

APPROVED
EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE, 1ST FLOOR CHAMBERS
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.

Members	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Magdalene Lewis, Chair	P	9	1
Laura Clark, Vice Chair	A	7	3
Shezette Blue-Small	A	2	2
Catherine Cirillo	A	2	1
Joseph Discepola	P	8	1
Theron Douglas	P	2	0
Edna Elijah	A	6	4
Elaine Fiore	A	4	3
Roland Foulkes	P	8	0
Nancy Green (arr. 6:42 pm)	P	6	2
Trisha Halliday	A	7	1
Katie Leach	A	4	4
Maureen Persi, Ed.D.	P	3	2
Franco Ripple (left 7:52 p.m.)	P	3	0
Lillian Small	P	2	0

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

Staff

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

Students

None.

As of this date, there are 15 appointed members to the Board, which means 8 would constitute a quorum.

A. Opening

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. Chair Lewis thanked Vice Chair Clark for taking charge of the meeting in her absence, and she welcomed back Ms. Small.

- **Attendance and Sign-in**

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

- **Approve Minutes (February 14, 2011)**

Approval was postponed until a quorum was present.

A correction was noted on p. 5 by Mr. Ripple. He said that the previous vote (on his motion) was rescinded in order to re-open discussion, but the motion itself to request the City Commission approval to seek donations was not rescinded, as stated in the minutes.

Dr. Persi had a concern about the minutes of the February meeting, and started by reading the purpose of the Education Advisory Board. She then referred to the minutes of October 21, 2010, and she quoted: "Mr. Foulkes was curious exactly what the Board does for a school that they adopt. Chair Lewis replied that the schools send a wish list to the Board and the Board tries to fulfill it. Ms. Elijah added that some of the school's principals came to a Board meeting and presented some ideas for consideration."

Dr. Persi then displayed a wish list from Lauderdale Manors School as an example of a wish list. She mentioned the hygiene kits that are on the list. She then said that at the February, 2010, meeting, Ms. Small submitted a copy of a newspaper article regarding lack of soap for students at school, and that reinforced the Board's thinking to continue looking at toiletries and hygiene kits for the students. She mentioned the three schools that the Board had adopted, but mentioned they focused mostly on the two elementary schools.

At the January, 2011, meeting, Dr. Persi said that she asked if Vice Chair Clark's daughter was still spearheading the collection of toiletries, and acknowledged Ms. Small's contributions to the effort. Dr. Persi said that Vice Chair Clark indicated at the time that she thought Ms. Small was going to order items online and deliver them to the school. Dr. Persi then brought up Lisa Plaitis, who works for a company that supplies toiletries for large hotel chains. Dr. Persi said she does not know Ms. Plaitis personally, nor does she have ongoing contact with her.

Dr. Persi then read the following letter she had sent to Lisa Plaitis on January 21, 2011 into the minutes:

"Hi Lisa,

It was so good to speak to you this morning. I'm so happy you remembered me from the Unico family picnic at Alan's house.

Please know that I've informed the Assistant to the City Manager, Ms. Julie Richards, to email or fax you a letter requesting our need for toiletries for those students who are our most needy. Upon obtaining the signature from our Board President, Dr. Magdalene Lewis, you will receive our request. Our Education Advisory Board in Fort Lauderdale has adopted three failing schools, and

hygiene seems to be a top priority with the principals' wish list. Any assistance your company can provide we'll sincerely appreciate and be put to good use.

Once again, I thank you for helping and providing the needy children of Fort Lauderdale with your products to improve their hygiene. My husband or I will be responsible for obtaining these products and we will see that they are delivered to the Board. We'd like to have the high school students and some of our Board members get involved in decorating the small white lunch bags that the children will receive and they will be decorated so that the children will feel special when they receive these toiletries. And the high school students who help will receive community service towards their graduation requirements.

Sincerely,
Dr. Maureen Persi
Education Advisory Board"

Dr. Persi explained that she read this letter into the minutes because she is concerned about a statement that was in the February Board minutes next to her name. She then proceeded to read a definition of 'conflict of interest': "We define a conflict of interest as a situation in which a person has a private or personal interest sufficient to appear to influence the objective exercise of his or her official duties."

She pointed out on p. 5 of the February minutes where Mr. Foulkes stated that he was concerned that there might be a possible conflict of interest with Dr. Persi. Dr. Persi was very concerned about seeing her name "next to those words." She asked Mr. Foulkes to apologize, because she said there was no conflict of interest, nor any hint of impropriety. She said all she was trying to do was fulfill the wishes of the Board to bring toiletries to the children of Fort Lauderdale. She also asked that the minutes of the February meeting indicate that the apology was so taken, and to refer readers to the minutes of the March meeting.

Mr. Foulkes explained that his comments were made in light of the information that he had at the time of the February meeting, and he suggested it would have been better if the Board had waited to present the information until Dr. Persi was present to explain the background details.

Dr. Persi referred to the Communication to the City Commission on p. 4 of the February minutes. Ms. Richards asked her to prepare a draft, and she did. Dr. Persi asked Ms. Richards to edit it as she would to prepare it for the City Commission. Dr. Persi then read the letter into the record:

"Room Amenities has agreed to donate toiletries to needy students in the schools adopted by the Education Advisory Board. Those schools are Arthur Ashe, Sunland Park, and Lauderdale Manors. This Board is asking permission from the City Commission to write a letter as requested to the company to accept such

donations to be distributed through the principals of the above mentioned schools, with the letter should be written by the Mayor on the Board's behalf."

Dr. Persi then pointed out that Mr. Foulkes did have the information he needed.

She explained she did not attend the February meeting because she was attending the National Conference on Education in Denver, Colorado.

Mr. Foulkes responded that the letter to Ms. Plaitis that Dr. Persi read at this meeting was not read on the night of their vote. He said the background provided at this meeting was not presented to the Board in February. If they had had that information, he said his comments may have been different. He said that perhaps a note could be made in the record about Dr. Persi's concern about his comments.

Mr. Ripple informed Dr. Persi that the Board voted unanimously on the first motion, which was to approve the letter to be sent to the vendor. The vote was later rescinded by another motion because there was discussion that took place (as noted in the minutes) when Mr. Foulkes raised the prospect of a conflict of interest. Mr. Ripple continued that even though 'conflict of interest' has a negative connotation, the Board did not have the knowledge of Dr. Persi's relationship with the vendor, and the Board made a good faith determination that not knowing that, it would be more appropriate to have the letter come from the Mayor on two grounds:

1. Not knowing Dr. Persi's relationship with the vendor
2. It would be more appropriate for the letter to come from the Mayor requesting services from a vendor than from a purely advisory body.

Furthermore, Mr. Ripple said it would be inappropriate for Mr. Foulkes to offer an apology when he made the comment in good faith.

Dr. Persi referred to the February minutes again, noting that Ms. Small made a motion, seconded by Mr. Ripple. In p. 6, the minutes read: "Due to the fact that the above motion was passed unanimously without discussion, a new motion was made as follows." She said if you refer to paragraphs 2 – 5, there was indeed a lot of discussion. She said that did not make sense. She also wondered why a new motion was made, when an amendment would have sufficed.

Dr. Persi reiterated that she did not want the words "conflict of interest" next to her name.

Mr. Ripple said it would be appropriate for this month's minutes or last month's minutes to reflect that Dr. Persi has absolutely no financial interest or conflict of interest whatsoever with the vendor providing the toiletries. He also commented that the minutes are, in a sense, out of order, and said that on page 5, it should read: "The motion was made by Ms. Small and seconded by Mr. Ripple, to request the Commission for approval to seek donations..." He said the resulting commentary

should be skipped. Mr. Ripple explained that a point of order was made by Mr. Foulkes saying that the motion was passed unanimously without discussion. Then, Mr. Ripple said, he made the motion, seconded by Mr. Foulkes, to rescind the previous vote, which the Board unanimously approved. The ensuing discussion occurred about any potential conflict of interest, and the suggestion was made that the letter be written by the Mayor. Then the new motion was made by Mr. Discepola, seconded by Mr. Foulkes, to request the letter written by the Mayor.

Mr. Discepola said that he supported an amendment to the minutes editing Mr. Foulkes' comment. In the interest of getting the toiletries to the students in a timely fashion, Mr. Discepola said the motion was to have the Mayor write the letter at that time and alleviate any concerns. He added 'conflict of interest' always has a negative connotation. He recommended amending the minutes to reflect there was no conflict of interest and to include what Dr. Persi had requested.

Dr. Persi stated that the letter to the Commission was very clear, and she does not understand why a second motion was brought up to reiterate what was in the Communication, when all that was necessary was to perfect the language of the first motion stated by Ms. Small, and seconded by Mr. Ripple.

She continued that the Board minutes reflect the Board's posture. The mention of a possible conflict of interest presents an "extremely damaging situation." She asked Mr. Foulkes again for a public apology.

Mr. Discepola recalled there was an issue with Dr. Persi's name being on the letter and that was why a new motion was made, to resolve that. Dr. Persi responded that her name was never going to be on the letter.

Mr. Ripple also said that in order to have discussion on the motion that was passed, they had to go back and rescind the vote and then vote on that. That created a high degree of parliamentary frustration and confusion.

Mr. Foulkes reiterated they had nothing in their hands to discuss at the February meeting. He suggested for the future that if any member has a motion or program to present, that they be present when it comes before the Board. He reiterated that the letter read at this meeting was the first time he had heard of the relationship. If the letter had been read last month, he probably would not have had a concern about conflict of interest. He would welcome attaching that letter somewhere in that statement where he is quoted, noting that this is a letter to clarify the relationship (or lack thereof) between Dr. Persi and the vendor.

Mr. Douglas commented that there may have been a problem with the recording, but if the audio were to be played back, one could hear that nothing was personal.

Ms. Chiappetta said she was advised not to attend last month, as a different company was going to handle that meeting. She said there was an audio record, but no clerk in attendance. She also mentioned that the previous month's minutes cannot be changed for something that, in fact, was said. However, clarifications can be made in the following month's minutes.

Chair Lewis said they will make the necessary adjustments and attachments so that it will be clarified.

Dr. Persi commented that if the Board did not feel they had enough information, they should not have taken a vote.

Mr. Webster brought up a few issues he had with the minutes. In the third paragraph on p. 4, there are comments attributed to him which he thought were a combination of comments between Vice Chair Clark, the Board, and Mr. Shim. He said it was confusing, and he did not know how to correct it. Ms. Shelley also mentioned that at one point the recording did go off. Mr. Webster continued that he would have said that he agreed "with the wonderful efforts of the foundation and that they do have wonderful business partners."

On p. 6, third paragraph, where it says "Mr. Webster reiterated," Mr. Webster said he did not know where he stated that the first time in the minutes, but he would stand by his comment that they do have great students. In the seventh paragraph, he corrected the spelling of "Beacon" to "BECON."

Mr. Foulkes noted on the bottom of p. 6, that the issue at the public forum on April 7 is supposed to be the U.S. Department of Education's reclassification of race and ethnicity.

Dr. Persi noted on p. 6, there was a typo under the paragraph which begins with "Mr. Ripple" in the middle of the paragraph: "took" should be "tool."

Mr. Ripple had a question regarding what changes were allowable, and Ms. Chiappetta responded that corrections can be made. If statements are misinterpreted by the typist, that can be clarified. She added that if someone really wants something in the minutes, to specify that, as the minutes are summary minutes, not verbatim. Mr. Ripple added that if something appeared in the minutes that the speaker did not intend to be in the minutes that could also be removed through amendment to the minutes.

Mr. Foulkes wondered if Mr. Shim would be allowed the opportunity to review the minutes for accuracy. Mr. Webster said he sent the minutes to Mr. Shim, as he usually does, and he will follow up with him.

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by Mr. Ripple, to hold off adopting these minutes as presented this evening until the various corrections/reviews are made, and that the minutes be brought back to this Committee for a final vote at its April meeting.

Mr. Discepola questioned whether they can make the corrections to the minutes now, since “constructive notice” has been sent to Mr. Shim regarding any changes to be made.

Dr. Persi asked if it would be allowed for Mr. Foulkes to rescind his remarks if the intent was not there. Ms. Chiappetta clarified that it could be rescinded if the typist had misinterpreted the speaker’s comments and did not mirror the speaker’s intent. Mr. Discepola suggested that they paraphrase Mr. Foulkes’ comment to the following: “Mr. Foulkes recommended that the letter be signed by the Mayor.”

Mr. Foulkes reiterated his reasons for making the comments that he did, and added he was not impugning anyone’s character, but it was “a simple question” which he regards as routine. He added the remark could be deleted, but he would not support it. He also noted that he had wondered if the company was seeking to do business with the City, and if so, he wondered if this was one way for them to get their foot in the door. He said that was the underlying theme of his concern.

Mr. Foulkes then relayed an experience he had in the past with a potential conflict of interest when he chaired the County Commission’s Multi-Ethnic Advisory Board. From that experience, he learned to always ask and clarify to find out the relationships of people, groups and organizations giving something to a government entity. He added that the money involved in that instance went to the Broward Education Foundation for a project of the School Board and of the Multi-Ethnic Advisory Board, not to himself.

Dr. Persi alluded to issues with the recording, and then Ms. Richards said that there had not been a problem with the recording. Mr. Douglas clarified that when he said “recording,” he was referring to the recording of the minutes by the typist, not the actual audio recording.

Mr. Discepola wondered since Mr. Foulkes’ concern over a conflict of interest was not with Dr. Persi, but with an organization (a third party) willing to donate, not sell, if he would request a change to the minutes that what was stated in the minutes was not accurately transcribed from what may have been recorded, and amend it accordingly. Otherwise, as the minutes stand, they should not have involved Dr. Persi’s name. Based on what Mr. Foulkes has said at this meeting and her explanation of the relationship, the transcription could not be accurate, or at least it is defamatory in nature.

Mr. Foulkes said he was not sure those were his exact words, as the minutes are summary minutes, and he would have to listen to the tape to hear exactly what was said and in what context.

Mr. Ripple suggested a change to the minutes in the fifth paragraph on p. 5 in the February minutes to read as follows: "Mr. Foulkes stated that he was concerned that there may be a potential conflict of interest with Room Service Amenities, and therefore, if the letter was signed by the Mayor, there would not be a question of conflict with any members of this Board."

Mr. Foulkes withdrew his previous motion to delay the adoption of the minutes, and Mr. Ripple withdrew his second.

Motion by Mr. Ripple, seconded by Mr. Discepola, to accept the corrections to paragraph 5 on p. 5 as read and to accept the February minutes as amended, including any other corrections made this evening, and noting that Mr. Shim has not yet been able to give his input on the February minutes.

There was a friendly amendment by Mr. Discepola to amend the minutes of paragraph 5 on p. 5 of the February minutes to read: "Mr. Foulkes stated that he was concerned, and therefore wanted the letter to be signed by the Mayor to avoid any potential conflicts of interest."

Mr. Ripple considered the amendment unfriendly, explaining that the Board had determined that any potential conflict of interest was with the vendor's possible relationship with the City or intent to do business with them.

Mr. Discepola amended his friendly amendment to replace the name Dr. Persi with the name Room Service Amenities. Mr. Ripple accepted that.

Motion restated by Mr. Ripple, seconded by Mr. Discepola, to make the correction in paragraph 5 on p. 5 with the following: "Mr. Foulkes stated that he was concerned that there might be a potential conflict of interest with Room Service Amenities, and therefore, if the letter was signed by the Mayor, there would not be a question of conflict." And to accept the minutes, accepting all corrections and noting that Mr. Shim has not yet had an opportunity to opine on the February minutes. In a roll call vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Motion by Mr. Foulkes that for any proposals brought to this body by a member, the member must be present for complete clarification of any issues that may come up surrounding a proposed action. Motion died for lack of a second.

Mr. Ripple stated that the toiletry project had been continued from January. If someone presents something for consideration by the Board in a given month and it is a continuation of something from a previous month, he wondered if that meant that whatever is being carried over would be tabled if they were not present. Chair Lewis thought they would table it. Mr. Discepola thought they should use their discretion as to whether to discuss it, so they are not "handcuffed."

Ms. Richards clarified that at the February meeting, Vice Chair Clark did mention that Dr. Persi was attending an education conference. The Board wanted to write a letter and they needed the permission of the City Commission to write the letter, and that is how the Communication to the City Commission came about.

- **Introduce New Members** – None.
- **Guest introductions**

Mr. Foulkes introduced his mother, Mrs. Foulkes, a retired teacher.

- **Announcements**

Mr. Foulkes announced that March is National Peace Corps month, and 2011 is the 50th Anniversary of the Peace Corps. There are a number of local teachers and administrators who are returned Peace Corps volunteers. He added that these educators are living the third goal of the Peace Corps, which is to educate Americans about the rest of the world. He said he has copies of proclamations in honor of the Peace Corps anniversary.

B. Communications to City Commission

None.

C. Current Business

There was no Current Business on the agenda.

Mr. Discepola remarked that he attended a meeting for the Broward County Bar Association, and reported that some lawyers are interested in “Justice Teaching.” They go into civics classrooms at the elementary/middle/high school level and explain how the legal and justice systems work. He asked Board members to advise him if they know of anyone at the schools who would like to participate, and he will get the lawyers in touch with the school representatives. Mr. Discepola said the lesson plans are administered by the Florida Supreme Court.

Mr. Webster expressed interest, and Ms. Small mentioned the law magnets at Fort Lauderdale High and William Dandy Middle School.

D. Old/Ongoing Business

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

Sunland Park: Dr. Persi announced that on March 10, former Board member Mrs. Deaner accompanied her to Sunland Park. Dr. Persi had been collecting discarded or damaged items from stores for the schools and collected five shopping bags full of items when she was at the educational conference in February. The Vice Principal accepted the donations and said they would be used as incentives, which was one of the items on their wish list.

Mr. Foulkes announced that on April 27, the Diversity Committee of the School Board of Broward County will have its last school site visit for the year at Sunland Park. It will be a revisit to see where it stands with respect to the nine conditions of the CCC lawsuit settlement, and other issues regarding building structure.

Lauderdale Manors: None.

Arthur Ashe: Chair Lewis said that Arthur Ashe requested funds for students who were unable to pay for field trips. Chair Lewis said she would refer this to the Pantry on Third Avenue.

[Mr. Ripple left the meeting at 7:52 p.m.]

2. Other Reports/Updates/Discussion

a. Reports & Updates:

1) City Staff Liaison – Julie Richards

No report.

2) Student Members to EAB – Not addressed

3) Broward County School District – C. Webster

- Mr. Webster clarified that last month when he gave the percent for meeting class size, he said it was 90% plus, and the exact figure is 97.5%.
- In answer to a question from Ms. Leach regarding boundary changes, he said the timeline he referred to her was under construction. He will do some research and get up-to-date information.
- Mr. Webster said that Ms. Cirillo asked about a program and he thought it had been terminated, but it has not been. It is called "Harness the Power" and will be aggressively promoted. It will be posted on the District website within a few days.
- Mr. Webster added he will take forward the suggestion to accept comments from the community.

- He said that he brought the entire drug testing policy, as well as the annual memo. There is not mandatory drug testing for all employees; however, there is mandatory drug testing for employees who are required to have a commercial driver's license. In addition, drug and alcohol tests are required for pre-employment, random post-accident follow up, return to duty and reasonable suspicion.
- Mr. Webster announced that the dual enrollment program with Broward College has expanded to include five online courses and will utilize the virtual school.
- The Fort Lauderdale Centennial Mural will be unveiled at Stranahan High School on March 25, 2011, at 6:00 p.m.
- The Titans of Nova High School won the Miami Heat/Pepsi Black History Month competition. The school won \$5,000 and students got tickets to a Heat game.

Mr. Foulkes brought up the District's position on the Grand Jury Report. He wondered where the District is now, and if they are writing another response for the Commissioner. Mr. Webster recalled that the Commissioner asked for a response and the Superintendent promised a response to the issues brought up by the Grand Jury within 45 days. He submitted one response already, but is working on a more detailed response within the 45 days. Space will be made available for the Inspector General and his or her staff.

Mr. Foulkes had heard a rumor that the Florida Department of Law Enforcement would be collaborating, and wondered if it was true. Mr. Webster said he was not sure. He will find out and let Ms. Richards know.

Mr. Douglas clarified that the question last month about the drug testing was whether or not it was random. Mr. Webster explained that it is random for those with commercial driver's licenses, but for everyone else it is based on reasonable suspicion.

Mr. Douglas also wanted to hear feedback regarding a federal government agency that was reclassifying race and ethnicity, and what effects that will have on the public schools. Mr. Webster responded that Mr. Foulkes is the chair.

Mr. Foulkes said there is a regular monthly meeting on April 7 of the Diversity Committee of the School Board, and the entire meeting will be devoted to the United States Department of Education's required district diversity data changes. This is a nationwide change, but the meeting is going to focus on Broward County only. Students who historically have been identified as Hispanic or Latino now have a different category to select. Letters went out last year to parents informing them of the change and requesting they re-declare their race based on the new United States Department of Education guidelines. He said there was a list of questions and answers he can email to Ms. Richards to distribute to the Board.

Mr. Foulkes continued that up until last year, the majority of the students in the District were identified as black. In a year's time (looking at the Twenty Day Count), the District became a majority white district, due to many students being identified as the default category, white. The Diversity Committee has invited representatives from government offices and academia to attend the meeting and answer questions. It will be presented as a Community Forum and will be held at the African American Research Library from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Mr. Foulkes will send out more details as they become available.

Ms. Green commented that one of the unintended consequences of the decision to change the classifications is that there is a place to specify ethnicity as well as race, so the numbers do not match. Mr. Foulkes added that they cannot compare data collected previously, as that does not match either.

Mr. Douglas requested that a report on the community forum be added to the agenda for the next meeting. Chair Lewis commented that she was sure Mr. Foulkes would be willing to do that.

4) Council of Fort Lauderdale Civic Associations – B. Shelley

- Ms. Shelley reported that the Council marched in the parade, along with six neighborhoods.
- She also said they elected officers the previous week, and each District has a representative who will go out to each neighborhood to try to get them involved.
- The Code Department gave a presentation.
- Meetings are the second Tuesday of each month on the Eighth Floor, and she invited Board members to attend.
- The Council will be hosting the Florida Neighborhood Conference in June, and there will be tours and seminars.
- The book for elementary children that she mentioned at the February meeting has been sent out electronically for the schools.

E. New/Future Business

F. Next Meeting and Closing

Chair Lewis announced the next meeting would be April 21.

She also verified that Dr. Persi was comfortable with what transpired at the meeting.

Ms. Richards said that at the next meeting there will be election of the Chair and Vice Chair, and their new year begins in April.

Mr. Foulkes announced that on April 16 at the African American Research Library, WPBT (Channel 2) will be pre-screening two of four episodes of Harvard professor Henry Lewis Gates' series on "Blacks in Latin America." It will focus on Haiti, the Dominican Republic, and Cuba, which are well represented in the local school population. In his program, Dr. Gates explains why people choose "white" as their racial category. The following Tuesdays, PBS will be broadcasting the program nationally. Mr. Foulkes said he has flyers on the program.

Mr. Foulkes alerted the Board to the Centennial Wade-In commemoration in Monday, July 4. He also has flyers for that event.

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:23 p.m.

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