



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA**  
**Thursday, December 15, 2022**

**June 2022 – May 2023**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Amy Ellowitz, Chair	P	5	0
Heather Brinkworth	P	5	0
Yolanda B. Francis	P	2	3
Tina Jaramillo	P	5	0
Carlos Lang	P	4	0
Lisa May	A	1	4
Christopher Relyea	P	4	1
Alyssa Mendez	P	5	0
Rory Sponsler	A	2	3
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	A	3	2
Denia Perloff (arrived at 6:33 p.m.)	P	4	1
Suzanne Dean, Vice Chair	P	5	0
Erin Gohl	P	4	1
Pamela Aiken	A	1	1

**Appointed Members to the Board: 15**  
**Needed to constitute a quorum: 10**

**Staff Liaison:** Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer

**Communication to the City Commission – Employee Volunteer Program**

The Education Advisory Board encourages the Commission to implement an employee volunteer program. We encourage Commissioners to lead by example and commit “x number” of hours per month to volunteer in schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale. We envision City Commission supported opportunities for staff members to volunteer during paid City work hours or volunteered time off. The Education Advisory Board respectfully requests the Commission to investigate models for City employees to engage in volunteer opportunities at schools located in the City of Fort Lauderdale and implement such a program to support our City schools.

**Motion** by Ms. Gohl, seconded by Mr. Relyea, to recommend a Communication to the Commission regarding an employee volunteer program. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously. (10-0)

**DRAFT**

**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**Thursday, December 15, 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	5	0
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Tina Jaramillo	P	5	0
Carlos Lang	P	4	0
Lisa May	A	1	4
Christopher Relyea	P	4	1
Alyssa Mendez	P	5	0
Rory Sponsler	A	2	3
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	A	3	2
Denia Perloff (arrived at 6:33 p.m.)	P	4	1
Suzanne Dean, Vice Chair	P	5	0
Erin Gohl	P	4	1
Pamela Aiken	A	1	1

**Staff**

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

**Guests**

Sharon Hughes, Community Connector  
Judith Marte, Deputy Superintendent of Operations  
Kathleen Langan, Smart Bond Program, Senior Program Director for AEACOM  
Yvonne Garth, Smart Bond Program

**Welcome**

The meeting was called to order at 6:32 p.m. by Amy Ellowitz, Board Chair, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**Attendance and Roll Call, 15 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum**

As of this date, December 15, 2022, 10 out of 14 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

### **Communication to the City Commission**

The Education Advisory Board encourages the Commission to implement an employee volunteer program. We encourage Commissioners to lead by example and commit “x number” of hours per month to volunteer in schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale. We envision City Commission supported opportunities for staff members to volunteer during paid City work hours or volunteered time off. The Education Advisory Board respectfully requests the Commission to investigate models for City employees to engage in volunteer opportunities at schools located in the City of Fort Lauderdale and implement such a program to support our City schools.

**Motion** by Ms. Gohl, seconded by Mr. Relyea, to recommend a Communication to the Commission regarding an employee volunteer program. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously. (10-0)

### **Communication to the City Commission**

The EAB recommends that the Commission continues to support efforts to collaborate with the Bezos Academy and other evidence based early learning programs that will lead to improved access to Early Childhood education opportunities linked to increase school readiness and literacy gains. The Education Advisory Board also recommends continued engagement and collaboration with key partners and stakeholders to lay the foundation for long-term academic success”.

**Motion** by Ms. Brinkworth, seconded by Mr. Relyea, to recommend a Communication to the Commission regarding the Early Childhood Initiatives. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed with Ms. Jaramillo in opposition. (9-1)

### **Board Chair’s Minute**

Chair Ellowitz indicated they will begin with the Stranahan cafeteria update, then discuss the Community Action Teams, the Education Listening Campaign, and a couple Commission items coming up, one is tentatively scheduled for January 10, 2023, and the other still has a date to be determined. She drafted a Communication to the Commission that she wanted to share with this Board, so they can work on it together. Approval of the minutes will be done at the end. Ms. Saunders brought to her attention that some of the Board members had individual concerns, which were listed on a spreadsheet. All the concerns have been reviewed and she thinks they are valid and valuable and wants to give it full attention. They can touch on those concerns at the end of the meeting if there is time, but if not, they will be addressed during future meetings and worked into the

agenda. Most of the concerns are about school closures, tutoring, testing, issues about school water fountains, and Public Relation issues. There were questions regarding statistics on the LGBTQ population, and it was noted that new data would be available in Spring 2023.

Ms. Brinkworth commented that she read that Florida opted out of the Your First Behavior Survey. She thinks the Board needs to know because it is important data for all the community organizations that support their youth.

Chair Ellowitz stated that could be on the National Survey. When she called the School Board to find out how to access the data, she asked to speak to Casey Gilliard who used to work for the School Board for the LGBTQ community and the student body, but that position no longer exists.

Judith Marte, Deputy Superintendent of Operations, indicated that she knows some position names were changed to other names during the reorganization. Ms. Gilliard is no longer there, but she does not want this Board to think they do not have someone looking at this body of work in the school department. She will get back to someone with the correct contact and stated it is under Student Support Services.

### **Stranahan High School Cafeteria: Update**

Judith Marte, Department Superintendent of Operations, is responsible for facilities, building maintenance, finance, communication, IT, transportation, food service, and Risk Management.

Kathleen Langan, Smart Bond Program, Senior Program Director for AEACOM, manages SMART projects and CIP projects. Stranahan High School cafeteria is not Smart funded, but it is funded. She provided a basic update as follows:

- **Primary GOB Renovations:** All the improvements the School Board invested into Stranahan total almost \$30 million and those improvements look fantastic. Some of the before and after changes can be seen in the campus, the STEM labs, and the Media Center. The Media Center started with Mr. Runcie and a lot of grant funding from different places.
- **Primary Renovations:** There are still a number of buildings that may not look so great, but the future is strong.
- **More Images of Improvements:** They are 98% finished with the overall GOB. There have been some challenges with the contractor, and they are in Legal. There are a couple of roofs left to be done. Building #18 has been decommissioned due to structural issues and was being used for storage. Building #17 got a new roof in one area and was scheduled to have HVAC improvements. There are a couple of fire alarm panels in the building that serve Building #10. Some severe structural

issues in Building #10 have been identified, so the architect is going to the School Board for approval to amend their contract, so a Castaldi can be performed on Building #17. A few options are being considered as to where the move the fire alarm and other things. They will report back once the Castaldi is conducted.

Ms. Saunders asked if that is the Art building.

Ms. Langan replied no. Ms. Saunders may be thinking about Building #6 where there is equipment. The architect has developed a new design for that space, so they have to go out to bid; it is a different permit. They are having some challenges with the contractor and are going in different directions to get things done.

- New Cafeteria: This has not changed from the last update. Their current inhouse estimate was \$15,370,000. The CMR estimate at the 100% construction documents was \$17 million, and the overall project budget was \$20,800,000. That has been modified and they are on track. They got the guaranteed maximum price submission from the contractor and have spent the last couple weeks negotiating that contract. They have an item going to the School Board on Tuesday at 9:30 a.m., and the tentative ground-breaking is set for January 20, 2023, in the morning. The schedule has not changed, and they still anticipate that the Notice to Proceed will be issued to the construction manager on January 2, 2023. They expect to have negotiated opening and occupying the cafeteria for school to start in the fall of 2024. Demolition of the existing cafeteria will take about five months, a little longer than originally anticipated, and that is because of additional underground utilities that must be moved, and about 35 trees have to be planted in and around the area.

Ms. Marte commented that she and Ms. Langan are both committed. The kids are excited. They had a great event at the Media Center with a gaming competition, making t-shirts, and debate; it is what the kids deserve. She is close to retirement and being able to push the team along is the way she wants to end her journey. Some things that have held up the program were repeated inspections and now if something is inspected two times, there is a standup meeting. It was noted that the Superintendent has announced a beautification project across the district.

Ms. Brinkworth thanked Ms. Marte and congratulated her on negotiating the GMP.

Mr. Relyea commented that he has asked for the drop-dead date at every meeting, so he will believe it when it is done.

Ms. Marte stated the drop-dead date is Tuesday, January 3, 2023. She gave her commitment and will do everything possible to make it a reality.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned the last time they spoke she asked where Building #17 and #18 were and if they had FISH capacity or student stations assigned to those buildings

and if so, if they could be removed once the Castaldi is done. She asked which buildings they are on the campus.

Ms. Langan stated Building #18 has been a storage building and Building #17 is being used for storage.

Ms. Marte indicated she knows the building number of two campuses, but these buildings are not one of them.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned the huge tree canopy and asked if there is a possibility of moving some of the trees and putting them in the northwest corner by the marquis. Canopy trees would be good for band practice and for the neighborhood; it would change the way the neighborhood looks.

Ms. Marte was not sure about the trees and stated that an arborist would have to look at them.

Ms. Langan stated that a formula must be followed and some of the trees have to be returned depending on their size. She agreed with Ms. Marte that it would be difficult, but they can look at taking some of the trees going into the area of the demolition and perhaps move them to different locations.

Ms. Marte thinks they should at least look at the root system in the existing trees. If the roots are too involved and they destroy them, the tree will not survive and then they create a liability of the tree falling into the building. She did not want to promise anything but stated they would have an arborist look at them at a minimum. They are going to plant 35 trees.

Ms. Brinkworth requested they be thoughtful about the space where the trees will be planted.

Ms. Saunders mentioned a question from a community member to confirm the number of outdoor seats for the cafeteria.

Ms. Langan indicated that seats and canopy were added to the outdoor area, and she will have to get back to Ms. Saunders because she did not have the number with her. They will also look at the FISH for student stations in Building #17; she did not think there was anything in Building #18.

Ms. Marte indicated they cannot build new seats where they potentially need them because there are 45,000 seats vacant within the community and they are not in the places where the populations are migrating. They need to deal with those and get to a certain level before the State will give them approval to potentially build a new school. They are currently doing a re-boundary of MSD because it is severely overcrowded, but based on the development schedule for Parkland, it is a temporary fix. A lot of portables

are being decommissioned across the district that are counting as seats. She is working on a plan outside of the SMART program to remove unsatisfactory portables in a much more aggressive way than done historically. They are going to the School Board in January 2023, for a significant investment in removing all portables from campuses where they are not necessary or where they are unsatisfactory and should be removed. As those seats come off the books, that will give more latitude where seats are needed. This is PPO's main goal for next year.

### **Community Action Teams: Update & Next Steps**

Chair Ellowitz advised there is a Community Action Teams meeting next Thursday that she will attend virtually.

Ms. Saunders indicated since they last met, the Community Action Teams were launched at the three schools. They have a neighborhood representative supporting these schools at Walker Elementary, Westwood Heights, and North Fork Elementary. Two Education Advisory Board representatives are assigned; Amy Ellowitz is supporting Walker Elementary School and Denia Perloff is supporting Westwood Heights. They are looking for another representative for North Fork Elementary School.

Vice Chair Dean volunteered to support North Fork Elementary School.

Ms. Saunders stated they have had productive meetings with each of the principals where they confirmed some of the immediate partnership priorities, which were shared with the Board at the last meeting. They have been able to get commitment and move forward with a project for each of the three schools. They are working with artists to do a mural at Walker Elementary, which will be happening on MLK Day; the Neighborhood Leadership Academy is doing a beautification project at Westwood Heights Elementary; and they are working with the Fort Lauderdale Executive Airport to facilitate a field trip for students at North Fork Elementary. There was also a sponsorship meeting, so part of this project is getting volunteers involved at the schools on a day to day or monthly basis and engaging community member in conducting donation drives and sponsorships to support all three schools. They had a productive meeting with representatives of the Woman's Club and other community organizations, who committed to supporting this effort. The Woman's Club has already raised over \$700 to fundraise for uniform. They are currently finalizing a list of essential items with the principals, so they can continue to spread the word and garner more support from the community for all three schools. They will be checking in next week with all the principals to share the updates.

Chair Ellowitz questioned if there was anything to report back from the SAC meeting at Walker Elementary the night of the Woman's Club meeting.

Ms. Saunders advised that the Community Action Teams participated in the SAC meetings at all three schools and at the State Assessment visits. They need to change the name because the acronym CAT is also used by the State for the Community Assessment Team,

so that is something they are working on. The point of those presentations is to bring the community together to review data and collectively identify strategies to promote continuous improvement.

Ms. Jaramillo suggested adding Community Action Team Fort Lauderdale as CATFL.

Ms. Saunders stated she has not been inspired and is open to that inspiration.

Ms. Gohl suggested changing Team to partnership or Community Action Partnership.

Ms. Saunders liked action and thinks that is an important element. We do not have school in the name, so maybe they could add school or education excellence into the name.

Chair Ellowitz suggested education outreach.

Ms. Saunders mentioned one of the objectives of their meeting next week is to finalize the schedule for each school, because they are looking for partners to provide food and beverages for those events. They already have commitments from the Fort Lauderdale Fire Department, and Action for Literacy. For the next two months they have some partners identified, but they are trying to get confirmation on the schedule, so they can share the school events.

Chair Ellowitz asked if the meetings are typically the last Wednesday of every month.

Ms. Saunders stated every school has a standing meeting every month, it depends on the school. Some schools are combining their SAC meeting with their State Assessment Team meeting, which has been helpful because it garners more support and engagement.

Chair Ellowitz advised she is going to try to attend the meeting at Walker Elementary.

Ms. Saunders indicated that is part of the meeting next week, so they can clarify the dates for the January and February meetings.

Ms. Brinkworth suggested CAPE, Community Action Partnerships for Education.

**Motion** by Ms. Gohl, seconded by Vice Chair Dean, to rename the Community Action Team to CAPE, the Community Action Partnerships for Education. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (10-0)

Chair Ellowitz asked if the Woman's Club is still organizing activities for February.

Ms. Saunders replied yes. In addition to activating the event at the school, they are inviting the school to events outside. The Woman's Club is interested in hosting a tea, which will likely be in February, and they would like to partner with other organizations who would welcome that. The idea is to build comradery with educators across the three schools and to connect them to different community groups and organizations that support and



appreciate the educators.

Chair Ellowitz commented that they tried to decide whether to do it in December, but they were told that was a bad idea.

Ms. Saunders asked if Chair Ellowitz had any takeaways from the meeting.

Chair Ellowitz stated it was nice to see the actual faces of everyone they have been talking to during interviews. She ran into someone she knows on the Woman's Club and when she told them how excited the Board is to support Walker Elementary, she wrote a check for \$100.

Ms. Saunders reiterated that the Walker Elementary SAC date is the last Wednesday of the month, North Fork Elementary is Tuesday and that sometimes shifts, so they need to confirm, and Westwood Heights is the first Tuesday of the month.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned if anyone is interested in volunteering or if they have any friends who are interested in helping after school activities to let them know.

Mr. Relyea asked what kind of volunteers are needed.

Chair Ellowitz replied they need reading at Walker Elementary.

Ms. Saunders advised they are looking for reading mentors at all three schools during their reading block in the morning. Preferably, they would like to have some consistent commitment and volunteers are welcome to come every week, which is preferable. There are also volunteer opportunities in the afternoon to sponsor clubs for afterschool activities. All the schools are looking to expand those enrichment offerings and sometimes the barrier is having someone who has expertise to help support the club.

Ms. Brinkworth questioned if it would be possible for teens to get community service hours by committing to the same date every week but not the same person.

Ms. Saunders stated that is something they could try to arrange, having the same time and a rotation.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned discussion at the last meeting about the possibility of teens getting community service hours serving as the instructor of robotics and the district staff person would be there overseeing the students. She thinks that is something they should discuss.

Ms. Saunders agreed. She mentioned the CAPE initiative and stated she is looking for intentional ways to engage youth and create opportunities for leadership development, learning about citizenship, and how government works. She thinks there is an opportunity there and wants to make sure every initiative incorporates the voice of youths. She has not yet had conversations with Principals at the Middle and High Schools regarding this

initiative, but she has been recruiting for Book Explorers.

Mr. Relyea stated that former Commissioner Ben Sorenson called him last week about a similar idea about trying to figure out a way to set up an infrastructure to have students shadow for a day at any number of different things. He asked his advice on how that might work and what kind of legal loopholes they would have to go through. Ms. Saunders may want to reach out to him and combine forces. As far as helping there are thousands of high school students who not only want but need volunteer hours and merely out of the obligation, but also to gain their own experience. It is an untapped resource, and everyone wins.

Ms. Saunders advised she would like to have that follow up conversation. She is in the process of applying for a State appropriation. The last two years they have implemented a Summer Enrichment Program, which proved to be effective. They are looking to have a year-round program to create continuity from summer to afterschool. As they look at enhancing the program, a big focus is on youth engagement. They are looking at how to build that within their existing programming and potentially there could be other modulars that stand alone. That is something they are currently working on, and she welcomes any input.

Ms. Mendez asked if the Neighbor Leadership has any framework because it was very informative.

Ms. Saunders stated it always helps when they are requesting funding to show there is a proven model that works.

**Education Listening Campaign:** Review objectives, timeline, and survey/focus group questions

Ms. Saunders indicated this is something the Board has been discussing for a long time and they are trying to implement a widescale Listening Campaign to get critical input from the community on their priorities for education. She put together a simple framework, which she distributed. The School District will be engaging in long-range planning and part of that is thinking about right sizing, which means there will be some conversations about potential school closures or repurposing schools. There are a number of schools in the City that are under-enrolled, so she thinks it is imperative for the City of Fort Lauderdale to talk with residents to build awareness and get their input on what they would like to see in future education for their community. She put together a timeline, which will begin in January through April, and she has outlined several different education channels. Part of the goal is to get as much input as possible and doing that in a variety of different ways. They are looking to leverage existing meetings together for input. Hopefully, the Listening Campaign will be a standing item that the EAB would like to look at monthly. She will be working with Civic Associations in February and has identified targeted Neighborhood Civic Associations they would like to work with in January and February. This prioritization has come through the data analysis realm of under-enrolled zones within the City. They

are also looking to create Town Halls and want to host these in a variety of different venues, including Community Centers and schools. They also want to capitalize on City events. They have Neighbor Support Night in February, and events are planned through the Community Action Teams, which happen to be in many of the under-enrolled schools, which is a great opportunity to get input from those families. They are looking to do something innovative such as a meeting in a box type of a concept. The concept is that there are meetings and gatherings happening all over the City and they cannot be at every one, but they can give every community organization instructions they need to get input for the City around this important initiative. They need to design that in a way so it will be 15 to 20 minutes and can be built into any of their existing meetings and then there will be a data collection process. Comments can be handwritten and submitted back to the City and there will be an online form where they can input data. The idea is that they want to be able to engage with as many people as possible. As that is developed, they ask the Education Advisory Board to share this with different community organizations or people they feel would be able to gather a group to have meaningful conversations. They also know they need to do this in waves, so she has identified a couple key objectives as follows:

- What is the reason for under-enrollment?
- Capture community suggestions for improvements to the schools that would create more demand.
- Repurpose schools for other needs in the community.
- Identify potential partnerships.
- Report priorities to the School Board around potential school transformations to meet the community's needs and create demand in education offerings for the City.

Mr. Relyea mentioned partnerships and stated there are plenty of businesses or business types that have benefitted from their association with this City. He feels there has always been a moral obligation for them to give back and take part, but it becomes more than that. He thinks there is a business obligation or an economic obligation. The contracts the City throws out should not come without expectations or obligations. As a City, they do not have to give those things away. Moving forward, he thinks it needs to become incumbent upon the City that the expectation is built into contracts, that the expectation is built into the goodwill to whatever it may be. He does not think some sort of expectation or obligation would cost them a contract or something else. He is tired of businesses getting the benefit and not being reminded that they are expected to pull weight.

Ms. Saunders stated perhaps they need to look at identifying the assets they have in the community. They can make different recommendations around the ways they engage and support through grants or other contractual obligations.

Mr. Relyea stated as the quality of education continues to improve in the City, those businesses benefit, so they should give their fair share because they are the ones who are going to reap the rewards.

Ms. Brinkworth commented that often their Commissioners need to remember that the City holds the cards. Corporations and companies have a desire to give back and benefit from it. All they have to do is ask and require. She thinks they should make a Communication to the Commission to bring to the next meeting.

Mr. Relyea stated it will need polishing because he is sometimes not politically correct.

Chair Ellowitz advised they can edit during the meeting.

Ms. Saunders questioned what the Board thinks about the idea of meeting in a box and noted they have mixed data.

Ms. Gohl stated it might be good.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned the last time the Board spoke about the way it is written it was decided it should be understandable on a sixth-grade level. She questioned the timeline envisioned to draft the questions.

Ms. Saunders stated the hope is to secure the Neighborhood Associations in January, so she can send it out to the Board before the next meeting to get input.

Chair Ellowitz asked if Ms. Saunders is going to write the questions.

Ms. Saunders thinks it would be good to finalize a draft and she welcomes any input.

Ms. Jaramillo asked if the questions will be sent out.

Ms. Saunders mentioned that the Board put together a survey instrument when they did outreach for Bennett Elementary School, so that can serve as a guide, and then she can share some other thoughts.

Chair Ellowitz stated that is something they would all work on individually between now and the end of this month. She asked if it would be possible if within the next 30 minutes that they work on that a little to at least get an outline or framework of what the questions would be.

Ms. Saunders stated the way they approached the conversation for Bennett Elementary School was by introducing it as one of the EAB priorities. There is a different set of questions for people whose children are enrolled in the school and for children not enrolled in the school. If a child is enrolled in the school, one of the questions would be the reasons they enrolled their child in the school. They also asked questions about what is most important to parents when selecting a school and there was a series of items they were asked to evaluate. They asked for suggestions on the most important improvements to the school. There were under five questions, which would be the goal.

Ms. Jaramillo asked what questions are asked if a child is not enrolled in the school.

Ms. Saunders stated one question is if a child is enrolled in one of the schools and then there is a series of questions. If a child is not enrolled, they were asked where the child is enrolled and what some of the factors are that contributed to that decision.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned discussion about highlighting the schools. She asked if there could be a family fun day showcase where schools come out and have booths at the events or even at Neighborhood Civic Associations where it is a brief highlight about something great happening at the schools, so it is constantly out there.

Ms. Saunders indicated it is important to get informed input, which will be a challenge when they think about having widespread outreach. That is why they probably need to look at this in terms of phases. Some of the initial data is perception data where they can identify; some may be accurate, and some may not be. She agreed there will be a balance they need to achieve, and she is open to suggestions.

Chair Ellowitz commented that since they already have CAPE meetings organized with the three schools they are using as a prototype if they could communicate with the administration at all three schools regarding sending out blurbs or bios about things happening at the schools at the beginning of the year, then something could be written and sent to Civic Associations, etc.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned that Homeowner's Associations have monthly newsletters, so perhaps they could have a school highlight section.

Ms. Saunders stated that could be one of the asks to the Neighborhood Association.

Ms. Jaramillo commented they already do a newsletter, so it would be up to the principal to do a quick bullet point and a picture of something they did.

Ms. Saunders thinks the work this Board did for Bennett Elementary is an important example to reflect on. Some of that organically happened. As they were engaging with the elementary school and the surrounding neighborhoods, the neighborhood associations got more engaged in the school and started to include highlights and spotlights about Bennett Elementary in their newsletter. The Bennett Elementary project lost a little momentum because other priorities came up. While Bennett Elementary is still a priority, there are so many other needs, which is something else they need to be thoughtful about. They need to determine how to look at this comprehensively and stay focused on the immediate priorities.

Ms. Mendez asked if the survey will just have closed questions or if it will incorporate open-ended questions.

Ms. Saunders believed it would be good to have both, so there is comparability across

measures of what is most important when choosing a school for a child and open-ended questions would give more of an understanding of what is motivating and most important to people regarding education.

Vice Chair Dean mentioned that a lot of corporations get subject matter experts together to come up with good questions. She did not know if it would be a value at a subsequent meeting to have Principals, teachers, Parent-Teacher Associations, etc. who could voice some of the questions they think would be important.

Ms. Saunders commented that the other thing to think about is what makes sense and how to do this well. They can adjust the timeline and think about January being the month to finalize the questions they are going to ask. As a Board, they can work independently from now until January to identify important topics and questions to be asked. Then they can have a working session to react to a draft collectively. She can invite some people from Structural Innovations within the City of Fort Lauderdale to provide some counsel. Before this is launched, let's feel comfortable about what they are asking and how they are sharing the information. There might be different sets of questions they ask at a meeting in the box versus at a forum they are hosting at Town Hall.

Ms. Brinkworth asked if they are allowed to have a less formal working meeting as long as it is Sunshine, or if they have to record every word everyone says.

Chair Ellowitz stated it has always been explained to her that two of the members cannot meet outside.

Ms. Brinkworth asked if January could be a true working meeting where it is not formal like a Workshop.

Ms. Saunders mentioned the meeting is publicly noticed but questioned how the recording works.

Ms. Blair stated she has taken pictures.

Ms. Saunders commented at least there is documentation. She said she would follow up with the City Attorney.

Ms. Perloff expressed concern about how this is going to come together. They have great ideas, but how are they going to be put into practice.

Ms. Saunders stated she would have time to compile any input provided from now until the January meeting and she could also consult with some people within the City who have experience doing this, so they can have a packet to review together.

Ms. Jaramillo asked if they could submit potential questions.

Ms. Perloff asked if Ms. Saunders would send the members the Bennett Elementary information.

Ms. Saunders indicated she will send what they did for Bennett Elementary. With different audiences they have to be mindful, so in the Bennett Elementary example there were different sets of questions for teachers, parents, community members, and Neighborhood Association. There are concerns that are school specific and concerns that are regional. Her thought process is that they need to build awareness of regional issues, but they need to first collect input on the school specific topics and then have groups come together and share what they have learned across different schools.

Ms. Perloff asked if it would be possible to get something by next week.

Ms. Saunders stated that is a fair request; she can commit to share a draft next week.

Vice Chair Dean mentioned that Sharon, the Community Connector, might be a good resource.

Ms. Saunders thinks that is a wonderful suggestion. Sharon is part of a group of larger Community Connectors, and they have questions they used for the last Listening Campaign, and she thinks they are a great resource.

Ms. Mendez mentioned distribution channels once the survey is finalized. She noticed a lot of them are in person.

Ms. Saunders stated they have a subscription to Zen City, which is an online platform; they have a modular where they can collect open-source information. They can also track data analytics as they come in real time.

Ms. Mendez asked if the information is shareable.

Ms. Saunders replied yes, and her understanding is that quantitative and qualitative data can be tracked.

Ms. Mendez questioned the ability to email parents from schools they are trying to get feedback from.

Ms. Saunders stated they will not have the list, but they can coordinate with the schools. She is coordinating with the Communications Office at the School District, and they are aware that we are going through this process and trying to line up activities. The School District will be hosting Town Hall meetings in January, but she did not know if they were scheduling any other community meetings. She thinks it is important they give more opportunity to collect this input.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned Homeowner's Association and newsletters and suggested there

be a write up with a QR code to a survey.

Ms. Saunders thinks that is a great idea. The other opportunity they have there is to customize the message for each of the newsletters. The challenges are large when they think citywide, but they want to make sure they are getting the right information.

Ms. Mendez questioned if they could utilize the City's social media channel.

Ms. Saunders replied absolutely.

Ms. Brinkworth stated when they have historically collected data about schools in this City most of the data has been perception based and not from people who have had any experience with the schools. In her former role as a School Board member, she spent a lot of time looking at data and people who were far removed from having school-age children were giving a lot of feedback about the schools. She wants to make sure they do not end up in that same situation again, that they are mindful of getting feedback from people who are in the schools or have children that could be in the school but are choosing not to put them there. When it was mentioned about getting information from the School District, she had to take a deep breath because we do not want them to control the questions that are asked.

Ms. Saunders advised she is trying to be mindful of their decision-making timeline and that the School Board is aware that the City of Fort Lauderdale is engaging in this effort to help provide input to them. They are going through their own process as they build out their long-range plan; there are not as many opportunities for public input through the district. She thinks the City should encourage people to participate and provide input at the district-hosted Town Halls, but she does not think that is sufficient. If the School Board is going to make short-term decisions on a set of schools, we need to be mindful of that and adjust.

Ms. Brinkworth asked if Ms. Saunders knew the School Board's timeline.

Ms. Saunders thinks the Town Hall meetings will happen in January and then that input is going into development framework for the long-range plan. She did not know the timeline for short-term decision making.

Ms. Jaramillo asked if there will be some questions asking if parents have children enrolled in Broward County public schools and if not, then maybe they should get a different series of questions.

Mr. Relyea suggested creating an algorithm.

Ms. Saunders thinks that is valuable because they should capture the difference of the perception of people who do not have school age children versus those who do.

Ms. Gohl suggested asking where they are zoned for and where their children go. Perhaps



getting input from people with kids at some of the schools should intercept with some of the CAPE work.

Ms. Saunders thinks that is something to bring as an agenda item to the meeting next week with the principals.

Chair Ellowitz asked if they should only be questioning parents or guardians who have children in the school system.

Mr. Relyea replied no, it is important to collect both and know the bifurcation when there is one.

Ms. Saunders stated it is not always parents.

Vice Chair Dean commented that they can also sort by people who have school age kids and then do some analysis on that.

Ms. Perloff envisions that many people taking the survey will be retired.

Ms. Saunders thinks the Downtown Development Authority can be a partner for them in terms of connecting with people who live in the Downtown condos.

Vice Chair Dean asked who would do the qualitative data analysis.

Ms. Saunders stated the analysis would be through the City, they are not hiring a consultant at this time.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned the themes are going to be mostly under-enrollment, school improvements, repurposing community needs for the schools, and potential partnership opportunities.

Ms. Saunders thinks once they identify the need, part of the Board's role is to connect the need to the assets they have in the community.

Chair Ellowitz asked if there are any other themes.

Ms. Saunders stated the only other piece she would bring out is Early Learning, which is separate, but connected, and they are exploring different partnership opportunities. There may need to be some questions related to preschool offerings as well.

Chair Ellowitz questioned if it would be prudent to divide the Board into small groups.

Ms. Saunders indicated the last time they divided by stakeholder groups. Maybe they can list stakeholder groups and identify who might be interested.

Chair Ellowitz questioned if it would be easier to do with the Bennett Elementary survey in front of them and asked if the survey could be sent out early next week.

Ms. Saunders replied she can email the survey.

Chair Ellowitz commented that it is not possible for Board members to hit "Reply to All" to Ms. Saunders' emails.

Ms. Saunders clarified they cannot "Reply to All" due to Sunshine Law.

Vice Chair Dean mentioned if the information were pulled up Ms. Saunders could probably email the survey right now.

Mr. Relyea questioned the time limit to analyze data once it is received. There are classrooms in every public high school that have kids who are extremely familiar how to run those programs, analyze, and code questions correctly, so they do not skew results and they work for free.

Ms. Saunders stated it is hard to know the decision-making timeline because it is up to the School Board. The Board must stay focused on collecting the data and looking for solutions in partnership with the community. She thinks it would be advantageous to have a strong research partner and a lot of students are probably interested in this type of effort. She asked if the Board had any introductions for her.

Ms. Brinkworth suggested questions written for Ms. Saunders be run through a question readability, so they can try to manipulate the question to get it as close to a sixth-grade level as possible.

Ms. Jaramillo commented that they want a total of no more than ten questions.

Mr. Relyea mentioned the question about how people describe the physical condition of the school.

Ms. Saunders thinks that was a leading question; they have a specific focus with Bennett Elementary.

Mr. Relyea stated he would object, and they would have to establish the foundation before asking the question.

Ms. Saunders indicated this was probably developed in November and implemented in December for a planning session with the Superintendent in January. They gathered some valuable insights, but if they want to do this at scale it takes more time. There were Homeowner's Association interview questions, questions with realtors, local business owners, and business associations. Those were the stakeholder groups considered for the Bennett Elementary School project.

Chair Ellowitz requested that information be emailed to her.

Vice Chair Dean recommended no more than five points on a scale. The way this is laid out it is almost better for every question to be one item and then a range of opinions on that item.

Ms. Saunders stated this was used as a Focus Group tool, not a survey instrument. She thinks some of the questions may be better served as a survey than a Focus Group.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned there were oral interviews and phone calls.

Ms. Jaramillo asked if she could save the document, make edits, and send it back to Ms. Saunders.

Ms. Saunders stated everyone is allowed to send things to her. She can sift through the information no matter how it is sent; she would like the input.

Vice Chair Dean mentioned when developing questions, it is good to think about making sure there are not compound questions.

Ms. Saunders indicated that Vice Chair Dean will be their expert. They want to have a good sense of what they want to gather from now until January and then they can refine specific questions with everyone's expertise.

Ms. Jaramillo asked if Ms. Saunders wants the questions in a scale that shows strongly agree or strongly disagree.

Vice Chair Dean thinks they can decide what type of framework they are going to use at the end.

Mr. Relyea believes it is much easier to run on data. If you want to do something with the results, the results need to be useable.

Ms. Saunders stated they probably will want to collect different types of data. The survey the City conducted is more of a scale, but then there is not a sense of what is informing their decision; they probably want a mix. She was going to share the Bennett Elementary School survey and ask the Board to provide feedback. She can revise the timeline, set it up next week, and take their focus in January, which is solidifying this approach, and begin Focus Groups in January.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned the four areas to develop questions for as follows:

- Early Learning and partnerships
- Reason for under-enrollment

- Suggestions for school improvements and/or repurposing to meet community needs
- Find potential partnership opportunities

Ms. Mendez mentioned partnership opportunities and asked if there is a way to ask people if they own a local business. If yes, they can find out if they are interested in getting involved and they can leave an email address, so Board members can follow up.

Ms. Saunders stated they want to capture information that would be helpful to follow up on.

Ms. Saunders indicated they want to get citywide input because they want to look at this comprehensively. The idea is to have questions related to targeted school communities. They would look at the under-enrolled zones, have questions for parents who have children enrolled in North Fork Elementary School, post the listening sessions, and focus on people who are involved in that school. Because the schools are closely together, some regional input will be needed, so once they put the date around the school specific priorities. She would look to have a forum that brings a cluster of schools together at which point they could share what they learned from the school specific Listening Campaigns and how they want to look regionally at what some opportunities might be for renovation or if there were not common themes how they would tease that out.

Vice Chair Dean questioned what a feeding pattern is.

Ms. Saunders advised that a feeding pattern is from elementary, middle, to high school. There are a number of schools in the City that feed from elementary to middle and then from middle to multiple innovation zones, so there are some questions around the continuity of programming for those children that they want to explore; that also impacts enrollment.

Chair Ellowitz commented that she sent Ms. Saunders a communication she drafted; however, she wants to start with the draft Ms. Brinkworth wrote at the last meeting.

Ms. Brinkworth indicated the draft was about volunteer opportunities for City employees in their schools. She read the draft into the record as follows:

The Education Advisory Board encourages the Commission to implement an employee volunteer program. We encourage Commissioners to lead by example and commit to “x number” of hours per month to volunteer in schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale. We envision City Commission supported opportunities for staff members to volunteer during paid City work hours or volunteered time off. The Education Advisory Board respectfully requests the Commission to investigate models for City employees to engage in volunteer opportunities at schools located in the City of Fort Lauderdale and implement such a program to support our City schools.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned the last part was asking the Commission to look at other models.

Ms. Gohl likes “very accessible hour a week”.

Vice Chair Dean suggested a minimum of four hours per month.

Ms. Jaramillo asked if the volunteer hour is out of the employee workday or in addition to their workday.

Ms. Brinkworth stated because they are a government entity there are rules, so they will have to investigate what they can do and figure out for the rules they fall under. They can do paid work hours or volunteer time off, which is like PTO, but it is VTO.

Ms. Mendez asked if they should be specific with how much time City employees can take off for that cause, such as a maximum of ten days per calendar year.

Chair Ellowitz asked if anyone had anything to add other than the input regarding hours.

**Motion** by Ms. Gohl, seconded by Mr. Relyea, to recommend a Communication to the Commission regarding employee volunteer programs. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously. (10-0)

Ms. Saunders advised she would coordinate with the City Clerks’ office tomorrow.

### **Commission Items on Education** (postponed from December 2022 meeting)

#### **Early Learning** (Tentatively scheduled for January 10, 2023)

Chair Ellowitz stated there is a meeting on Early Learning scheduled for January 10, 2023, and the second meeting is about Aviation. The first Communication is that the Education Advisory Board recommends the Commission continue to support efforts to collaborate with the Bezos Academy and other programs that will improve direct access to Early Childhood Education opportunities into Preschool Readiness and Literacy Gains. The Education Advisory Board also recommends continued engagement and collaboration of key partners and stakeholders to bolster early academic success.

Ms. Jaramillo commented that she has hesitations of them taking away from programs already in place.

Ms. Saunders stated she can put context on the Commission item. They are continuing to explore a partnership with the Bezos Academy. This item is to look at that partnership opportunity in the context of Early Learning in their City. She has been working with the Early Learning Coalition and they are helping her gather data to identify where there are needs and where they are seeing wait lists in terms of school readiness and also working with some of the key partners in the area they are looking at such as the YMCA and the Jack and Jill Children’s Center to understand their model and give opportunity for those

key providers to share what they are doing in their Early Learning space. They are trying to be helpful around how they approach this partnership and how it would be best suited. They are also looking at eligibility criteria for these different programs. They are working with Head Start, Early Learning Coalition, Jack and Jill Children's Center, and the YMCA to understand the Early Learning space.

Ms. Gohl asked if they could add something along the lines to lay the foundation for long-term success at the end. She likes the idea of framing it. She suggested adding to the end, "Collaboration with key partners and stakeholders to bolster early academic success to lay the foundation for long-term academic success". She wants to make sure what they do is clear because Early Learning really impacts the kids for their entire educational trajectory.

Chair Ellowitz stated she can take out, "To bolster early academics" and say, "Lay the foundation". She asked the position of the Board regarding the Bezos Academy or if they prefer it be vague and say, "Evidence based programming".

Ms. Gohl thinks the model is good. The Bezos Academy is not Amazon, and they are contributing to the community.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned there have been issues with Bezos Academy in other cities.

Ms. Saunders commented perhaps it is more to support the ecosystem of Early Learning. In working with the Early Learning Coalition, she learned they have 150 applications a week for school readiness and the highest number of applications is in the 33311 zip code. We need to be mindful that we are probably not serving all the children, but we also want to make sure we support existing organizations providing quality services.

Mr. Relyea stated the City is engaged at some level with the Bezos Academy, so there is a point of reference for them. It is also not their #1 focus like it is on this Board. He thinks the Bezos Academy reference, as long as it has the codicil after it says, "This and things like it", gives them the point of entry and the point of reference to remember. He does not think it is exclusive, but that it is appropriate.

Ms. Saunders indicated that part of this presentation will give an overview of the Bezos Academy, so they will have representatives from the Bezos Academy there as well as other community partners who can answer questions on how they support the Early Learning space. As far as the timing of this item, the City of Fort Lauderdale acquired property in the 33311 area, which is currently a building that has exceeded its useful life. There is an opportunity for the City to look at the property to create a public good and promote education. The property is an historically high crime area, so the idea is to be able to create some community benefit in the space. One of the opportunities with the Bezos Academy is that they have capital dollars to support with the infrastructure. The Bezos Academy has expanded the ways in which they partner with the community. When the City first started working with the Bezos Academy, the partnership opportunity was to renovate an existing building. As the Bezos Academy worked with a lot of these buildings,

many issues were encountered. The Bezos Academy created a second partnership model, which involves a modular. The Bezos Academy created a modular, which is much different than a school modular, it would be a three-classroom modular they could put on a property as long as it fits. They have done some preliminary exploration of this newly acquired parcel to see if the modular could fit and it would be contingent on the City to make adjacent land available that is owned by the CRA. The third way the Bezos Academy partners is if there is a new building design, they would contribute to some of the architectural planning involved in space that could be allocated for a Bezos Academy. There is an immediate opportunity to explore a partnership for this site. However, the way they are looking at the presentation is a little more comprehensive to think about where the partnership model could be best suited within the community and understand where the needs are for Early Learning.

Vice Chair Dean thinks the Bezos Academy is a little less of a threat. She feels it is almost in more competition with other mom and pop schools or daycares and this provides educational opportunities.

Ms. Saunders stated from a staff perspective, they have been aware of the issues and that is why they have been working with community partners. The question is where this partnership best fits.

Chair Ellowitz clarified the Communication to the Commission would say, "The Bezos Academy and other evidence based on Early Programming that will lead to improved access to Early Childhood education opportunities linked to increase school readiness and literacy gains. The Education Advisory Board also recommends continued engagement and collaboration with key partners and stakeholders to lay the foundation for long-term academic success".

**Motion** by Ms. Brinkworth, seconded by Mr. Relyea, to recommend a Communication to the Commission regarding the Early Childhood Initiatives. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed with Ms. Jaramillo in opposition. (9-1)

Mr. Lang asked if Ms. Jaramillo could bring up concerns from other places, so they can keep an eye on that as this develops.

Ms. Jaramillo replied she will keep an out eye out.

Mr. Lang suggested Ms. Jaramillo bring up the concerns and what they did with the information.

Ms. Perloff thinks they should follow up on those two suggestions.

- **Budget Request for Phase II of Aviation & Aerospace Training Program (TBD)**

Chair Ellowitz asked if the Board was okay working on the Aviation Budget next month.

Ms. Saunders stated that was delayed partly because they are exploring different opportunities for funding with the airport and reviewing eligibility for airport funds towards the project. They are working with the FAA. They also look to get input from the Airport Board and the Economic Development Board.

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes – September 15, 2022**

Ms. Jaramillo referenced Page 12 and noted that the ACE program should be changed to *A/CE* program. Also on Page 12, Fiction Based should be changed to *Non-Fiction Based*.

Ms. Mendez mentioned Page 13, first paragraph, second line, noted that Youth and Tech Center should be changed to Youth *Impact* Center.

**Motion** by Ms. Brinkman, seconded by Ms. Gohl, to approve the September 15, 2022 minutes as amended. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (10-0)

### **Approval of Meeting Minutes – November 16, 2022**

Ms. Brinkworth referenced Page 20, sixth paragraph, and noted when the GMP was inspected should be changed to say when the GMP was *expected*.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned the middle of Page 22 and noted that the last word should read as *FISH* (Florida Inventory of School Houses).

Ms. Francis referenced Page 11, fourth paragraph, and said to take out the rest of the sentence.

Ms. Francis mentioned Page 8 and noted a period should be after the word station and the rest of the sentence should be deleted.

Vice Chair Dean referenced Page 14 and noted that the comment, she suggested when the questions are developed, they should be run through readability was made by Ms. Brinkworth and then she followed up by saying there is an easy way to determine readability on Microsoft Word.

Ms. Perloff mentioned Page 7, second paragraph at the bottom, and noted that 3, they could have a 3 Way should read, they could have a 3 Way Support system.

Ms. Francis referenced the bottom of Page 17 and noted that parent and student is backwards and should insert “*before* providing dinner and childcare”.

Ms. Saunders mentioned Page 8, second paragraph and noted the PAL program should be changed to *KAPOW* program.



**Motion** by Ms. Lang, seconded by Ms. Francis, to approve the November 16, 2022 minutes as amended. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (10-0)

### **Adjournment**

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned the meeting at 8:32 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.***