



**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA**  
**Virtual Meeting**  
**Thursday, March 18, 2021 6:30-8:30 p.m.**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>July 2020 – May 2021</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	9	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	8	1
Lisa May	A	4	5
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	9	0
Heather Brinkworth	P	4	0
April Jeff	A	2	7
Dr. Heather Munns	P	7	2
Tina Jaramillo	P	8	1
Colleen Lockwood	P	9	0
Vickie Melus	A	4	5
Christopher Relyea	P	9	0
Lillian Small	A	3	6
Rory Sponsler	P	8	1
Betty Shelley	P	7	2
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	9	0
Yolanda B. Francis	A	4	5
Tomislav Lukic	P	9	0
Dr. Jean-Jacques Rajter	P	4	0
Leah Polhemus Hopkins	P	2	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 respectfully recommends the Commission reappropriate funds in the amount of \$500,000 to close the learning gap created in the wake of the pandemic, which has resulted in roughly 30% of the students failing to make adequate academic progress. The dollars would support a specialized afternoon program as a compliment to the School District’s half day program to address the pronounced learning and childcare needs of our most at risk families in a fun engaging way that builds confidence.

**Motion** by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Vice Chair Ellowitz, to approve the letter and send it to the Commission for review. **Motion** passed unanimously. (14 -0)



CITY OF FORT LAUDERDALE

**DRAFT**  
**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING**  
**CITY HALL**  
**8<sup>TH</sup> FLOOR CONFERENCE ROOM**  
**100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE**  
**FORT LAUDERDALE, FL 33301**  
**THURSDAY, MARCH 18, 2021 6:30-8:30 PM**

<b>Members</b>	<b>Attendance</b>	<b>July 2020 – May 2021</b>	
		<b>Present</b>	<b>Absent</b>
Dr. Allen Zeman, Chair	P	9	0
Ruchel Coetzee	P	8	1
Lisa May	A	4	5
Amy Ellowitz, Vice Chair	P	9	0
Heather Brinkworth	P	4	0
April Jeff	A	2	7
Dr. Heather Munns	P	7	2
Tina Jaramillo	P	8	1
Colleen Lockwood	P	9	0
Sarah Owen DelNegri	A	6	2
Vickie Melus	A	4	5
Christopher Relyea	P	9	0
Lillian Small	A	3	6
Rory Sponsler	P	8	1
Betty Shelley	P	7	2
Dr. Michele Verdi-Knapp	P	9	0
Yolanda B. Francis	A	4	5
Tomislav Lukic	P	9	0
Dr. Jean-Jacques Rajter	P	4	0
Leah Polhemus Hopkins	P	2	0

**Staff/Guests**

Zoie Saunders, Chief Education Officer, City of Fort Lauderdale  
Dr. Mark Strauss, Cadre Director  
Angel Gomez  
John Sullivan, Broward County School Member  
Sarah Leonardi, Broward County School Member  
Danielle Smith, Principal of Bennett Elementary School  
Robert Strickland  
Crysta Parkinson, Prototype, Inc.

- **Welcome**

This meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.

- **Attendance and Roll Call, 20 appointed members; 10 needed for quorum**

As of this date, March 18, 2021, 14 of the 20 appointed members were present, which constituted a quorum.

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

Equity in Education: The Education Advisory Board respectfully recommends the Commission reappropriate funds in the amount of \$500,000 to close the learning gap created in the wake of the pandemic, which has resulted in roughly 30% of the students failing to make adequate academic progress. The dollars would support a specialized afternoon program as a compliment to the School District's half day program to address the pronounced learning and childcare needs of our most at risk families in a fun engaging way that builds confidence.

**Motion** by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Vice Chair Ellowitz, to approve the letter and send it to the Commission for review. **Motion** passed unanimously. (14 -0)

### **Chair's Minute**

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned the time focused on Equity in Education and the significant number of presentations done over the last month. Tonight, they are sharing a public facing presentation made for Board members to share with other organizations. John Sullivan will discuss Stimulus Funding, which is going to put \$600 million in Broward County Public Schools. As a City, they must think about how they complement the efforts Broward County is making with the money, so they could continue to play an increasingly useful role in overall education for 20,000 students who go to school from the City of Fort Lauderdale. The Board will focus on Fort Lauderdale and discuss their big initiative as well as talk about things already in the works. Over the past 30 days, 30 different individuals have been briefed and asked if they think what the Board is doing has meaning and purpose and they all said yes. A broad endorsement has been received from the Child Services Counsel from Broward, the Education Foundation, the Community Foundation of Broward, from Superintendent Runcie, Dr. Valerie Wanza, Chief School Performance & Accountability Officer, Dr. Mark Strauss, the Cadre Director, and Dr. Rosalind Osgood, District 5. The Board is starting to build a Cabinet to advise of this effort, which is filling up. The question is how they get a group of 20 to represent the way they want to lift education from the ground up in a way everyone is involved.

## **NON-AGENDA**

- COVID-19

John Sullivan provided a brief overview of the ESSER Funds as follows:

- A first CARES Act passed on the onset of the pandemic, and Broward's cut was about \$46 million.
- Another Stimulus passed in December; however, those funds have not yet been received from the State. The State has indicated those funds should be received in the coming months after Charter Schools get their share; the amount is about \$200 million.
- The latest Stimulus passed and after Charter Schools receive their funding, the amount would be about \$630 million. They might get access to those funds quicker than the funds passed in December because of how the Bill was written. The Board had a preliminary presentation on the dollar amount, but no discussion on how to utilize the funds.
- From the Federal side of the House, a lot of money will come into the District; however, they are restricted in terms of what it can be used for.
- It was noted that 20% of the \$600 million must be used towards learning loss.
- The Legislative Session has six weeks left and it is anticipated that funding from the State would be impacted negatively due to the Covid-19 crisis. Some of the Stimulus dollars would have to be utilized to make up shortfalls experienced from the State.
- There will be many discussions with the School Board and community to determine how to best utilize those funds to ensure they are dealing with the Covid-19 side of the students and making sure the investment is used appropriately.

In response to Chair Dr. Zeman, Mr. Sullivan advised the total for the three Stimulus packages coming to Broward County is about \$876 million, which must be utilized by 2023. Sometimes the Federal Government extends those types of funding by a year, so there might be an extension until 2024.

Chair Dr. Zeman opened a quick discussion about learning loss and noted that the final Bill requires everyone to spend 20% of the money on learning loss. He questioned members and guests about their thoughts regarding learning loss and what the overarching affect has been over the past 12 months.

Vice Chair Ellowitz indicated that she spoke with a teacher who said he was completely overcome mentally and emotionally. He said when looking at children on the screen, even if they are present, they are vacant; there is no connection. She noted there is so much apathy, but the children are not retaining.

Mr. Sponsler stated that it has been a challenge to maintain enthusiasm in the classroom like he would have if they were together in person, but interaction is limited. He concurred with everything Vice Chair Ellowitz said; teachers are experiencing it with the students. Some things the Board is hearing at the high school level is that the State is holding teachers accountable for results on the exams. There has been nothing from the Secretary of Education or Governor that is going to give teachers any leeway. The last announcement he heard was that students are expected to take end of course exams in person and currently, students are struggling. He mentioned his personal experience with the Cambridge Program and noted Cambridge is not offering any assistance during the Covid-19 crisis. He is advising his students who are taking AP classes to come to the school to take the exam in person because if they take it at home online, the College Board Test Security System does not allow them to skip a question and come back to it. If a question is skipped on the exam, it is a wrong answer; students do not have any choices. If students come in person for the AP History test, they have choices on the exam and get to write essays about what they have learned, but if they take the online version, the College Board dictates, and they have no choices to demonstrate what they learned. Students had to make decisions today as to what type of exam they are going to take; either online or in person with pen and paper and it stressed them out.

Dr. Rajter has two children at home as well as employees in his practice whose children have also remained home. His son has flourished in the virtual environment and has made more progress than expected. Some of his employees have had different experiences where their children were unable to focus and drifted without learning. Some children do well in distance learning while others do not. He believed mandating everyone to come into school at this time may be problematic. He is not going to rush to send his son to school for the upcoming FSA testing. In his school there has been student to student communication of Covid-19, and he does not want to take those types of risks.

Dr. Strauss commented that learning loss is being seen across the District. One of the measures learning lost is being used for is student identification for Summer School for students who are not meeting adequate academic progress, which is separate from FSA or standardized testing; it is about students who are not passing courses. There are close to 60,000 students in the District who are not meeting the definition of adequate academic progress and it is not a Broward County problem, it is a worldwide problem. The Broward County School Board is looking at Summer School, which is designed around reconnecting students into the educational system in a meaningful way to make up some of the loss. They also must look at extended time and opportunities. He is working with Principals on deliberate teacher/student placement for school next year where they look at teacher strengths and personalities and attempt as best as possible to match students with the best teacher. Learning loss is real; it is not every student. Not every child is suffering, but many are and unfortunately, as they talk about Equity, it is a disproportionate problem in that it is affecting poor and minority students even worse than other students.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated that he understood Mr. Sullivan's point that numbers are not equitably spread, but he also read that Summer School is nice to have, but they must think of it as a system or accept the fact that many students have missed a significant amount of school.

Ms. Lockwood advised she has been referencing a report from McKinsey & Company issued in December 2020, titled Covid-19 and Learning Loss, that points to some of the comments Mr. Sullivan made. They project scenarios forward for overcoming high hurdles and strategies and two points made were in addition to proper student matching with teachers so there is expanded learning time, part being Summer School, and intense tutoring, particularly in math. In addition to the high FRL impacts is access to devices and the internet. If they are not overcoming the digital divide and truly eliminating it, students will not be able to participate in a remote way. It was estimated, on average, there was 12 to 16 months of learning loss for students of color through 2020, six months for white students, and on average, ten months. She is optimistic, but this is not near term, it is long-term; this is a future economic impact into the work force.

Mr. Relyea understands there is a permanent learning loss, and it is going to leave a scar. He mentioned the focus on Broward County and Fort Lauderdale but wanted everyone to keep in mind that their loss was relative to everyone else's loss. It was noted that the graduating classes of 2020, 2021, and maybe 2022, are going to be affected relative to the other graduating classes, but the hit is reasonably universal. He believes the learning loss is less when it is relative to everyone else; he thought it was more of a mental health focus. He also thought curriculums could largely be replaced by artificial intelligence.

Ms. Brinkworth concurred with Mr. Relyea. She is fortunate to be in a house with children who have done well academically as far as the curriculum goes, but mental health wise, it is not pretty, and she worries greatly about students who do not have security or someone to comfort them when they are suffering. A lot of effort needs to be focused as students transition back to school. She questioned what it would be like for students who are thriving in the online atmosphere when they transition back to school and how it would affect them and their mental health. Her daughter is thriving online and thinks there is a lot of waste of time during in-person school. The Board needs to discuss the transition for students who love being home and online.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that Superintendent Runcie recently described learning loss and missing students during a meeting as an entire zone being taken out of the budget for next year; 8,000 students and all the equivalent FDE dollars that come with them are gone and have not shown up in 12 months.

Mr. Lukic stated that he spoke to several teachers and asked them what their experience has been through the pandemic. The one common thread through their responses and collective experiences from teaching different subjects and a different amount of time in the school system was the lack of participation within their classrooms on basic

assignments. His neighbor said she gave an assignment of fill in the blank worksheets to a class of 30 and only three students filled it in. He is a student too and knows it is difficult to concentrate at home, but he thinks students have a shift in culture. What was particularly troubling to him was that one of the teachers texts his students on a regular basis to tell them if they are not in class they cannot graduate and one reply was at this point, they expect their School Administrators or higher education leaders to essentially forgive them for their lack of participation or performance. He thinks this problem is cultural as well as performance wise.

Danielle Smith, Principal of Bennett Elementary School, has seen a loss and everything said is on target as far as social and emotional needs of the students, the divide amongst children who are at home by themselves, and children who have support. Teachers are expected to give the FSA to students, and the kids need to come into school to take the test. Having those students at school after being home all year would be like sending them to a 5k when they have never done a lap around the track. They need to build their stamina as far as being in school, wearing a mask, and practicing social distancing, because that is going to be a hard transition. In looking at the academic piece as far as students and where they are with focusing on learning and teachers focusing on teaching, it is believed students need a years' worth of growth to get a learning gain.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that regardless of people's opinions about the FSA, there will be some data and once results are seen they may get an explicit answer to the question as to how big of a learning loss there is. It might reinforce the McKinsey Study and the averages Ms. Lockwood mentioned and it may call for further action.

Dr. Verdi Knapp questioned if there was a final word on the FSA. She noted there are conflicting stories going around the schools and teachers are telling students there is an opt out option and there is not an opt out option; students are being encouraged not to participate.

Mr. Sullivan advised that Tallahassee indicated they are expecting teachers to administer the FSA and Statewide Assessments because the window has been extended to do so; they do not have any intention of waiving that requirement. As a District, they want the data, but do not want the tests to be utilized to penalize students or teachers. Two Bills are currently moving, one in the Senate and one in the House, that are identical by Broward Delegation Members, #886 and #359. The Bills would suspend all penalties associated with accountability and they think it is appropriate not to use the accountability system for those purposes, but to inform them of interventions and additional support students will need.

Ms. Leonardi clarified and emphasized there was no opt out procedure allowed by the State of Florida.

Mr. Sullivan indicated if a school does not get 95%, they would get an “I”, which would impact funding. The Secretary of Education indicated if States applied for a waiver, they would grant them, but as of this point, our State has not granted a waiver. They have been working with different stakeholders to get the State Education Commissioner to apply for the waiver and he stated that he may, but currently there is no opt out and it could affect funding if schools do not achieve that 95% participation rate.

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked everyone for their information.

- **Equity in Education**

Chair Dr. Zeman and Ms. Saunders presented a brief slide presentation about Equity in Education, which Ms. Saunders sent to Board members. The slides were about Fort Lauderdale, the poverty divide, grades and poverty levels, ways in which the Commission is thinking about this, the approach, making sure there is equitable resource distribution, taking an anti-racist approach and understanding structural change required to generate system change and overcoming systemic racism. It was noted that the Children’s Services Counsel is offering specialized training for Board members on May 6, 2021, and that information will be shared and discussed at the May Education Advisory Board meeting.

Slides were also about a solid foundation; the Board has a unique opportunity to build upon work through the Broward Data Collaborative, which is going to integrate data through multiple child-serving organizations, looking at a way to measure results and drive impactful programming. Slides continued with expanding coalition, education, Stimulus dollars, a Summer Academic Program for 50,000 to 60,000 students in Broward County, an afternoon Summer Camp Program by the City, which would have some intentional academic interventions as well. The closing slide was about what is next. Chair Dr. Zeman spoke with John King, former Secretary of Education, who had many other Cities and organization working on Equity in Education, which he shared with the Board and they are being incorporated. The Board was asked to take these slides between March 18, 2021 and the April meeting, and talk to people to get their input. The Board wants to catalog what members hear and what the reactions were overall.

Ms. Coetzee, Ms. Jaramillo, Ms. Hopkins, and Mr. Sponsler talked about people, Associations, and organizations they would approach.

Chair Dr. Zeman indicated that Homeowners’ Associations are a great option. One thing that is not done enough is talking to students. He is going to talk to his seven kids and ask what they think about this, what it would do for their education, and what it would have done for them when they were K-12 in terms of lifting and eliminating the gap between potential and realized achievement. He will send emails to Ms. Saunders for the groups he briefs so it could be captured. He encouraged Mr. Relyea and Mr. Sponsler to mention this to their students if possible and stated that Mr. Lukic could share with



teachers he knows to get their reactions and see what they think about this and if it has meaning and purpose.

In response to Mr. Sponsler, Chair Dr. Zeman advised that his Homeowners' Association is full of Fort Lauderdale residents. The intent is if someone resides in Fort Lauderdale or attends a Fort Lauderdale school, they are in the basket and part of the students they are supposed to advocate for. It is the Commission's intent to follow students who attend schools outside of Fort Lauderdale and any outside residents who attend in Fort Lauderdale. They are interested in the reaction to doing this.

Ms. Saunders suggested members who talk to organizations that collect data around schools be intentional in asking what data they collect and what would be useful. It should add value and reorient the work in ways that are going to allow an individual teacher or organization to be more impactful in building productive tools in the education system. It is important to identify champions.

Mr. Relyea emphasized that none of his students go to school in Fort Lauderdale and most do not live in Fort Lauderdale. He would show his 250 students and the first question would be, "What do you want me to do?" He questioned if the students could be given two or three examples.

Chair Dr. Zeman stated that most of the work Mr. Relyea's potential staff members want to do is place-based, which requires deep knowledge about maps. He thought giving the students 1/250 of the map of Fort Lauderdale and saying, "Here are four blocks, please tell us everything you can. Here are five things we want, and you can come back with five other things you think". Young minds think of things related to education that old minds do not. To spread Fort Lauderdale in 2 x 2 blocks and hand one to each student and ask them to come up with anything they think is relevant to education. Data points is an interesting exercise that would be a huge value. He asked Mr. Relyea if he would accept the challenge.

Mr. Relyea accepted the challenge and mentioned his 250 students and the Key Club; he stated they could drive an army.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that people are asking about a budget and others are asking what kind of organization needs to be organized to follow the model of a Harlem Children's Zone or some of the promised neighborhoods. This presentation was the first public-facing presentation to gather useful feedback. It is critical to know about the data, what they think, and to know whether they would help. He did not know what the Board was going to do yet, but people are needed.

## **NON-AGENDA**

### **SUMMER ENRICHMENT PROGRAM**

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned how the Board was going to plan the City's involvement in the next two or three months. Some policy decisions need to be considered about how Fort Lauderdale participates. The Board wants to be complimentary to the County's programs that are half days, four days a week, but they need to think about camps. The question is if it makes sense for the City to offer recreational camps at the same time Broward County is offering an encouraging academic remediation. Perhaps this is something the Parks and Recreation Department should think about. This is something the Board needs to think about as their role as advisors to the City Commission.

Ms. Saunders mentioned the learning loss and stated that close to 7,000 students were identified for the Broward County Public Schools Academic Summer School, which equates to about 30%, so the need is great. The County's program is a half day, morning Academic Enrichment Program, and the Board is requesting the Commission reappropriate \$500,000 of CDBG dollars to focus on summer enrichment. The initial project design was developed with the assumption that not all students would qualify for the District program, so that model is to provide academic enrichment to the traditional whole day programs and create a specialized afternoon program in coordination with Broward County Public Schools. The funds would support outfitting community centers with Broadband internet, staffing and instructional staff members to provide academic enrichment, along with partnerships with many organizations across the community that could provide great hands-on project-based learning. There are three sources of funding: Broward County Public Schools, Children's Services Counsel, and the City of Fort Lauderdale. Many families need a full day option; therefore, this is an opportunity to have an extension of learning. She continued to talk about the design for the afterschool program, utilization of school spaces to operate the afternoon program, the partnership with Broward County Public Schools, the review of the request for reappropriation by the Commission on April 6, 2021, collaboration with multiple District divisions along with Children's Services Counsel, additional dollars for fall to support academic enrichment and Broadband internet for the community and workshops for college and career readiness for seniors and juniors. It was noted that Dr. Verdi Knapp shared resources as it relates to the Wise Mind Project and being able to infuse mindfulness into the program. Many resources could be brought together for this program to create an enriching experience.

Chair Dr. Zeman questioned if Ms. Saunders could talk a little about what the Education Advisory Board could do to support.

Ms. Saunders stated the Board could build relationships with caring adults. They could think about a volunteer aspect of the program where they could establish mentors and tutors while being mindful of Covid-19 and thinking about how many people could be part of one classroom. This is about building positive relations and supporting the whole child.

She questioned the Board's thoughts on that type of program element. They have talked with Florida University about recruiting interns as well.

Dr. Strauss commented that Ms. Saunders did an excellent job of summarizing. There is a lot of ongoing work with many moving parts and different players. He liked seeing everyone with a common goal, willing to come together from different backgrounds and organizations, wanting to do what is right.

In response to Dr. Verdi Knapp, Ms. Saunders believed space was covered, but there were some construction schedules that might present some challenges; at some point that might be part of the equation. If any organizations were known that could offer space, that could be discussed.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented on the issue of the Commission deciding whether to draw down a Community Development Block Grant in the amount of another \$500,000 to support additional space in Summer Camps and to hire a vendor and perhaps certified teachers and he thought this was something the Board should discuss to help overcome the learning loss. Ms. Saunders will continue planning with the County; there are many Principals involved and many details about how SMART Bonds are supposed to be fixing things during different weeks of the year. There is an infinite number of logistics to work out for such a large program and at the same time they need scale. They cannot get to the 7,000 or so Fort Lauderdale students recommended to this program if they do not figure out how to spend a little more money. The County is spending a lot of money and they are making the biggest investment. There is a capacity issue; if a little money is spent through the City, the \$500,000, they would be able to attract more people to the academics during the half day and would be able to give students more academics during their camp time in the afternoon. He questioned the Board's thoughts on sending a Communication to the Commission in support of the \$500,000 decision.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked if anyone was in opposition; there was no reply.

**Motion** by Mr. Relyea to have Vice Chair Ellowitz write a letter demanding the Commission use the funds for this purpose. There was no second to this motion.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked Vice Chair Ellowitz to draft a few sentences asking for that. He thought the intent was to say there is significant Stimulus monies available to the County and they are spending it to overcome the learning loss that has been well documented for Fort Lauderdale students. The Board would recommend that the Commission view favorably any requests to draw down CDBG grants in the amount of \$500,000 and anything else she would like to add. He also would add that the Board is recommending the Commission dedicate \$500,000 for this effort.

Ms. Saunders indicated that the Commission might have questions as to why there is a need for additional resources. They might need to clarify School District funds that would provide a half-day, which would be an extension.

Vice Chair Ellowitz read the draft as follows:

The Education Advisory Board was informed there are significant funds as a result of Federal Stimulus Funding of \$876 million. In light of the Board's efforts to implement Equity in Education, the Education Advisory Board respectfully recommends the Commission reappropriate the funds in the amount of \$500,000 to close the learning gap created in the wake of the pandemic, which has resulted in roughly 30% of the students failing to make adequate academic progress. The dollars would support a specialized afternoon program as a compliment to the School District's half day program to address the pronounced learning and childcare needs of our most at risk families in a fun engaging way that builds confidence.

**Motion** by Mr. Relyea, seconded by Vice Chair Ellowitz, to approve the letter and send it to the Commission for review. **Motion** passed unanimously. (14 -0)

- **Old Business**
  - Strategic Initiatives: Updates
    - Bennett Elementary School

Principal Smith advised that she had a visit with Ms. Leonardi at which time they went through some things that are needed at the school as far as repairs. They are continuing to work and having the Board's support is key and essential; she thanked the members for their support. Everyone is looking forward to Spring Break to rest and then they will be back on track to finish strong in the fourth quarter.

Ms. Saunders stated there should be an update at the next meeting as to when this item is going to the School Board; tentatively, it looks like it would be in the summer. With that in mind, they are doing some backwards planning to make sure they are getting the right level of community input to bring to the School Board. They will be engaging with individuals they previously met within the community. If there are other parents who live in the zone or used to live in the zone who would like to share their input, please forward their information so she could make sure the Board was aware of smaller focus groups.

Chair Dr. Zeman thanked Principal Smith for 11 months of attendance.

- Joint Use Parks

Ms. Saunders provided a brief update regarding Joint Use Parks. They are moving forward with opening parks under the short-term opportunities and there will be an update regarding the timing. She has been working with the District to review prerequisite fencing required to open parks to the community. They are having conversations to finalize scope as it relates to the Parks Bond.

- Early Learning Initiative

Ms. Saunders reported that a lot of focus on Early Learning Initiatives is built into the full-service Community Schools Grant and additional resources that come with the grant. They are waiting on the award for summer and a copy would be available in June.

- **New Business**

- SMART Bond Updates

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned Stranahan High School is a school with many Fort Lauderdale residents, and they are working hard to make dramatic improvements whether it is programming, attendance, athletics, extra-curricular activities, parent involvement, and sponsor involvement. Stranahan High School has a strong leadership team, and they have a lot of County support trying to grow the school back to the same level it was in the past. The school is getting ready for construction of a new cafeteria and some Fort Lauderdale residents, parents, neighbors, and alums are gathering steam about decisions that have been made limiting the construction design. He asked that everyone pay attention and if possible, read the Sun Sentinel, attend neighborhood meetings, and call anyone they know who cares about that topic without discussing anything the Board might vote on during a meeting. This will be an interesting story because of decisions that were made limiting improvements; even though building engineers said the building needed to be condemned and rebuilt, in the end they chose to do a remodel; similar to what was done with Principal Smith at Bennett Elementary School. Stranahan High School has a legitimate issue in terms of the way it has been treated with SMART Bond money.

Ms. Saunders stated she would provide a high-level update and follow up prior to the next meeting to provide more background on the Stranahan project so the Board could engage in a fuller discussion during the April meeting. The project was organized in two phases; the cafeteria was the second phase, and the first phase is about 90% complete. Some pictures have appeared in community meetings that point to a need for continued focus and improvements and the second issue was related to the cafeteria. There has been a lot of feedback from the community, which triggered the School District to rethink the design for the cafeteria. It is important that the Education Advisory Board be aligned with the community, understanding the options and what would be in the best interest of the

community. She wants to be sure the Board can spend more time so she could provide additional background and lay out available options for the School Board to review. They are in a situation where they are looking at a cafeteria building designed for an elementary school and the question is if the proposed renovations would bring it up to the standard of a high school cafeteria. There is also an issue with a connection to restrooms; the restroom design would be outside of the cafeteria. The District has made a commitment to get to the 790 capacity, so that is positive. The community is asking for a cost analysis to make sure dollars are invested in a way that would have a maximized return for the campus.

Chair Dr. Zeman advised this is an issue the Board must learn more about; they must think through the decisions made and be thoughtful about how they advocate for all students in Fort Lauderdale and find a way to be direct and balanced in what they do. He requested Ms. Saunders gather additional information in the next month, so they could move forward.

**Approval of Last Meeting Minutes:** February 18, 2021

Ms. Jaramillo thought she was marked absent and noted that she was about 15 minutes late.

Ms. Saunders referenced Page 3. The first sentence under Children's Cabinet should read as, "**focus on the needs**", not "the best needs". Instead of "the children", change to "**all children**". Replace "Every Design Initiative" with "**By All Means Initiative**".

In Page 3, last paragraph; Strike "they think about" and add, "**we have an opportunity to design framework**".

**Motion** by Mr. Lukic, seconded by Ms. Coetzee, to approve the February 18, 2021 minutes as amended. **Motion** passed unanimously. (14-0)

- **Comments**

Mr. Relyea stated that SB86 is on his radar. The Senate Bill made it through the Committee on the House side regarding Bright Futures. As a parent of a child in the Cambridge Program and another child who is about to be in the Cambridge Program, he is uncomfortable about someone determining this degree is worth funding and that degree is not worth funding. He would like to hear an official position and would be remiss as a member of this Board not to mention to this.

Chair Dr. Zeman asked about the difference in the Bright Futures Program being considered and approved by the House side.

Mr. Relyea stated to his knowledge, if the Bill passes, it would not fully fund students who would have otherwise qualified for full funding for Bright Futures if they pursue degree paths in Fine Arts specifically, and then also a reduction of financing based upon kids who have successfully completed AP and ACE courses to the extent funding for their scholarship may be reduced as a matter of taking those classes.

Mr. Lukic advised that the version he read specified they would fully cover students who are solely pursuing either the Career Paths that are predetermined or needed in the State economy or following a Science or STEM Engineering Pathway.

Ms. Jaramillo mentioned Fine Arts and Humanities degrees would not be funded.

Mr. Lukic read a commentary that more and more students pursuing graduate degrees have degrees in Humanities and that number is going up. The argument is that students who study Philosophy in the Undergraduate Program used to go to Law School or Medicine would then have an additional significant roadblock to that pathway, which are important jobs within the economy.

Chair Dr. Zeman commented that if Mr. Relyea wanted to do more in terms of thinking about this, he could issue a paper for April to generate ahead of time and send it to Ms. Saunders with a little research. Perhaps the Board could put together a Communication for the Commission that suggests they ask Legislative Affairs representatives to indicate that one of the large Cities in Fort Lauderdale views education for education, not just for education to get specific jobs.

Ms. Brinkworth mentioned that John Sullivan texted her earlier and said he thought SB86 was dead. She suggested Ms. Saunders reach out to Mr. Sullivan to see whether there is any action the Board needs to take prior to doing a lot of work between now and the next meeting.

Chair Dr. Zeman thought it was always a good idea to reach out to Mr. Sullivan. The Board will continue to include Ms. Brinkworth and Mr. Sullivan in these meetings as a way of getting the latest information and perhaps the top five things going on in the Legislature related to education.

Ms. Saunders stated she would be happy to schedule a meeting with Mr. Sullivan and Mr. Relyea.

Ms. Brinkworth thought one thing the Board might encourage Mr. Sullivan to do is advise as to what action items the District has put out, because they have a Legislative page for citizens to act and to let Legislators know their opinions on Bills that would impact education.

- **Closing**

Chair Dr. Zeman mentioned the Board is transitioning a little; they are thinking about what really matters and supporting the Commission by putting it into play on Equity in Education as well as other initiatives that are out and realizing real gains they have been sponsors of in the past. This shift is more active; it is more time and commitment and he thought it offered tremendous rewards. This is going to take a lot of time and energy and he commended the Board for their action and recognized the shift they are taking from being a purely passive Board meeting a few hours a month to reporting on what they do between meetings. He is excited to hear Ms. Saunders' report in terms of who was briefed and what their reactions were, so those things can be incorporated going forward in this initiative.

Hearing no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:34 p.m.

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