



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

2nd DRAFT
MEETING MINUTES
CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD
Thursday, May 15, 2025, 6:00 p.m.
101 NE 3rd Ave
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33311

June 2024 - May 2025

Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Chair Janet Gualtieri	P	9	0
Pamela Aiken	A	5	4
Heather Brinkworth	P	8	1
Kristina Dever	P	7	2
John Gillen	P	6	3
Erin Gohl	P	8	1
Juliet Gray-Williams	P	8	1
Deborah Rosenbaum, Vice Chair	P	7	2
Kristin LaFleur	P	4	0
Pamela Vance	P	3	0
Cary Tabora (arrived at 6:04 p.m.)	P	3	0

Also Attending

Susan Leon, Chief Education Officer
Susan Grant, Assistant City Manager
K. Cruitt, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc

Call to Order and Determination of Quorum

Roll was called and it was determined a quorum was present. The meeting began at 6:03 p.m.

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Approval of the April 17, 2025 Minutes

Susan Leon, Chief Education Officer, distributed hard copies of the revised second draft and noted that attendance tracking begins in June, making May the final meeting of the year. She explained the attendance requirements and outlined the consequences for non-compliance. Attendance records had discrepancies after January, as only eight meetings were held; she made the necessary corrections to the attendance grid. Prior to the meeting, Ms. Leon shared that the City Clerk had brought the member attendance issue to her attention. Due to errors in the attendance records, she was unable to forward the Communication to the Commission. She also highlighted that a second Communication had been prepared but could not be submitted for the same reason—incorrect attendance data. Ms. Leon advised her to email the latest draft back to the minute writer and copy Lisa Tayar, Proto Type Inc, on the message.

An additional revision was also required to correct the spelling of Ms. LaFleur's last name on page 2, under the "Approval of February Minutes" section. Ms. Leon also confirmed that Denia Perloff was removed from the board due to excessive absences, and a revised board list will be uploaded to DHQ.

Motion made by Vice Chair Rosenbaum, seconded by Ms. Gohl, to approve the April 17, 2025, with the corrections as noted. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

Old Business

- **Communication to the Commission – May 20, 2025, at 1:00 p.m. Aviation Scholarships/Barrington Irving Technical Training School Fortify Lauderdale & The Underwater Project**

Ms. Leon stated that, due to errors in the previous meeting minutes and attendance grid, the presentation to the Commission has been rescheduled to June 3. Vice Chair Deb Rosenbaum confirmed her availability and will present on the Underwater Project.

Chair Gualtieri will be out of the country and unavailable until June 18. Although Assistant City Manager Susan Grant proposed June 17 as an alternative date, the Board agreed to proceed with June 3. Ms. Grant also noted that the budget related to these projects will not be approved until September; the June 3 presentation is intended to express the board's support.

The Board discussed having a second speaker to present the Aviation Project alongside the Underwater Project. Juliette Gray-Williams volunteered to present on the Aviation Project on behalf of the board and confirmed her availability for June 3. Both she and Vice Chair Rosenbaum requested bullet points to support their remarks.

As two Board Members will be speaking, the Board agreed to notify City Clerk David R. Soloman to ensure proper procedures are followed, including public notice and coordination of the speaking order.

Motion made by Ms. LaFleur, seconded by Mr. Gillen, to approve Juliette Gray-Williams to speak on Aviation Scholarships on behalf of the Board at the June 3 Commission Meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

- **Broward Education Foundation Scholarship Update**

Ms. Leon shared an update from Claudette Lavoie, Director of Scholarships at Broward Education Foundation regarding the scholarship applications. Five of the six participating schools have submitted sufficient applications, and those are now moving forward to the scholarship committee for selection. However, at Whiddon Rogers, only two students applied, and one was disqualified for not residing in Fort Lauderdale. The Foundation will reach back out to the school to solicit additional applications. Cary Tabora, who works at Whiddon Rogers, offered to follow up with the school's advisor to encourage more students to apply, noting that two spots are available per school. Although the application deadline has officially passed, exceptions will be made for Whiddon Rogers to ensure full participation.

Ms. Leon noted there were a total of 50 applications across the six schools, including two from Seagull. She also mentioned plans to request a formal recognition for the scholarship recipients at the June 30 Commission meeting, as it would be the last opportunity before the Commission recesses until late August. This is the first year of the program, and Board Members expressed enthusiasm and optimism for its continued success.

New Business

The Board discussed the upcoming meeting schedule. Chair Gualtieri noted that Board Members typically take vacations in June and July, and reminded the Board that last year, meetings were paused in July and August, with only a June meeting held. It was also mentioned that the Commission is in recess during July and August, making it consistent for the board to break during that time as well. However, it was noted that the third Thursday in June falls on Juneteenth, a City holiday, and several Board Members would be unavailable.

John Gillen requested that the Board consider moving its regular meeting day from the third Thursday to either the second or fourth Thursday each month. Vice Chair Rosenbaum subsequently made a motion to change the regular meeting date to the second Thursday of each month. Before the motion was seconded, discussion began regarding potential conflicts with other Advisory Boards, the availability of meeting space, and whether a formal change would require Commission approval. In light of the feedback and unresolved logistical considerations, Vice Chair Rosenbaum withdrew the motion.

Staff recommended that the Board consider only adjusting the June meeting date for now and allow staff to review possible future date options, room availability, and whether a formal resolution would be required to change the meeting schedule permanently.

Motion made by Vice Chair Rosenbaum, seconded by Mr. Gillen, to move the June meeting to June 12. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

The Board continued its discussion on adjusting the regular meeting date and time due to recurring scheduling conflicts among members. Mr. Gillen shared that the current third Thursday schedule conflicts with his obligation to the Central Beach Alliance (CBA), where he serves as the voting representative for his condominium association, and noted he may have to resign if a change is not made. Another Board Member cited a conflict with the South Middle River Civic Association's Board meetings, held on the second Wednesday of each month. Given the size of the Board and the variety of external commitments, Board Members acknowledged the challenge of finding a perfect alternative. Suggestions included exploring different days, starting meetings earlier, and using a Doodle poll to identify availability. Heather Brinkworth noted the Board has historically met on the third Thursday and recommended confirming with the City whether a schedule change is even permitted, as it may require formal approval or resolution. Ms. Leon agreed to inquire with City staff and stated the topic would be placed on the June agenda for further discussion. Staff confirmed that no motion was needed to begin exploring options.

Following the discussion on potentially changing the Board's regular meeting date, the Board turned to consider the summer meeting schedule. Mr. Gillen made a motion to cancel the July meeting due to anticipated conflicts and the City Commission's usual summer recess. The motion was seconded by Ms. Brinkworth for the purpose of opening discussion.

During discussion, several Board Members raised questions about possible scheduling conflicts in August, including the start of the school year and the City's availability during its summer break. Ms. Brinkworth clarified that her seconding of the motion was intended only to allow for discussion, and noted that if the city is unavailable in July and August, meeting during that time may not be productive. Other Board Members echoed the concern, suggesting that the August meeting should also be considered for cancellation depending on quorum availability.

After further dialogue, Ms. Brinkworth withdrew her second, and Mr. Gillen withdrew the motion.

Subsequently, Ms. Gohl made a new motion to cancel the July meeting.

Motion made by Ms. Gohl, seconded by Vice Chair Rosenbaum, to cancel the July meeting. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously.

The Board agreed that the August meeting would remain scheduled for the time being and will be revisited at the June meeting, at which time Board Members were asked to bring their availability for August to determine if a quorum can be met.

Chief Education Office Update

- **Redefining Schools Update**

Ms. Leon provided an update on the Redefining Schools initiative, noting that a draft presentation for the upcoming Board Workshop has been circulated. While the draft outlines Phase I of the initiative, she pointed out that it is missing significant details. One key omission is North Fork Elementary, which was previously considered for a partnership with the Museum of Discovery & Science. That plan has been abandoned due to cost concerns, and the school is no longer included in Phase I. The Superintendent has requested suggestions for the future of North Fork, including ideas such as converting it into an open enrollment "commuter school" to serve downtown workers. While the Board had previously recommended that the property not be sold, Ms. Leon suggested that this recommendation should be reiterated due to ongoing interest from developers.

Regarding Broward Estates Elementary, Ms. Leon shared that she is part of the committee overseeing developments there. Concerns expressed in community meetings include potential changes to Head Start funding, what will happen to current students, transportation logistics, and a general feeling among residents of being unheard. While a building assessment has been conducted and early education programs like VPK are expected to begin in August, the overall future funding and direction of the school remain uncertain. The district is still welcoming suggestions and feedback.

In terms of facilities and real estate, Ms. Leon noted that several district-owned properties remain for sale, including a triangular parcel near Coral Springs High, a property on Oakland Park Boulevard that formerly housed technology and benefits departments, and additional parcels in Parkland and Plantation. There were no new updates regarding these sales in the latest presentation. The district is also relocating staff from the KC Wright building and exploring the option of leasing space within it.

Looking ahead, the Superintendent has expressed interest in exploring a Sports Academy model at Bennett and Sunrise Middle Schools, though no formal meetings have been scheduled yet. Input from the Board is being sought on this concept. Meanwhile, park bond-funded renovations at Sunrise Middle are still scheduled to begin this summer. These include extensive upgrades to athletic fields, and the principal has prioritized the installation of an overhang over lighting. These improvements are part of a larger City initiative to create joint-use spaces between schools and the community, allowing public access to facilities like playgrounds and sports fields outside of school hours. Similar projects have already been implemented at other schools such as Dillard and Riverland. At Thurgood Marshall, plans are still pending as meetings have yet to be successfully scheduled.

The next Board Workshop is open to the public and will take place at 9:00 AM, with the Redefining Schools discussion scheduled to begin at 11:30 AM. Board Members were reminded that while the Board had previously communicated its opposition to selling certain school properties, it may be appropriate to reaffirm that position, especially given current development pressures.

Member Discussion

None.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 p.m.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for June 12, 2025.

[Minutes prepared by J. Burnham, Prototype, Inc.]