

APPROVED
EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE, 1ST FLOOR CHAMBERS
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.

Members	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Magdalene Lewis, Chair	P	8	0
Laura Clark, Vice Chair (arr. 6:35 pm)	P	6	2
Shezette Blue-Small (arr. 6:41 pm)	P	2	0
Catherine Cirillo	P	1	0
Joseph Discepola	P	6	1
Edna Elijah	P	6	2
Elaine Fiore	P	3	2
Roland Foulkes	P	6	0
Nancy Green (arr. 6:35 pm)	P	5	1
Trisha Halliday	P	6	0
Katie Leach	A	3	3
Alan Levy	A	5	3
Maureen Persi, Ed.D. (arr. 6:32 pm)	P	2	1
Franco Ripple	P	1	0
Lillian Small	A	5	3

Appointed members to the Board: 15
 Needed to constitute a quorum: 8

Staff

Julie Richards, Staff Liaison
 Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Students

Sade Smith
 Bryana Bell

As of this date, there are 13 appointed members to the Board, which means 7 would constitute a quorum.

A. Opening

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m., and wished everyone a Happy New Year.

- **Attendance and Sign-in**

Following roll call, it was determined there was a quorum in attendance.

- **Approve Minutes (November '10)**

Ms. Cirillo made the following correction: on p. 8, third paragraph from the bottom, "Beacon" should be "BECON."

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by Ms. Elijah, to approve the minutes of the November 18, 2010, meeting as corrected. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- **Introduce New Members: Catherine Cirillo; Franco Ripple**

Ms. Cirillo said she has been the Bookkeeper/Office Manager/Technical Liaison at Bennett Elementary for 17 years. She lives in the North Coral Ridge Country Club Estate area, and was invited to the Board by Ms. Dinnen.

Mr. Ripple noted he is a Fort Lauderdale native and has attended both public and private schools in the City, having graduated from Pinecrest in 2001.

Bryana Bell and Sade Smith introduced themselves as student members.

[Vice Chair Clark and Ms. Green arrived at 6:35 p.m.]

- **Guest Introductions:**

There were no guests.

- **Announcements:**

None.

B. Communications to City Commission

None.

C. Current Business

1. Student Members to the Education Advisory Board

Ms. Richards brought up the applications for the students wanting to be on the Advisory Board.

Ms. Cirillo noted that all the students applying were seniors, and wondered why there were no juniors. Ms. Bell said that at her school, they asked for juniors, but [unable to hear person speaking]. Ms. Smith said that she was informed to pick a junior and senior

for next year, and picked one of each, but did not have them fill out an application for this year.

Ms. Cirillo was concerned that there were no juniors, and Ms. Richards explained that [unable to hear person speaking]. Mr. Foulkes provided a brief history on how students have come to the Board. He said the ideal is to have juniors (and seniors) and that the process should be fully implemented in the fall.

[Ms. Shezette Blue-Small arrived at 6:41 p.m.]

It was noted there was one junior who applied from Dillard.

Ms. Richards reminded the Board that at their last meeting they agreed to review the student applications at this meeting. She also reminded the Board that their new year begins in April and wondered if the Board wanted their new students to begin in April.

By consensus, the Board agreed to review the applications.

Ms. Elijah wondered if the two students present had submitted applications and if they wanted to speak.

Ms. Richards reminded the Board of the requirements they had agreed upon for student members.

Bryana Bell, a senior at Fort Lauderdale High School, said she is interested in becoming an educator. She thought being a part of this Board would give her a peak "behind the scenes," not just what happens at the school level.

Mr. Foulkes asked for her letter of support from her principal, as he did not get a copy yet. Ms. Bell replied that she will remind the principal. Ms. Halliday offered to get the letter.

Mr. Foulkes asked Ms. Bell if she would have time for the Board meetings, and she said that after 6:00 p.m., she does not have any other extracurricular activities and would be able to handle her homework.

Mr. Ripple asked Ms. Bell what she hopes to do after graduating from high school. Ms. Bell replied that she has applied to several universities within the state, but has not decided her major. She is interested in becoming an educator and is fascinated by history.

Ms. Elijah asked Ms. Bell what her current GPA is, and Ms. Bell answered that it is a 3.0.

Mr. Discepola pointed out that Ms. Bell and Ms. Machin were already accepted as student members at the last meeting, so they should only have to review three applications, not five.

Sade Smith, a senior at Stranahan High School, said she has been in the **Youth Act** program since her freshman year and also **SEA** since the 7th grade. Over the summer she received her nail technician license. She said she wants to join the Air Force and then go to college. She said speaking at the Board is good practice for her, as she does not like public speaking.

Vice Chair Clark mentioned that there were a total of five students interested: one from Stranahan, two from Fort Lauderdale and two from Dillard. She thought they wanted two from each school and she was impressed with all the applications.

Motion by Ms. Cirillo, seconded by Ms. Elijah, to accept the five applications as attached to the minutes. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Foulkes requested that all applicants submit the letters from their principals to complete their application. It was noted that both Dillard and Fort Lauderdale had submitted one letter per two applicants. Vice Chair Clark suggested that if the principal could write a separate letter for each student, the Board would prefer that. Otherwise, they would accept the submitted letter.

Ms. Richards stated there was one student, Gloria Grissett, who had not submitted an application. Ms. Smith said that Ms. Grissett had her application finished, but could not attend the meeting.

Mr. Foulkes requested that the students inform the Board of any issues in their schools that should be brought to the attention of the Board.

Ms. Bell commented that there was an ongoing issue with intolerance amongst the students at Fort Lauderdale. As an example, she told of a satirical presentation in one of her classes that involved the creation of a hypothetical political party based on anti-homosexuality. She said some of the language used was disturbing. The teacher interrupted the presentation, noting it was inappropriate. She continued that there are different clubs on campus to build awareness and unity, but she would like to see some type of action taken within the school.

She asked the Board for advice on how to approach the school administration about it, mentioning that she did just email the principal about the situation. Mr. Foulkes remarked that the school should have an active Human Relations Council, and that is the group to approach. Ms. Bell said that she was not aware of that group, and added that the problem is widespread amongst all the high schools. She continued that she does not observe much intermingling among the different groups, despite efforts in the past to promote unity.

Mr. Foulkes announced that the District's Diversity Committee has its monthly meeting on February 3, 2011, at 6:30 p.m., at the K.C. Wright Building in the first floor Boardroom. He was re-elected Chair and he invited the students to come and address the Diversity Committee. He said that the Diversity Committee is in the District's Diversity and Cultural Outreach Department, and that department oversees the Human Relations Councils which should be operating in every school. If the students can attend that meeting, they would have "the ear" of that Committee, the Director of the District's Diversity and Cultural Outreach Department, and the School Board.

Vice Chair Clark said that her daughter's elementary school recently had a speaker on diversity who was a Columbine survivor. Vice Chair Clark spoke very highly of the effect of her presentation on the students and also on the parents who attended a separate presentation. Vice Chair Clark said she would contact the woman's website, and perhaps she could come to some of the middle and high schools.

Vice Chair Clark observed that elementary-aged children do not have the racial issues that are more common in middle school and high school. There was a discussion on why and when those problems arise.

Mr. Discepola commented that there are a lot of associated issues such as freedom of speech in schools, parental influence, self-identity and group belonging, lifestyle choices (e.g., athlete versus student government, etc.). He said the question is how the school can educate students and parents to be more open minded and tolerant.

Ms. Bell remarked that having a speaker come to the school is not enough. Many high school students do not want to care about anything. She suggested something more interactive, such as activities and clubs.

Chair Lewis stated that the first step is that the school administrators and counselors have to be aware of what is going on.

Ms. Blue-Small said it was good that Ms. Bell took the information to the principal. She continued that the satirical presentation was a teachable moment that the teacher should have taken advantage of and discussed in the classroom. Ms. Bell remarked that she did not want to get the teacher in trouble, because he had to control the situation before it turned into a heated argument amongst the students. There was no opportunity for discussion just then, since students were starting to "get riled up."

Dr. Persi thought this area should be addressed with the Board of Education since it is a systemic problem. She was shocked that students in the City have no knowledge of the City's history. As far as tolerance and character education are concerned, she said that would not be fixed with a "one-shot deal" of a speaker coming in. She suggested addressing the problem starting at the pre-kindergarten age. Then it could be built upon each year in the curriculum. She suggested incorporating that into the areas of

language arts, library media and social studies. She added that the curriculum has to drive everything in the children's education.

Mr. Ripple praised Ms. Bell for having the courage to bring the matter up to her principal. He asked Ms. Bell what happens when she and her peers see an act of discrimination. Ms. Bell said they usually react by saying something to the effect of how much they dislike the school and the actions of their peers. Their first thought is usually, "Why does that even have to happen?"

Mr. Foulkes asked Ms. Bell how the student gay/lesbian community responded to the incident. Ms. Bell responded that the one she knows well reacted by shaking his head. She added that the school's gay/straight alliance has not been active for about two years.

Ms. Smith said that at Stranahan, the students are separated by cheerleaders, and who you know or do not know. She sees the most separation in Building One. If students observe an incident, they tell the administration. She said they do not have major problems, and also they do not have the gay/straight alliance any more.

Vice-Chair Clark mentioned "Cracker Day" (usually the last day of school) when a white student going to school on that day would get beat up. It was noted by others that this is widespread. She added that they do teach character education in elementary school, with one featured trait per month. One student per class per month receives an award for the trait of the month. The student has to explain why he was chosen.

Chair Lewis reiterated they have to get the parents and all the adults who work with children involved. She added that incidents on campus will interfere with the educational progress of the students.

Ms. Blue-Small stated that her school has a zero-tolerance policy, and they bring infractions back to the home. She agreed with Dr. Persi, that the policy has to begin at the School Board level.

Dr. Persi asked the two students if they were aware of a character education program. Ms. Smith said she did recall the program starting in kindergarten and they still do it at Stranahan. She said at **Youth Act** they also do character trait of the month and week. Ms. Bell said that at Fort Lauderdale they have Student Character of the Month.

Ms. Bell praised her school's administration, saying they were "amazing" and very responsive. However, administration can never know everything that is going on because students might be afraid or do not know how to approach a situation. She asserted there is a problem when it is "bubbling up," when people do not want to get to know others, or there are rumors about racial showdowns (which hardly ever occur).

Ms. Cirillo was curious if there was a forum for discussion at the schools before things get out of hand. Ms. Bell replied there a lot of counselors available for students who are afraid.

Ms. Cirillo disputed the reality of "Cracker Day," saying that a few kids may fight who would have fought anyway. She declared that administrators have to come out and let students know that there is "no such thing as Cracker Day at my school and it is not going to happen here."

Mr. Ripple agreed, saying that the perception is stronger than the reality, and people need to tamp down the perception of these days.

Vice Chair Clark and Ms. Cirillo said they never heard of Cracker Day until they came to Fort Lauderdale.

Ms. Blue-Small said a dialogue has to be opened up at the school and the administration has to know what is going on. It is up to the administration to open the dialogue, in addition to dealing with the perpetrators individually.

Vice Chair Clark suggested going back to the teacher (in the classroom where the satirical presentation took place) and asking him to have a class period devoted to the subject. She added it would be good to have an administrator in the classroom.

Ms. Fiore wanted the student members to be clear on what the Board expects of them. Mr. Foulkes stated he wanted the students' ideas on how they would resolve the problems and how the Board can help them. He wanted the solutions to come from the students, not the Board.

Ms. Smith relayed a recent fight incident at her school which involved students and parents. Now her school has a zero tolerance policy for fighting and weapons on campus.

Ms. Smith continued that they do have a forum at Stranahan for discussion between the administrator and students. Seniors are trying to form a legacy called, "If You Don't Know Me, Don't Judge Me." This is a group where kids can come and speak if they have been bullied or picked on. They are in the process of writing a constitution and setting up a confidentiality system.

Ms. Bell reiterated that the administration at Fort Lauderdale High is very responsive and provides excellent supervision, but they still need a grassroots or peer movement to be more effective.

Mr. Foulkes was curious if the students have observed any non-professional or non-inclusive interactions between their teachers. Ms. Bell said she had not, but Ms. Smith

said she has heard teachers talking about other teachers. Vice Chair Clark said that the office staff has been heard talking about students in the presence of (other) parents.

Ms. Green mentioned that she has been on the faculty of Fort Lauderdale for 14 years, and she thinks they are very professional and collegial.

Ms. Blue-Small commented that she tells her students that they do not have to like each other, but they must respect each other.

Vice-Chair Clark brought up the pending School Board budget and proposed discussing this topic at the next meeting. She relayed that at the School Board's last meeting, they debated between "human capital" cuts and cuts in technology. She expressed confusion about the details of the budget.

Mr. Foulkes mentioned that he serves on the District's Technology Advisory Committee and had served on the Three-Year Technology Strategic Plan. He said that the school where Vice Chair Clark works has a special scenario, as there are zero dollars for technology in the district. He thought perhaps her school received grant money.

Mr. Foulkes agreed with Vice Chair Clark about having a presentation on the School Board budget and specifically on the technological aspect. He feared their lower-income students would fall behind due to lack of funding for technology.

Ms. Cirillo commented that she is in the Fort Lauderdale zone that was first to get technology, but have not had updates for two years. She said that the teachers' laptops will no longer run, and will not be compatible with the new promethean boards. She recommended that the district spend the \$17M targeted for BECON on classroom technology (new batteries) instead. Vice Chair Clark stated it is more important to invest in a teacher than a technology product that will break down in five years, if that is a choice.

Chair Lewis announced that the School Board budget will be on the agenda for the next meeting. Mr. Foulkes recommended two people for the technology portion of the presentation: Angela Coluzzi and Dr. Jeanine Gendron.

Ms. Blue-Small echoed that it is very important to have a budget person who can explain the workings of the budget. She also said that BECON generates a lot of their capital through corporate sponsorships. Ms. Blue-Small added that she is at a school with donated software, but the computers are not updated so she cannot run the programs.

Mr. Foulkes will provide Chair Lewis with the contact information for a speaker.

Mr. Ripple reported that some counties are using virtual classrooms as a way to actively circumvent the class size limit, and he wondered if this was happening in Broward

County. Ms. Cirillo said it is happening, and dollars come out of the real schools because the funding goes to the virtual schools.

Mr. Ripple wondered if students were randomly picked, or based on qualifications such as advanced placement. Ms. Blue-Small responded the parents have to request the virtual school.

Ms. Bell said she went in after school to a computer lab to take an online course to catch up in math. She has several friends who are taking AP classes from their home. Rather than students being picked, they can request to participate if they want more credits or want to catch up.

Mr. Ripple clarified that what he meant was that in some other counties there is no selection process other than the counties needing to get under the cap, so students are placed in the virtual classrooms regardless of their ability to perform. He was assured that is not happening in Broward County.

Mr. Foulkes said that the virtual school in Broward County is operated under BECON, and serves a number of students. There are also athletes who travel around the world who utilize the virtual school because they cannot be in the classroom.

Ms. Fiore brought up the City of Fort Lauderdale Centennial Celebration, and mentioned that it is going to be addressed at Stranahan. She wondered if the Board wanted all the high schools to be involved. It was noted that most of the schools were involved.

D. Old/Ongoing Business

1. School Adoptions: Lauderdale Manors, Sunland Park, Arthur Ashe

Dr. Persi asked if Vice Chair Clark's daughter was still planning to spearhead the collection of toiletries. Vice Chair Clark said she thought Ms. Small was going to order items online and deliver them to the school. Dr. Persi had some items to contribute.

Dr. Persi also relayed that she recently spoke with a person who works with a large hotel firm that only deals with toiletries and has a wealth of supplies. All they would require is a letter from the Board (on official letterhead) requesting toiletries for the schools. Chair Lewis thought it was a good idea to pursue.

Dr. Persi will email her contact and find out how many schools she could handle. Dr. Persi will then get in touch with Ms. Richards and proceed from there.

Vice Chair Clark offered to take the items home so her daughter can bag them.

Ms. Elijah said that the Community Liaison person, Dawn Yates, could probably handle delivery to the schools.

Vice Chair Clark asked Dr. Persi to let her know if there is more to come, and then she can make arrangements with the school principal and Community Liaison for delivery. Ms. Richards said she would call Ms. Small the next day to see if she had any more of the bags.

2. Other Reports/Updates/Discussion

a. Reports & Updates

1) City Staff Liaison – Julie Richards

Ms. Richards reminded the Board of the City's 100th Birthday and suggested they check the website for related activities.

2) Student Members to EAB

No more comments.

3) Broward County School District – C. Webster

Absent.

4) Council of Ft. Laud. Civic Associations – B. Shelley

Ms. Shelley explained that the Council is an organization for all of the homeowners associations within the City of Fort Lauderdale. Meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month on the eighth floor. Discussions include what is going on in the different neighborhoods.

She reported they have a representative from the Council who is on the Centennial Committee. There is also a photo contest and she will provide more information at a later date.

Ms. Shelley mentioned that they will be having their election of officers, and invited all the neighborhoods to join the Council. She said she takes back to the Council meetings what is discussed at this meeting and invited the Board members to attend.

E. New/Future Business

None.

F. Next Meeting and Closing

1. Location and Date: City Hall, February 17, 2011

Chair Lewis welcomed the new members who joined the Board and thanked the student members for attending.

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by **Mr. Ripple?**, to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

[Minutes prepared by J. Rubin, Prototype, Inc.]