

**APPROVED
MINUTES OF THE
EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
Fort Lauderdale, Florida
100 North Andrews Avenue, 1st Floor Chamber
Thursday, May 21, 2009 – 6:30 p.m.**

Cumulative Attendance

Members	Attendance	Present	Absent
Jacqueline Ackerina, Chair	P	1	0
Laura Clark, Vice Chair	P	1	0
Lu Deaner	p	1	0
Edna Elijah	P	1	0
Derek Kelmanson	A	0	1
William Borawski	P	1	0
Mary Foster	A	0	1
Katie Leach	P	1	0
Lillian Small	P	1	0
Shezette Blue-Small	A	0	1
Linda Cooke	P	1	0

As of this date, there were 11 appointed members to the Board, which means 6 would constitute a quorum.

Staff

Julie Richards, Interim Staff Liaison
Charles Webster, Broward County Public Schools
Betty Shelley, Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations
Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.
Jennifer Picinich, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Communications to City Commission

None at this time.

A. Opening

- **Attendance and Sign-In**

Chair Ackerina called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m. Roll was called and it was determined a quorum was present.

- **Approval of Minutes (April 2009) and Agenda (May 2009)**

Mr. Webster noted the following corrections to be made to the minutes of the April 2009 meeting:

- Page 2, paragraph 2: Frank Alfieri is not a School Board member, but is with the Broward County Schools Public Facilities Department;
- Page 3, paragraph 3: Final sentence should read “If the students cannot be moved to temporary classrooms, then construction would extend up to 36 months”;
- Page 6, paragraph 7: “100% staff participation” should read “100% faculty participation.”

Motion made by Ms. Elijah, seconded by Mr. Borawski, to approve the minutes of the April 2009 meeting as corrected. In a voice vote, the **motion** carried unanimously.

- **Introduce New Members**

Chair Ackerina asked that the new and continuing Board members and Staff introduce themselves at this time.

Linda Cooke, representing District 4, has been involved in education for over 30 years. She has served on various task forces with the Board of Education, and is currently Director of Vocational Training and Education, which serves approximately 200 men and women with disabilities at the Habilitation Center.

Lillian Small is a native of Fort Lauderdale and taught middle school for 25 years. She is retired but remains very interested in staying involved with education in the City and County.

Bill Borawski, representing District 1, is originally from Pennsylvania and has educational degrees in emotional disturbance, learning disabilities, and dyslexia. He has taught young and adolescent children for 23 years and is certified as an elementary school principal and as a Director of Special Education Services. He moved to Florida upon retirement and wishes to continue helping children through education.

Katie Leach is a lifetime resident of south Florida and has been a special education classroom teacher; she has also worked with children with autism and as an autism program specialist for Broward County. She has a Master’s degree in Special Education.

B. Communications to City Commission

Chair Ackerina reminded the Board that if there is pertinent information they wish to call to the attention of the City Commissioners, including issues in which the

EAB would like them to participate, be aware of, or address, it can be discussed in this section of the meeting.

She described the Sunshine Law for the benefit of new and returning Board members, noting that any communication between members that addresses Board business must go through Ms. Richards' office.

Chair Ackerina recalled that at the April 2009 meeting, the Board had encouraged the City Commissioners to visit Arthur Ashe Middle School. She advised that the school is currently undergoing a change of Principals, and will most likely have a new vision for the 2009-2010 school year. The new Principal, Deborah Peoples, has been invited to visit and present to the Board in the future.

The following Item was taken out of order on the Agenda.

D. Old/Ongoing Business

Chair Ackerina reminded the Board of the presentation regarding renovations to Northside Elementary, and noted that the presenters had gone before several other Boards, as well as the City Commission, with the project. The Board had recommended that the project be considered for approval by the City Commission.

1. Lauderdale Manors Follow-Up

Lauderdale Manors Elementary had presented to the Board on the same date, and provided them with a document listing some of the school's needs so the Board can discuss how they may be of help. She noted that the EAB had planned to host a breakfast for the faculty at the end of the school year; however, two of the three Board members who had originally volunteered to assist with this plan were replaced by the new City Commission, and the Board had been unable to follow through at this time. Chair Ackerina hoped to be of assistance to Lauderdale Manors in the coming school year, and requested that Ms. Richards send the school's "wish list" to all the Board members for future reference.

She informed the new members that the Board had adopted three schools: Sunland Park Elementary, Lauderdale Manors Elementary, and Arthur Ashe Middle School. The EAB had asked that representatives of each school visit the Board and describe their programs, specialties, and needs.

2. Arthur Ashe Follow-Up

Arthur Ashe had declined to send a list of needs, preferring to allow the incoming Principal to establish her own ideas once she is acclimated to the school.

3. Sunland Park Follow-Up

Sunland Park Elementary is also in transition, as their Principal is retiring. A new Principal has not yet been officially named.

4. Establish Goals for School Adoptions

Chair Ackerina explained that in addition to working from a wish list of items, they would also attempt to collaborate with various organizations to either obtain material items or solicit support through volunteer work.

She stated that there should be an “established focus” of the Board’s means of support, and hoped the new Board could return some recommendations to the next meeting for discussion and documentation. She felt the wish list mentioned earlier could serve as a starting point, and might possibly serve as a wish list for all three schools.

She noted that EAB goals were established some time ago, but may change as the Board itself changes. Chair Ackerina hoped all members would all take an active role in making a difference for education. She asked that they review the previous goals and consider new suggestions for the coming 2009-2010 school year as well during the summer months.

She asked for input from the Board on these activities and goals.

Ms. Small asked what criteria were used in selecting the adopted schools. Ms. Deaner replied that the Board chose the schools they believed “had the greatest need.” She added that the City had, at one time, planned to “take over” from the Board and begin a mentoring program at Lauderdale Manors in particular; unfortunately, this never took place.

She noted that Sunland Park had been an “F” school at one time, which was a contributing factor to its adoption; Arthur Ashe had once had a similar problem, and had even considered consolidating with another school to improve their situation before their Principal had helped implement the magnet program.

Vice Chair Clark recalled that the Board had hosted Sunland Park Principal Mattie Benson at an earlier meeting, and she had provided them with a list of ways the Board could be of help. They assisted in establishing a program in which police officers read to children at the school once a week.

5. Chair Report

Chair Ackerina noted that the 20-day count document was in need of further updating, as it had contained incorrect information for Bayview Elementary. She

stated she was waiting for FCAT scores to become available as well so the Board could take a look at the grading system of, specifically, the three schools they had adopted. She felt the document would be available by the June 2009 meeting.

She recalled that at the previous meeting, she had charged Board members with the task of recruiting prospective new EAB members, as they had gone through a brief period of low membership. She expressed her gratitude that the new City Commissioners had appointed new members, and added that further appointments were forthcoming. With a larger Board, she felt they would be more capable of addressing issues of interest, perhaps in groups of two or three that could take over specific tasks toward the EAB goals or with adopted schools.

Chair Ackerina continued that a student member to the EAB had been previously discussed, and the Board had yet to determine the criteria for a student member's selection. She stated that the School Board of Broward County has two students who act as advocates; in addition, she had learned that both Stranahan and Fort Lauderdale High Schools have student governments, and felt these might be the best places from which to recruit a student member. She hoped the Board could discuss the requirements for a student member, if they still wished to have one, at the June meeting. She added that she would wish any such student to receive community service credit, should he or she meet with the Board on a regular basis. The student member would also be asked to report the Board's activities and goals back to his or her school, and perhaps other schools.

Chair Ackerina noted that she had received an invitation to an event at Sunland Park Elementary in recognition of three students having won in an essay contest. City Commissioner Bobby DuBose and Mr. Borawski had also been in attendance.

She advised the Board that they had been notified of a Better Meetings Academy workshop for Advisory Boards and Committees, which addressed what these entities are required to do and how they should operate. Chair Ackerina reported some of the key points she had taken from the meeting:

- Meetings must start and end on time, including meetings that feature presentations. She asked that Board members arrive "at least 10 minutes" ahead of the scheduled start time, 6:30, to ensure all equipment is working properly by the time the meeting begins.
- Should the discussion stray from EAB topics or goals, the Chair will direct it back to the subject at hand, as she is required to do.

Mr. Borawski, who had also gone to the Better Meetings Academy, added that he felt it is important for any Board member to attend, as it informed them not only how to carry on a meeting properly, but taught them the advice and recommendations that advisory bodies are expected to give, and what should or

should not be said outside a meeting. He noted that input, advice, and concerns from members of various other boards were also helpful.

Chair Ackerina advised that everything said or written at a meeting is considered public record under the Sunshine Law, and pointed out that once a member's appointment is over, all his or her notes must be turned in to Ms. Richards; in addition, all conversation at meetings is recorded, and physical recordings remain on the record for two years. Papers remain with the City in perpetuity.

6. Other Reports and Updates

- **Staff Liaison – Julie Richards**

Ms. Richards had no information to report at this time.

- **Broward County Public Schools – Charles Webster**

Mr. Webster informed the Board that he would ask Ms. Richards to send information, via email, to the members regarding an upcoming event, the 2009 Bridge to Prevention Academy. It is for community and parent leaders, and will provide these individuals with "various prevention-related concepts, programs, resources, techniques, and community/district support systems." Community organizations, as well as Broward County Schools, will give presentations, and attendees can interact with other parents, service providers, and school professionals. Topics include bullying, gangs, diversity, gender issues, internet safety, and others.

There will be two sessions, one each for those interested in elementary or secondary school populations. The June 8-11, 2009 event will cover elementary issues, and middle/high schools will be covered from June 15-17. Prospective attendees may register up to one week prior to the event. These sessions will be held at Cooper City High School from 8:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.

Mr. Webster continued that the Broward County School District is, once again, a candidate for the Broad Award. Last year, when the District was a finalist, they received \$250,000 in scholarships, and this year it is again a finalist, which guarantees this amount once again. Mr. Webster distributed a press release regarding the 15 students from Fort Lauderdale High School and others in the District who were selected as scholarship recipients. An article in the *Sun-Sentinel* contains the students' names as well, he noted.

He went on to note that 3rd grade reading and math scores came out earlier in the day, and are reported to be "about the same... as last year." However, Broward County schools still outperformed nearby counties in both FCAT reading and math scores. Breakdowns by individual schools are available online.

An initiative called the Dillard Family Zone has begun in the Dillard area, and plans to attempt to “galvanize the community.” The idea is adopted from a program called “Ready by 21,” which aims to prepare children ready for either work or college by the time they reach either college age or 21 years. The initiative will survey the community to learn what resources are available and will attempt to provide these resources to the children in the community. The initiative is currently working to involve community leaders with the project. Mr. Webster described the effort as “moving along nicely,” and stated that he will bring progress reports to the Board as the initiative progresses.

He recalled that there had been an issue with some middle and high schools that had wished to participate in an Arbor Day event (April 25, 2009) with the Fort Lauderdale Garden Club at Esplanade Park. The Community Education Chair of the Garden Club had reported a prospective problem, in that Stranahan High School students had nearly been unable to attend due to transportation issues; however, the Principal of Stranahan High School had ensured that these students would be present at the event. The Garden Club had emailed a letter of thanks to the Principal.

Mr. Webster concluded by noting that the District has “no money,” and he was studying a 75-page document to determine what had occurred during the recent legislative session. The District is currently attempting to fill a gap of approximately \$160 million. Dollars had been taken from reserves to meet a shortfall in 2008-2009, hoping that the legislature would have found new sources of revenue for education; unfortunately, this did not occur. He added that 800-900 teachers have been “surplused,” along with roughly 50 administrators and others at lower-level jobs.

Mr. Borawski asked Mr. Webster if he could confirm that Lauderdale Manors is constructing additional classrooms, and asked how this could occur when teachers are being laid off, as this could create a shortfall of teachers to take over the classrooms in question. Mr. Webster explained that staffing is not the issue: “surplusing” an individual means that person does not have a job at the moment, but attempts will be made throughout the year to remedy this.

Mr. Borawski expressed concern that funds were being spent to construct new buildings, which, he noted, was most likely due to expansion of the population. Mr. Webster pointed out that construction issues are generally part of a five-year plan, and construction contracts have been obligated as part of that plan and must be followed through. He added that he had only recently received this information and planned to look into it further.

He clarified that the District has two sets of funds, operational and capital. Capital dollars are for buildings and infrastructure; the budget issue is primarily with

operational dollars, which include salaries, insurance, transportation and fuel, utilities, and other considerations.

Ms. Elijah added that the new construction will replace a very old building that had been experiencing structural and other problems. Mr. Webster added that any building demolition must be approved by the State.

7. Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations – Betty Shelley

Ms. Shelley stated that the Council has a new Board and new Chair, and meets the second Tuesday of each month at 7:00 p.m. in the conference room. She invited the Board members to attend these meetings.

She added that the Council regularly participates in the Community Volunteer Projects (CVP), which generally occur on Saturday mornings; the Vice Mayor is often in charge of these projects, which regularly occur at schools such as Lauderdale Manors and Sunland Park. She offered to keep the Board apprised of upcoming school projects.

E. New/Future Business

- **Fort Lauderdale Centennial Celebration – March 27, 2011**

Chair Ackerina stated that Vice Chair Laura Clark had advised, in the past, that the Board should plan “something big” for this upcoming event. She agreed that the Board should look at it closely and determine how they wished to participate. She requested any ideas that the members might have at this time.

Ms. Deaner recalled that some years ago, the Board had put together a pamphlet describing all the Fort Lauderdale schools, their various programs, and other characteristics. She offered to bring copies of this document, suggesting that an update would be “very valuable” to the community, and might be a tool to energize the City’s real estate market, as families moving to the City would be interested in Fort Lauderdale schools.

Ms. Shelley recalled that there had been prior discussion of the Board sponsoring poster or banner contests with a Centennial theme within the schools as a way to involve students in the celebration.

Ms. Cooke pointed out that 2010 is the Centennial for the Greater Fort Lauderdale Chamber of Commerce, who will team up with the City to plan events. She felt the Board could call on Chamber members to work with them. Ms. Deaner agreed, and suggested that there may be several groups who plan to participate as well. She proposed the Board meet with all the prospective partners in the celebration to ensure that there was no duplication.

Ms. Leach felt the schools could participate not only by looking at the City's past 100 years, but by looking into "the future of learning" as well. She asked which body is overseeing the Centennial. Ms. Shelley advised that a Centennial Celebration Committee has been appointed by the City, and meets once a month. She felt they would be receptive to any ideas the EAB might wish to present.

Ms. Deaner asked if there might be an EAB member appointed to the Centennial Celebration Committee. Ms. Shelley believed, however, the City Commissioners had already made their appointments to this Committee by this time.

Ms. Cooke stated that the Chamber has a volunteer board for the Centennial, and she would look into whether an EAB member might be able to join that body.

Chair Ackerina pointed out that at times, representatives of schools or other groups approach the Board and ask to give a presentation with regard to particular events or interests; at other times, the Board solicits presentations. She requested that if a member finds a group they feel would have an important message or information to impart to the Board through a presentation, they send the appropriate information to Ms. Richards for scheduling. She emphasized that it is important not to "overbook," and that the maximum amount of presentations at a single meeting should be two, although ideally they should strive for one if possible.

Vice Chair Clark stated that once the schools mentioned earlier announced their new Principals, she felt the Board should try to schedule them again, over the summer if necessary, to learn what their needs are and try to make a positive impact.

Chair Ackerina noted that Mr. Webster had originally scheduled Ms. Peoples, the new Principal at Arthur Ashe, to present to the Board this evening; however, as she is very new to the school, it was decided to allow her more time to acclimate. She assured the Board that Ms. Peoples will be rescheduled, and added that the Board will discuss who will take the lead with any particular school in the future.

Ms. Deaner recalled that in the past, the Board had not met for at least one month during the summer. Ms. Richards confirmed that the schedule reflects a "summer break" in July.

Ms. Leach asked if the Board will consider asking "partnerships in the community" to present and discuss ways they could assist – for instance, nonprofit organizations. Chair Ackerina agreed with this idea.

Ms. Deaner noted that the EAB had recently discussed asking the City Commission to visit a school. She also pointed out that the Board has met at schools in the past to hold their meetings there.

Chair Ackerina stated that the regular meeting location is more convenient due to its recording devices; in addition, should they go to a school, the Board must ask for permission to use the facilities after hours, among other considerations.

Ms. Clark felt this would be a good opportunity for the Board if it is feasible, and proposed that they visit the three adopted schools. Chair Ackerina reiterated that she is not opposed to the idea, but it must be addressed well in advance; in addition, she felt that the adopted schools would invite the Board to attend events, which would give them a chance to pay a visit.

Chair Ackerina added that some of the City Commissioners have expressed an interest in attending Board meetings, which would be more suitable if done in the regular meeting location.

She requested that the Board members note three items for follow-up:

- What they feel the EAB goals should be, and what they feel the group should do (at least two suggestions);
- Ideas about the student member – should the Board have one and what that student's responsibilities would be, how will he or she be chosen, and would any member like to take on this effort;
- What the Board's goals should be regarding the adoption of schools, possibly including volunteering and/or providing items from the schools' wish lists.

Ms. Leach asked if more than one student member could join the Board. Chair Ackerina noted that while there is no stated limit, the member should be a high school student and have transportation to and from the meetings. She felt they should begin with a single student member and then "see how it works out" before pursuing the possibility of more.

Ms. Small proposed they have one student member from each of the three high schools in the City.

Ms. Deaner recalled that in the original ordinance establishing the EAB, there was a list of how many members the Board should have (originally 15). She added that there had never been more than one student member in the past, but perhaps this could be changed.

Mr. Borawski agreed that all three high schools should be represented rather than selecting a representative of one school over another.

Ms. Richards clarified that there are no set guidelines for the manner in which a student member was chosen. Vice Chair Clark added that the Board would need to clearly state the responsibilities of being a student member to the prospective students.

Chair Ackerina stated that the Board would continue discussing this Item at the next meeting.

Regarding the goals for adopted schools, Chair Ackerina stated that this would not reflect wish list items only, but would take into consideration what the Board felt it should do.

Vice Chair Clark proposed that the Board form three subcommittees, each of which would focus its attention on a single school. She felt they could accomplish more in this manner.

Ms. Elijah reminded the Board that two of the adopted schools' principals had provided the Board with wish lists at their presentations. She felt Board actions should be directed by these lists, as the principals are more familiar with the schools' needs than the Board.

Chair Ackerina pointed out that at least one of these schools will have a new principal in the future, who may feel the school's needs are different from what has been listed in the past. She also felt the Board should have an opportunity to express what they are interested in accomplishing.

Ms. Deaner agreed with both these suggestions, but felt that the Board's emphasis should be on providing the items that were requested.

There being no further business to come before the Board at this time, the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by K. McGuire, Prototype, Inc.]