



Approved Feb 2007

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD

Meeting Minutes for October 19, 2006 - 6:30 P.M.

Breakthrough Fort Lauderdale

Pine Crest School

1501 Northeast 62nd Street

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33334

<u>Members</u>	<u>Attendance</u>	<u>Cumulative Attendance</u>	
		<u>Present</u>	<u>Absent</u>
Michael Bacigalupi	P	4	2
Aaron Bass	P	3	2
Jacquelyn Bradley	P	4	0
Pam Brown, Co-Chair	P	5	1
Brian Dassler, Co-Chair	P	4	2
Jacque Gross	A	3	1
Paula Haliczer	A	2	2
Alice Hendrickson	A	0	6
Elizabeth Hays	P	2	0
Pearl Maloney	P	4	2
Leola McCoy	A	3	1
Janice Olson	P	4	2*
Frances Payne	A	0	6
Elaine Schulze	A	4	2
Niara Sudarkasa	P	5	1
Judy Zinn	A	3	3
Total Members Present	9		
<i>Current Membership: 16 Quorum: 9</i>			

Lu Deaner, Chair Emeritus P
Leslie G. Carhart, Staff Liaison P
Charles Webster, BCPS Liaison P
Betty Shelly, CFLCA Liaison A
Jamie Opperlee, Recording Secretary

Guests

Roderick Parker, Sunland Park Elementary
Terri Murru, volunteer
June Coffman, Bayview School

* Attendance error corrected at Ms. Olson's request.

EAB October 2006 Agenda

A. Opening - B. Dassler and P. Brown

- Attendance and Sign-in
- Announcements
- Approve September minutes & October agenda
- Introduce guests

B. New Business

1. **Panel/Open Discussion – Topic: Parental Involvement**
2. **Continuing Discussion on EAB 2006-07 Objectives –**
3. **Follow-up Discussion on City Clerk Advisory Board Training (September 21)**

C. Old/Ongoing Business

1. Chair Reports – Brown/Dassler

- a. Selected topic/issues
- b. Policies relating to Presentations/Speakers
- c. Education Summit – Date Change to January 31st 2007, Planning and Preparations

2. Other Reports/Updates/Discussion -

- a. City Commission/Manager Follow-up: None
- b. Liaison Reports & Updates:
 - 1) Staff Liaison Report – Ms. Carhart
 - 2) Broward County School District Reports – Mr. Webster
 - 3) Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations Report – Ms. Shelly

3. Board Elections

D. Other Matters – (TBD) - For the Good of the Board

E. Next Meeting and Closing

- Agenda Items: TBD:
- Location: Fort Lauderdale City Hall
- Date: November 16th
- Adjournment

Opening – Co-chairs Pam Brown & Brian Dassler - Attendance and Sign-in

The meeting was called to order by Co-Chairs Dassler and Brown at 6:35. The attendance sign-in sheet was passed around.

Announcements/Introduce Guests

Board members and guests introduced themselves in turn. Guests included: Mr. Roderick Parker, teacher at Sunland Park Elementary; Ms. Jane Coffman, principal of Bayview Elementary; Terri Murru, Administrator of the Community Foundations of Florida.

Approve September 2006 Minutes, October 2006 Agenda

[This item was taken out of order]

Motion made by Dr. Hays, seconded by Ms. Olson, to approve the minutes of the September 2006 meeting. Board unanimously approved.

Motion made by Dr. Sudarkasa, seconded by Mr. Bacigalupi, to approve the agenda of the October meeting. Board unanimously approved.

New Business

Panel/Open Discussion – Topic: Parental Involvement

Co-Chair Dassler explained that the Board had identified encouraging parental involvement as one of their priorities for this year, and had decided to “go to the experts” for their input on this issue. The Board hoped to develop a set of “best practices” to share with the City Commission, Staff, citizens and schools. Co-Chair Dassler explained that Board members had submitted questions for the panel in anticipation of the meeting.

The first topic the Board had asked about was an example of how one family or student had benefited from parental involvement. Ms. Murru described her efforts to become involved in North Fork Elementary as a volunteer, and to facilitate the school’s SAC [School Advisory Committee] and PTA. Ms. Murru said they had arranged a meeting with parents, providing food and childcare, and asked what parents wanted and needed to help them help their children with schoolwork. Ms. Murru said there were three components to the “giveback” they had with the parents: bring the child to school clothed, fed and safe. The parents should then follow up with any parent/teacher activities.

Mr. Murru said there was one family who had been unable to afford to buy books and had traded vouchers, which were later auctioned off, for the books. Ms. Murru said it was important for the family to have helped other kids while helping themselves.

Mr. Parker said that Sunland Park had encouraged families to attend the school’s open house by serving food and running raffles. Mr. Parker said they had informed the parents that the school was there to help make the kids better people, not just to teach them. They had also distributed day care vouchers to parents. Principal Dawkins had instituted a program whereby parents would receive a computer in return for participating in a school volunteering course.

Mr. Bass said they had taken a different tack, and tried to instill in parents the idea that their children were an investment, and it was the parents' responsibility to be involved. They worked with parents to make them more empowered to be actively involved in their children's education. Mr. Bass mentioned one family whose child had been removed from an accelerated class and put in a basic class. Breakthrough had worked with the parent to show her how to approach the principal to discuss the rules for removing the child from the accelerated class. The day after the parent spoke with the school, the child was returned to the accelerated class.

Ms. Coffman remarked that contrary to the image most people had of Bayview, families of Bayview students had the same array of problems as students at other schools. Ms. Coffman explained that two years ago, as a result of Adequate Yearly Progress review, Bayview had 26 students bussed in from other areas. She mentioned one particular child who had been assessed for special needs, who had "blossomed." Ms. Coffman explained that this boy's mother was very comfortable coming into school when an issue arose concerning her child.

The next topic Co-Chair Dassler asked about was how to engage extended family members and what roles they could play in student success. Ms. Coffman said that volunteers were "invaluable, whoever they are." She felt schools needed to facilitate the volunteers' involvement and make them feel welcome at the school. Ms. Coffman said they assessed every child to determine what his or her needs were, and they had people who trained the volunteers in specific skills to work with specific groups of kids, so they had a particular purpose.

Mr. Bass agreed with Ms. Coffman about volunteers, and added that showcasing the children was very important and encouraged family member involvement. Breakthrough encouraged extended family members to help check homework as well.

Mr. Perkins had noticed that many parents seemed fearful of the school. They therefore phoned parents to make them aware of special events and requested their help. Mr. Perkins said they were receiving more volunteer applications from more family members every day.

Ms. Murru felt that technology had made it easier to engage parents on a more regular basis. She agreed with Mr. Perkins about phoning parents, and added that it had special impact when the principal made the call. Co-Chair Dassler asked Ms. Murru if there were special challenges to engaging grandparents, and how these could be overcome. Ms. Murru remarked that it was important not to pry, especially in regard to estranged extended family members, and to make them feel welcome as well.

Co-Chair Dassler asked about strategies for engaging hard-to-reach families. Mr. Bass said that ownership was a huge part of getting family members involved. They had broken up the parents' association into three committees: Family Empowerment, which provided families with information about job opportunities and created a "yellow pages" of businesses owned by school parents; Events, which held a Family Night once per month with various activities and helped to create informal networks for parents; High School Option, providing specific information on individual high schools to help parents interact with and ultimately select high schools.

Ms. Coffman agreed that the more parental involvement, the more successful the child would be. They had tailored volunteer activities to suit the abilities and availability of parents. Mr. Parker felt that parents were the key to engaging other parents. If one family had a positive experience, they would communicate this in the community and other parents would follow.

Co-Chair Dassler asked how they brought parents in. Ms. Coffman explained that Bayview had activities such as: technology mornings, where parents came in to learn technology in the computer lab; FCAT writing night; ESE night; cultural week and book fairs. Ms. Murru said that in response to requests from parents, they had provided study tools parents could check out and use at home, to encourage the kids to read, write and do math every night. Mr. Bass said they held meetings with parents to explain what they needed to be doing and they had a program director who consulted with individual parents as well.

Ms. Coffman informed the Board that when she was at Markham Elementary, they had an "extremely successful" night school for parents program that included childcare and transportation.

Co-Chair Dassler thanked guests for their attendance and their input.

Continuing Discussion on EAB 2006-07 Objectives

Co-Chair Dassler asked the Board's input on ways to implement some of the suggestions made this evening. Dr. Hays wanted to involve the City in developing a volunteer program in which parents could participate on weekends; she felt they must acknowledge that many parents could not be involved during the week because of their work schedules.

Mr. Bacigalupi wondered if they could link parental involvement groups to create a larger network. Mr. Bacigalupi felt there had been changes in society that had resulted in the reduction of people's participation in many organizations. He explained that he was a Lions Club member, and they had successfully improved their membership by engaging in more service projects. He felt this strategy could help link the parent organizations.

Mr. Bass agreed with Mr. Bacigalupi's idea, and felt it would help build a social network for parents too. Ms. Murru felt this would be very valuable to her school's parents, since the school had not been a member of the County or national PTA for years because they lacked sufficient members to pay the dues. This would allow these parents to be a part of the City's learning community.

Co-Chair Brown reported that School Board member Dinnen had invited Mr. Dassler, Ms. Carhart and herself to meet and discuss creating a forum to give Fort Lauderdale schools their own identity. Ms. Carhart remarked on the growing phenomenon of a decline in people's membership in organized groups, and felt this was affecting school participation as well. She felt that sometimes, simply creating an occasion and extending an invitation could break this cycle.

Ms. Deaner remarked that each school's population was unique and this could present a problem in uniting them into a larger group. She agreed that showcasing the children and offering food encouraged parents to come together. Ms. Deaner thought they could develop simple ways to invite parents in, such as a show of student art, or a youth gardening show. For the schools the Board had "adopted" with an impoverished population, Ms. Deaner felt the school could host a community social to which parents could bring appetizers or leftovers. Mr. Bacigalupi stressed that service should be incorporated; perhaps asking parents to perform yard work at a school for instance. He noted that this would add to the parent's sense of accomplishment and pride in the school.

Ms. Olsen felt they needed to identify particular needs at particular schools before determining implementation. Co-Chair Dassler asked for a Board member to put the information they had collected into a format that could be presented to the City Commission and sent to school principals inviting their feedback. Dr. Hays felt the Board needed time to consider some of the ideas put forth this evening, and at the next meeting they could discuss whether they needed additional information before presenting the information, what use they could put the information to, and if they wanted more input from other sources.

Ms. Bradley felt groups could be organized by classroom, so parents could get to know their child's classmates' parents. Ms. Murru said at her school, every event must provide a learning opportunity, not just a networking opportunity. Mr. Bass felt they could ask principals' opinion of a Fort Lauderdale parents' association, and ask what other needs the school had. **Mr. Bass volunteered to meet with Mr. Bacigalupi to create the presentation.**

Ms. Carhart noted that parents' attending some form of training or other classes set a very good role model for kids, and showed that "schools have something to teach everybody."

Follow-up Discussion on City Clerk Advisory Board Training

Nothing new to report.

Old/Ongoing Business

Chair Reports

Co-Chair Brown discussed the meeting with School Board member Dinnen at which Ms. Dinnen expressed her desire to create a steering committee comprising stakeholders which could organize a summit of people interested in education in Fort Lauderdale. This committee would also create the group's objectives. Ms. Dinnen had agreed to send notes from their meeting, which Co-Chair Brown agreed to share with the EAB.

Ms. Carhart noted that Ms. Dinnen had stated she wanted to replicate something she had started in Plantation. Ms. Carhart suggested that Ms. Dinnen be invited to discuss this with the EAB at a future meeting.

Policies relating to Presentations/Speakers

Co-Chair Dassler reminded the Board of their decision last month that speakers addressing the Board should be consistent with their emphasis. The Early Learning Coalition of Broward County had requested to address the Board. The Board agreed to invite their representatives to participate in the discussion on parental involvement.

Education Summit – Date Change to January 31st 2007, Planning and Preparations

Mr. Webster explained that the date had been changed to accommodate the League of Cities members. Co-Chair Dassler suggested that the Board's workgroup preparing a presentation for the summit meet prior to the next EAB meeting. Workgroup members agreed to meet at 5:30 prior to the next EAB meeting.

Other reports and Updates

Co-Chair Dassler distributed copies of an email he had received from Mr. Luciani, the new principal of Arthur Ashe, in response to Co-Chair Dassler's email. Co-Chair Dassler felt Mr. Luciani did not "enthusiastically encourage" the EAB's involvement at the school. He thought Mr. Luciani recognized that the Board's involvement with the school and the magnet program last year might have been one of the reasons Lowanda Hines had been fired from Arthur Ashe. Co-Chair Dassler felt it would take some time for Mr. Luciani to trust the EAB. Dr. Sudarkasa did not feel the response was as negative as Co-Chair Dassler thought.

Liaison Reports and Updates

Staff Liaison Report – Ms. Carhart

Ms. Carhart had nothing to report.

Broward County School District Reports – Mr. Webster

Mr. Webster had nothing to report.

Ms. Olson asked if there would be a report on the land purchase. Mr. Webster said the City had offered to buy the land back recently. He assumed there would be an investigation, and agreed to report any developments to the Board.

Co-Chair Dassler said Ms. Dinnen had explained at their meeting that the parcel was large enough for an elementary school, but because of the negative publicity surrounding the purchase, the City was offering to buy the land back.

Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations Report – Ms. Shelly

In Ms. Shelly's absence, Dr. Hays reported that the Neighborhood conference had been a great success.

Board Elections

Co-Chair Dassler said he favored having co-chairs on the Board, and hoped another Board member would nominate Ms. Brown to continue on as Chair in keeping with their effort to create sustainability and continuity.

Motion: Ms. Olson nominated Ms. Brown as co-chair, and Mr. Bass seconded. Ms. Brown accepted the nomination and the Board unanimously approved.

Motion made by Dr. Hays, seconded by Ms. Maloney, to continue the practice of operating with co-chairs. Board unanimously approved.

Mr. Bass volunteered to serve as co-chair.

Motion: Dr. Sudarkasa nominated Mr. Bass as co-chair, and Ms. Maloney seconded. Board unanimously approved.

Other Matters/For the Good of the Board

Dr. Hays asked what became of the truancy report requested at the previous meeting. Dr. Sudarkasa said the group charged with creating the report had not been able to meet. She said she would speak to Ms. Schulze and Ms. McCoy and prepare something for the Board. Ms. Carhart agreed to provide data on the truancy rate for all City schools to the group.

Next Meeting and Closing

- **Agenda Items:**
- **Location:** City Hall – Regular Location
- **Date:** November 16th, Fort Lauderdale City Hall

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:36 p.m.

Handouts: Email response from Arthur Ashe principal Andrew Luciani to Co-Chair Dassler's email.