

City of Fort Lauderdale

*City Hall
100 North Andrews Avenue
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33301
www.fortlauderdale.gov*



Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 7, 2019

12:00 PM

Joint Workshop with Education Advisory Board

City Commission Conference Room

CITY COMMISSION WORKSHOP

FORT LAUDERDALE CITY COMMISSION

DEAN J. TRANTALIS Mayor

ROBERT L. McKINZIE Vice Mayor - Commissioner - District III

HEATHER MORAITIS Commissioner - District I

STEVEN GLASSMAN Commissioner - District II

BEN SORENSEN Commissioner - District IV

CHRIS LAGERBLOOM, City Manager

JOHN HERBST, City Auditor

JEFFREY A. MODARELLI, City Clerk

ALAIN E. BOILEAU, City Attorney

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Trantalis called the meeting to order at 12:17 p.m.

ROLL CALL

Commission Members: Commissioner Heather Moraitis, Commissioner Steven Glassman, Vice Mayor Robert L. McKinzie, Commissioner Ben Sorensen, and Mayor Dean J. Trantalis

Education Advisory Board Members: Dr. Allen Zeman - Chair, Amy Ellowitz - Vice Chair, Maureen S. Dinnen, April Jeff, Michele Knapp, Terry Large, Lincoln Pastuer, Sarah Owen Delnegri, Betty Shelley, and Lillian Small

Education Advisory Board Members Not Present: Robert Audet, Linda Barnett, Jennifer Lovell, Vickie Melus, Heather Munns, Christopher Relyea, and Rory Sponsler

QUORUM ESTABLISHED

Also Present: City Manager Chris Lagerbloom, Chief Education Officer Zoie Saunders, City Clerk Jeffrey A. Modarelli, City Attorney Alain E. Boileau, and City Auditor John Herbst

Broward County School Board Members Present: Robert W. Runcie Superintendent of Broward County Schools, and Dr. Lori Canning, Director, Early Learning/School Readiness, Broward County Schools

INTRODUCTIONS

PRESENTATION

[19-0497](#)

Presentation - Opportunities to Improve the Quality of Education in Fort Lauderdale - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Chair Zeman facilitated the Education Advisory Board (EAB) presentation entitled *Opportunities to Improve the Quality of Education in Fort Lauderdale*. The presentation included six consensus recommendations endorsed by over 90 percent (90%) of school principals and also shared with Superintendent Runcie, his staff and the Commission. Chair Zeman confirmed the opportunity to partner with Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) to improve education.

Chair Zeman said that the objective of the EAB presentation is to inform attendees of primary gaps; share high impact, lowest cost recommendations; hear guidance as EAB plans for the 2019-2020 EAB efforts; and learn how the EAB can contribute going forward. He noted the guidance received by the EAB last year and current investments in education made by the City. Chair Zeman confirmed that a great education system is fundamental to having a great City. Private schools and non-traditional schools were not included this year but there are plans to include them next year. Chair Zeman discussed background information, statistics regarding resident students, aspects of education managed at the County level, the process/methodology used for the gap analysis and school grades as illustrated in the presentation.

A copy of the presentation is attached to these minutes.

[19-0493](#)

Education Advisory Board Recommendations - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Chair Zeman presented the Education Advisory Board (EAB) and school principal consensus recommendations:

- 1. The City partnering with the County to expand the joint use parks utilizing City and County Parks & Recreation funds to meet student & resident needs (100%)*
- 2. The City supporting establishment of a network of Early Learning Centers (100%)*
- 3 The City expanding and publicizing programs in Broward County Public School (BCPS) facilities, i.e., camps during summer, holidays, spring break & teacher workdays (100%)*
- 4. The City supporting school volunteer programs with one additional City FTE (94%)*
- 5. Setting City education standards for at least "A" or "B" schools, and use "one-year learning gain" for City annual awards and publicity effort to show actual school progress (100%)*
- 6. Providing free, high-speed wireless (5G?) around all City Schools (94%)*

[19-0494](#)

Discussion - (Commission Districts 1, 2, 3, and 4)

Discussions ensued on the six consensus recommendations presented by the EAB.

1. The City partner with County to expand joint use parks with City and County Parks & Recreation funds to meet student needs (at all 24 schools) & resident needs (Amy Ellowitz)

EAB Vice Chair Ellowitz expounded on the history and efforts involved in establishing a youth soccer league which lead to establishing a soccer field at Hardy Park. She discussed the importance of Parks and utilizing funding from the Parks Bond to address community parks and playgrounds on school properties.

Commissioner Moraitis commented on the use of the Parks Bond to address these items. Comment and discussion ensued. Chair Zeman said that school principals from all 24 schools confirmed the need for additional school playground funding. Vice Chair Ellowitz commented on the importance of these amenities which will serve to attract economic growth and enhance community. She discussed the benefits and importance of physical activity for students and the manner in which other municipalities and schools are addressing this need. She said the County is interested in partnering with the City, commenting on the importance of collaboration. Commissioner Moraitis confirmed Commission support and that the Parks Bond is moving forward. She commented on the benefits of collaboration and the efforts of the Parks, Recreation and Beaches Advisory Board (PRABAB) to rank projects for the Parks Bond.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the expenditure of Parks Bond funds in areas not owned by the City, City Attorney Alain Boileau confirmed he would research and advise. Further comment and discussion ensued. Chair Zeman noted previous history related to this topic. Commissioner Moraitis commented on her understanding of the Parks Bond which was based on the Parks Master Plan. City Manager Chris Lagerbloom noted the need to review the funding amounts in the Parks Bond.

Chair Zeman discussed funding amounts for park areas adjacent to and on school properties, discussing the importance of collaboration to attain the best use of funding and outcomes for students. He suggested having a joint plan with the County to address all 24 schools and maximize use of funds.

In response to Vice Mayor McKinzie's question, Phil Thornburg, Director of Parks and Recreation, confirmed there are no County Parks within the

City. Vice Mayor McKinzie commented on addressing needs based upon recommendations from the PRABAB. Mr. Thornburg explained details regarding proceeds from the Parks Bond that will be used to improve School Board properties (\$3,000,000) and City properties located adjacent to schools.

2. The City supporting establishment of a network of Early Learning Centers (Jennifer Lovell)

Chair Zeman discussed the need to close the existing gap in pre-school education/school readiness, commenting on statistics listed in the presentation and related details. He explained how the City of Hollywood is addressing the topic of early learning, noting its contribution to early literacy.

Dr. Lori Canning, Director, Early Learning/School Readiness, Broward County Schools, explained that forty percent (40%) of children in the City are entering kindergarten at the readiness indicator. There are currently 10,000 children in the City with early learning/school readiness needs. She commented on early learning centers currently located in the City and the *Head Start Programs* in eleven elementary schools. Additional support is necessary to strengthen the educational foundation of all children ages 0-5. The lowest economic areas have the greatest need.

Dr. Canning discussed how early learning/school readiness has been addressed in the City of Hallandale, expounding on details that include a professional development site and social services provided by a variety of community partners. These social services not only target young children but also the needs of the family as a whole, including adult education GED classes and other needs.

In order to build strong support and a foundation for early learning, Dr. Canning requested a conversation regarding how the EAB can assist with expanding the current *Head Start Programs* to additional schools. She recommended bringing together community partners to create a network involving all early childhood providers and the Early Learning Coalition for Childcare Providers (Early Learning Coalition) to build quality early learning and school readiness.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding how the Broward County School Board (School Board) can participate in providing early education assistance, Superintendent Runcie explained that the School Board provides facilities and staff in conjunction with multiple agencies. Superintendent Runcie commented on efforts to invite early childcare

providers throughout the community to take advantage of School Board resources and address early learning/school readiness, expounding on details.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding the role of the City, Dr. Canning explained details regarding existing funding. She discussed the need for the City to illustrate its advocacy to all stakeholders. This would allow for a consistent, uniform message in furtherance of building a network of support.

Chair Zeman explained the need for the City to acknowledge the existing gap from birth to age five and unequivocally support a call to action to address this need. He commented on the potential for the City to host early learning sites, expounding on details. Chair Zeman said that there are currently no mandates within the State, counties or municipalities to address early learning needs for children from birth to five years of age. Mayor Trantalis confirmed a consensus in support of early learning/school readiness.

Commissioner Moraitis commented on a conversation with School Board Member Dr. Rosalind Osgood regarding a possible Early Learning Center. In response to Commissioner Moraitis, Dr. Canning explained details regarding the *Head Start Program* and *Voluntary Pre-Kindergarten (VPK)*. Superintendent Runcie explained *Head Start Programs* are limited based on federal funding and the current demand that exceeds availability.

Commissioner Moraitis observed that the presentation illustrates schools are excelling each year; however, where they begin is significantly lower. She discussed public and private entities working together. Commissioner Moraitis commented on efforts of Nova Southeastern University. She noted the opportunity for other colleges and universities to work together for an Early Learning Center.

Superintendent Runcie confirmed that the Early Learning Center in the City of Hallandale has a host of partners. It is a center of excellence that serves as a demonstration site. The goal is to replicate it in the City of Fort Lauderdale, possibly taking an existing school facility and repurposing it as an Early Learning Center.

Advisory Board Member Maureen Dinnen discussed the differences between western schools and eastern schools in the City, commenting on the related economic factors. City support would serve to equalize this concern.

In response to Commissioner Glassman's question regarding how families become aware of early learning education opportunities, Dr. Canning confirmed there are multi-media campaigns in churches and communities. The Early Learning Coalition for Child Care Providers offers subsidized funding. There currently are 450 children on the wait list for the *Head Start Program* in the City; 420 seats were available and are filled. There are currently 650 children on the wait list for the Early Learning Coalition subsidized funding; there is current funding in the City for 1,500 children.

Commissioner Sorensen concurred with the need to address early learning/school readiness, confirming his support to move forward. Dr. Canning noted those involved with these efforts include the Early Learning Coalition, the Children Services Council, community partners and others.

3. The City expanding and publicizing programs in Broward County Public School (BCPS) facilities: camps, for summers, holidays, Spring Break & teacher workdays (Allen Zeman)

Chair Zeman expounded on research indicating the benefits of addressing opportunities for students needing additional study time during the summer.

In response to Vice Mayor McKinzie's question, Phil Thornburg, Director of Parks and Recreation, expounded on the efforts of Parks and Recreation Staff that include education. Chair Zeman noted the County's interest in allowing the City to utilize County facilities during the summer, confirming availability. Mayor Trantalis said this would be helpful.

4. City support school volunteer programs with one additional City Full-Time Employee (FTE) (Heather Munns)

a. Based on existing research (e.g., Lehr et al., 2003; Ritter et al., 2009) increases in volunteers at currently underserved schools should result in a statistically significant impact student success outcomes (e.g., increases in attendance and scores on Statewide exams as well as decreases in dropout rates) at all levels from elementary through high school.

b. Within the schools, the Liaison will work with the school administration to set strategic goals and monitor volunteer programs

success (including student-related success outcomes) and work with the PTA and school departments to assess specific needs and how well they are being met.

c. Outside the schools, the incumbent will be responsible for recruitment of school volunteers opportunities at underserved schools through community involvement.

Dr. Zeman discussed input from school principals regarding volunteerism opportunities, commenting on the challenge of vetting volunteers to assure skills are aligned with needs and encourage consistent participation. This recommendation was ratified by one hundred percent (100%) of school principals. Dr. Zeman recommended a City Staff Liaison work to understand the needs of the 24 schools and align volunteer efforts where needs exist.

5. Set City education standards for at least "A" or "B" schools, and use "one-year learning gain" for City annual awards and publicity effort to show actual school progress (Allen Zeman)

Definition: One Year Learning Gain

Metric: One year of learning in one year

Key measure: the percentage of full year enrolled students who achieved a learning gain from the prior year to the current year. Test are given each year in English Language Arts (grades 3 -10) and Mathematics (grades 3 -8, and in year of Algebra or Geometry).

Results range from Level 1 -5 from statewide standardized assessments including the comprehensive assessments, EOC and FSAA assessments.

Learning Gain is defined as:

*Maintain a Level 2, 3, 4, or 5 from one year to the next; or
Improve one or more "scale score" points within Level 1 from one year to the next.*

Dr. Zeman explained signals received by Superintendent Runcie and School Board Members from cities regarding the need for improvements and change to meet desired goals. He said the standard for a City

school should be an "A" or "B".

A new metric is proposed: a year spent at school learning equals a year of learning gained. Dr. Zeman expounded on details and input from principals related to this topic, including student flow, the current curriculum and standards.

In response to Mayor Trantalis, Superintendent Runcie said that the State provides data illustrating school learning gains, expounding on details. Dr. Zeman commented that these gains contribute to economic development. Superintendent Runcie noted that school grades matter. However, there are other components of a school's success. The greatest measure is learning gains. In some instances, due to the need for students to catch up, more than one year of learning gain is necessary. This is a critically important measure.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question, Superintendent Runcie discussed learning gains translating into the improved grading of a school, noting that other factors including proficiency that the State is beginning to consider in the formula used to grade schools. Further comment ensued.

Mayor Trantalis recognized Philip Bullock, Principal of Walker Elementary School. Superintendent Runcie explained the efforts and success of Mr. Bullock at Walker Elementary School. Over the last two years, Walker Elementary improved one hundred and thirty percent (130%), the highest in the County. Formerly graded as a triple "F", it is now a "C" over that two-year period. Mr. Bullock expounded on details related to how the State reports classroom achievement. Superintendent Runcie commented on additional factors. He also commented on the topic of transient students.

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question about school districts outside of the State that use the one-year learning gain key metric, Superintendent Runcie noted that the letter grading system is used due to the ease of understanding by the public. He stated that education is far more complex. Superintendent Runcie commented on school system restraints regarding this topic. He commented on the need to focus on prominent issues including equity, mental health, social/emotional learning, physical education and community engagement for a different, broader vision of student success.

Superintendent Runcie discussed Broward County Public Schools (BCPS) middle school efforts to change student experiences with rigorous, engaged project-based learning environments tied to

standards. This gives students a sense of purpose, mastery and creativity, allowing them to identify with what they are learning. Superintendent Runcie confirmed the need for the capacity to address students who need to catch up and are surrounded with social, family and community related challenges.

Chair Zeman discussed publicizing the standard for City schools in a manner that departs from the State mandated system. He recommended using the proposed new metric that a year spent at school learning equals a year of learning gained and publicizing the fact that a significant percentage of students moved one grade forward versus the State grading system which casts an entire school under a letter system that gives an incorrect perception. Further comment and discussion ensued.

Chair Zeman commented on the opportunity to celebrate and publicize achievements. Commissioner Sorensen commented on the importance of this concept for students and teachers, noting the value of celebrating student achievements. Mayor Trantalis concurred, noting this often occurs in sports but not scholastically. Chair Zeman confirmed that the 24 principals supported the importance of the City showing the encouragement of student success. Superintendent Runcie commented on the history of grading schools.

6. Provide free, high-speed wireless around all City Schools (Michele Verdi-Knapp)

Although most schools in the U.S. boast broadband access and plenty of assignments require the internet, when many students head home this presents a challenge as they either have no internet access or it is limited in speed.

This results in a homework gap. The problem is created when students who use digital learning in class do not have access to the internet at home to complete their schoolwork.

A report published from the Institute of Education Sciences, found that 80 percent (80%) of 8th graders use a computer at home to complete their schoolwork during the week.

Many schools are left with two options: keep moving forward with digital learning and risk leaving some students behind-or keep homework assignments offline, holding back the students who might otherwise

benefit from software and tools available on the internet. The issue is pervasive-and it disproportionately affects under-represented minorities and students in rural areas.

Across geographic locales, the percentages of students with no or low-speed internet access were consistently higher for students living below the poverty threshold than for students living at greater than 185 percent (185%) of the poverty threshold.

Advisory Board Member Michele Knapp commented on the number of students who do not have access to the internet for online homework and leaves them at a disadvantage. She said that this is an awareness issue and confirmed the need to address this requisite. Superintendent Runcie noted that the School Board offers each family five copies of Microsoft Office. He commented on successful efforts to address the needs of a student through virtual schooling options.

In response to Mayor Trantalis' question regarding how to address students who lack internet and technology, Superintendent Runcie noted efforts to improve equitably through providing access to technology, citing examples, improvements and need for ongoing replenishment. The current ratio is two students for each computer in County schools. Superintendent Runcie confirmed the need to identify those families on the margins with no computer or Wi-Fi access. He suggested that the City could create a special program for these students in conjunction with a telecom and computer vendors to address this need.

Commissioner Moraitis commented on her suggestion at the recent Northwest-Progresso-Flagler Heights Community Redevelopment Agency (NWPFH CRA) Advisory Board Meeting to use NWPFH CRA funds to provide internet services within the NWPFH CRA area. Vice Mayor McKinzie confirmed there is Wi-Fi access along the Sistrunk Boulevard corridor. Commissioner Moraitis recommended identifying areas in need of Wi-Fi. Chair Zeman confirmed the importance of this issue and further research would be done.

Chair Zeman commented on research efforts by Nova High School students to identify education related contributions from the other 23 Broward County municipalities, discussing results as illustrated in the presentation. He also reviewed the investments in education by the City of Sunrise listed in the presentation.

CLOSING REMARKS

In response to Commissioner Sorensen's question regarding

conversations with his peers around the country regarding the need to focus on early learning/school readiness, Superintendent Runcie said that this is on the forefront. However, the larger conversation deals with societal issues that have worked their way into schools. Over sixty percent (60%) of students in schools across the country are impacted by a range adverse childhood experiences. Schools need to build the capacity of students to deal with these challenges within the school environment. These are huge barriers to student achievement.

Chair Zeman noted the importance of engagement. He confirmed that the EAB is aligned with schools, allowing them to be informed on an ongoing basis regarding school concerns and to make recommendations.

ADJOURNMENT

Mayor Trantalis adjourned the meeting at 1:30 p.m.