



EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
CITY HALL, 8th Floor Conference Room
Thursday, March 16, 2023, 6:30PM

<u>Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	June 2022 – May 2023	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Amy Ellowitz, Chair	P	8	0
Suzanne Dean, Vice Chair	P	8	0
Heather Brinkworth	A	6	2
Yolanda B. Francis	A	3	5
Erin Gohl	P	5	0
Tina Jaramillo	P	7	1
Carlos Lang	P	7	0
Christopher Relyea	A	5	3
Alyssa Mendez	P	8	0
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	5	3
Denia Perloff	A	6	2
Pamela Aiken	A	2	3
Juliet Gray-Williams	P	2	0
Colleen Lockwood	A	0	4

Appointed Members to the Board: 14
Needed to constitute a quorum: 8

Staff Liaison: Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer

Communication to the City Commission – Education Listening Campaign

The City of Fort Lauderdale’s Education Advisory Board (EAB) respectfully recommends that its Mayor and Commission support the EAB’s efforts to develop and implement a dynamic Education Listening Campaign. Fort Lauderdale has a unique role to play in understanding our local educational needs. City schools sit at the intersection of the nation’s sixth largest school system and a diverse, burgeoning metropolis. The campaign’s goal is to capture the strengths and needs of the City’s public schools. By amplifying the voices of our residents, the City can partner with the Broward County Public School Board to inform decision-making and effect meaningful, lasting change. Campaign findings will enable Fort Lauderdale to empower students to become career-oriented, productive, and engaged community members. In elevating the quality and appeal of our schools, Fort Lauderdale will be recognized as a desirable destination for local, national, and international businesses.

Motion by Dr. Verdi-Knapp, seconded by Ms. Gohl, to accept the draft as is to present to the City Commission. In a voice vote, the **motion passed** unanimously. (8-0).

DRAFT

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING

Thursday, March 16, 2023, 6:30 P.M.

CITY HALL, 8th Floor Conference Room

100 North Andrews Avenue

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

<u>Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	June 2022 – May 2023	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Amy Ellowitz, Chair	P	8	0
Heather Brinkworth	A	6	2
Yolanda B. Francis	A	3	5
Erin Gohl	P	5	0
Tina Jaramillo	P	7	1
Carlos Lang	P	7	0
Lisa May	A	1	7
Christopher Relyea	A	5	3
Alyssa Mendez	P	8	0
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	5	3
Denia Perloff	A	6	2
Suzanne Dean, Vice Chair	P	8	0
Pamela Aiken	A	2	3
Juliet Gray-Williams	P	2	0
Colleen Lockwood	A	0	4

Staff

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale

Carla Blair, Prototype, Inc.

Guests

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:40 p.m. by Amy Ellowitz, Board Chair, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance and Roll Call, 14 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum.

As of this date, March 16, 2023, 8 out of 15 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

Board Chair's Minute

Communication to the City Commission

The City of Fort Lauderdale's Education Advisory Board (EAB) respectfully recommends that its Mayor and Commission support the EAB's efforts to develop and implement a dynamic Education Listening Campaign. Fort Lauderdale has a unique role to play in understanding our local educational needs. City schools sit at the intersection of the nation's sixth largest school system and a diverse, burgeoning metropolis. The campaign's goal is to capture the strengths and needs of the City's public schools. By amplifying the voices of our residents, the City can partner with the Broward County Public School Board to inform decision-making and effect meaningful, lasting change. Campaign findings will enable Fort Lauderdale to empower students to become career-oriented, productive, and engaged community members. In elevating the quality and appeal of our schools, Fort Lauderdale will be recognized as a desirable destination for local, national, and international businesses.

Motion by Dr. Verdi-Knapp, seconded by Ms. Gohl, to accept the draft as is to present to the City Commission. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (8-0)

Chair Ellowitz mentioned a zoom meeting she attended where she received an update on the Broward Education Foundation, which is a group started by doctors' wives in Hollywood 40 years ago to give scholarships; it is a 501c3. They are in charge of a \$4.5 million budget, and they fund a certain number of programs. They also work with the City of Hollywood and the City of Weston. The City of Hollywood provides \$20,000 and their Advisory Board awards teachers during an Awards Ceremony. The City of Hollywood basically provides 20 teachers with \$1,000 each. The City of Sunrise does something similar, as well as the Weston Rotary Club. Last year, they gave scholarships to 356 graduates, in the amount of \$1.5 million. They have a Teacher Resource Program, which is a personal and professional development program, and once teachers go through the program, they participate in mentoring other teachers, and then they train their cohort in a way that is conducive to that population. They have an 8,000-square-foot supply store called Tools for Schools. Each teacher can go in twice a year and get up to about \$1,000 in school supplies. This Board can have a tour if desired. They also build food forests in school, they started with eight, and by the end of the school year they will be up to 24. They called the food forests TEA Gardens, which stands for Technological Empowered Agriculture Gardens

Ms. Jaramillo questioned if high school seniors can apply for the scholarships.

Chair Ellowitz was told that BRACE Advisors should connect with the Broward Education

Foundation to get the information.

Ms. Gray-Williams commented that the application can be viewed on Google online.

Ms. Saunders stated they like to distribute the scholarships late in the cycle, so they can help address gaps in students' financial aid packages.

Chair Ellowitz asked if Ms. Gray-Williams attended the Teacher Innovation Ceremony.

Ms. Gray-Williams replied she has done it before, and as a teacher she was awarded a grant. It is an opportunity for teachers to get funded for their classrooms.

Chair Ellowitz stated examples were provided for some of the innovations that teachers came up with.

Ms. Gray-Williams stated when she did it, she connected her students with students living in Africa. They worked with a school in Nigeria.

Chair Ellowitz always says they can accomplish a lot more on this level than on the national level.

Ms. Gohl mentioned that several years back at VSY, she worked with some teachers who had ideas to help write grant applications. She did not know if it would be possible through the CAPE teams, but if teachers have ideas, she would be happy to help with writing applications. That might be a way to support the three schools they are partnering with through CAPE.

Vice Chair Dean asked if the schools they are focusing on are familiar with Tools for Schools.

Ms. Gray-Williams advised they are all over the District; all the schools have an opportunity to participate.

Chair Ellowitz questioned who is currently attending the staff meetings.

Ms. Saunders stated Denia is attending Westwood Heights.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp indicated that she went to the last Northside meeting. She did the interviews when the Board was doing the Gap Analysis and at that time they had no PTA and could never get a quorum for SAC. Now, they have a full cafeteria of parents and the kids had presentations all around.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned that the City of Sunrise Commission spends a few minutes at the beginning or end of the meeting with each Commissioner highlighting a school in their District and outlining what is happening in the school.

Ms. Gohl commented that District 4 had a meeting and Vice Mayor Sturman brought together his Advisory Board members and Civic Association Presidents. They made sure not to talk about any EAB business, but the Vice Mayor brought up the fact that they would like to have students recognized and students doing the Pledge of Allegiance. They are very eager to make that happen.

Ms. Saunders stated they were able to connect on that. She met with the Vice Mayor's Office. Ms. Saunders provided an update that students are now leading the Pledge of Allegiance. It is a great way to get kids into City Hall and learn how local policy is made. The volunteer application is on the City's website and any student interested in being part of that can sign up through the application; it is first come first serve. In terms of the recognitions, that is part of the reason she was interested in talking with the Broward Education Foundation to see if they already have a process to bring together all of the great updates. They are looking at that to see how to do that on a consistent basis.

Ms. Gohl indicated they also have partnerships with the Florida Panthers and the Commission would like to recognize students or teachers with tickets. She stated that Teacher Appreciation Week is in May and perhaps there is a way to pair those two things.

Chair Ellowitz asked if the young girl who did the pledge of allegiance post it on Social Media, or take selfies with the Commission with the Commission.

Ms. Saunders replied yes, and the City had some pictures with her, which were posted.

Ms. Gray-Williams announced that BAPSE, which is the Broward Alliance of Black School Educators, has a conference tomorrow at the African Library, and there will be three guest speakers. It is called the SLICE conference, which means Social Emotional Learning, Leadership, Instruction, and Curriculum. It talks about community and equity and diversity. The program is from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. The outline of the organization can be viewed on BAPSE.org.

Chair Ellowitz advised she will share that with the Chamber of Commerce, as they have a Diversity Inclusion Council, and she will also share the information with a Council who focuses on education in the Chamber,

Education Listening Campaign: Recommendation to Commission

Ms. Saunders advised that the Education Listening Campaign is designed to be a community driven effort. After months of coordinated planning with the EAB, it is time to share the concept with City Commission to build understanding of the need and opportunity as it relates to improving education in our City. A Communication to Commission could be helpful in sharing what the Education Advisory Board has discussed to date and where they see the opportunity for the City's involvement. Simultaneously, she is organizing meetings with District and City leadership to align efforts and decision-making

timelines. It will be important to clearly define roles, responsibilities, and intended outcomes, so everyone is on the same page as they walk through this process.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned that she saw Mayor Trantalis while he was speaking at a Friday morning networking event. Afterwards, she spoke with him.

Chair Ellowitz read her draft letter for the Commission as follows:

The City of Fort Lauderdale's Education Advisory Board respectively recommends that its Mayor and Commission support the Education Advisory Board's efforts to develop and implement a dynamic Listening Campaign. The goal of the Campaign is to capture the voice of City residents to identify both the strengths and needs of the City's Public Education System, so the City can collaborate most effectively with the Broward County Public School Board to affect an effective and lasting change. Most importantly, the results of the Campaign will enable to the Education Advisory Board to direct its efforts most effectively as well as to empower Fort Lauderdale student body to become confident, productive, and successful community members, but also to classify the City as an attractive destination for local, national, and international distance.

Their foundation is to appeal to businesses and taxpayers.

Ms. Saunders noted the importance of creating alignment with Economic Development because it is one of the Commission priorities. She thinks clarifying the City's unique role is helpful.

Chair Ellowitz questioned when that would be presented.

Ms. Saunders replied April 4, 2023 would be the earliest they could get that on the schedule.

Chair Ellowitz commented that she should be able to present the letter if someone wants to draft it.

Ms. Jaramillo asked if it could be sent, so edits could be made and send it back.

Ms. Saunders suggested making edits, so the draft letter could be submitted and voted on today as a communication.

Ms. Gohl suggested changing "capture the voices" to "amplify the voices" because it speaks to the uniqueness.

Ms. Saunders commented that the City's role in amplifying community voice was discussed with the Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations. There was a robust conversation around this and as they south answers on "What is the City's role"? Ms.

Saunders shared that the Stranahan High School cafeteria project demonstrates the benefits of the City being involved in helping to champion improvements desired by the community.

Ms. Gray-Williams mentioned shareholders.

Ms. Saunders stated the City can help mobilize community members and help amplify their voices. It does matter if the City gets involved and shows up; it demonstrates a level of commitment and interest in education.

The Board reviewed the draft letter and came up with the following revised draft to present to the Commission:

The City of Fort Lauderdale's Education Advisory Board (EAB) respectfully recommends that its Mayor and Commission support the EAB's efforts to develop and implement a dynamic Education Listening Campaign. Fort Lauderdale has a unique role to play in understanding our local educational needs. City schools sit at the intersection of the nation's sixth largest school system and a diverse, burgeoning metropolis. The campaign's goal is to capture the strengths and needs of the City's public schools. By amplifying the voices of our residents, the City can partner with the Broward County Public School Board to inform decision-making and effect meaningful, lasting change. Campaign findings will enable Fort Lauderdale to empower students to become career-oriented, productive, and engaged community members. In elevating the quality and appeal of our schools, Fort Lauderdale will be recognized as a desirable destination for local, national, and international businesses.

Motion by Dr. Verdi-Knapp, seconded by Ms. Gohl, to accept the draft as is to present to the City Commission. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (8-0)

Ms. Saunders thinks the topic may warrant a Commission conference meeting when the timing is appropriate. The Commission meeting is not noticed as an Education Advisory Board meeting, so only one Education Advisory Board member can speak at the meeting in relation to the EAB communication.

EAB Education Topics: Prioritize List

Chair Ellowitz mentioned the banning of books, which is an emerging new issue. The ALA website has a two-page suggestion list for anyone who wants to get involved. There are a lot of links provided.

Ms. Gohl commented that she learned books were removed from her Media Center several months ago when she asked during a SAC meeting. She thinks a lot of people feel a little removed, but once they hear it happened at their school, people become aware and mobilized.

Ms. Jaramillo stated a lot of people are not aware of the legal ramifications if there is an objectionable book in the classroom and what could happen to the teachers legally and financially, and their potential to have their license revoked by the State.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp asked how they counteract the book banning that is actually occurring. She has not seen a notice go out for any of the books being removed. She asked how one group of parents gets to say they do not like a book and they are banned. Perhaps, parents should be given an option, but do not make a decision for her child based on their beliefs.

Ms. Jaramillo indicated the law says there has to be a public notice for people challenging the book. As a parent, she has not received a notice. She suggested having someone speak to the Board about the law, so they can understand and speak about it if asked.

Ms. Gohl believes each District was supposed to develop a policy and process around how that was going to happen. When the first list of ten came out, that had not happened.

Ms. Jaramillo understood that Broward had different steps and the Principal would have books pulled and there is supposed to be a School Review Board, and that Board would say yes or no to the challenge. If the parent does not like the answer, then it escalates to the District.

Ms. Gohl believed there was not an articulated process followed publicly at the District level. The problem is the ones that have been removed thus far. That process at the District level did not happen.

Ms. Jaramillo stated the law says once a decision has been made that the book can never be brought back or rediscussed.

Mr. Lang questioned who is accountable.

Ms. Gohl indicated it was brought up at a School Board meeting and School Board members said they had not been notified, which is part of the process.

Ms. Jaramillo thinks there is a Committee at the School Board level that has not communicated with School Board members. She questioned who created that Committee; she feels like that should be transparent.

Ms. Jaramillo commented that the other issue is because of this fear, a lot of schools are airing on the side of caution because they do not want the lawsuits.

Ms. Gohl mentioned they brought up other issues and Chair Ellowitz said that the Organization Chart for the School District eliminated the DEI. As an EAB, they wanted to make sure to pay attention to how they were supporting LGBTQ families and students. This is an issue that tightly aligns with the previous topic because a lot of books being removed are books that celebrate LGBTQ. She thinks this is a mental health issue, a diversity issue, and an inclusion issue because the message they are sending is

detrimental to students.

Chair Ellowitz agreed. She mentioned other topics for future discussion as follows:

- Reliance on instructional videos.
- Block scheduling.
- Online books.
- Testing.

She suggested lowering them on the priority list. The next three are #2:

- SAT/CT Prep.
- College Resource.
- Education calendar.

Chair Ellowitz noted that further research is required to accurately define the problem.

Ms. Gohl commented on the SAT and ACT Prep and suggested expanding that or redefining that as college and career readiness. She mentioned technical schools and working backwards to see what is already in place and how they can support existing programs and all things in Priority #2.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned that college students do not realize they are posting things online. Perhaps they can create some type of resource or campaign that educates parents about tools that are available.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp commented there is a lot out there; there is so much that it is overwhelming.

Ms. Mendez stated that maybe one event with different stations that tackle different topics could be done or if it is an engaging presentation about the topic of social media dangers.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned the title of the presentation the Dean at American Heritage provided, "How Did We Get Here and What do We Do About It"? She thinks Priority #2 are things they can cycle through SAC and PTO meetings. They need to educate parents to #2. She asked if there was anything to add about Priority #2, SAT Prep College Resources, the Education calendar, Social Media, and digital literacy.

Vice Chair Deans thinks students need to take resume writing for kids who might be going more direct to workforce.

Chair Ellowitz thought they should talk about kids who know they do not want to go to college.

Ms. Gray-Williams stated the kids can talk to a Guidance Counselor and they can direct

them to technical schools in the area that they may have an interest in.

Ms. Jaramillo indicated they bring different groups in and depending on the magnet they might have a Career Fair.

Ms. Gohl asked if Naviance helps explore careers and set goals.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp commented that Naviance seems spectacular.

Ms. Jaramillo thinks the issue is for kids having one BRACE Advisor for such a large amount of students is not enough compared to what other schools have. If they could down the line find a way to implement something to offer support to the BRACE Advisors to bringing those kinds of college counseling services.

Chair Ellowitz suggested having college students doing Internships or volunteering. They have already been through the process and advised.

Dr. Verdi Knapp stated Pompano High does it through their study hall, but they build in monthly activities through Naviance and have reflections questions and upper classman student mentors that help talk through the freshman class to get them to understand the purpose.

Ms. Jaramillo likes that idea. They do have personalization. She thinks it could be interesting at the high school level to make it like an Advisory where they have some readiness and things that can be implemented.

Ms. Gohl stated that might be a mechanism at the high schools because she thinks every student is required to have that study hall period.

Chair Ellowitz figured that was essential and technical. She questioned how anyone envisions those being implemented.

Ms. Saunders stated they need to identify the best practices.

Chair Ellowitz commented that the issue is pointing people in the right direction.

Ms. Jaramillo feels like there are teachers at public schools who can offer more experience. She would like to do a summer boot camp for seniors and do a workshop with them.

Ms. Saunders mentioned that perhaps they could pilot it with the high school summer program. That is something they could follow up on.

Ms. Mendez was looking at the four items discussed, and she thinks it is important to not exclude private school families from the conversation because not all private schools are created equal. A lot of families receive Step-Up scholarships, and that is what makes private education possible.

Chair Ellowitz commented that revisions could be made to the list. She noted that homeschool students are considered public school students.

Ms. Gohl stated filling out the FASA is a huge gatekeeper for getting financial aid, but a lot of families do not know that process and do not understand. She thinks adding that into this would be a big equity piece.

Ms. Jaramillo indicated that the County has a lot of resources.

Chair Ellowitz commented in light of the pandemic and hurricanes, she feels like food and security is Priority #1 and it is probably the easiest to address and continue to address. During the pandemic the School Board got together with faith-based organizations and other non-profits to address that. She would like to see what is still in place. She is sure there are many places that would be happy to contribute in any way they could.

Ms. Saunders would like to make sure there is an alignment with the Commission's priority on homelessness. A lot of students are homeless or food insecure.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned partnerships as Priority #3. To her, none of the priorities are more important than the other, it is just where to start.

Ms. Saunders commented that each initiative is at a different readiness level. For many topics, further research is needed to understand the issue before defining how the issue can be addressed.

Ms. Mendez stated that it seems like the last two priorities go hand in hand. As you are looking for partners to step in with the food and security issue, those relationships will be established.

Mr. Lang commented that during the pandemic, the Surfside collapse, and the Fire service, the one thing they had was food. People were willing to donate, they would come every shift and drop off food at every station. They had too much food, but they wanted to donate because they saw the need. He thinks it is getting the message out. If there is an emergent situation and there is not enough food, if we find a way to get it out to the vendors, they are more than willing to donate. He thinks that is the best place to start.

Ms. Gohl asked if they could use the City's Social Media and other ways to thank anyone who participates.

Ms. Mendez stated the organization Church United is like a partnership of many churches

and when there is a crisis, they are a first line of contact and then they will disseminate to all the churches, so it is an efficient system.

Chair Ellowitz indicated that is another thing about the Broward Education and Foundation. During Stoneman Douglas, 72 Go Fund Me pages were started, and they sifted through the ones that were bogus or counterfeit, and then they put them together, collected the money, and disbursed it.

Mr. Lang stated they need a place that says this is where food, money, or supplies can be donated.

Chair Ellowitz questioned how they would obtain a list of what was created during COVID.

Ms. Saunders stated they can compile resources based on the work completed during COVID. She can compile that for the next meeting.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned free and reduced lunches and asked how that was determined.

Ms. Gohl stated it was for everyone; the Federal Government made it available to everyone, so they could come by and pick up food.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned brick and mortar students, who get breakfast and lunch if needed, but what about virtual school kids.

Chair Ellowitz commented maybe they are already linked to a faith-based organization that would help. She noted that homeschool students can take advantage of extracurricular activities on the school campus, so she assumed they could reach out to the schools and ask.

Vice Chair Dean suggested they add a section for when school is out for summer break and/or emergencies.

Ms. Gohl stated there used to be a way to text and it would provide places you could access food. The School District used to communicate it pretty well, but she has not seen it in several years.

Ms. Saunders stated she could reach out to 211.

Ms. Gohl thinks they should build into the scholarship opportunities to tie students to the Broward Education Fund, recognizing that connection, so they do not lose it.

Staff Updates

Ms. Saunders did not have any updates to provide.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – February 15, 2023

Chair Ellowitz referenced Page 7 and noted it should say, “...**commented that parental involvement in high schools is a challenge, parents tend to not get involved because their children do not want them to be on campus. She inquired about attendance**”.

Page 14, end of fourth paragraph, should say “...to process **the vicarious trauma the children experience during such drills**”.

Ms. Gray-Williams referenced Page 16, at the bottom, where it says Ms. Gray-Williams suggested an education calendar, and that noted that was **Adrienne Carter**. Ms. Saunders stated that was captured on the second version of the minutes.

Page 16, fourth paragraph, should read as Ms. **Gray-Williams** and not Ms. Gray.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned Page 15, second paragraph from the bottom should read, “college **SAT**”.

Vice Chair Dean, stated Page 15, should read as Vice Chair Dean asked how set in stone **was** in the process ...

Page 16 should read as Ms. **Jaramillo**; name misspelled.

Motion by Ms. Jaramillo, seconded by Vice Chair Dean, to approve the February 15, 2023 minutes as amended. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (8-0)

Adjournment

The next meetings will be held on April 20, 2023 and May 18, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned the meeting at 8:18 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.