



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
Thursday, April 20, 2023

<u>Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	June 2022 – May 2023	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Amy Ellowitz, Chair	P	9	0
Heather Brinkworth	P	7	2
Erin Gohl	P	6	0
Tina Jaramillo	A	7	2
Carlos Lang	P	8	0
Christopher Relyea	A	5	4
Alyssa Mendez	P	9	0
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	6	3
Denia Perloff	P	7	2
Suzanne Dean, Vice Chair	P	9	0
Pamela Aiken	P	3	3
Juliet Gray-Williams	A	2	1
Kristina Dever	P	1	0

Appointed Members to the Board: 13
Needed to constitute a quorum: 7

Staff Liaison: Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer

Communication to the City Commission – Education Listening Campaign

As a result of the recent devastating floods faced by the City of Fort Lauderdale and with the closure of City Hall, the EAB respectfully requests that we be permitted to hold meetings at school sites within the city of Fort Lauderdale. This request will permit the EAB to continue the forward progress of our current initiatives and deepen our connection to our cities' school communities. This opportunity will also allow schools to showcase their programs and accomplishments. Additionally, visiting the schools allows the EAB to show the community our commitment to education in the city and supports our dedication to meeting in person. With staff assistance we agree to meet the requirements of Sunshine Law and provide public access.

Motion by Vice Chair Dean, seconded by Ms. Gohl, to approve the Communication to Commission. In a voice vote, the **motion passed** unanimously. (10-0).

DRAFT
EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Thursday, April 20, 2023, 6:30 P.M.
ZOOM MEETING
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301

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		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Amy Ellowitz, Chair	P	9	0
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Tina Jaramillo	A	7	2
Carlos Lang	P	8	0
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Alyssa Mendez	P	9	0
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	6	3
Denia Perloff	P	7	2
Suzanne Dean, Vice Chair	P	9	0
Pamela Aiken	P	3	3
Juliet Gray-Williams	A	2	1
Kristina Dever	P	1	0

Staff

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale
Crysta Parkinson, Prototype, Inc.

Guests

Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Amy Ellowitz, Board Chair, and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Attendance and Roll Call, 16 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum.

As of this date, April 20, 2023, 10 out of 13 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

Communication to the City Commission

“As a result of the recent devastating floods faced by the City of Fort Lauderdale and with the closure of City Hall, the EAB respectfully requests that we be permitted to hold meetings at school sites within the City of Fort Lauderdale. This request will permit the EAB to continue the forward progress of our current initiatives and deepen our connection to our City’s school communities. This opportunity will also allow schools to showcase their programs and accomplishments. Additionally, visiting the schools allows the EAB to show the community our commitment to education in the City and supports our dedication to meeting in person. With staff assistance, we agree to meet the requirements of Sunshine Law and provide public access.”

Motion by Vice Chair Dean, seconded by Ms. Gohl, to approve the Communication to Commission. The **motion** passed unanimously. (10-0)

Board Chair’s Minute

Chair Ellowitz mentioned an email from Ms. Saunders advising that the Community Center at Croissant Park Elementary received major flooding and had a lot of damage to many items that need to be replaced. She thanked Mr. Lang for his service at the Croissant Park Civic Association. The Civic Association voted to donate \$2,000 toward the replacement of damaged items at the community center. Mr. Lang reached out to see if the Education Advisory Board would be willing to match or donate in any way. She was not sure of the protocol, but wanted to mention it if anyone is interested or inclined privately to make that decision. She asked Mr. Lang to provide an update on the damage to the Community Center.

Mr. Lang indicated that the community center received over 18 inches of flooding and a lot of equipment was damaged or destroyed. The Civic Association has some funds, so they are chipping in and hoping to get other neighborhoods to match.

Ms. Saunders stated she is working with Parks and Recreation to understand the extent of damage at the Community Centers. Croissant Park experienced such significant damage that they are not able to operate programs out of the Croissant Park Community Center at this time. Through a reciprocal use agreement with Broward County Public Schools, the City’s aftercare program is taking place at Crescent Park Elementary School. There was damage at other Centers, and they may also need supplies, so they will be putting together a comprehensive list she can share once she better understands the situation. She noted that City Hall had significant damage and staff are working remotely until they can identify a temporary office space. The Commission discussed the issue, and they do not think it makes sense to do repairs at City Hall, so they are looking for a temporary solution while planning for a more permanent City Hall.

Ms. Gohl commented that during a meeting today at VSY, she learned that many families in the school lost everything. She asked if there is a curated list of resources to share with the families.

Ms. Saunders indicated they are learning there is not one comprehensive list. She has had conversations with different schools and community providers who are willing to provide resources and support. She thinks the opportunity they have is to figure out how to build connectivity and share those resources; that work is under way. Currently, she does not think there is one comprehensive list.

Chair Ellowitz asked what resources Ms. Gohl is aware of at this time.

Ms. Gohl stated they are mainly hearing there are families who have no clothes, beds, toys for their kids, and no books. They are going to start a program in their PTA where families can donate gift cards to other families, but what they were recognizing is that they cannot tackle the bigger needs. They want to help put families in touch with resources where they might start to work on those types of things.

Chair Ellowitz asked if anyone has worked with the Red Cross and if they are helping.

Ms. Saunders provided a high-level update of the City's response. The City did partner with the Red Cross and continues to do so. They have two emergency shelters, one at Holiday Park and the other at First Presbyterian Church through the weekend. The Holiday Park location is going to close after this evening and the remaining people who need support will be relocated to another church in Lauderdale Lakes, which is being managed through the Red Cross. Additionally, they are still operating comfort centers and there are two locations in the City where residents can charge their phones, get basic supplies, and food. Those sites are still available and in operation and she asked everyone to spread the word to those who need those services. There are also other programmatic resources and social workers who are trying to help people navigate and connect flood victims with resources. As a City, they are not able to be a social service provider, but they are working with partners to connect those impacted with resources and services. The comfort locations are one way they can serve as a hub for those who can make it to those centers.

Chair Ellowitz asked if the families Ms. Gohl is in contact with need items or if are they were displaced from their homes as well.

Ms. Gohl replied both, some have lost everything. They heard from teachers who were in touch with the families, and they were saying in this immediate phase the families do not have clothes, shoes, and basic things. Kids lost all their toys and stuffed animals. They were trying to balance if a drive to collect items is the most productive or trying to provide gift cards, so families can make choices. The VSY PTA is going to do a gift card through a Family-to-Family program.

Chair Ellowitz stated that Ms. Saunders will keep them updated with any lists they can

share with the schools and neighbors.

Ms. Saunders commented that for some it will be a very long recovery.

Education Listening Campaign

Feedback on Communication to Commission

Chair Ellowitz advised there was a Commission Workshop on Tuesday, and their Communication was not presented because there were pressing issues relating to the events of the past week.

Broward County Public Schools – Long Range Planning Approach

Ms. Saunders reported that Broward County Public Schools has launched a reset of their long-range planning process. The school district hosted a Long-Range Steering Committee kick-off meeting on Monday to review the findings and to provide input on the initial framework. The Steering Committee is comprised of Broward County Public School Leadership Team Members, their consultant, AECOM, and some representatives from the community. The specific position they have for community representation are Board Chairs from the Facilities Task Force, the Diversity Committee, the District Advisory Board, and the ESE Committee. There was a recommendation to include a representative from the Broward League of Cities. They are in the beginning process of Phase I, which involves refining the long-range planning framework. As they look at the framework, they are identifying what criteria they will study to analyze the needs for the schools. Data points they are looking at include enrollment and age of facility, as they are trying to quantify the need across the District. After they finalize the framework, they will hire a consultant who will be responsible for doing the work, the analysis, engaging in the community outreach, and making recommendations for the long-range plan. She was at the meeting as a member of the public and to offer opportunities for partnership. She shared that the City of Fort Lauderdale is developing an Education Listening Campaign that will add value to Broward Schools' community engagement efforts. She also shared that there is a sense of urgency in the community for change. As an example, different interest groups are exploring the possibility of forming charter schools in the downtown area and other alternatives to traditional public-school options. She urged them to be mindful that these conversations are happening within the community and cited the opportunity for Broward Schools to look at opportunities to reimagine their school programming in the near term. There will be some additional follow-up in coordination with District staff. As mentioned at the last meeting, one of the key next steps is to get alignment between the School District and City's leadership teams on how they are approaching this work in alignment with the decision-making timeline. She recommended they focus on some of the programmatic components and looking at innovative opportunities, not just focusing on facility condition. The Steering Committee discussed the possibility of coordinating with a parallel efforts approach and long-range planning more comprehensively.

Ms. Saunders mentioned the Education Advisory Board Communication to the Commission and as Chair Ellowitz said, it was not the right time, because the Commission was focused on the flood recovery response. She is working with the City Manager by identifying the appropriate next step, and they might be able to move forward and have a conference item, which could allow them to have a little deeper conversation around the need and opportunity for the City's engagement. She mentioned that some of these schools will likely raise a level of importance more immediately. The Cities of Parkland and Coral Springs have recently experienced this; they have gone through a reboundary process at Marjorie Stoneman Douglas High School. Changes will be coming. Instead of our community reacting, she thinks this is their opportunity to get ahead and understand the priorities for the residents, so they can help amplify and champion those issues. She thinks it is important they stay connected on the School District's process, but also other movements happening in the community to advocate for additional educational changes and do their best to listen and provide some comprehensive suggestions for the future.

Ms. Saunders thinks they need to clarify for the Commission that there will be some ambiguity in this process. As a City, we have to be comfortable with the fact there will be some unknowns at the beginning of this process.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned the schools on the original list for them to keep their eyes on as far as being under-enrolled and as possible consideration for whatever choices the District was going to put forward for those particular types of schools within an area. She questioned if any of those schools were impacted by flooding significantly.

Ms. Saunders advised that several schools were impacted by flooding. She knows there was extensive flooding at Stranahan High School, which is one of their under-enrolled schools. There was also flood damage to Walker Elementary School and Westwood Heights, as well as Whiddon Rogers and Seagull School. She has not received a complete list, but knows they are itemizing the costs in terms of some of repairs, but she thinks it is safe to say that some of the under-enrolled schools they have been looking at would likely be impacted because they are situated in neighborhoods that experienced high flooding.

Ms. Brinkworth commented that she did not have a good sense of what else in the City suffered flooding on their campus, which might be something that would contribute to their conversation for the School District. She asked if the Stranahan auditorium flooded.

Ms. Saunders replied there is significant flooding in the auditorium. She can request a list of repair needs. They have been compiling a list of the repair needs.

Chair Ellowitz questioned if the School District published a list of the damage and costs.

Ms. Saunders indicated that she has asked some questions to better understand the process, but she could not say with certainty what the actual steps will be as they move forward. She knows they will be seeking some FEMA support in terms of repairing some of the damage.

Chair Ellowitz asked if insurance covers some of the damage.

Ms. Saunders commented that she imagined they would look into that. She could not recall if the previous flooding repairs at Stranahan were covered by insurance.

Ms. Brinkworth did not know, but when she was on the Board, they were waiting for FEMA to pay outstanding dollars from ten years ago. They are going to have to use Capital money to make repairs and will probably have to use what is in their PPO and Maintenance budget because they do not have additional Capital allegations to spend; there is no extra money.

Chair Ellowitz asked if the Broward Education Foundation would help with that type of support.

Ms. Brinkworth replied not for Capital usually, but Ms. Gohl could reach out to them regarding families in need across Broward who were impacted.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned foster kids in the mix and told Ms. Gohl she could reach out to Voices for Children, because they are the fundraising arm for the Guardian Ad Litem Program. She stated Erica is the Director.

Ms. Saunders commented that the challenge is how to be a helpful connector. With City Hall being inoperable, they do not have a place to accept and store donations, so they are working to see how to invest and best coordinate with different service agencies to play that role. There are some events that are coming up this weekend and next to try to help organize support for people impacted by the floods. She will share all those events once she receives additional information. She thought there might be some volunteer opportunities as well.

Chair Ellowitz went back to the Listening Campaign and the Communication to Commission, and asked if there is a scheduled date for that to be read.

Ms. Saunders advised she does not have confirmation yet. The Commission read the Communication and she was able to provide some context. However, they did not discuss this further because they decided they did not have the ability to focus on that given the other urgent matters. It might be better served to have a conference item to have a fuller conversation, so more time can be devoted to the concept of an Education Listening Campaign. She is trying to get direction on whether it will be read as a Communication or if there might be an opportunity to have a conference item.

Ms. Mendez mentioned the Calvary Chapel in Fort Lauderdale is serving as a host site for collections such as new items, baby items, formula, diapers, baby wipes, shovels, yard gloves, etc. She stated they have an outreach hotline: 954-556-4510 or email outreach@calvaryftl.org. She noted they are assembling teams to go out daily in partnership with Samaritan, and all that is on their website at calvaryftl.org/week.

Dr. Verdi-Knapp stated that St. Jerome's is taking collections on Saturday, and they need everything. Clothing and bedding are the top items. She noted she will drop all stuffed animals at Ms. Gohl's door.

Vice Chair Dean asked if all these resources could be put into a chat.

Chair Ellowitz did not think there is a chat feature because it is a webinar. Once a list is available, she is sure they will receive it.

Vice Chair Dean suggested emailing to Ms. Saunders and then she could consolidate the list they developed as places to donate. She noted that she could also donate a lot of stuffed animals.

Next Steps

Ms. Saunders believes a lot of focus has been on the recovery effort. Some students have been impacted and are taking advantage of the shelter options. The City has been working with Broward County Schools to help coordinate transportation and support. In terms of other staff updates, the SRO Agreement has been a recent focus. The School Board voted to increase the reimbursement rate to what was being requested by the Broward Chief Association and now it will go to the individual Cities to finalize those Agreements. There is currently not an active Agreement and that was an issue because Cities have not been reimbursed for the SRO services since August. After 2022-23, they will enter into a multi-year contract.

Ms. Gohl asked if any of that will change whether Fort Lauderdale Elementary Schools get SROs or if they remain with the Guardian program.

Ms. Saunders stated the Agreement is currently for SROs in the middle and high schools. When they were contemplating budget in terms of the School Board, the expectation was that the SRO numbers and placement would remain the same, but that might be discussed further.

Chair Ellowitz questioned if there were any updates with Early Childhood.

Ms. Saunders advised she is scheduling visits with many of the Early Learning providers in District 3, which was an area they were exploring for the possibility of housing a Bezos Academy. In terms of Joint Use Parks, they are continuing to move forward and working with communities to refine the design. An Amendment to the Recreational License Agreement will be brought forward to the School Board with some additional projects they are working on through the Parks Bond. Their Summer program is coming up, so they are gearing up for that. They wrapped up the Book Explorer's Program with Award Ceremonies and all the children got certificates. They are also creating an opportunity to recognize the teen mentors at an upcoming Commission meeting. It was originally

scheduled for May, so she will let everyone know when that is finalized. It was wonderful to see the commitment level from the volunteers and their commitment to their mentees. They are exploring some grant opportunities as it relates to Workforce development.

Chair Ellowitz asked if Ms. Saunders has been in touch with the three Principals of the three schools they have been highlighting over the past several months.

Ms. Saunders stated that some of the planned parent meetings were rescheduled due to the floods. She knows they are looking to organize some Teacher Appreciation events and she is trying to understand the ask and will share that with everyone as well.

Staff Updates

Chair Ellowitz welcomed new member, Kristina Devers.

Ms. Devers introduced herself. She stated that she has two boys who attend Fort Lauderdale High School. She works in the Broward Schools Expulsion office and her passion is working with at risk kids.

Approval of Meeting Minutes – March 16, 2023

Chair Ellowitz referenced the bottom of Page 3 and noted that Denia's last name was not mentioned.

Motion by Mr. Lang, seconded by Ms. Brinkworth, to approve the March 16, 2023 minutes as amended. In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (10-0)

Adjournment

The next meeting will be held on May 18, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Chair Ellowitz indicated that she might not be able to attend the May 18, 2023 meeting in person.

Ms. Saunders advised if they meet in person, it would be at a different location, not at City Hall.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned the situation and asked if they could use this as an opportunity to meet at schools.

Ms. Saunders replied that the Education Advisory Board could communicate that as a request. This type of request was reviewed previously, and the prior City Commission recommended against it, but this is a different situation. She can follow up on a staff perspective and share what she finds out. They are sharing facilities since their aftercare is being held at the school, so that cooperation can be highlighted.

There was a question if rules were in place that meetings could not be held at someone's house.

Ms. Saunders advised that in the past, the rule is that meetings must take place at City Hall either in the 8th floor conference room or in the Chambers, and there has not been flexibility with having those meetings anywhere outside of those two locations.

Chair Ellowitz recalled having a meeting at Bennett Elementary School and Prototype was there with their recording system. She asked if that was deemed not to be sufficient.

Ms. Saunders stated after that session there was a recommendation from the Education Advisory Board that went as a Communication to the Commission, and they had advised against it at that time. After that point, they were only able to meet in the two locations at City Hall. She can follow up to better understand what the issue was and if they are reevaluating that given the current circumstances.

Ms. Brinkworth thought there might be some issue around if they do not make it to every school in Fort Lauderdale. It might look like they are favoring schools if they happen to have a meeting at one school as opposed to another.

Ms. Saunders believed the issue might have been access and making sure that anyone could walk into the building who was interested in participating in the meeting. The access point is probably more of a focus for the City.

It was asked if the Board could sign out a conference room at the public library.

Ms. Saunders stated there are lots of different places they could go. The direction has been that Advisory Boards can only meet in those two locations. They have to better understand what would be allowed.

Chair Ellowitz asked if it would make sense for the Board to draft some kind of Communication requesting that or if it would make sense for Ms. Saunders to do some kind of background search first.

Ms. Saunders indicated they can do both. She defers to the Board in terms of what they want to do for the Communication.

Ms. Brinkworth commented that she always wanted the Education Advisory Board to be able to meet at schools. She knows there is some question around the recording of the minutes and the Sunshine having anyone being able to come into an open meeting, but she thinks those are things they could work around. If this is an opportunity to get something positive out of a bad situation, she thinks they should try.

Ms. Saunders stated it would give the schools an opportunity to showcase their school.

Chair Ellowitz mentioned when they did the one-time meeting at Bennett Elementary it was great; they had the HOA join.

Chair Ellowitz asked if anyone was willing to draft something quickly that they could edit.

Ms. Brinkworth volunteered.

Chair Ellowitz was thinking of something like "In light of the recent weather issues faced by our City, the Education Advisory Board respectfully requests that they be permitted to hold meetings on school sites within the City of Fort Lauderdale".

Ms. Saunders indicated from a staff perspective as this goes for a Communication, she would certainly support it. She thinks there is value in the Communication and understanding what the requirements are, she would be happy to support in ensuring that those requirements are met if that is the direction given.

Chair Ellowitz suggested putting something in like "In an effort to support our student body" or "Our City's student body" or "The students and their families through this time".

Ms. Brinkworth asked if they should also mention that fact that it is because City Hall is currently inoperable.

Chair Ellowitz replied yes.

Ms. Brinkworth commented "And that they value meeting in person and coming together in person". She stated this is in line with the broader goals they have been describing with their Listening Campaign.

Chair Ellowitz stated that in reality, the only meeting they could have at a school would be in May because then schools are out for the summer, so the next meeting would be in August, and some schools may still be dealing with issues.

Ms. Brinkworth suggested meeting at Lauderdale Manors or some other places or a campus that is open for summer.

Ms. Brinkworth read the draft Communication she had so far as follows:

"In light of the recent weather issues faced by our City, and with the closure of City Hall, the EAB respectfully requests that we be permitted to hold meetings at school sites and at community vendors within the City of Fort Lauderdale. This request will permit the EAB to show the community our commitment to education in the City and supports our dedication to meeting in person."

Ms. Brinkworth asked if the City has its own requirements regarding meetings.

Ms. Saunders replied they would be related to Sunshine and public access.

Ms. Brinkworth again read her draft to the Communication as follows:

“In light of the recent weather issues faced by our City and with the closure of City Hall, the EAB respectfully requests that we be permitted to hold meetings at school sites within the City of Fort Lauderdale. This request will permit the EAB to show the community our commitment to education in the City and supports our dedication to meeting in person. With staff assistance, we agree to meet the requirements of Sunshine Law and providing public access.”

Discussion ensued regarding other phrases that could be used in the Communication.

Ms. Saunders advised she just learned that Broward County Public Schools will be able to pick up the children in the shelter and transfer to their schools and they will have supplies and backpacks on the bus for them Monday morning.

Vice Chair Dean asked if the City is still having issues as far as people calling in to figure out places to donate since there is not a central depository or distribution methods.

Ms. Saunders stated it is not coordinated. There are a lot of different entities that are engaged in this recovery effort. There is a need to pull that together and she will share updates once she receives them. She thinks a lot of events being planned over the weekend are opportunities to do that because the different resources can be brought together, and they can talk and figure out how to do it at scale. She sees this as important opportunities and she will share those flyers.

Vice Chair Dean questioned how these events are being shared with people in the most devastated communities and areas.

Ms. Saunders did not know, but she thinks it is an important question. No one has internet access and that is something Emergency Management has been working on.

Vice Chair Dean wondered if the City could include the events in a news broadcast. She mentioned the flood and tornado warnings she receives in text message form, but a lot of people still have functioning cell phones.

Ms. Brinkworth again read her draft Communication as follows:

“As a result of the recent devastating floods faced by the City of Fort Lauderdale and with the closure of City Hall, the EAB respectfully requests that we be permitted to hold meetings at school sites within the City of Fort Lauderdale. This request will permit the EAB to continue the forward progress of our current initiatives and deepen our connection to our City’s school communities. This opportunity will also allow schools to showcase

their programs and accomplishments. Additionally, visiting the schools allows the EAB to show the community our commitment to education in the City and supports our dedication to meeting in person. With staff assistance, we agree to meet the requirements of Sunshine Law and provide public access.”

Motion by Vice Chair Dean, seconded by Ms. Gohl, to approve the Communication to Commission. The **motion** passed unanimously. (10-0)

Ms. Brinkworth asked if the Communication has to come to the formal presentation of a meeting or if it can go directly to them so this can be sorted out before the next meeting.

Ms. Saunders stated this needs to go through the Commission conference meeting. Usually, she could get it on the next meeting, but it may be the meeting after. She will share the Communication with the Clerk’s office and they will let her know when it can go to the Commission conference meeting. Board members can reach out individually to their Commissioners.

Chair Ellowitz commented that she will reach out and encouraged everyone to do the same.

Vice Chair Dean asked if the Communication will be shared.

Ms. Saunders replied yes, she will send copies.

Chair Ellowitz believes the Communication covers all bases and gives a good impression.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned the meeting at 7:30 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.