

**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**Monday, June 16, 2022 6:30 P.M.**  
**CITY HALL, 8<sup>th</sup> Floor Conference Room**  
**100 North Andrews Avenue**  
**Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301**

<b>Members</b>	<b>June 2022 – May 2023</b>		
	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Amy Ellowitz, Chair	P	1	0
Heather Brinkworth	P	1	0
Ruchel Coetzee	A	0	1
Yolanda B. Francis	A	0	1
Tina Jaramillo	P	1	0
Colleen Lockwood	A	0	1
Tomislav Lukic	A	0	1
Lisa May	A	0	1
Vickie Melus	A	0	1
Christopher Relyea	P	1	0
Lillian Small	A	0	1
Alyssa Mendez	P	1	0
Rory Sponsler	P	1	0
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp (Virtual)	P	1	0
Denia Perloff	A	0	1
Suzanne Dean, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Erin Gohl	P	1	0

**Staff**

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale  
 Carla Blair, Prototype, Inc.

**Guests** – None.

**Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m. by Amy Ellowitz, Board Chair, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Attendance and Roll Call, 17 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum**

As of this date, June 16, 2022, 9 of 17 appointed members were present, which did not constitute a quorum.

**Approval of Meeting Minutes**

Minutes were deferred due to lack of a quorum.

## **Board Chair's Minute**

Chair Ellowitz announced today's discussion will include an update on Summer Camp, Stranahan High School, and a brief overview of the state of Fort Lauderdale Schools and Community Engagement.

Ms. Saunders reported last year was the first year the Summer Enrichment Program was implemented where academic enrichment was brought to the Parks and Recreation Summer Camp. This week they are completing teacher training and Camp starts next Monday. Last summer the Star Assessment was used to measure student performance and based on those results, they are replicating the program this summer. Last year, there were lots of COVID restrictions, so there were not as many opportunities for campers to go on field trips. Last summer, students had two hours of academics per day and this summer, campers will have one hour. They have the unique challenge of having twice the number of campers and half the time, so some strategic decisions have been made around introducing a new digital curriculum and organizing time to maximize the benefit to students. The program is fully staffed with teachers, and they are looking forward to another great summer.

Mr. Relyea questioned if students are receiving breakfast and lunch through the schools this summer like they have in the past and if that would include kids not participating summer programs.

Ms. Saunders replied for the demographics that qualify for the program, yes. Out of 11 Summer Camps, only three require lunch be provided. She did not know about kids not participating in camps, but she did not believe they would receive lunches throughout the summer.

Ms. Gohl commented she saw something on social media that would connect people to resources.

Mr. Relyea stated in years past, there have been centralized locations amongst high schools where students could pick up food through a drive-thru. He noted there are a lot of kids in the district and the only place they get breakfast and lunch is taken away from them for nine to ten weeks.

Ms. Saunders indicated the other part of the summer program is that they will partner with non-profits to provide additional enrichment outside of the Parks program and those programs are being finalized.

Mr. Relyea asked how teachers were found and if they advertised.

Ms. Saunders advised outreach was done through social media and about half the teachers from last year are returning. If anyone knows of any teachers interested, please let her know.

Ms. Gohl questioned the curriculum.

Ms. Saunders stated they are using the organization Edmentum and the curriculum is called Exact Path. They are in the process of finalizing the Consultant Contract for Phase II of the Aviation Program.

Chair Ellowitz asked if the Bezos discussion has been tabled.

Ms. Saunders advised they are exploring opportunities within potential City properties and partners, but she did not have anything to share at this time. They are in an exploratory phase and will continue to look at options. They are continuing to move forward with the parallel path where some opportunities have already been identified with the School District. They are looking at other opportunities within the City where there is a need and opportunity in terms of space. The Bezos Academy has introduced another option to build a modular, because retrofitting buildings can be challenging. So, if land is available, that is another possibility to explore.

Chair Ellowitz questioned if there is a minimum requirement for square footage.

Ms. Saunders indicated the minimum interior space requirement is 2,500 square feet and many resources have been updated and examples of how that can be configured have been shared. As a follow up, she can email that information to Board members.

Vice Chair Dean mentioned a potential location in the Sistrunk area, where there is a need, but she has to reach out to see if it meets square footage requirements.

### **Stranahan High School Cafeteria Replace Status Update, Greg Boardman, Project Manager III, School Board of Broward County**

Greg Boardman, Project Manager III, School Board of Broward County, was not present.

### **Overview of Fort Lauderdale Schools, Review portfolio and available data**

Ms. Saunders indicated the overview of Fort Lauderdale Schools is connected with the Community Engagement Strategy to be discussed as they think about how to approach this. The Board will think about what data to bring forward, so it can be comprehensively analyzed. The following information was discussed:

- Census data to get a better understanding of school age children in Fort Lauderdale.
- The percentage of school age children participating within public schools is a helpful data point and looking at outliers that have high participating based on school age children and those that do not try to ascertain some factors driving those decisions.

- Enrollment data and thinking about cohort trends.
- The portfolio will change when additional data is reviewed to identify thresholds of the percentage of residents attending schools. It is possible an expanded set of schools will be considered as part of Fort Lauderdale.
- Academic data has been a little inconsistent and those challenges will continue as the test changes next year. In August, they will have FSA data to review as well as key data points, which can be brought in as well as graduation rates and attendance.
- A Neighborhood Survey is conducted on a regular basis and there are certain questions related to perception of public education, which has ranked low. The Community Engagement Strategy should be designed to help them better contextualize the data and understand what it means.

A more comprehensive presentation will be brought back, which helps highlight the portfolio. They want to bring data out around Magnet and Innovative Programs and look at participation rates of those programs in terms of in boundary and out of boundary, which is getting compiled by schools and zones to help understand some of the patterns. She would like to discuss what else is important for the Board to analyze to help them direct their work.

Vice Chair Dean questioned if the Board could get something that shows what the Neighborhood Survey looks like.

Ms. Saunders replied she would follow up.

Mr. Relyea indicated enrollment data is available and he asked if reassignment frequency and what percentage of kids are reassigned into their schools and outside schools. He noted the reassigned demographic inside schools is likely to be a different group of kids because neighborhoods tend to be semi homogenous as opposed to reassignment kids who could be from wherever.

Ms. Saunders stated she has looked at that in certain schools, but not for the entire portfolio. Data is helpful to see patterns to begin identifying appeal and demand within the City and Countywide.

Ms. Jaramillo asked if they are looking at families choosing to go to Charter or Private Schools in the Neighborhood Survey and if there are questions as to why residents are choosing private education over public education.

Ms. Saunders advised Charter School data is a little easier to collect and analyze; private school data is a little more challenging and that is part of the rationale for looking at Census data, so they can begin to guesstimate the gap.

Ms. Gohl questioned if they will be able to map this data because it could be powerful to convey different messages.

Chair Ellowitz commented there is a lot of literature about community schools and community engagement, and one of the first things recommended is to create a map.

Ms. Saunders stated once they understand this, the question is how to visualize this. She noted the GIS Team could be a support because the map could be very illustrative.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned the Census data gathered pre-COVID and questioned what impact it has on mobility for families and what the influx of new people means as far as the number of kids and families who have moved here because that is an unknown for the next ten years.

Ms. Saunders indicated that is some of the data the Downtown Development Authority has been collecting around the increase of residential units.

Ms. Brinkworth commented on graduation rates and suggested looking at cohort data and the codes used for students who do not graduate in a cohort, so they can understand the number of graduates.

Ms. Saunders asked if that part is attrition from the Freshman to Senior year.

Ms. Brinkworth replied it depends how they are coded.

Mr. Relyea advised he has tracked this at his school for the last ten years because students get so many benefits if they are in the top 10% of their graduating class. There are about 600 ninth graders and by time their class graduates there will be closer to 475. The Senior class is always the smallest and the Freshman class is always the biggest.

Ms. Saunders questioned where the kids are going.

Mr. Relyea does not know where the students go, but at his school, many of the kids are rescinded. He stated there is about a 15% attrition in four years at his school.

Chair Ellowitz asked what happens if someone drops out of high school but takes the GED and if the School Board knows about it and records the data.

Ms. Brinkworth advised the State looks at cohort data and the amount of time and if it is off the cohort, it does not count. Alternative schools within the City work hard for students to recover credits and most of the students go back to their home school to graduate, but those schools have what is considered deplorable graduation rates because they are not able to count those kids. This is something to think about to make sure they are clear on what their cohorts look like.

Ms. Saunders commented a lot of kids might be working.

Ms. Brinkworth stated they need to think about what their cohorts look like as far as City schools.

Ms. Saunders mentioned she would be interested to understand the patterns in private school as well. She asked if that resonates or if there is more stability in cohort trends.

Ms. Jaramillo indicated there is more stability; the class is always around the same size each year. Sometimes the Junior and Senior classes end up bigger because kids who cannot afford the four years cannot get a diploma for coming one year, but they try to come in during the Junior year so they will spend two years at the school and get the diploma from that school.

Ms. Mendez commented reenrollment is generally high; she works at a private Christian school and feels the reason families might not be returning is due to differing views and philosophy.

Mr. Relyea wonders if there is a noticeable trend in people who attended private school and switched to public school because of economic constraints.

Ms. Mendez stated some families are seeking private education.

Ms. Brinkworth suggested considering enrichment offerings at the schools especially with electives and other opportunities.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned faculty retention.

Ms. Gohl asked if PTO demographics and data would be relevant because it shows parental involvement.

Ms. Brinkworth stated some are PTO's and some are PTA's.

Vice Chair Dean asked about disciplinary action towards students and if there is a record of that.

Ms. Gohl stated data must be reported monthly.

Vice Chair Dean mentioned attrition in Junior and Senior years and noted students can work to help supplement income at home.

Ms. Saunders mentioned there seems to be attrition from early elementary into middle.

Mr. Relyea reminded everyone that the mandatory prescription is only through age 16, so students cannot be kicked out until their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday. It starts with discipline, but then becomes a GPA records check. It should not be a big number, but it does exist.

Ms. Saunders asked if that would be a code and Mr. Relyea replied yes.

Ms. Saunders stated they want to have a comprehensive approach and be able to be proactive. There is a sense of urgency to focus on the cluster of schools that are severely under enrolled. They are going to continue to collect data throughout this process. They already know of some clusters where community input is needed, so it can be shared with the School District.

Chair Ellowitz asked if there is anything the Board can do in the interim.

Ms. Saunders replied the Board can think about this more as they get into the Community Engagement Strategy.

Ms. Mendez mentioned grades awarded to schools and to see if there is a correlation with the enrollment numbers.

Ms. Saunders indicated wait list data can be interesting. There are certain schools within the City that are not under enrolled, but with a wait list, and other parts of the City have schools that are severely under enrolled. There is some work to do to make sure every school is appealing to the neighborhood it serves.

Ms. Gohl mentioned Affordable Housing and how it relates to school quality.

Ms. Mendez suggested seeing which schools have social media presence.

Ms. Saunders commented that seeing what partnerships they have might be helpful and this is something this Board could immediately support.

Chair Ellowitz asked if schools do anything like training for teachers or if it the same at every school across the School Board. She questioned if Principals do anything for their staff and if there is any kind of team building.

Mr. Relyea advised there is a Countywide program for people who are inspiring leaders, but it is a cultural thing, which is largely driven by the school if they have a Sunshine Committee.

Chair Ellowitz asked if something is happening within the school regarding leadership.

Mr. Sponsler indicated it might be related to turnover. A few years ago, at his school, pre-COVID, it appeared the School District took over training of incoming teachers. He did not know if there is a direct correlation, but their teacher turnover is nothing like he has seen in 21 years.

Ms. Gohl stated if disparities are seen between schools, someone might say it is probably something else. She thinks the turnover piece is huge.

Ms. Saunders questioned what tenure they are seeing the turnover. They can continue to build on this, so she can provide a list of data points they are analyzing and compiling and bring an overview to the next meeting. She noted this would be ongoing but will help keep the Board informed while doing outreach.

Chair Ellowitz indicated there is no meeting in July, so there is a little time to think about this.

### **Community Engagement Strategy:** Input and discussion

Chair Ellowitz stated as Ms. Saunders said, they all know awareness and perception is typically less than stellar when it comes to public education, but they want to ask if that is because it is true or because the community is misinformed or not informed, or just not in touch with what is happening. Similar to the Gap Analysis, their intention is to do a long-term deep dive into lots of questions and topics, but the goal is to elevate and amplify voices in the community and then work in conjunction with the School Board in a community effort. It is in their best interest as a City and in the School Board's best interest to engage people because if not, all the literature she has been reading about Community Engagement, says the School Board will forever be entrenched in a battle of opposition of the community who do not understand what is happening and what is at stake. She and Ms. Saunders want to emphasize that the entire process of doing the Community Engagement piece requires them to be transparent and open with the conversation every step of the way. She reiterated some of the benefits students, the community, and the faculty experience when there is a strong community stereotype approach as follows:

- It provides students with the feeling of belonging and fitting in.
- It enables students to gain lessons and values that are not taught in school through partnerships, with stakeholders, other programs, and volunteers who come in to work with students.
- It empowers students and community members to develop relationships that last beyond the school experience.
- It makes students and parents feel like the education was more like an investment.
- If students engage with the community, they can also be making connections for employment, help with resumes, etc., beyond the school experience.
- Students may have a deeper opportunity to practice time management because of people they work with in other professions.
- Outside stakeholders can reinforce the curriculum happening in school differently, which might appeal to a student or class and makes a better overall impression.
- It helps the community develop a sense of empathy and compassion toward what the Student Body is experiencing and vice versa if students are involved in the community outside of school.

Attrition was discussed earlier and Chair Ellowitz mentioned an interesting piece about schools in Finland, which was a 40-year process that was very intentional. She read a few paragraphs into the record. Another piece she found interesting is there are about 60 languages spoken in Finland and despite the barriers with language and diversity coming into the smaller countries, they all share the same goals. As the number of immigrant students approaches 50%, their achievement is still climbing and can be measured by metrics they are using.

The following are goals of successful Community Engagement:

- Improve academic performance but gain advocates who will promote students' success.
- Create a shared purpose for the City that embraces the complexity of the issues they have and the competing values that exist in a diverse community like ours.

Other components of Community Engagement they are looking into are as follows:

- Family use and community partnership.
- Culture of inclusion and equity.
- Program environment and program leadership.
- Professional development.
- Continuous improvement and quality assurance.

Themes for successful school transformation that can be seen across the data and other successful programs follow:

- Community and business school partnerships.
- Parental collaboration.
- Curriculum connected to real world experiences.

The following have not been discussed:

- They have not discussed the students' voice as much, asking what they think.
- Cross generational learning.
- Local designing solutions to local problems.

The Community Engagement piece is going to emphasize, and they need to elevate and deliver voices in the community and back to the School Board, and work as co-collaborators; this is a phased approach. They are starting with setting the state, selecting communities, looking at the map to see who they need to address, how they can reach them, and bring them into the conversation. Phase II will be taking a Citywide approach.

Ms. Saunders commented there will be ongoing feedback loops as they are learning but making sure they have a mechanism to share community priorities with the City Commission and School Board as they continue to cultivate partnerships and communicate to those partners to help build connections.

Mr. Relyea mentioned under enrolled schools and stated the Board tried for a couple of years to have a City grade, but it did not work. Many schools have wonderful things going on, but no one knows about them. Realtors are a potential teammate, and he thinks the Board should engage the schools with better advertising. Schools have events at the end of the year, during holidays, and at the halfway point, and there are people in nearby communities who have never been on the campuses and think they know what the schools offer. There is no one better than students to advertise for the schools. There is a major disconnect between the greatness happening on the campuses; people outside think they know what is going on inside, but they could not be more wrong. There has to be a mechanism; they cannot ask a school to invent an idea, they should say this is what they need and tell them how to do it. He thinks the City has a responsibility and the purpose of the Board is to improve the quality of life within the City and the way to do that is through schools and exposing people to the schools.

Ms. Saunders thought they should call out as an assumption that for their community to be successful there needs to be integration between the schools and communication sources; the responsibility is not just what happens within the academic day. She thinks making that assumption clear is important because it can help build the shared purpose in figuring out how they best maximize resources. As a City, they have started trying to build government efficiency between the City of Fort Lauderdale, Broward County Public Schools, and the Children's Services Council. The summer program has been an example, and they have been intentional about asking where the gap is in terms of funding, which is where they can put in some dollars. The question is how to share resources, so they are not wasting money buying different curriculum for example. They see two things; data processing and aligning processes, but if they continue to show examples of that working, they think they can break through those barriers and have a better community infrastructure for education. Affordable Housing is a factor, there are other factors they need to bring into play. When people have a perception about a school, they should be intentional about soliciting informed input. Their responsibility is to acknowledge what is working well and being candid about what people see as shortcomings and try to figure out how to address it. Over the summer they are looking to schedule meetings with Principals and help them identify what they see as the strongest points of their school and what the challenges are; some challenges might be external. There have been discussions about scheduling meetings, so they can talk with Principals, capping it at four per conversation, and once they have a schedule there will be an opening for an Education Advisory Board member to be a part of those conversations.

Ms. Jaramillo indicated she spent 11 years at a high-end private school and the money

parents were paying was for college counseling their child was going to receive. The college counselor's sole purpose is to help kids through the college process; they are massaging academic resumes and providing students with access to summer programs to internships to make them look like they are the perfect student when they want to matriculate out into the schools. Public Schools have one BRACE advisor for the entire school. She thinks it is important to get kids to participate in internships whether it is with local attorneys, the Development Board of Fort Lauderdale, or different ways where they can spend time and have a summer internship with someone who might volunteer to college essay writing workshops with them to put together packages. No one is telling the kids this information, so another piece is having someone very well versed in college counseling providing that information to kids in the Public Schools who do not get access because they do not know it exists. Many of the summer programs offer financial aid and other things where the kids can sit on a college campus and have the experience they might not have otherwise. Kids do not see what they can attain or what they can participate in and that is the big gap she sees as unfair just because the kids do not know and because one BRACE advisor cannot provide that to a school. Perhaps through this program there is a set of people who can reach out to schools or kids who want the information or to families who do not realize these programs are out there.

Ms. Saunders thinks that type of information is important; it is a differentiator between parents making a decision for private or public schools and that needs to be made clear. She agreed this is a huge differentiator because staffing is not set up to that level of support for students. This summer the focus is targeted support; they are doing targeted counseling for Fort Lauderdale students and the focus is for students who have graduated and do not have a plan. Perhaps there is an opportunity for the Board to identify priorities in terms of lobbying and creating some alignment at the State level because there needs to be more highly qualified people to meet the number of kids who need the one-on-one support.

Ms. Jaramillo commented that having workshops, etc. might help bridge the gap a little.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned another initiative and part of what she did was interview Homeowner's Association Presidents and community leaders. There was not one person who did not say they were happy to help; they have skills and would be happy to be within the school if asked.

Ms. Jaramillo stated mock interviews with the kids might help.

Vice Chair Dean thinks the idea of doing a better job marketing and advertising the fact they have all these programs is important. She sees where they could do collaborations with the Parks & Recreation Department; they host events where people bring families, and Kid's Days. They could have a booth where they talk about Broward County Public Schools with brochures and highlighting things from Principals for certain schools. She agreed 100% with college admissions and thinks that should be collected from Public Schools.

Ms. Saunders hesitates with the recommendation to focus on Ivy League acceptance rates because she does not think they should value one school over another. She thinks they need to value that the child is going to a school that is going to nurture them and foster their interests and that is hard to quantify. She understands many private schools will promote where students are accepted to college, and it is something parents will see.

Vice Chair Dean mentioned partnerships with realtors and suggested meeting with larger realty agencies and doing a presentation.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp suggested using the realtor's format and doing a progressive open house for Fort Lauderdale elementary, middle, and high schools. The perception must be changed because any realtor will say the schools are bad, and she mentioned school grading.

Mr. Relyea thought the way to do that would be to get partners to feed the people during the meetings. People are moving here and are relying upon their realtor's opinion because all they have to go on is a school grade; they are not visiting the schools. If realtors are there, the conversation changes completely.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp mentioned the Realtor Board on 26<sup>th</sup> Street and stated they took in most of Broward, Palm Beach, and the South Broward Board. They have educational events all the time and perhaps they can get some of the Principals to come and do a slideshow presentation. Realtors need to be involved because they are gatekeepers.

Chair Ellowitz commented on an open house she attended at Fort Lauderdale High School, and they had the ROTC kids there, bands playing, and the mock trial classroom was open.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp questioned how they find these people in clusters. She thinks Homeowner's Associations and churches can help. People tell her they have submitted applications to volunteer, but they do not receive any return calls.

Vice Chair Dean questioned if there is a Volunteer Coordinator position.

Ms. Saunders indicated there is a Chief Service Officer who is very engaged and passionate about education; he does a lot with literacy. She hears from the community that they struggle on how to volunteer, and she hears from non-profits that they struggle with getting connected. They need to take a localized approach because there is a lot of value in that. There is a lot of matching volunteers, so they could possibly create forums to help facilitate that between schools and those interested. They are looking to establish a schedule for how to engage with schools because to date, a lot of work has been nowhere heavily engaged with one school based on projects they are working on, but then it is hard to keep sight of what else might be going on or on other needs throughout the entire system. They are trying to make sure they have check in points for

all the schools and think about what type of forums they want to create to facilitate those meaningful connections.

Vice Chair Dean suggested creating a database where they reach out to each individual Principal and ask if they could have a pool of volunteers, what would they want them to do. Then, for each school, there is a list, so volunteers can be managed.

Ms. Saunders commented there is also an opportunity to create sister schools.

Chair Ellowitz stated they could have meetings like they did at Bennett Elementary School, which was very well received.

Ms. Saunders advised that was a decision from the City Attorney to keep EAB meetings at City Hall. If the Board wants to revisit that, it would be a Communication to the Commission for further discussion.

Ms. Gohl mentioned sister schools and stated they want to be intentional and careful if they do that, so they are not fueling the same narrative that one is the savior. They need to be careful, so it is seen as reciprocal and that different things can be contributed in both directions.

Ms. Saunders agreed.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned a list of opportunities and stated she constantly hears from schools, leaders, and community members, that there are barriers when trying to get into schools; there is a huge gap. If someone fills out volunteer information and they do not select a specific school, their application is thrown into a list. If the School District could identify volunteers who want to volunteer in the City of Fort Lauderdale when they fill out the form, that information could be shared, so there would be some insight and they could review the needs and capabilities of the volunteers and help bridge the gap. She mentioned advertising and stated the School District moved away from the ability of individual schools having their own template on their website for advertising. If someone Googles Fort Lauderdale High School for example, their old website will be found along with their new website, which is the template every school in Broward County must use. It was noted that former Principal of Fort Lauderdale High School was frustrated by the new websites because she knew it differentiated her school. Competing matters and every school in Broward County is forced to use that template. Perhaps the City could look at making the template better.

Mr. Sponsler indicated if the Board wanted to put something on that website it would have to go through so much red tape; teachers do not bother.

Vice Chair Dean asked why that has to be done.

Ms. Brinkworth stated there are many reasons, but one of the biggest reasons is due to

ADA compliance because it is a governmental entity; people look in the world to sue, so if they find something is not ADA compliant, they file lawsuits and get money.

Ms. Saunders mentioned there is probably some standardized content that all schools need to communicate. She thinks there is a balance of having continuity across the broad content and allowing customization; that is the challenging balance to achieve.

Ms. Mendez commented if the first impression does not look good that is going to be the perception. She attended an event hosted by Life Work Leadership Journey and it was a think tank type of forum. There were two education non-profits as well as the Principal from Northside Elementary and the members of this organization were tasked with giving back their intellectual capital. They were trying to help solve any challenges the schools were facing. The Principal shared some of the struggles they are dealing with such as perception and people not realizing the great things happening at the school. They talked about social media, which she thinks is underutilized. The school is offering concierge level private school servants, which is something people need to know. There were remarkable stories of transformation, which is a matter of telling the stories and getting them out there. She thought some type of tool kit could be created or standardized training could be done for every public school; empowering school leaders with something digestible and not intimidating.

Ms. Saunders asked if Ms. Mendez has a Marketing 101 presentation that could be customized for that purpose.

Ms. Mendez replied she does not, but she would be happy to help build something.

Ms. Gohl asked if the schools could change the websites. She suggested doing templates for them.

Mr. Relyea stated they use social media.

Ms. Saunders advised that many times Principals are invited to Education Advisory Board meetings to share what they have done that has helped increase their social media presence in a changeable way. It is not a sanction training by the School District, it is if they are interested in hearing some ideas.

Vice Chair Dean commented that kids in the school are much better with social media, and she thought some type of Ambassador Program for Juniors and Seniors where they are taught the kinds of things desired, so they can contribute to a group page dedicated to the school. It could be something where certain students are elected who are not going to defame the school and they would have a position to put on their resume as a Social Media Manager of whatever school they are representing.

Ms. Mendez stated the school she works at is trying to implement that kind of strategy. Students know the platforms better than them and they are eager for opportunities.

Mr. Relyea mentioned the lack of BRACE advisors, etc. and stated he has been texting a student who has a profit company with his family, and this is what they do. He ran a hypothetical and asked if they would be interested in partnering with the City, which could expose them to hundreds of thousands of kids and what they might be able to offer to people coming through the Fort Lauderdale Registration, and he is working on pricing. He taught this student for six years and this is a motivated family who figured out on their own how to send four kids to Ivy League or equivalent and they took that knowledge they acquired on their own and turned it into a business. He is not trying to make them money; he thinks this is good advertising for them if they would partner with the City and perhaps they would do it for nothing because it might benefit them as a company. They have hands on counseling, but also have a do it at your own pace module that can be done repeatedly and there is lifetime access to all the content. This is something the School Board might want to pursue and maybe they would be willing to do a partnership for the advertising and goodwill. The name of the company is Best College Aid, and their website is bestcollegeid.com.

Ms. Saunders indicated kids need to learn more about college early on, so she thinks it is helpful to pursue available services, so they have a better understanding.

Ms. Mendez questioned what the SAT and ACT Prep look like in the public school system. She asked how many parents know about the SAT's.

Ms. Saunders stated it depends on the school; some of it is offered for free.

Mr. Relyea advised some schools have specific programming and classes. He stated it is up to the school and noted the City can play a role there.

Ms. Saunders questioned how to make sure there is equity and access in learning.

Mr. Relyea commented the places that need help are not getting it.

Ms. Gohl mentioned they need to focus on some schools in the immediate term and writing success stories is something she can do. If there are some things that would be helpful for the Board to spotlight and that the City might be able to promote, she would be happy to help.

Ms. Brinkworth thought the City could play a key role helping schools navigate how to get grants. Some schools have staff members who write grants and others have no one on staff to write grants and it is intimidating. If there are people in the community who know how to do it or who have done it, it is not difficult, they just have to know how to write a grant. If they could help figure out what grants fit the needs of the schools and then find people to help them, they can write a compelling story and a grant proposal that wins, which would help the City by getting those dollars infused into the community. It would not only be for things that impact the school, it could be larger community impact. Regarding opportunities to share the information, Bridge to Life and the School

District had nights where people went online and participated. There are some talented people who work for the School District who have a lot of information, but parents do not know about the opportunities, or they do not have access to get to the opportunities. Perhaps the City could host something at a local Community Center and invite the parents to have higher levels of participation.

Ms. Saunders stated they are partnering with Bridge to Life, so that is an opportunity.

Chair Ellowitz asked if after school programs would be a funnel to communicate with parents.

Ms. Saunders thinks that could be done during after school programs the City operates, the Boys and Girls Club, and the YMCA. Kids are there and families have connections with those providers because the kids have probably been going there since they were little and there is a different level of trust. She is continually impressed with the relationship their Parks and Recreation staff have with their community; they are part of the family.

Ms. Mendez mentioned churches and noted they could get their congregation involved. Maybe the City could play a role in connecting local churches with local schools that have needs, which would give the congregation a chance to step foot on the campuses and they could get to know the Principals and staff.

Mr. Sponsler asked when the Chamber of Commerce is going to be invited to a meeting.

Ms. Saunders stated they are partnered with the Chamber of Commerce and the Greater Fort Lauderdale Alliance.

Ms. Gohl mentioned Virginia Schuman Young hosted a middle school forum last year and parents from all the local public middle schools talked to parents who were looking at schools and people walked away feeling like they had all these great opportunities as opposed to zero. She thinks they could do that at every level. Parents who have had good experiences are the best Ambassadors. Relationships are built between the schools.

Chair Ellowitz stated the vision over the next couple of months is that they will be more specific about the communities, target questions to ask, and they will come up with questions and a format.

Ms. Saunders indicated they would immediately begin scheduling conversations with Principals. Scheduling during the summer will be tough when thinking about organizations; more of the conversations will be stakeholders engaged in the communities in a variety of ways and trying to expand those networks. One way to do so is tapping into resources of the Education Advisory Board with members inviting

neighbors or colleagues to engage in these discussions.

Chair Ellowitz asked if it was determined if there will be a meeting in July and Ms. Saunders stated that is up to the membership. She noted a tentative meeting was set for July 21, 2022, and questioned if another survey should be sent in attempt to get a definitive answer. She will not be available the week before or after July 21, 2022.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned there was supposed to be a direct appointment for Bayview Elementary, but she did not think it happened. Someone was listed as a directive link as a new Principal and there was a lot of chatter on Face Book that they were told they were going to get a community process and then a direct appointment, but the policy says, "In extraordinary circumstances the Superintendent may direct, appoint, and forego the community process". She responded to community members by saying she would ask what the extraordinary circumstance is if they were told they were getting a community process and to reach out to their School Board members.

Ms. Gohl stated it was mentioned at the School Board meeting on Tuesday. They said if the community input process had started, they were going to continue it and if it had not started, they were directly appointing in the interest of time.

Ms. Gohl indicated there seems to be conversations around opportunities for community input directly to the School District being more limited and there have already been conversations about how they are constrained. She thinks it is going to be a challenge of this initiative and this Board going forward, at least in the immediate term, because 100 people showed up to get community input and only 30 people were allowed. She does not know if it is trying to partner with School Board members working to find and create some channels, but there seems to be a current challenge. On the note of direct appointing, there does not seem to be a standard process that used to be followed and on the school closure question, no one who has ever been through a school closure at the District level is still there. She does not know if they know what the process is going to look like because there is not anyone who has done it previously, so it may be a new process. She thinks they need to be proactive and try to initiate conversation and communication with School Board officials to make sure they are aware of the issues the Board is thinking about and if it is coming down the pipe, they want to be aware of it.

Ms. Saunders spoke with the Superintendent and school members around this approach and being transparent about what the Board is trying to achieve, mentioning the objectives and how they see their role as a partner. Some of the preliminary conversations have started but solidifying what that means is another level of discussion. She thinks different channels should be considered. The City has already had experience when attending School Board meetings, as there is two minutes to speak, so that is not a dialogue as partners. There might be an opportunity of a Joint meeting, so they have to be ready, and think about what type of prep everyone needs for that conversation to be productive. She thinks they are going to get to a point where a different forum needs to be created because they are not able to talk back and forth.

Ms. Saunders indicated she could see it being threatening, so they must be transparent. They are making investments in schools and education for after school programs and summer programs. There are concrete ways they can be a contributor and they have to make that known.

Chair Ellowitz stated they have to listen; the conflict will get worse before it gets better because everyone is afraid of what is going to happen.

Ms. Saunders advised if it is handled the right way it is going to be messy and things will come out during the conversations that people might take offense to, and they must be able to say that was a pain point that came out of the conversation, acknowledge it, and figure out a solution. She also hears the level they have is tightly controlled and they do not want a tightly controlled discussion, they need to make sure a negative group is not being allowed to take over.

Chair Ellowitz suggested this conversation be continued during the next meeting.

Mr. Sponsler recommended not limiting conversations to Principals while engaging with school leaders. There are lots of people in every school who have suggestions, programs in place, and a lot of good ideas.

Ms. Saunders commented if there are different supports available, they might think of ways to take advantage of them.

Chair Ellowitz stated they must be transparent.

## **Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned the meeting at 8:19 p.m.

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

***Minutes changes are to be made only by Prototype. Please make all staff edits at one time via redlining or in an email and return to your minutes writer for our approval and acceptance. We will then create a second draft. We will also make final changes after Board approval. Contact Lisa with any questions.***