



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD
Thursday, October 17, 2024, 6:00 p.m.
101 NE 3rd Ave
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311**

June 2024 - May 2025

Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Chair Janet Gualtieri	P	3	0
Pamela Aiken	P	2	1
Heather Brinkworth	P	3	0
Kristina Dever	A	1	2
John Gillen	P	3	0
Erin Gohl	P	2	1
Juliet Gray-Williams	A	2	1
Charles Laster	A	1	2
Denia Perloff	P	1	2
Deborah Rosenbaum	P	2	1

Also Attending

Susan Leon, Chief Education Officer

I. Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Chair Janet Gualtieri. Roll was called and it was determined a quorum was present.

II. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Gualtieri asked the Board to rise for the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. Approval of the September 19, 2024 Minutes

Motion was made by Ms. Rosenbaum, seconded by Mr. Gillen, to approve the September 19, 2024, minutes as presented. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

IV. Old Business

Ms. Leon provided an update on the draft from the previous Board meeting regarding preserving land for future school use. She reported the statement had been presented to the City Commission, resulting in a unanimous resolution in support. Ms. Leon explained this resolution was also shared with the School Board, emphasizing the importance of long-term planning for school facilities. Chair Gualtieri commended the team for their efficient work, and Ms. Perloff echoed the sentiment, highlighting the strong collaboration among members.

Ms. Aiken inquired about expanding scholarship opportunities, suggesting the creation of a general scholarship in addition to the existing aviation-focused one.

Chair Gualtieri recalled past discussions about mentoring programs for city employees and noted this idea had been well-received.

Mr. Gillen proposed partnering with Junior Achievement to offer mentorship opportunities for students interested in public service careers.

Ms. Brinkworth suggested extending an invitation to Ms. Lori Salzarulo to present to the Board.

Ms. Leon agreed to investigate previous mentorship initiatives and provide more details at the next meeting.

V. New Business

- **Redefining Schools Update**

Ms. Leon briefed the board on the ongoing redesign of several schools, emphasizing the importance of community input. She mentioned the attendance boundary committee's efforts and highlighted partnerships, such as the Museum of Discovery and Science's involvement at North Fork Elementary.

Chair Gualtieri expressed appreciation for the efforts made to involve the community but raised concerns about ensuring feedback is taken seriously and incorporated meaningfully into final plans. She emphasized the importance of transparency and building trust with parents.

Ms. Gohl noted Coconut Creek also presented and emphasized a need for K-8.

Ms. Brinkworth specifically asked about the status of park bond funds for school-related projects, highlighting the extensive efforts that went into securing those resources. She mentioned concerns about field sizes, noting that while there was no

space for a regulation-size field, the board should consider the practicality of having such facilities if pursuing a sports academy. The topic of turf fields also arose, and Ms. Brinkworth questioned the value of installing non-regulation turf fields, hinting that investing differently might yield better outcomes for the park and community.

Ms. Brinkworth suggested leasing school facilities to host family literacy centers, integrating early childhood education, and offering career and technical education (CTE) to support community literacy and education goals. She acknowledged potential logistical hurdles, such as adult presence on campuses, but expressed confidence that solutions could be found.

Ms. Leon shared that during a meeting with the superintendent, there was discussion about utilizing Thurgood Marshall for adult education programs due to the building's size. She expressed surprise when plans shifted to a K-8 model, as the original idea seemed to change, with programming also being moved back to Ashe.

Ms. Brinkworth highlighted Gulfstream Early Learning Center as an excellent model, emphasizing its comprehensive services for families, including social services and partnerships with organizations like Hispanic Unity. She suggested the city could adopt a similar approach, partnering with the school board to bring innovative services to local schools. She urged the commission to identify community needs by zip code and explore ways to prioritize available school space for necessary programs.

Ms. Gohl agreed that more Early Learning Centers, CTE programs, and adult education are needed, referencing feedback from community meetings held since January. She praised the Gulfstream model for its effectiveness and suggested the community could benefit from implementing multiple such centers.

Ms. Brinkworth emphasized the importance of advocating for neighborhood-focused opportunities rather than expecting residents to travel to central locations like Broadway. She suggested localized programs at schools like Northside or Thurgood Marshall, where parents dropping off children would be more likely to engage with adult education initiatives, even if organized on a smaller or rotating basis. She felt there was an opportunity being missed.

Discussion ensued about the lack of swimming education in the school curriculum.

Chair Gaultieri committed to researching state mandates and exploring options for incorporating swimming lessons into the curriculum.

- **BCPS Government Affairs Update**

Ms. Leon forwarded all updates from Mr. Arana to the board, including National Day of Service information. Garden boxes were discussed as a part of ongoing efforts to promote sustainable agriculture and environmental awareness in schools.

Ms. Gohl also mentioned "Read Across Broward," an initiative aimed at encouraging reading and literacy throughout the district.

A brief discussion ensued about the ballot question regarding auditing.

VI. Chief Education Officer Update

Ms. Leon shared that efforts were being made to coordinate a visit with the district director from the school board and Rufus from FXE to Opa-locka Airport to tour the Barrington Irving Training Center. She mentioned plans for this visit, tentatively scheduled for November 8. She shared that aviation classes had been set to start in January at Fort Lauderdale High School, supporting the scholarship initiative.

Ms. Leon also highlighted efforts to collaborate with Public Works and Atlantic Technical Center to offer in-person courses addressing staffing challenges in the sector. While she had secured logistics, finding a qualified teacher remained a challenge. The project was part of the "Good Jobs, Great Cities" initiative, aiming to develop apprenticeships and prepare candidates for licensing, despite a shortage of qualified individuals.

Discussion ensued about school calendar and community input.

VII. Member Discussion

Ms. Brinkworth announced the launch of a new pickleball club at Fort Lauderdale High, expressing excitement about the opportunity for students to engage in a fun, active sport. She requested donations of equipment and suggested community outreach. Mr. Gillen offered to assist in reaching out to local businesses for support.

Ms. Leon updated on engaging Parks and Recreation to discuss the park bond status. She highlighted quarterly principal meetings she initiated for collaboration. She summarized involving city employees in mentorship programs and discussed creating full-service community outreach at elementary schools to support families comprehensively.

Discussion continued about creation of Fort Lauderdale scholarships.

VIII. Closing

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 p.m. The next regular meeting is scheduled for November 21, 2024.

[Minutes prepared by T. Baclawski, Prototype, Inc.]