



EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
Virtual Meeting
Thursday, October 15, 2020 6:30-8:30 p.m.

July 2020 – May 2021

Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	4	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	3	1
Wendy Gonsher	A	2	2
Lisa May	A	2	2
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	4	0
April Jeff	A	2	2
Jennifer Lovell	P	4	0
Dr. Heather Munns	P	4	0
Tina Jaramillo	P	4	0
Colleen Lockwood	P	4	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	P	4	0
Vickie Melus	P	3	1
Christopher Relyea	P	4	0
Lillian Small	A	1	3
Rory Sponsler	A	3	1
Betty Shelley	A	2	2
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	4	0
Yolanda B. Francis	A	2	2
Tomislav Lukic	P	4	0

Appointed Members to the Board: 19

Needed to constitute a quorum: 10

Staff Liaison: Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer

Communication to Commission:

The Education Advisory Board, as part of a larger effort to engage our community in shaping the future of public education in the City of Fort Lauderdale, recommends that the Mayor and City commission:

- 1) Express support for the School Board of Broward County's current allocation of 2020 SMART bond dollars for critical and essential facility renovations at Bennett Elementary School, and
- 2) Support City staff and the EAB's continued collaboration with Bennett Elementary School and neighboring Fort Lauderdale communities to capture residents' preference for long-term facility and program enhancements.

Motion: Motion made by Vice Chair Amy Ellowitz and seconded by Ms. Tina Jaramillo. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

DRAFT



MEETING

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

**CITY HALL
8TH FLOOR**

CONFERENCE ROOM

100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301

THURSDAY, September 17, 2020 6:30-8:30 PM

July 2020 – May 2021

Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	3	0
Ruchel Coetzee (arrived at 6:49 p.m.)	P	2	1
Wendy Gonsher	P	2	1
Lisa May	P	2	1
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair (arrived at 6:38 p.m.)	P	2	0
April Jeff	P	2	1
Jennifer Lovell	P	3	0
Dr. Heather Munns	P	3	0
Tina Jaramillo	P	3	0
Colleen Lockwood	P	3	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	P	3	0
Vickie Melus	A	2	1
Christopher Relyea	P	3	0
Lillian Small	A	1	2
Rory Sponsler	P	3	0
Betty Shelley (arrived at 7:23 p.m.)	P	2	1
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	3	0
Yolanda B. Francis	A	2	1
Tomislav Lukic	P	3	0

Staff/Guests

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale

Danielle Smith, Principal of Bennett Elementary School

Vice Mayor Steve Glassman

Celia Gisleson, Vice Mayor Glassman's assistant

Mark Strauss, Resident

John Sullivan, Broward County School District

Michael Walker, Sunrise Middle School

Barbara Collins, Resident and Bennett Elementary teacher

Amy Schmidt, Joint Use Parks

Monique Collazo, President of Bennett Elementary School PTA
Alex Collazo, President of Poinsettia Heights Civics Association
Jill Young, Broward County Public Schools
Joseph Beck, Broward County Public Schools
Heather Brinkworth, Broward County School Board
Daniece Williams, Broward County Public Schools
Martha Steinkamp, Parks and Recreation Board
Jamie Oppерlee, Prototype, Inc.

I. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance – Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair

This meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

II. Attendance and Roll Call, 21 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum

As of this date, September 17, 2020, 18 of the 21 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

III. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes – August 20, 2020

Page 12, last paragraph, should read, “**Beachside Montessori**”.

Motion by Ruchel Coetzee, seconded by Tina Jaramillo, to approve the August 20, 2020 minutes as amended. Motion passed unanimously. (18-21)

IV. Presentation: Bennett Elementary School, Danielle Smith, School Principal

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated there is an opportunity for the City’s Education Advisory Board to make a meaningful contribution to a school that is poised to make a big leap in both educational quality and enrollment. He introduced Danielle Smith, Principal of Bennett Elementary School.

Principal Smith reported that information relating to the Smart Bond and Bennett Elementary was mentioned during last month’s meeting and they are currently in the process of getting community input. She shared the following information:

- Bennett Elementary is one of two elementary schools in Fort Lauderdale that has the Cambridge Innovative Program, which was implemented in 2018. The Program is part of the feeder pattern that goes from Sunrise Middle School to Fort Lauderdale High School. There are currently eight teachers trained in Cambridge and a total of 14 classroom teachers. The Program is available for students in Kindergarten through 5th grade. Based on enrollment, Bennett Elementary is a unique boutique small school.

- Based on data trends from 2019, their learning gains are on an upward trend. Students were unable to take State Assessments last year, but based on their mid-year Assessment, they are projected to increase by a whole letter grade. Students are slated to have State Assessments this year and they are hitting the ground virtually with all their programs in place through e-learning.
- 2019 data showed an increase of 13% in math learning gains and a 7% increase in ELA English Language Arts. Bennett Elementary is a small school and they have a lot of specialized learning that is customized to take care of all students.
- The Literacy and Math Coaches have designed some great data chats and progress monitoring plans with common Assessments, and they collaborate with their teachers.
- One program replicated from Bayview Elementary and implemented is the “Want to Read” program.
- Some Smart Bond project facts were shared last month. In 2000, Bennett Elementary was slated for a new building, but based on the Castaldi Analysis Report, it was recommended repairs not be done, but to demolish the buildings and repair; for economic reasons it was more feasible to rebuild. Due to economic reasons and the real estate crash, those buildings were put on hold and 20 years later they have the Smart Bond. They are in the preparation stages with the Project Manager and Architects in getting things into place; however, they are at crossroads where they need to divide their scope and sequence of the plan because the entire plan for the Bond is for repairs. Their plan is in two phases. Phase 1 is moving forward with repairs that need to be placed and Phase 2 needs to go back to the School Board, as they want to complete the remainder of the scope project deciding whether to repair or rebuild. That information is being shared with the community. Phase 1 is going to the School Board in October or November and there needs to be a Board Workshop for Phase 2 for changes in the Bond to be approved. Because of Covid, a date for the Workshop has not been determined.
- It was noted that 78% of the reassignments are Fort Lauderdale residents.

Chair Dr. Zeman advised there is a chance for this Board to inform the City Commission about the opportunity to ask the County to reprioritize funds in the Smart Bond.

Mayor Glassman commented that the Fort Lauderdale City Commission does not take a band-aid approach, they are a “can-do” Commission. He is willing to do whatever it takes to communicate this and to help everyone work towards an actual rebuilding of the facility. He has talked to people in District 2 neighborhoods that feed into Bennett Elementary and pretty much has heard a consensus for a rebuild. He believes Ms. Brinkworth knows that feeling and he thanked her for her years of service to the children of Fort Lauderdale and to the School Board of Broward County. He welcomed Ms. Sarah Leonardi, School Board Member-Elect District 3, and stated that he told her how

important this is as a project, what a priority it is, and that he wants to see a new school for Bennett Elementary. This is an important priority of his as well as for the entire City Commission.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that Mayor Glassman has always been open to the Education Advisory Board and has helped in ways that are not so obvious to everyone. He thanked Mayor Glassman for his service and concern about education, not just in this District or City, but Countywide. He welcomed Heather Brinkworth and requested she share thoughts about the potential for a construction project at Bennett Elementary School.

Ms. Saunders requested Ms. Brinkworth be made a presenter as well as all attendees participating in the discussion around Bennett Elementary.

Ms. Brinkworth thanked the Education Advisory Board for their commitment to public schools in Fort Lauderdale. There has been conversation with many schools across Broward County Public Schools regarding Bennett Elementary. She pushed conversations with community help to advocate for a common-sense approach as to how money would be spent for North East High School in District 3 and believes Bennett Elementary falls into that category. One concern is that dollars are tight and the cost for demolishing and replacing some of the buildings at Bennett Elementary, as recommended by staff, is more than what the School Board has shown an appetite for. This is going to take great advocacy from the community, a very well thought out plan, and an opportunity for a possible public private partnership. She would like the Education Advisory Board to think about how resources could be leveraged in the community to make this a reality because it is important to the City. Bennett Elementary serves a great community and there is a need to retain its capacity, which she feels strongly about. She will advocate as hard as she can for the time she is on the School Board and then will continue advocating as a community member and resident of the City of Fort Lauderdale. There is a lot of opportunity, but she reiterated it is going to take advocacy and that is where the Education Advisor Board, the City of Fort Lauderdale, and the Commission will play a big role. Money should be spent on the buildings that need renovating and then renovations can be a longer discussion. She thinks they owe it to the school to get those renovations started.

Alex Collazo, President of the Civics Association in Poinsettia Heights, was in attendance with his wife, Monique, who is President of the PTA at Bennett Elementary. He spoke in favor for the push for a new school at the last meeting. He thinks this area is still affordable, but it does not have the public school that is needed. He and his wife would like to support a hard push to get this school rebuilt and they can be contacted at PoinsettiaHeights.org to see how their community feels. Most people are in favor of the rebuild. There are many questions regarding funding and the numbers, and it would be

helpful if those could be published to help people understand. There is some concern with the Educational Bond overall, not necessarily against it, but some people like to see where the money is going and how it is divided. Bennett Elementary was at the back burner for a long time and should be at the front of the line for a full refit.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated that a link could be provided, which shows where the Smart Bond money has gone, what has been executed, what is under obligation, and what has been completed.

Mark Strauss, resident and Cadre Director for Bennett Elementary, thanked the Board for the work they do. At Bennett Elementary there is truly a passion for working to meet the needs of every individual child and that is the boutique feel mentioned. Bennett Elementary is a jewel. The Education Advisory Board's advocacy is truly needed to make a difference. Advocacy is one thing that drives decision-making.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if Mr. Strauss wanted to share anymore in his position about the plans. Principal Smith is not there by mistake; there is a real interest in Bennett Elementary given its location and history of the school being so great in the past, adopting changes like Cambridge, and hiring teachers with a long history of academic excellence.

Mr. Strauss stated that Principal Smith is awesome and she is at Bennett Elementary because she is seen as a person who can grow the enrollment, who will roll up her sleeves and get involved in the community, and she has a passion and vision for excellence in education; she is there to do visionary work.

Michael Walker, with Sunrise Middle School, concurred with everything said. While working with Principal Smith for the last few years, he has seen a big change at Bennett Elementary. He always looks at the school system with the end goal, which is to have students graduate and move onto a career or college and he sees the visionary leadership Principal Smith has brought to the school. He commented that 78% of the students on reassignment live within the City, so they are serving students regardless of which boundary they are in. He thinks there is a huge need to improve and make the school a welcoming environment for their students and to continue to increase the enrollment as Principal Smith has been doing. As a resident in the area, he heard Mr. Collazo mention the cost of homes and living; people want good options for their children and there are not too many neighborhoods left in the area that are super affordable. When parents spend a lot of money on a house, they want a quality school. He believes Principal Smith is providing a quality school, but there is always more that can be done with the building itself. He believes the most important thing Principal Smith has been doing is being a welcoming Principal for the community surrounding their school.

Mr. Relyea indicated he is at a school that originally was slated to be demolished and rebuilt, but that did not happen and they went with a retrofitting option, which sounds similar to the plight Bennett Elementary may fear to deal with. That option has not been great for the school or the community and he thinks it will ultimately cost more money. Money should be spent wisely even if it means spending a little more now, as it could save money in the long-term. He mentioned the Return on Investment and stated that as a community, everyone knows what a quality school can do for a City and Bennett Elementary is primely located to give that money back in tax revenues tenfold. It is his strong recommendation not to retrofit Bennett Elementary and to demolish and replace the buildings.

Mr. Sponsler mentioned when he joined the Board a year ago, the first meeting was held at Fort Lauderdale High School and he was listening to conversations from Principals on the west side of the City who were having difficulty retaining teachers. The Board has moved away from the discussion about equity and educational opportunities for students on the west side of the City. He is a firm believer that Bennett Elementary is due for upgrades and it serves a great purpose being next door to the middle school, but he does not want to lose sight of the fact that one of the goals a year ago was how we were going to improve education opportunities and elevate learning goals and gains to students on the west side of the City.

Ms. Gonsler commented that her Homeowner's Association is zoned for Bayview Elementary and people moving into the area know that. A few years ago, there was discussion about zoning and Districts being changed and their neighborhood would be going to Bennett Elementary. She questioned where the perception came from that Bayview Elementary students would be so against going to Bennett Elementary or if that was based on old information. She questioned what needs to happen to make the numbers and perceptions change if Bayview is overenrolled and Bennett Elementary is under-enrolled.

Ms. Brinkworth stated there are long held perceptions in the community that do not match the reality of what occurs in the schools. The only way that can be changed is for community members to visit the schools and see what is really happening. She believed Sunrise Middle is reaping the benefits of that type of community change and the same must be done for elementary schools. Bennett Elementary School is primed for that to happen and she thinks spending the dollars to demolish some of those buildings on that campus and replace them will make a difference because there are already great programs, an amazing administrative team, and very talented teachers.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned changes throughout the immediate neighborhood and in the Bennett Elementary district. It is an area where more people are coming in, who have high expectations. Teachers like when parents express high expectations

because there is more engagement. The question about east and west Fort Lauderdale is totally legitimate. This is the only east Fort Lauderdale Elementary School that is not an "A" school. That does not mean west Fort Lauderdale schools are being ignored; this Board has been attentive in closing those gaps. Their approach has been analytic and strategic, and they know there are things to do on both sides. Two years ago, the incident that led to hardening the schools in Broward County pushed the neighborhood out and since that time it has been difficult to visit neighborhood schools. Something to consider in the future is how to open doors to Fort Lauderdale neighborhoods so more people can visit schools.

Chair Dr. Zeman went down the list of people registered to speak as follows:

Barbara Collins, resident of Poinsettia Heights and Bennett Elementary School teacher, was present. She is on the school PTA and SAC Committee and she supports the rebuild; it is much needed and long overdue. She is a strong advocate for the Cambridge Program, and they are currently implementing The Area of Global Perspectives, which prepares students for the Cambridge Program at their sister school, Sunrise Middle, and then onto Fort Lauderdale High School. She believes the rebuild of Bennett Elementary will draw neighborhood children back to the best little secret kept in Broward County.

John Sullivan, Broward County Schools, was in attendance, filling in for Leslie Brown, and Jill Young and Daniece Williams, Broward County Public Schools, were in attendance.

Joseph Beck, Broward County Public Schools, indicated that Bennett Elementary School is uniquely positioned to help the City of Fort Lauderdale attract young people who want to live here. As Principal Smith shared, Bennett Elementary is a great reassignment opportunity. We are not going to get another opportunity to build a new school in east Fort Lauderdale, so the best plan is to bring the facility quality to parity with other crown jewel schools, such as VSY, Bayview, and Harbordale.

Chair Dr. Zeman summarized that a lot was heard about Bennett Elementary last month. This is an opportunity to advocate for a better facility while supporting information gathering and advocacy required to improve both inside the building while at the same time trying to convince the Commission to influence the Broward County School Board to think seriously about this jewel of a school and making it into a facilities jewel. He thanked Principal Smith and stated that the fact their learning gains are on a positive trend is huge.

Vice Chair Ellowitz advised she is a huge Bennett Elementary fan. With all the construction happening in the Downtown area, she has noticed that specific area is one

of the last affordable communities for a family. As mentioned in past meetings, there are so many issues with mold and as Principal Smith said, "You can't put lipstick on a pig".

Motion by Vice Chair Amy Ellowitz, seconded by Christopher Relyea, to ask for the construction project at Bennett Elementary to be named as a Strategic Initiative by this Board. Motion passed unanimously. (18-21)

Ms. Coetzee commented that to motivate this movement to get Bennett Elementary construction is to get the community involved because the City cannot carry all the dollars. It would be helpful if teachers and students could give some testimonials that might help motivate some dollars to build a new school. She wanted to add marketing materials to all the real estate agents that tells them exactly why Bennett Elementary is so good.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated it is part of the motion, which was to make it a Strategic Initiative; how we achieve that initiative is built into the motion.

Ms. Lockwood mentioned the Strategic Initiative and thought it was important to dig into points by Ms. Brinkworth and Mr. Sponsler. To do this, Ms. Brinkworth's suggestion about a public private partnership is key. She did not think we would be in a position for the School Board to sign off at this point, but if we came with a community partner or two, and she knows the City is hiring a Grants Coordinator, research could be assigned to investigate funding for this project. She did not know if they should start with discussing public private partnership, but thought it was a great suggestion that would be a significant challenge to go after without a larger context. She did not know if that would mean an amended motion.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated those were critical points. All of that would be wrapped into this as a Strategic Initiative including the PPB option, thinking about the context of everything going on in the world. One advantage is that this Board is advisors to a political Board and the political Board makes those decisions all the time. The question is if this is the time to push construction in the City of Fort Lauderdale or work more on Equity issues or other issues. The Board's job is to collect information, run the facts, advise the Commissioners, give them all the information, and then the Commission will decide if they want to move forward. He did not think a new amendment was needed because there was no content to the motion; the motion is to make this an issue that the Board needs to spend time studying.

Mr. Sponsler commented that he would like his property values to increase with a top rated and quality constructed school.

Ms. Saunders suggested thinking about the larger City School Engagement Strategy. As part of that, defining an approach that is equitable. Bennett Elementary is being brought forward as a key opportunity for many reasons. Looking at the data for enrollment is one indicator that shows an opportunity for the community to become more involved to connect residents with the experiences and learning what is going on in the school. Secondly, there is an opportunity with the Smart Bond to move this forward. Timing is a consideration as well in bringing Bennett Elementary School forward as a Strategic Initiative. As a City, it is important that we are looking at all schools and making sure equitability is being focused throughout all the Districts. Many other initiatives are being worked on at staff level, which will be brought to the Education Advisory Board, so they can continue to get input and guidance beyond Bennett Elementary School. She encouraged as part of the next conversation to begin thinking about some of the indicators that create an equitable approach for the Board to focus on schools throughout the City and to place a strategic and concerted focus on a way to make a meaningful difference. She reiterated that timing is an issue because there is an opportunity on the table to be able to utilize Smart Bond dollars and it is imperative that the community is involved in that decision-making. There is compelling data on the City website that shows an increased enrollment demand for the Fort Lauderdale High School zone and that is an important element to consider. Over a ten-year period, there has been a 13% enrollment increase in the Fort Lauderdale High School zone. The other piece to consider is with two schools that benefitted from new construction and as shown in the data packet, there is a correlation with higher enrollment for in-boundary students. That is something this Board has thought a lot about and we want to make sure magnet schools continue to be recognized with many awards, but also making sure there is a quality neighborhood option in whatever neighborhood you live in. When looking at Fort Lauderdale High School and Harbordale Elementary School as a comparison with two schools in this zone that benefitted from new construction, data shows there were spikes in in-boundary enrollment, meaning they are creating more demand for residents zoned for those schools. There are also some programmatic aspects, which is an important element. Putting this out there shows the Board is considering this as a vote and it does not preclude the Education Advisory Board or the City for advocating for positive changes at other schools. Other projects that can benefit from this Board's advocacy and support.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that this Board, for at least the last three years, has been clear there are Cities like Weston and others in Broward County, who have significant engagement in their schools. Fort Lauderdale is growing, and we are trying to catch up to other Cities, which is crucial. That is the role of liaisons, the role of taking the Joint Use Park Bonds and making sure we continue to engage in picking a school where this Board can make a difference now just because of the facts on the ground. That model of engagement is the long-term model of how a City, a school system, and a partner get to higher levels of excellence. There is nothing that says we cannot have "A" schools in

all 30 schools in Fort Lauderdale. Some schools have lots of parents on the PTA and many volunteers and other schools have no participation. The engagement to our schools is fundamental to success and as a Board, there is an opportunity with our liaisons as individual initiatives. It is the long-term growth of the City's relationship to the schools and County that will contribute to sustained growth and education. The elements are there; City residents want great education, but there are institutional barriers preventing it from happening and we must beat those barriers down and make that relationship honest and genuine.

V. City School Engagement Strategy

Ms. Saunders explained that the project with Bennett Elementary School is a way to pilot how we, as a City, can push forward change by engaging our community. She thanked Colleen Lockwood, who serves as the President of the Counsel for Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations, for inviting her to provide to the Counsel, much of the work this Board has been engaged in over the last year, and also to provide a spotlight on Bennett Elementary School. The intent moving forward is to continually engage with our neighborhood Associations, Counsel, and having these school spotlights. Currently, a number of indicators put Bennett Elementary School at the top of the list for this Board to pursue for reasons discussed and there is an opportunity to explore other ways in which the Board can help to prioritize that focus. She is following up with neighborhood Association Presidents to provide an education update and spotlight schools within their community. If a school is not physically located in their community, it is a school zoned for their neighbors. In doing so, being able to create a larger understanding of the programs available to the residents and a forum for them to provide input. For those liaisons assigned to schools, she would like to reach out and invite them to the neighborhood Association meetings, so they could be part of the effort, along with work they are doing with the PTA Associations in giving updates. While moving forward the Board needs to think how to more effectively engage community members in promoting public education and sharing their voice around what they want to see in schools and building greater awareness of what is available in public education throughout the City. She would like to discuss ideas of other ways to meaningfully engage community members as one and how the Education Advisory Board can begin to prioritize the focus. Equity is a key driver in all work at the City.

Ms. DeNegri questioned where we stand with the walkaround the team was doing to prioritize the parks.

Ms. Saunders stated that a preliminary list could be shared later in this meeting.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if there were any thoughts on City school engagements.

Mr. Relyea commented that schools in their City might have sister schools in other locations. He suggested matching schools on the east side of the City with schools on the west side of the City. There are different metrics of success. It occurred to him that there is so much going on in the east side and he knows the constraints and resources are different, but he cannot imagine why it would be bad to get east and west side schools together in some sort of official or unofficial capacity.

Ms. Saunders stated that last year, as part of the kickoff of the school year, Principals and City staff were brought together to engage in these conversations around how they can collaborate. It was more focused on how the City could support schools, but during those discussions there was an opportunity for Principals to share similar questions, concerns, and requests. Anytime they can have a forum where they are promoting conversation, engagement, and sharing best practices is welcome and a lot of that is occurring especially with Dr. Strauss and his Principal meetings and other opportunities for them to engage. They have not had an opportunity to do that type of event this year and questioned what they might be able to meet virtually to compensate.

Mr. Strauss indicated that he is a Cadre Director because he supports and supervises most of the schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale. He has schools on both the east and west side, so a lot of their discussions are around equity and how schools can support and learn from one another. He always reminds schools that may have a higher letter grade that they can learn from the hard work taking place in schools that may not have the same letter grade. While looking at equity, they need to look at what high performance schools can provide in the way of motivation and helping during holidays. Unofficially, schools have adopted each other to ensure that every child in school goes home with a Christmas present. They are always discussing issues around equity or talking about race during their meetings. Many people are uncomfortable talking about race, but it is an important topic that must be explored and embraced, realizing it is a big piece of the equity conversation.

Chair Dr. Zeman advised that he would like Mr. Strauss to attend another meeting at some point and talk to the Board about Fort Lauderdale and the engagement of the City with the schools, what he has seen that has worked, or what the opportunity looks like here. This Board could benefit from his perspective as to whether they are on a three or ten-year path, if they are engaging in getting traction, or if this is just to get a few things done and go home. As a body, this Board has tried to be aspirational in where they go, and they have a great Commission. There is a need opportunity, but some information is missing. There are 20 members on the Board and 30 schools; they are trying to link a member with one to two schools but are struggling because of the pandemic. They can only study what needs to be done, so when the pandemic ends, they will be poised

to do something that has a meaningful impact on the engagement of the City with the 30 schools.

Mr. Strauss stated he works very closely with Ms. Saunders. He is the liaison to the City of Fort Lauderdale and he and Ms. Saunders speak multiple times a week. The City of Fort Lauderdale has made a huge shift in the way it works with the School District and it is noticed by his colleagues, Principals and by the School Board. He applauded the Education Advisory Board, the Commission, and Ms. Saunders for the dynamic shift that has taken place in the relationship between the City of Fort Lauderdale and the schools within the City.

Mayor Glassman commented there have been discussions and the course has changed just by the fact that Ms. Saunders' position was created. He thinks that showed this Commission was treating their relationship with the School Board in a different way than prior Commissions.

Vice Chair Ellowitz commented that as a Social Worker, she has seen that often people are not aware of their rights or benefits to participating in having a voice. That is something this Board needs to look at; how to engage and get people excited about participating.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that is a key point. Part of the Commission's passion about education was creating a CEO position and hiring someone with the talents Ms. Saunders has, and the energy keeping her issues going forward, which reflects on the City. The City of Fort Lauderdale is demanding better education and their politicians and Board are responding to that. The schools need more volunteers, more money, better schools, Principals that care, and teachers who teach as well as giving time to Counselors so they can counsel rather than do testing and lunchroom duties. He understood Vice Chair Ellowitz's point as a Social Worker. The issue was the school, parents, and a combination of factors got them to a point where the traditional engagement with the parents did not exist.

Mr. Lukic mentioned the issue of the ability parents have in terms of free time to participate in their child's school. He is sure the student population of Bayview and their families are in a position where at least one parent might have greater amounts of free time to dedicate or volunteer at a school whereas when going to schools that have families with limited resources, it is more difficult to take time to engage and volunteer at the PTA when working two or three jobs. We must be cognizant of people's abilities to engage on a physical level with volunteering in the schools and see if any other ways can be developed.

Ms. Jaramillo commented on the sister school engagement and stated that perhaps some of the private schools in the Fort Lauderdale area could be a good resource. Other ways for City school engagement may be instituting some sort of Civic

involvement, getting community leaders to go into the schools and engage, offering internships or other ways for students to actively engage in the community with leaders within the community and learning from those leaders through various programs or speaking engagements. She teaches high school students, and many do not know how a Commission functions.

Mr. Sponsler mentioned the Joint Use Parks being open for a longer amount of time, which the Board has discussed, so adults can use the parks during hours they are not at work or on the weekends. Before moving to Fort Lauderdale, he taught at Bridgeville in Delaware and they started wraparound services to serve underserved students and families. The school was open for laundry services and food pantries were opened, which would get more community adults actively engaged in coming to the school, particularly if they had a child at the school. He was the Band Director and there was one field for the football team and marching band, so the football team would take the field for practice after school and he would have to wait until 5:30 p.m. to start rehearsals. If children went home after school, they would not have the means to come back, so they instituted a meal program and homework help where the cafeteria ladies prepared meals. When he heard about the Recreation plan, he envisioned that the school would stay open later for underserved students. There could be a combination of recreational activities and additional support for learning gain or activities, and then an evening for a certain amount of time they offer wraparound services that would help the parents. One of the wraparound services in Bridgeport was during tax time where people from the community would help parents with their income taxes and filings. Covid is not conducive to that right now, but perhaps we can get public private partnerships going, so there would be a reason for adults to come to the school other than to check in with a teacher or see what is on the bulletin board.

Ms. Gonsler referred to what was said about Dillard High School earlier and it seems that given what is happening in the world today, this Board needs to look at the issue of equity a little differently and broader. It is presumptuous of the Board to try to determine what would get parents in any given neighborhood engaged in their school; we do not know why parents are not participating. She noted there are no people of color on this Board, but they are talking about issues of equity. If the Board wants to encourage engagement, they need to walk the walk, not talk the talk. The Board needs to be more representative of the Fort Lauderdale population and then input or involvement is needed from people to say what is needed from the Board, the City, and the schools.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if anyone in attendance by telephone had anything they wanted to share on this issue. To Ms. Gonsler's point, nothing changes because the Board talks about things during the Education Advisory Board meeting. Members take Strategic Initiatives seriously and work for real measurable outcomes, they are not interested by having an interesting academic debate at a Zoom meeting. It is about

how to get engagement to the point. When residents are involved in the schools it no doubt raises the standards for what that school delivers. Facilities, quality of Administrators, and quality of teachers matter. This is something the City of Fort Lauderdale could do better than it is doing now, and it would be catching up with other Cities who have an active engagement between City residents and the schools.

VI. Old Business

A. Fort Lauderdale School Reopening Update

Ms. Saunders agreed that focus needs to be on racial equity. She acknowledged that racism is structural and requires policy change. The City of Fort Lauderdale is involved in that and is taking a priority focus. Our City Manager is part of a Task Force to focus on racial equity with Cities and understanding what different policies need to be enacted. This is part of a fuller and broader conversation that needs to happen.

Ms. Lockwood mentioned equity and thought Ms. Gonsler was correct, problems that are not understood cannot be solved. The first step to addressing equity is taking a course and being trained. She referenced the County with something called Groundwater, which is a short three to four-hour deal that she thinks is imperative. Ms. Saunders is working on getting that delivered. She would share that in the Collective Group she runs across K-12 higher ed non-profit serving agencies. They are forming a youth led, student led Racial Equity Advisory Group; the first meeting is in October. Adults are being invited and she will forward the date and time to the Board. Equity in education is the focus.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if Education Advisory Board members would be able to take that course or if it was only for City staff.

Ms. Lockwood stated that CSC offered the course last month and she and Ms. Saunders shared the information. Free slots were offered in the past and it took a while to fill up; however, the slots for the Racial Equity Training filled up within hours. They are currently out of slots, but more will be opening.

Ms. Saunders advised the school reopening is top of mind for everyone and noted the following:

- The Parent and Community Task Force is hosting Parent University Webinars and they are prerecorded for anyone who is unable to watch live. She encouraged everyone to review, as they provide great resources for families supporting their children with e-learning.
- The City of Fort Lauderdale is operating a supervised e-learning program that is supported by the United Way at four different Community Centers across the City

and currently, the capacity is to serve six students.

- The School Board meeting is scheduled for September 22, 2020, where they will have a full Board Workshop to discuss reopening. Superintendent Runcie has recommended October 5, 2020 as a potential start date and athletics for Phase 1 will begin for high school on September 21, 2020.

John Sullivan, with Broward County Schools, indicated that Ms. Brinkworth and the School Board Collective will be having a discussion next Tuesday, which should begin shortly after 10:00 a.m. He believed this would be their ninth meeting on school reopening. Superintendent Runcie is recommending an October 5, 2020 start date and students and families will still have an opportunity to select e-learning if they choose, they are not forced to come back. A survey for families will be available after the next Board meeting where they will be asking each family to select their mode of education, whether it is in person or e-learning.

Mr. Strauss stated there are many work groups going on behind the scenes that are helping to inform and bring up questions, so the Board can have an informed discussion on September 22, 2020. He encouraged everyone interested in this topic to tune into the Board Workshop, which should be posted either late Friday or Monday, which would be an opportunity to look at an extensive Power Point.

Ms. Saunders advised that this Board has had the benefit of hearing from Dr. Posner, Chief Architect of the school reopening design. She had an opportunity to participate in a working group that Mr. Sullivan leads around partnerships for school reopening. Any questions can be shared with Ms. Brinkworth or anyone on the call.

Ms. Brinkworth requested that specific questions be sent to her at HeatherBrinkworth@browardschools.com. All emails will be read, but she does not personally respond to all of them because there are hundreds. She does; however, ask questions specifically raised to make sure community concerns are answered.

Ms. Lockwood mentioned digital design, a point of contact in the School District for students who lack adequate wi-fi, have a broken laptop, or not enough in the home. She questioned who she should contact.

Ms. Lockwood believed they should reach out to their school directly.

Mr. Sullivan suggested contacting their school Principal. The School Board has invested in technology and over 100,000 devices have been distributed during this pandemic. They have also worked with internet providers, so they have access to the e-learning model via internet.

Ms. Saunders advised that the City continues to explore collaboration with Broward County Public Schools to expand Broadband internet access through a partnership

cultivated with Hot Wire. Data has been analyzed in coordination with the Broward County Public Schools team to geographically target areas within the City that are most in need or have challenges accessing reliable internet. That project will continue and will be important even when school reopens, as students need individual pathways of instruction. They are making progress targeting and identifying specific areas that would most benefit. She will continue to share updates with the Board.

B. Joint Use Parks Initiative Update

Ms. Saunders indicated that win-win projects have been identified that will benefit both the school and community. Key projects are being looked at in two phases. Some projects are short-term opportunities, which require minimal fencing. Long-term projects identify standout opportunities for investments through the City's Park Bond. All schools listed for short-term opportunities are also part of the consideration for longer term investment in terms of making enhancements to those sites. The next step will be putting together a memorandum that will go to the School Board and to the City Commission to provide those updates. They will be working to finalize the schematics for the required fencing for short-term opportunities in coordination with Broward County Public Schools, always involving school Principals, and then they will host community forums related to the Bond to get broader input from parents and students. Those schedules will be shared once they are finalized.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that this is saying public property is public property and we should take full advantage of the schools after hours and of the parks when schools are in session. He thinks the Board has created a relationship between the City and schools. The County has zero funds for parks, but the City has resources that can help schools and facilities that fundamentally help students learn; this is not just about physical exercise, it is about the ability to learn more. There is a tremendous synergy between physical activity and academic growth.

Ms. Saunders acknowledged Martha Steinkamp, who has been the liaison for the Parks Advisory Board and thanked her for her leadership and support. Ms. Steinkamp continues to provide updates to the Parks Advisory Board on this initiative.

VII. Open Discussion – None.

VIII. Closing

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

[Minutes transcribed by C. Guifarro, Prototype, Inc.]

DRAFT



**VIRTUAL EDUCATION ADVISORY
BOARD MEETING**

**CITY HALL
8TH FLOOR**

CONFERENCE ROOM

100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE

FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301

THURSDAY, October 15, 2020 6:30-8:30 PM

July 2020 – May 2021

Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	4	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	3	1
Wendy Gonsler	A	2	2
Lisa May	A	2	2
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	4	0
April Jeff	A	2	2
Jennifer Lovell	P	4	0
Dr. Heather Munns	P	4	0
Tina Jaramillo	P	4	0
Colleen Lockwood	P	4	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	P	4	0
Vickie Melus	P	3	1
Christopher Relyea	P	4	0
Lillian Small	A	1	3
Rory Sponsler	A	3	1
Betty Shelley	A	2	2
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	4	0
Yolanda B. Francis	A	2	2
Tomislav Lukic	P	4	0

Staff/Guests

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale

Dr. Lori Canning, Executive Director for Early Learning Language Acquisitions

Joseph Beck, Broward County Public Schools

Lavina Robinson, Principal, North Fork Elementary

Amy Schmidt, Broward County Schools

Jill Young, Broward County Public Schools

Danielle Smith, Principal of Bennett Elementary School

Nadia Clarke

Daniece Williams, Broward County Public Schools

Angel Gomez
Mark Strauss, resident and Cadre Director for Bennett Elementary
Enrique Sanchez, Deputy Director of Parks
Janelle Ceden
Jamie Opperee, Prototype, Inc.

I. Welcome and Pledge of Allegiance – Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair

This meeting was called to order at 6:33 p.m.

II. Attendance and Roll Call, 21 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum

As of this date, September 17, 2020, 12 of the 19 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

III. Chair's Minute

Chair Dr. Zeman announced that the Board will go back to live meetings on November 15, 2020 at City Hall, a room to be determined.

IV. Old Business

- Strategic Initiatives
 - Bennett Elementary School

Chair Dr. Zeman welcomed Principal Danielle Smith.

Ms. Saunders mentioned the importance of continuing to support Bennett Elementary School. She is working closely with the Demographics Team at Broward County Public Schools and coming up with a balance for an approach to help the City prioritize the support needed around the schools. As Ms. Brinkworth indicated at the last meeting, the intent is to create a phased approach where certain buildings could be identified that would benefit from immediate renovation and move those forward for approval from initial investment in the Board for building improvements to Bennett Elementary School and then hold for additional conversation regarding buildings that need more significant rebuilding at a later date.

Mr. Beck, Demographics Department, stated that because there are buildings newer than Bennett Elementary School, they are not covered by the Castaldi that might be eligible for replacement. The consensus is that they need to move forward with renovations on buildings that are not eligible for replacement at this time, so the scope split will come to the School Board, which means Phase 1 would proceed with renovations to newer buildings and it would be determined whether older buildings

would be renovated or replaced at a later time.

Principal Smith advised they are moving forward with the next phase of the Bond Project. Phase 1 is going before the School Board on October 20, 2020 and hopefully a new school will be discussed at another meeting. Things are going well at Bennett Elementary School; some students are back. She thanked the Board for continuing to support their school.

In response to Chair Dr. Zeman, Principal Smith advised that most of the work for Phase 1 funding is roofing and HVAC, which can be done while school is running. This work includes Building 9, which is their main two-story classroom building, the cafeteria, and a few other miscellaneous buildings.

Ms. Lovell questioned if a letter from the Board regarding the recommendation for construction in the Engineering Letter to the City of Fort Lauderdale Commissioners would be helpful.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated there is going to be a vote on the overall scope of Phase 1 in five days. He believed Ms. Lovell was talking about Phase 2 and the issue of new construction. The letter would be from the City Commission to the County mentioning the Engineering report, the need, and community impact.

Ms. Lovell clarified that the letter should originally be from the Education Advisory Board to the City of Fort Lauderdale Commission because this is something the Board feels is important and that way the Commission is aware of what the Board has been discussing.

Motion by Ms. Lovell, seconded by Mr. Lukic, that the Education Advisory Board send a letter to the City of Fort Lauderdale Commission.

In response to Mr. Lukic, Chair Dr. Zeman stated he was looking for an action that the Education Advisory Board moved toward.

Ms. Saunders mentioned mechanisms of a letter versus a Communication to Commission.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that a couple of things could go along within the Strategic Initiative. Communications to the Commission have an impact, they are read, a lot of feedback is received from the Commission, and Ms. Saunders engages them in a conversation that informs them of things they are not likely to know or focus on. One hybrid option is to put together an information package and attach it to a Communication to the Commission saying, "The attached are findings the Board has found by work done". It is likely the Board could do some remarkable work in this regard in terms of representing the Homeowner's Associations, themes discussed

around equity, educational quality, and building momentum where there is already significant growth at Bennett Elementary School. He thought the motion was specifically a Communication to the Commission that this is something the Board finds great value in.

Mr. Lukic questioned how sensitive the creation of a package or letter is to recipients.

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned that since there is a vote on Phase 1 in five days, a Communication could be sent at the end of this meeting. It is unclear exactly when the decision would be made for Phase 2.

Principal Smith indicated that the timeline was correct; Phase 1 is going to the School Board on October 20, 2020 and Phase 2 is when the Project Manager would create different options and a plan, and then they would request to be on the Board Workshop agenda. Most of the Workshop agendas have been related to reopening, so many of these types of plans have been on the backburner.

Ms. Williams advised that some of the Board options are being added to the Workshop agenda, so the first one is in the second week of November. It is anticipated they could get to a Board Workshop within the next couple of weeks, but in order to do so, they need to continue outreach to the community and gathering input, so they have as much data as possible to support information to be shared with the School Board.

Ms. Lovell felt it would be beneficial for Communication from the Education Advisory Board that says members are in support of Phase 1 and Phase 2.

Ms. Coetzee and Vice Chair Ellowitz agreed. Vice Chair Ellowitz stated that as an Advisory Board, they have been part of a larger effort to engage the community in shaping the future and public education in the City of Fort Lauderdale. She recommended there be two parts to the motion; the first would be to express support from the School Board of Broward County for the current allocation of the 2020 Smart Bond dollars for the critical facility renovations at Bennett Elementary School. The second would be to support City staff and that the Education Advisory Board continue collaboration with Bennett Elementary School and the neighboring Fort Lauderdale communities that would benefit in order to capture the residents preference for the long-term facility and program enhancements.

Chair Dr. Zeman requested Vice Chair Ellowitz draft a Communication to the Commission and that Ms. Lovell withdraw her motion, which sounds like what is captured in the recommendation. He noted that the motion and second were withdrawn.

Motion by Vice Chair Ellowitz, seconded by Ms. Jaramillo, to draft a Communication to the Commission. The subject is Bennett Elementary School, "The Education Advisory

Board, as part of a larger effort to engage our community in shaping the future of public education in the City of Fort Lauderdale, recommends that the Mayor and City Commission 1) Express support for the School Board of Broward County's current allocation of 2020 Smart Bond dollars for critical and essential facility renovations at Bennett Elementary School, and 2) Support City staff and the Education Advisory Board's continued collaboration with Bennett Elementary School and its neighboring Fort Lauderdale communities to capture residents preference for long-term facility and program enhancements". In a voice vote, the **motion** passed unanimously. (12-0)

Ms. Lovell suggested adding that the Board works together with Broward County to #1 since Broward County will be voting on this.

Vice Chair Ellowitz suggested, "The School Board in conjunction with Broward County".

Mr. Lukic commented that based on information provided during previous meetings, it seemed that a greater amount of public support was needed to push this through. At the last meeting, Principal Walker from Sunrise Middle School was present to show support, and from his understanding, Bennett Elementary School also has the feeder system into Sunrise Middle with the Cambridge program into Fort Lauderdale High School. He questioned if it was possible to include Education Advisory Board Administration of those two schools within the Communication to show there is a greater support from the local education environment.

Chair Dr. Zeman advised that one of the challenges the Board has is that they want everyone to attend the meetings and feel publicly open in their conversations with the Board, but one way to continue a relationship is not to quote them. If the Education Advisory Board goes to the City Commission and says this is a big deal and they want them to relay something to the School Board, they will know a vote is coming and will either ask the City Manager and Ms. Saunders to write a letter as a deputized representative of the City and call the Superintendent or the School Board members to let them know. It is risky to cite other people's comments in a Communication to the Commission.

Mr. Lukic clarified that he was not suggesting this be included now, but that they should reach out to the Commission and have them give written approval and then for it to be amended. He would not want to take anyone out of context.

In response to Chair Dr. Zeman, Principal Smith thought the way Vice Chair Ellowitz wrote the Communication was very concise and specific.

Vice Chair Ellowitz repeated the Communication to the Commission as follows:

COMMUNICATION TO CITY COMMISSION

Subject: Bennett Elementary School

The Education Advisory Board, as part of a larger effort to engage our community in shaping the future of public education in the City of Fort Lauderdale, recommends that the Mayor and City commission:

- 1) Express support for the School Board of Broward County's current allocation of 2020 SMART bond dollars for critical and essential facility renovations at Bennett Elementary School, and
- 2) Support City staff and the EAB's continued collaboration with Bennett Elementary School and neighboring Fort Lauderdale communities to capture residents' preference for long-term facility and program enhancements.

Dr. Strauss thanked the Education Advisory Board for their support and collaboration; it is noteworthy and greatly appreciated.

Ms. Saunders requested Vice Chair Ellowitz send her the revised language for the Communication to Commission. Upon confirmation, the Commission requests a member of the Education Advisory Board attend and she would also be there and could help to explain. This opens the conversation with the Commission and helps get the direction that they support this as a City Strategic focus. She appreciates being part of a larger effort and anticipates that being a conversation with the Commission once the Communication is read.

- Joint Use Parks Initiative Update

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned the Joint Use combined effort between the Education Advisory Board, the Commission, and Ms. Saunders, plus countless Principals and Broward County staff. He recognized Ms. Saunders as the Education Officer and Chief Change Agency for Joint Use Parks in the City of Fort Lauderdale.

Ms. Saunders provided a brief Power Point Presentation, which included the Strategic Initiative established by the EAB to promote joint community and school use of all publicly funded parks and recreation areas in the City of Fort Lauderdale, the Ten-Minute Walk Campaign in 2018, the renewed Recreational License Agreement in 2018, the Parks Bond Referendum in 2019, the establishment of the Joint Use Parks Working Group, hiring of the Parks Bond Program Manager in 2020, developing and scoring criteria by the Joint Use Working Group, focus on short-term projects, and defining the scope of each of the projects next year. Also included was the \$200 million Parks Bond, proposed projects for Joint Use which were identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan executed in 2016 with two key points; identifying short-term opportunities and long-term opportunities, "Voice of Customer", where they engaged closely with the schools, milestones included in the discovery phase, asset inventory of 15 new sites

selected to explore Joint Use opportunities, and finalization of criteria for each of the 15 sites scored and validated. The intent was to develop a win-win for the school and community, which is bucketed into three main categories: 1) Community need, 2) Feasibility of the school site, and 3) Evaluate the benefit to the school program or design.

In response to Ms. DeNegri, Ms. Saunders advised that funding has been a discussion with the Parks Advisory Board regarding upkeep, maintenance, or additional Park Rangers. In terms of Park Rangers, that is something the Parks Department has worked on to make sure there is coverage to make more Joint Use sites available.

Enrique Sanchez, Deputy Director of Parks, stated there is a lot of support to build, but maintaining it is always a challenge. They try to build in a replacement schedule for all playgrounds, facilities, and equipment, so they are replaced as needed, but they fell so far behind after the recession that this Bond was needed. The City had a ten-year Bond in the 80's and 90's and have not had one since. They hope to build this into their regular budgets.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if this is a quantitative process where there are ten categories, which are given points for an overall score. He mentioned criteria related to aesthetics and curb appeal and questioned if that came from school Principals or the City.

Ms. Saunders indicated many of the Principals have efforts to increase their enrollment and to improve the overall external environment of the school. They saw these external portions of land in front of the school, many of which were in high traffic areas, so making improvements to that section could help with possible interest in the schools. The School Board does not have specific dollars earmarked to maintain parks on school properties, so this is the time to make that investment to make the school more attractive.

Principal Levina Robinson, of North Fork Elementary School, stated that she supported the indicator of curb appeal to increase enrollment. She is one of the underenrolled schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale and making the school visually appealing and attractive can help increase enrollment. Her school is located on Broward Boulevard on the New River and curb appeal would capture passersby.

Ms. Coetzee commented that the irony is that their school is on one of the busiest roads in Broward County and many people do not know all that North Fork has to offer. The New River is a beautiful experience and a great area the community could enjoy with recreational activities, but it cannot be seen from the front or side of the school.

Ms. Saunders advised that the first question was if this was qualitative or quantitative. As a group, they were trying to establish a score, so they did quantify and establish a score for each school. As the process continues, new variables might be identified, or they might be able to refine or expand the scoring methodology. When assigning a score to each school, it aligned with conversations the group was having descriptively and qualitatively. A few schools were found as candidates for Joint Use, so it was found to be helpful.

Principal Robinson indicated that this is a technical endeavor as well because everything they do is around their students to ensure safety is embodied with regulatory laws and ordinances. The aesthetic value and first impression when approaching an institution is supposed to be safe and educational. Some parcels are easy to comply with and others entail a lot of dollars; the end product may not be a friendly and appealing because the school starts to look like an institution full of fences, which is not welcoming. The type of fences used is another aspect discussed by the group and she thought it was a comprehensive approach in valuing the aesthetic theme.

Ms. Saunders continued the Power Point Presentation. Most parks discussed are School Board property; they are closed to the community during the day and open after school hours; sometimes they might only be open on weekends, depending on school activities. In other cases, the park may be a City park that is closed to the community during the day to benefit the school and open after hours. The Joint Use can happen on both City owned and School Board properties and the map displayed a combination of both. Opportunities were shown for Joint Use parks at schools, which was established based on the criteria of need. Scoring identified nine projects that were great candidates to move forward with Joint Use. Areas identified were in the western side of the City of Fort Lauderdale, both in the northwest and southwest sections. Two standout projects mentioned were short-term and long-term. Stephen Foster Elementary School is a beautiful large property nestled within a neighborhood; however, there is no park within a ten-minute walk. What makes it a short-term opportunity is that the fencing needed is straight forward, but they will still have to go through the approval process prior to opening.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned the status of the basketball courts and if they are restricted for school use only. He commented that taxpayer dollars pay for school parks and City parks, but the idea is to do what was presented. This is an example where a school had great facilities, but they were not available after school hours for the community. This opportunity should not have been missed.

Ms. Saunders advised that is currently not a Joint Use park.

Ms. Saunders continued with the Power Point Presentation. She reiterated that North Fork Elementary School is not within a ten-minute walk of a park. It was noted there are a lot of walkability challenges to those parks, which might be due to access to major thoroughfares. Many fencing opportunities have been explored for this large property and it might be a chance to connect to separate pieces of land on either side of the school. There is also a tie-in with different education programming.

Principal Robinson indicated that North Fork Elementary School was a former Marine Science Magnet, so they still have remnants of the Sciences at the school through their STEM program and Robotics Club. Even though they are not a formal magnet, they still have Marine Sciences and other Sciences infused in their curriculum. The river is used as a space for an outdoor classroom or outdoor Exploratorium to enhance the Science curriculum and could perhaps be expanded to community members after school hours, so they could enjoy and learn some facts about nature. She mentioned wildlife in the river and noted there are crabs and different species of fish. It is a great opportunity to engage the community.

Ms. Coetzee mentioned the bridge in that area that was recently done, and she always wondered what it was. There is a great opportunity to partner with the Marine Association and she could make that introduction to see if they have some dollars to do some type of partnership because it is a learning opportunity. The river is beautiful, and the space is unlike any other school; it could be unique for other schools to visit.

Ms. Saunders continued the Power Point Presentation. Key milestones in the beginning of the presentation showed that the City of Fort Lauderdale and Parks and Recreation Master Plan identified key opportunities to the City to be able to make some improvements including where they might be able to expand in their partnership with the School Board in leveraging Joint Use Parks. It was based on that report that the Parks Bond projects were proposed. The Joint Use Working Group has established criteria to look at 15 schools that have not been identified as Joint Use Parks and objectively went about scoring them. Active Joint Use Parks have now become amenities currently available for the City. The initial list proposed showed that five out of six schools scored high according to criteria and another four were identified that seemed to be viable in win-win projects. The next phase would be continuing to work with the community in defining scope and how to get to the implementation phase.

Chair Dr. Zeman requested that Ms. Saunders comment on the \$11 million in the original plan and the list shown on the proposed project slide.

Ms. Saunders advised that dollars have not been earmarked to the group of schools shown on the proposed project slide. The initial Parks Bond list proposed dollar amounts for projects listed and the goal is to stretch and maximize the dollars to have

the largest benefit across the City. When criteria come into play, decisions would have to be made around prioritizing and investing dollars.

Mr. Sanchez indicated that during the Master Planning process for new Joint Use sites, the group helped them identify opportunities at certain schools to increase park amenities for residents of Fort Lauderdale. This was done through a collaborative input process but based on needs they felt needed to be filled, certain parks and amenities were identified and suggested. By visiting schools, talking with Principals, and through a public engagement process, everything will be confirmed. There will be some opportunity to shift some of those dollars to where it makes the most sense.

Chair Dr. Zeman interrupted Mr. Sanchez and stated that he would be invited to next month's meeting to continue this discussion. The specific topic the Board would like to address is the allocation of Bond money to Joint Use Parks. The issue is how to allocate money that was set aside for school parks and what is left off that list should at least be considered at some point with the Bond money or other money the City has for parks. Critical information is missing, and they must be very precise, so the Board knows what they can do. He thought scoring criteria was critical because the Commission is going to look for quantitative numbers that allow projects to be prioritized. He believed some opportunities were not made aware to the original planners and he hoped those would be put back on the table.

Mr. Sanchez went back to the current Joint Use Parks and noted that recommendations were based on things that might need to be renovated or replaced. Regarding actual spending of Parks Bond dollars, even though it is in the Plan, they are not able to take it to the Commission to spend unless it goes before the Parks Advisory Board.

Dr. Chair Zeman wanted to be clear that the original list was created before the concept of Joint Use Parks took off and that money must be spent in a way that makes sense for everyone in Fort Lauderdale. Before decisions are made, he hoped the Parks Advisory Board would ingest the information put together in this effort and come up with the best possible recommendations for the Commission.

Ms. Williams spoke on behalf of Guard Solutions, the Program Management Team for ACOM for Broward Schools and the General Obligation Bond. They are closely aligned with the team working with the City of Fort Lauderdale for the Park Bonds, so they have a unique opportunity to make sure both interests are aligned when it comes to stakeholders for the parks; they also represent stakeholders for Broward County Public Schools. They have been working closely with Ms. Saunders as it relates to schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale and are very attuned to initiatives on the table, so they can make sure all initiatives are aligned for the parks and Broward County Public Schools.

In response to Chair Dr. Zeman, Ms. Williams advised that she had a conversation with Ms. Saunders and Guard Solutions and ACOM, and the new Program Director, are working with the Broward County Public Schools Facilities Team and others with regards to making sure all initiatives for the Smart Program are carried through. They are here to help provide insight on what is happening with Bennett Elementary School and North Fork Elementary School. When the alignment for parks and Joint Use was mentioned, she felt obligated to try to assure the Board that however they need to align with the ACOM Team for Parks and Recreation, that they would make sure Broward County Public Schools is meeting any obligations needed.

Ms. Saunders indicated there is criteria. They have identified a process to prioritize, and the next step is getting concrete around specific projects and understanding the budget around that. A lot of effort has been put into making sure they are all in alignment as to how they prioritize. The next focus moving forward will be critical to the success of the project. A list of the short-term projects was shown, which will be pursued and go through the process. A memo will be forthcoming to the Education Advisory Board to get input and initiate short-term planning, then there will be some community meetings. The next time she reports back she should have a clearer sense as to how the project scope would be designed and what those community meetings would look like.

Ms. Saunders continued the Power Point Presentation. The next slide was related to the Bennett Elementary School Strategic Initiative and to Joint Use and pictures were shown of the Joint Use Park with a play area and basketball courts.

Ms. Saunders made the following announcements:

- The ribbon cutting for Bennett Elementary School will be coming up soon; however, a date has not yet been finalized.
- High School football is returning to Lockhart Park, and the first game will be on October 29, 2020 between Fort Lauderdale High School and Dillard High School. The Commission is doing a small Commemorative Ceremony; there are covid restrictions in terms of event size.

Chair Dr. Zeman suggested putting details together that compare the original plan and these opportunities and that the Board think about scoring criteria. Perhaps the opportunities could be put into one bucket and either the City or the Education Advisory Board could participate in an effort where priorities of those things would be clear to the Commissioners. Residents and voters in the City of Fort Lauderdale entrusted the City to spend \$200 million on things that give the greatest value and he thought Joint Use Parks, which is a new thing, was not considered. There are some amazing values

where a small investment makes a tremendous investment. He would like to talk about projects next month, so the Board could crosswalk projects in the original plan.

- Early Learning Initiative Update

Ms. Saunders introduced Dr. Lori Canning.

Dr. Canning advised that the Early Learning Coalition previously attended an EAB meeting at which time they discussed how many childcare centers were in the City of Fort Lauderdale, how many public schools in Fort Lauderdale had VPK programs, Head Start programs, and Early Head Start programs; they applied for a grant opportunity, but have not received a response. When the grant was written, three schools were included in the City of Fort Lauderdale so they could possibly expand the Early Head Start program, which would be for infants and toddlers. Once the grant is received, they will return to the Education Advisory Board to share and make this a partnership opportunity. Once received, the programs would be added to Westwood Heights and to other Early Head Start schools throughout the District.

In response to Chair Dr. Zeman, Dr. Canning stated there are currently 80 seats and they applied for an additional 60 seats, which would be 16 additional seats at each of the schools, which include infant and toddler classes.

Dr. Canning announced Read for the Record Day on October 29, 2020; the book is Evelyn Del Rey is Moving Away. Thanks to their partnership with Children's Services Council and their Broward Leagues teams and all those partners, 40,000 books will be distributed in the spring, so every four and five-year-child in Broward County will go home with a book. Because volunteers are not allowed in the schools, they are doing Virtual Guest Readers. If anyone would like to be a Guest Reader at a Fort Lauderdale school or any school throughout the County, go to the Hands on Broward website; Ms. Saunders has a flyer. There will also be a virtual book this year and she will send a copy to Ms. Saunders to distribute.

- Fort Lauderdale School Reopening Update

Chair Dr. Zeman skipped the update but commented that schools are open, and students are going for all grades and programs. There was a lot of confusion about the survey and he wished better words than survey would be used in the future because many people felt it was optional, so a lot of students showed up on day one thinking the survey was just a survey rather than the definitive process in which you were supposed announce whether your children were going to attend or not.

V. New Business

- “Fort Lauderdale Cares” Initiative

Ms. Saunders advised they are partnering with Principal Robinson and one thing they are identifying is that there is a big need at three of the Fort Lauderdale elementary schools in supporting the homeless families. Jorg Hruschka, Chief Service Officer, started this “Fort Lauderdale Cares” initiative at the beginning of the covid pandemic and made sure they were able to connect people with the resources needed. They are working with North Fork Elementary School, Walker Elementary School, and Northside Elementary School, and with Heart Coordinators, who are assigned at the schools to support homeless families. They would like to expand the program; currently they are able to serve about 80 families. An event will be hosted every Saturday at a park and the first one will be at the Old Dillard Museum; the idea is to set up as a convenience store, so there are different stations where families can shop for what they need. There are some foundations that might be interested in supporting this effort. Ms. Saunders also spoke with Dr. Canning about bringing in some Early Literacy activities. There are two primary ways to be involved; 1) You can have your own collection drive, which can be seen on the flyer she shared and 2) Volunteer support.

Principal Robinson thought that was a wonderful initiative and believed more than 80 families were probably serviced over the last three weeks because her school alone has 30 homeless families. The families appreciate this and there is a great need.

- North Fork Elementary School

Chair Dr. Zeman apologized for being short on time and stated they would talk more about North Fork Elementary next month.

Principal Robinson appreciated the opportunity to be in attendance.

Dr. Strauss indicated that just as he supervises and supports Bennett Elementary, he does the same with North Fork Elementary. Principal Robinson is in her second year at North Fork and has brought such a beautiful brightness to the school in so many ways; the school is a gem that so many people do not know about. It is a school where people work hard to do good things for the children, especially for the most underprivileged and underserved students. North Fork Elementary School would probably be the poster child for serving less fortunate children.

VI. Approval of Last Meeting Minutes – September 1, 2020

It was requested that Maureen Dinnen and Terry Large be removed from the list of Board members.

Motion by Chris Relyea, seconded by Ruchel Coetzee, to approve the September 1, 2020 minutes as amended. **Motion** passed unanimously. (12-0)

VII. Closing

Chair Dr. Zeman stated there is a lot of opportunity and the Board has consistently picked Strategic Initiatives. Currently, no one is allowed in schools as guests or volunteers. Next month some of the details on projects will be discussed and the Board could think about what they could do related to Joint Use Parks that would be a value add to the City and residents. He noted that the next meeting would be live.

Ms. Lockwood thought attendance in schools was optional and she was not sure about in person Advisory Board meetings, especially in that room. She thought optional virtual attendance should be considered.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated he was not sure there would be a rational solution in November or December. The risk of the pandemic is not over and not having virtual attendance is a way of prohibiting a way of making a difference. He is working on virtual meetings.

In response to Ms. Lockwood, Ms. Saunders advised that Chat and Q & A is a Sunshine issue; therefore, Chat was disabled. She stated there have been many conversations around the City regarding Advisory Boards and in person meetings; this is a directive from the Governor's office. There may end up being some sort of hybrid model, but an understanding is needed as to what is required for voting members and what exemptions are available. Once that information is received, she will share those details with the Board.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:37 p.m.

[Minutes transcribed by C. Guifarro, Prototype, Inc.]