difference in square footage of 30,125 under Option B. The square footage for the prototype is 22,190. Option B is much cheaper because the square footage is more than an 8,000-square-foot difference.
- ESRAF needs to be followed because this project is going to be funded through Reserves or from Tops.
- Stranahan High School has about an 88% free and reduced lunch percentage and the students have 15.6 minutes to eat.
- The reuse has half the restrooms available to students and it also has a 5,000-square-foot covered patio to the south, which influenced the size of the cafeteria.
- The number of students is an ESRAF requirement.
- Staff said there are 584 students, but in looking at the types of tables being used,

they are long and narrow, and this District does not use those types of tables.

Mary Fertig, Fort Lauderdale resident and Education Community Activist, commented there was just over 12,000 square feet.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked if Mr. Boardman or Mr. Bays could answer the question about actual capacity and restrictions that limit tables.

Mr. Boardman thought Dr. Lynch-Walsh was correct when saying the number of seats would be dictated by the type of furniture used. There are many options to consider.

Mr. Bays stated there are seating options with four top tables in combinations and individually, which seat about 540 and other scenarios are slightly more or less with about 500 seats. Principal Padura mentioned seating of 500 as a threshold level, which is doable in many varieties. He noted the cafeteria would come with new furniture.

Dr. Lynch-Walsh commented with 540 seats inside and 260 outside looks like they are packing in the students, and she questioned if 260 seats were under cover.

Mr. Boardman showed the overall Site Plan and stated there are 260 exterior covered dining seats, plus the uncovered dining.

Ms. Saunders questioned if that design and capacity meets ESRAF standards.

Dr. Lynch-Walsh replied no, there is no getting away from the fact that it is only 22,190 square feet.

Mr. Boardman addressed the allowable from ESRAF and noted it is allowable to be underneath the formulas in ESRAF. They have a ruling from Mark Jeter from the State of Florida DRE that says those formulas are maximums. Most architects strive to be efficient as they can regarding the formula because they must meet a cost per student station formula. They are encouraged to create a design that is environmentally sound. He agreed with Dr. Lynch-Walsh, it is on the smaller size, but if compared to the rest of the 30 high schools they have, it would be in the top third in terms of dining room size.

Ms. Lynch-Walsh stated she was not disagreeing with ESRAF. She has yet to find anything that says it is a maximum because then the minimum would be the size of a postage stamp. She included the Criteria Table in ESRAF, Chapter 6, and a State Statute, regarding doing away with ESRAF. A State Statute for deviations from ESRAF would not be needed if they were not expecting those numbers to be reached. There are deficiencies in design, which is why it is entirely possible to come in at the \$17.5 million budget if not less. This reuse would have to be designed to make sure it conforms to Florida Building Code. She referenced Chapter 6 regarding size of space and occupant design criteria for planning projects for new construction, remodeling, and renovation that are to be recommended in a five-year Education Plan Survey and funding from State

Capital outlay funding sources and discretionally local capital outlay millage. They also recommend they be used with any other funding source. She mentioned Stranahan High School has five serving lines and questioned how long it would take students to have lunch. Never in all the community meetings she attended did Stranahan High School indicate they wanted a grab and go rest stop approach to eating meals, they wanted a gathering space. She noted this District has a history of doing penny-wise pound-foolish moves that end up not working. This is what the Facilities Task Force tries to avoid; this is a 50-year investment and there are no do overs. She understands the Board would prefer not to spend \$17.5 million and thinks it is possible to come in under. She mentioned the prototype and stated if flipped, doors and windows would be north off the parking lot and doors are not needed off the parking lot. Doors are also on the south side, and she did not know if they would be removed and made into windows, but, then there would be windows facing a parking lot in a post MSD world. One of the huge conversations at the community meetings was where to stash students if there is a Code Red or an actual shooter on campus. The design could be altered so students would not be able to be seen in the cafeteria, but there is a lot of glass. Restrooms are another issue, if there are only three restrooms, it is possible students would be late for class. There are too many questions; they could have already been designing the cafeteria. If this goes to the Board on November 9, 2021, and if it were her making a recommendation, she would like to see Option B going forward with the understanding they stay within budget and if they want to bring the reuse and save a little, let the Board decide. Do not give them an option because the fear is that it will be the reuse and then later everyone will be kicking themselves or it might not work.

Chair Dr. Zeman did not understand the venue chart. He questioned if the reuse would have five or six venues the way it is.

Dr. Lynch-Walsh stated it has five traditional ones and then another three on the side.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented on eight venues with 97 students going through per lunch period, he and questioned the five minutes.

Dr. Lynch-Walsh advised the five minutes is based on the kitchen consultant the architects have, which is divided by five minutes. The lunch period either takes 19.4 or 25.8 minutes; 35 minutes is the life of their lunches. Miami has a 45-minute lunch, and they are also grabbing and going. Three of those venues are only grab and go, they are not hot meals. They are counting five because three are grab and go. Current enrollment may or may not use the windows. It has eight, but it not the same eight the other one has. It has five traditional serving lines and three grab and go windows in a corner of the cafeteria. Regarding the cost per square foot, inside dining is \$3.50 per square foot, outside is a lot less, and the kitchen and serving is the most. Many equipment adjustments would have to be made. Food and Nutrition services use different equipment than Miami-Dade. There are many concessions and adjustments; everything costs money. There has been a lot of talk about equality and equity. Her concern was getting a cafeteria that fits and is part of a long-term plan, which the District has never done. They were advised to do a

long-term plan in 2014, but it was never done and now they are paying the price. She mentioned the 5,000-square-foot covered patio in Miami and questioned the square footage they were planning outdoors.

Mr. Boardman indicated the outside area is 3,200 square feet under reuse.

Dr. Lynch-Walsh stated that cafeteria was made for that campus and not meant to be a prototype. They are hoping demolition and site restoration are included in the \$14 million. If she were making a recommendation, she would say bring both to the Board with all the pros and cons, all the facts, and not to leave anything out.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned the current enrollment and last year's enrollment.

Principal Padura advised there are currently 1,453 students enrolled and last year was about the same, they fluctuate.

Thomas Harrison, Stranahan High School Athletic Director, indicated that he brought this to the School Board's attention eight years ago. The students are under served and time is of the essence. Poverty is a mindset and the longer they prolong this, it is paralysis by analysis. They continue to have meetings instead of recognizing needs and finding something that meets the needs. He worries because if they wait any longer the housing market could drop.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned there are two critical times: the vote and how quickly the structure gets built. He questioned if Mr. Harrison was referring to both things being essential or just the decision with the School Board. He asked what Mr. Harrison would choose.

Mr. Harrison clarified both are essential. They do not know who will be making decisions if it does not break ground. He stated he would choose whatever gives them what they need the quickest.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked Mary to give some insight.

Ms. Fertig indicated that she asked the School Board how they could bring forward long-term facilities plan that does not address Stranahan High School and the School Board voted it down. By 2005, as a result, a Castaldi document was done that Stranahan High School needed a new facility. A new school was approved, an architect was selected, plans were drawn, and then the great recession. She was at the School Board in 2009, when they had to vote to remove it plan from the District Education Facilities Plan as well as North East. In 2015, she and many others, attended meeting after meeting and demanded they move forward with the project, and were told it would be finished in 2017. They asked for a new cafeteria, and it was going to cost \$9 million. Finally, they got support of nine School Board members to build a new school, but it came with reservations. A motion was put up and taken down to cut the \$17.5 million to lower and

she thought the good faith was that they were going to try to bring this in for less; there was conversation about size. Between 2003 and 2020, five Board members have been committed to doing what is right for Stranahan High School. It is critically important to get an agreement. This cafeteria saves time and money, which can be seen on the chart; Plan B is \$18.5 million, and the reuse is \$14.6 million. They requested a new cafeteria in 2015, but staff person totally ignored the request.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if a new option for a new design and construction was preferred to a reuse.

Ms. Fertig stated they raised reuse from the beginning because they had North East. They also raised outdoor pavilions, not just overhangs with eaves. One of their suggestions was that they could use a reuse of a pavilion, which is probably \$650,000. This plan has eaves, so there are eaves around the outside that takes seating from a couple hundred students. There are other reuses that will be faster. As of the last time the Board authorized an increase in payment to the architect, they already paid about \$656,000 and there have been several presentations since then. The point is that they have no idea what the architects will cost. If Palmetto is not the answer, look at another reuse, do not just throw out the idea of reuse. Time is of the essence. Stranahan High School has a great staff, programs, and students, and they need wonderful buildings. She encouraged everyone to look at the reuse and see how it could be modified quickly and if not, to consider another model.

Esthel Brennan, President of the Riverside Residents Association, commented that Stranahan High School is a gem in the center of their neighborhood. As a community, they have been reaching out and attending facilities meetings since 2017. It was noted that a hand was raised to ask about the cafeteria at every meeting up until February 2020. She met with the Riverside Residents Association Board and reviewed the facts, but many questions were left untouched. They are not necessarily against the reuse but feel if there is going to be forward thinking and long-term planning that it is important to answer all the questions. She clarified dates and wanted to understand the vote tonight. She questioned if the School Board meeting is on November 9, 2021, because Commissioner Sorenson said he would like to have some discussion on this at the November 16, 2021

Chair Dr. Zeman explained the process and stated the Board would entertain a motion to talk to the City Commission about the use of the Education Advisory Board. If the Commission does not meet and are unable to read the Communication from the Advisory Board, it is in the Public Record, so what the Board says to them is already out there. City Commissioners talk to School Board members all the time and express their opinions about whether they agree with the Education Advisory Board. Tonight, the Board will entertain a motion to debate this and select one of the two recommendations to go forward and vote on, which will be public record. Board members are not elected officials, they are volunteers. The Commission would not make a formal letter to the School Board, but there are many other ways to communicate.

Ms. Saunders advised they could ask the Clerk's office to include the Communication on the November 2, 2021 meeting, so it is a possibility.

Ms. Brennan's concern was there was only one item presented at the community meeting.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked Mr. Bays and Mr. Boardman if they would be able to meet with the community to share all the details available about the original design and construction options if that was their desire.

Mr. Boardman replied yes. He thought Ms. Brennan was making a good point and thought the other options should be explored by everyone.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that ACOM works for the schools, and they can be invited to a meeting to answer questions.

Ms. Brennan questioned if they would have a formal opportunity to ask questions.

Chair Dr. Zeman advised they should have a room and the community could come together and try to understand. The influence on School Board members and on the nine members is fast. Gathering information is essential for government to work and he suggested finding a good date and time and having two meetings.

Ms. Brennan assumed costs were involved. They want to make sure this is a positive for the future and that they are not in the middle of building a future cautionary tale. She reiterated that they stand by the school.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned what Ms. Brennan advocates, the reuse or original construction.

Ms. Brennan advocates original construction. Her greatest fear is if the reuse is used, and it comes in at the same price as something that could have been specifically designed for the school in a few years.

Frank, Board member of Riverside Residents Association, has been an architect for 30 years. He looked at the reuse cafeteria, and while it was a nice, new cafeteria, it was not designed to fit the space at Stranahan High School. He asked if work was done to determine how it would work and requested information so he could do an overlay and see how the reuse would fit into the site as well as how it would respond to the criteria. He mentioned the design by the architect with the input of the community and noted it is larger and has features the reuse does not have. While the reuse could incorporate some of those, the design he just saw on the screen was the first time he was offered anything to compare. They are being asked to choose between two choices and do not know either one. The first original design was done without any reflection that it would have to be compared to the reuse. The reuse must be adjusted; it has some serious flaws, and it was not offered for that kind of review. There is a lot of glass on the reuse, it faces

unprotected areas in all directions, and it is hard to see how it is going to fit in with Stranahan High School. If they are asking them to make a choice, there needs to be a decent presentation with some preliminary design by people who know the School Board's criteria, the State's criteria, what the site conditions are, and do two fair comparisons so they can make a choice. This should be a signature project that can help revitalize the image of the whole school or it could just be a functional building. He spoke with the Vice Principal before everyone got to Miami and because there are only five stations and the way circulation is, students get in the way of each other coming and going and there is not a good flow. That was not shown because the tour was conducted when the building was empty. As an architect, he thought they should take the parts that can be reused and incorporate it to meet the criteria, not shrink it to meet budget. They must determine where they want to be. This option says 800 students and the other says 600 students, and he questioned which one it was going to be, so the two could be compared under the same criteria.

Ms. Fertig mentioned there are six options on the sheet and questioned why all of them were not presented.

Dr. Lynch-Walsh indicated that the architect's design of the renovation was what they were dictated to do. Once they were allowed to come up with a replacement option, they were forced by the budget to do a renovation plan as was the architect for Markham Elementary. It is not that they thought that was the best vehicle and there are emails showing this is a renovation. The same thing would have happened to Stranahan High School. The architects follow the directive they are told; they designed renovation because they were told to do so, but once they were told replacement, they were not allowed to design that because there are preliminary conceptualls. They have been given the opportunity to see where they can go with the budget of \$17.5 million with Option B being the most feasible; the other option is for \$16 million and is basically a box.

Ms. Brennan commented that the first concept was similar to what currently exists and then, after getting some history of Stranahan High School, they came up with a designed presented to the School Board; that was the option everyone was excited about going to the School Board.

Dr. Lynch-Walsh indicated it was the one that says September, the salmon color. The square footage was 32,925.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated to the Board that this is one of those decisions they will have to make a recommendation on in the absence of pure information. This is a balance of cost, schedule, community input, and an imperfect system.

Mr. Sponsler referred to the comment, penny wise and pound foolish. He was torn between the delay that has taken place for Stranahan High School to get new facilities and now they are at a place where the facility is necessary. He mentioned Fort Lauderdale High School and stated they have considered adding a lunch shift to the

campus schedule where students would start lunch before 10:00 a.m. The faculty dining room is nice, but almost never used. By time he walks to the cafeteria and gets through the crowd, he has just enough time to walk back to his classroom.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp stated that as a Board, they cannot discuss Excellence in Education in the City of Fort Lauderdale and Equity in Education and still say it is okay to look at these facilities; it is unacceptable. To consider anything, they must make it where it is going to make sense. If it costs money up front, then they have to do it.

Mr. Relyea advised that time is essential. If there is a reuse plan the school is comfortable with, he would defer to their preference to get this thing started and approved. He thinks it is an easier plan to approve and a faster timeline. No one knows what would happen between the time the reuse does not get started and a knock-down start over plan would be instituted, which would be another ten-year delay. He specifically deferred to the posted preference to the school administration because they have the most invested and know a lot more. If they want it done quickly and like the plan, that is the fastest plan.

Ms. Lockwood thought, as a Board, they need to lean into the equity reasoning. If she was not mistaken, Stranahan High School is the second oldest school in Broward County. She questioned how a better cafeteria helps improve student academic performance and noted there is evidence of what a better cafeteria does. She recently found out that Florida DOE provides publicly available School District Equity Data Reports, and she would be interested in drilling down the data for Stranahan High School as it compares to other schools. Time is important, but if they are building for the future, she thinks they need to plan a cafeteria that is going to accommodate where they see Stranahan High School going and then it matches the new media center.

Ms. Dean asked what could be done to make the new model cost closer to the reuse and mentioned there was talk about too many windows, etc. She expressed concern about getting confirmation that people are okay with the reuse number and delaying it.

Mr. Acosta stated he has six kids in the school system, and one just enrolled in Stranahan High School. His kids in Fort Lauderdale say the same thing, that the current set up is mushed in and is like a can of sardines. He thinks there are issues with the buildout and is leaning towards the new use, but he completely agreed with the fact that anything could happen in between, and then they would end up losing. He is also a Board member on Riverside Residents Association and has heard discussion about how this is falling apart. He would push to get the quickest and best use that is comfortable for the administration and leaders.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned timing and thinks the reuse option is the timely and cost-effective option. She feels constructions prices are going to continue to rise and the more they go back and forth, it will continue to cost more money. Since community members seem to like the reuse option and the turnaround can be ten to 12 months to get the students a facility that is good and working is where she is leaning.

Chair Dr. Zeman requested a vote between two options. The two he thought were reasonable to consider was the preference that the City commission should engage with the School Board in favor of exploring and considering a reuse because on balance, cost, schedule, and other features are the way to consider that option. The second is if they would prefer new design new construction, which is generally a larger option. It has not been scoped out and an architect has not been told to make a sheet yet. He mentioned the advantages of a reuse option, the penny-wide pound-foolish option, the new design new construction, which was the longstanding equity issue, and physical requirements met on each option. Regarding equity, something is being built at Stranahan High School and immediately there is a reuse option. He questioned if that happened because it was Stranahan High School. The challenge is that they do not know the two options and need to make a recommendation about whether they think the City Commission should lean in toward a reuse or new construction. They are going to continue asking Broward County Schools for construction money in Fort Lauderdale, this is not the last school in Fort Lauderdale that has 1950's construction. A Master Plan is going to be needed, which is one of the objectives Superintendent Cartwright has already put on the table. to make a sheet yet.

Ms. Leonardi clarified that the reuse option was not one of the immediate options considered, it was just brought to them in September.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated his point was that there are many ways to end up in inequity and one of those is not to ask hard questions. They just spent \$99 million on Fort Lauderdale High School.

A vote was taken on preferences, and everyone was in favor of a reuse except for Mr. Sponsler, who abstained because the Board has not had adequate time to discuss this and Ms. Melus, who was in favor of new design and new construction. It was noted that Ms. Frances and Ms. Small left prior to the vote.

Chair Dr. Zeman advised that a Communication should be drafted that reflects this was a split vote; therefore, it is a recommendation rather than a strong recommendation. This is a decision made with a lot of uncertainty. The Board does not know a lot and might not know the right questions to ask. They do have evidence and best predictions of things and on balance, when the pros and cons were weighed, they would recommend the City Commission to weigh in with the School Board to support a reuse option.

Recommendation for Communication:

:

1. We encourage Broward County School Board to continue to review all options for the construction of a cafeteria at Stranahan High School, which is a critical construction requirement in the City of Fort Lauderdale.
2. We recommend they acknowledge the less expensive reuse option, which is predicted to be completed and open one school year earlier, and costs less than a new construction and design option, as their preferred option.

3. We ensure the eventual cafeteria meets the dining, restroom, and all other requirements for Stranahan High School.

Motion made by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Mr. Acosta, to approve the Communication.

Motion passed unanimously except for Mr. Sponsler, who opposed. (10-1)

Edited Recommendation for Communication:

1. We encourage Broward County School Board to continue to review all options for the construction of a cafeteria at Stranahan High School, which is a critical construction requirement in the City of Fort Lauderdale.
2. We recommend they acknowledge the less expensive reuse option, which is predicted to be completed and open one school year earlier and cost less than a new construction and design option, as their preferred option.
3. We ensure the eventual cafeteria meets the dining, restroom, and all other requirements for Stranahan High School.
4. Our recommendation is based on our belief that the reuse option will be faster and is more likely to be completed, but if these constraints did not exist, we would prefer a new design cafeteria.

Ms. Dean thought one add on to the Communication might be if they felt there were no constraints on moving forward, many of the Board members would support the new renovation option. The only thing keeping them from making that decision is their concerns that it is going to slow or halt the process moving forward.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if such language would change Mr. Sponsler's vote.

Mr. Sponsler replied yes.

Chair Dr. Zeman edited the Communication and added #4. They recommend Broward County continue to review all options to acknowledge a less expensive reuse option, which is predicted to be completed and open one school earlier than an original design, to ensure the cafeteria meets the dining, restroom, and other requirements for a school such as Stranahan High School. If there were no concerns this would potentially halt moving forward with any progress toward getting an improved cafeteria.

Ms. Dean added a sentence that says if there were no concerns that this would potentially halt moving forward with any progress towards getting an improved cafeteria, people would have opted for the bigger, newer cafeteria. There are a lot of pros; however, the votes for reuse were because they want a cafeteria as soon as possible because they do not want to miss this opportunity.

Mr. Sponsler thinks everyone needs to consider that cafeterias are Federally funded, they are not funded by the School Board directly. At his school, students have given up trying to go through lines at lunch and the cafeteria is losing money. If the number of students

at Stranahan High School are accurate and 82% of the students are on free and reduced lunch and they stop trying to go through the lines in a new cafeteria that is too small, the Manager of the cafeteria is going to lose Federal funding.

Chair Dr. Zeman added a last sentence that their recommendation is based on their belief that the reuse option will be faster and is more likely to be completed, but if these constraints did not exist, we would prefer a new design cafeteria.

Mr. Sponsler agreed.

Motion made by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Vice Chair Ellowitz, to approve the Communication to the Commission. **Motion** passed unanimously. (11-0)

Chair Dr. Zeman reported that the Board has studied this for a while, they are not new to Stranahan High School and the cafeteria needs. If they had not moved the City's influence, the decision would have been zero. At least the City is on record saying when all things are balanced, they think the speed and lower costs that still meet all requirements is an option that benefits better than it balances the costs. It is not lost on the Education Advisory Board that when \$3 million or \$4 million at Stranahan High School are freed up that there is \$3 million or \$4 million to spend. This is Federal money, but it is going to be spent in Broward County. This is going to reflect what the City thinks about students who go to Stranahan High School. In some sense, the measure of caring for the students is that they want it now and do not want to take the political risk of the School Board saying yes, getting started, and for a variety of reasons, pulling the plug. He clarified he was not saying that the School Board has already presented this is the way to go.

NEW BUSINESS:

Learning Center Update:

Ms. Saunders reported they are moving forward with an exciting partnership with Bezos Academy. This is an opportunity to partner with Bezos Academy to bring in a tuition free Montessori Preschool that operates full days, year around. Four potential sites have been identified at under-enrolled Elementary Schools and they have gone through a preliminary. A non-disclosure agreement was approved by the School Board, which allows them to move into the next phase of sharing the floor plans of the four schools and the Bezos Academy is currently working on renderings and identifying what needs to be done. Bezos Academy will take care of the bill for Capital Improvements needed at the under-enrolled elementary school, including plumbing, kitchen space, and whatever might be needed. They fully operate the program including hiring staff and running the educational program for ten years. The partnership aspect of the School District is that they do not charge rent because it is a shared value by helping kids get high quality early learning opportunities. The intent is that those kids would stay at that school. Bezos Academy will be presenting at the Education Advisory Board meeting next month and the

next phase of the partnership agreement will be brought to the School Board in January, so they want the Education Advisory Board to weigh in. This is something the City of Fort Lauderdale brought to the School District as an opportunity to achieve many of their shared goals, something they have been trying to do for a long time but did not have the right partner. When looking at the data, it is clear the City needs this. This is not a Charter School; Jeff Bezos established this Foundation to operate tuition free Montessori Preschools across the country.

Warren Whatley, Vice President of the Local Resident's Association Board, commented that it seems as though the County would vote down whatever was proposed. To him, it does not seem the zero outcome was feasible, and it was not in the outcome set. He believes the Board killed the better option because they said the City was willing to forego the better option the County could have refused; leverage was given up to get the best for the school because they were afraid the School Board would say zero. He thought it was not a rationally thought-out decision in terms of strategies and possible potential outcomes before the Board.

Chair Dr. Zeman appreciated the thought and three Education Advisory Board members thought differently. He thinks there have been numerous issues where there have been disagreements and they try to speak respectfully to each other, and the do-nothing strategy has not happened in the last five years, which he is proud of. He did not agree with Mr. Whatley's characterization and did not think members were irrational in their vote. He thinks it is difficult for the Board to act strategically when they have to weigh the pros and cons. The Board is an Advisory Board, but if the Commission decides to do that, there is a risk they agreed to an 80% funded solution when they could have got 100% if they would have stuck to it. The Board has talked about the Stranahan High School cafeteria for months, so he thinks the Board was informed enough to make a recommendation to the Commission. It was not a unanimous vote on the reuse versus new construction, but it was a unanimous vote on the condition.

Mr. Whatley thought the vote did not maximize the value on Fort Lauderdale schools.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated there is significant evidence of Stranahan High School being promised money and it went to zero. The Board makes decisions based on evidence and he will not agree that the decision made was out of fear or misinformation. There was open discussion that was honest, and fact based. The sole driver was not the fear of zero funding, it was all the things discussed tonight.

Chair Dr. Zeman announced a Network request for Education Advisory Board members. If you are in the 10%, please turn in the request to Ms. Saunders within the next week.

Chair Dr. Zeman reported that a week ago today, he observed a Principal Tanya Frost at Bayview Elementary School, when the PTA said they were done with accounting of the Book Fair, one of the largest fundraising events at an affluent school in Fort Lauderdale. They announced how much they made, and the President of the PTA asked how much

they wanted to give to Northside, and immediately the Principal and President of the PTA came up with a number and wrote a check. It is amazing to see goodness that is organic. As a Board, they are going to start collecting these things and he invited Board members to report these things. One Board member will be asked to volunteer to organize these reports each month, so letters can be sent from the Mayor, a Commissioner, or the Chief Education Officer, to acknowledge these things. It is critically important that citizens, parents, teachers, and City Commissioners see the thousands of great things that go on every year because it is easy to see a handful of difficult things that go on.

EAB Asset Mapping (member's affiliations & education interests) – This was not addressed.

Strategic Initiative Updates – This was not addressed.

Approval of Meeting Minutes: September 30, 2021 – This was not addressed.

Adjournment

Chair Dr. Zeman adjourned the meeting at 8:56 p.m.

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