



**CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE
City Commission Agenda Memo
CONFERENCE MEETING**

#26-0082

TO: Honorable Mayor & Members of the
Fort Lauderdale City Commission

FROM: Rickelle Williams, City Manager

DATE: January 6, 2026

TITLE: Update – Broward County Schools “Redefining our Schools” Initiative -
(Commission Districts 1, 2, 3 and 4)

Background

As part of its effort to address excess classroom capacity in the district, the School Board of Broward County has undertaken an initiative entitled “Redefining Our Schools” that would include consolidation, closure and repurposing existing schools and facilities. In 2024-2025 (Phase 1), this effort included the conversion of Broward Estates Elementary (located at 441 NW 35 Avenue, Fort Lauderdale) into an Early Learning and Resource Center and reassigning those students to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School (located at 591 NW 31 Avenue, Fort Lauderdale).

The 2025-2026 (Phase 2) effort began in July 2025 and included numerous school board workshops and community meetings. Staff and the City’s Education Advisory Board have been active participants in the Phase 2 processes. The December 12, 2025 memorandum from Superintendent Howard Hepburn to School Board Members (Exhibit 1) and Broward County Public Schools 2025-26 Redefining Our Schools Initiative Update (Exhibit 2) outline the recommendations for 2026-27 school attendance area boundaries and school usage.

Recommendations specific to Fort Lauderdale include:

- Consolidate Seagull Alternative High School into Whiddon-Rogers Education Center. The Seagull Alternative High School campus will be transitioned to another use; and
- Consolidate North Fork Elementary School into Croissant Park Elementary School, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Elementary School, Thurgood Marshall Elementary School, and Walker Elementary School. The North Fork Elementary School campus will be transitioned to another use.

Following discussion by the City Commission at its November 4, 2025 Conference Meeting regarding a communication from the City’s Education Advisory Board, the City of Fort Lauderdale has expressed interest in utilizing the Seagull site for use as a public

safety (police and fire) training facility (Exhibit 3). The City has not formally discussed any potential opportunities for the North Fork Elementary campus. Based on reports, a few entities have expressed an interest in various programmatic changes for the North Fork campus.

The School Board is scheduled to discuss and consider adoptions and recommendations at a Special School Board Rule Making meeting on January 21, 2026.

Strategic Connections

This item is a FY 2026 Commission Priority, advancing the Public Places and Community Initiatives.

This item supports the *Press Play Fort Lauderdale 2029* Strategic Plan, specifically advancing:

- Business Growth and Support, Goal 6: Build a diverse and attractive economy.

This item advances the *Fast Forward Fort Lauderdale 2035* Vision Plan: We Are Community.

This item supports the Advance Fort Lauderdale 2040 Comprehensive Plan specifically advancing:

- The Business Development Focus Area
- The Education Element
- Goal 1: Ensure the provision of K-12 school facilities servicing Fort Lauderdale includes consideration of local facilities adequate for the needs of current and future residents; and
- Goal 2: Encourage traditional and non-traditional educational opportunities beyond K-12 including higher educational institutions, continuing education, workforce development and Career Technical Education by developing strategic alliances with business associations, colleges, and universities to connect skills development with jobs.

Attachments

Exhibit 1 – December 12, 2025, Memo from Superintendent Howard Hepburn to School Board Members

Exhibit 2 – Broward County Public Schools 2025-26 Redefining Our Schools Initiative Update

Exhibit 3 – November 17, 2025, letter from Mayor Trantalis to Members of the Broward County School Board

Exhibit 4 – Presentation

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Page 2 of 2