

APPROVED
EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE, 1ST FLOOR CHAMBERS
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
THURSDAY, MAY 19, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.

Members	Attendance	Cumulative Attendance	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Magdalene Lewis, Chair	P	11	1
Katie Leach, Vice Chair (arr. 6:36 p.m.)	P	6	4
Shezette Blue-Small	A	2	4
Theresa Bucolo	P	2	0
Vincent Cella (left 8:45 p.m.)	P	2	0
Catherine Cirillo (left 8:54 p.m.)	P	4	1
Laura Clark	A	7	5
Joseph Discepola	A	9	2
Theron Douglas	A	3	1
Edna Elijah (left 8:55 p.m.)	P	7	5
Roland Foulkes	P	10	0
Nancy Green	A	7	3
Trisha Halliday	P	8	2
Maureen Persi, Ed.D. (arr. 6:36 pm.) (left 8:42 p.m.)	P	5	2
Franco Ripple	P	5	0
Lillian Small (left 8:54 p.m.)	P	3	1

Appointed members to the Board: 16
 Needed to constitute a quorum: 9

Staff

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

Students

Sade Smith (left 7:08 p.m.)

Communication to City Commission

None.

As of this date, there are 16 appointed members to the Board, which means 9 would constitute a quorum.

A. Opening

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:31 p.m.

- **Attendance and Sign-in**

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

- **Approve Minutes (April 2011) (Not addressed at this time)**
- **Introduce New Member(s) (Not addressed at this time)**
- **Guest Introductions (taken out of order)**

Cynthia Park, Director of Advanced Academic Programs.
Michaëlle Pope, Director of Diversity and Cultural Outreach.
Denise Rusnak, Director for Exceptional Student Education.

- **Approve Minutes (April 2011)**

Mr. Foulkes pointed out on p. 4, middle of 5th paragraph, the “Sharpe study” should be “Schott study.” The same also applies to the first sentence on the top of p. 5.

Hearing no other corrections, Chair Lewis declared the minutes accepted as typed.

Sade Smith, Stranahan High School, entered the meeting and introduced herself.

Derick Smith, son of Ms. Elijah, introduced himself, noting he is a Behavioral Specialist in the Broward County School Board system.

Mr. Webster and Ms. Shelley introduced themselves.

[Dr. Persi and Ms. Leach entered the meeting at 6:36 p.m.]

B. Communication to City Commission

None.

C. Current Business

1. Overview – Diversity & Cultural Outreach; Exceptional Student Education; Advanced Academic Programs.

Ms. Rusnak, Director for Exceptional Student Education, addressed specific questions that had arisen at the last meeting. The Department of Education does monitor the number of students with disabilities each year and a report is made. For the past four years, the percent of students with disabilities has been 12%. The D.O.E. requires districts to fall within a 12-15% range. Specifically, she said in 2008-2009, the district

had 31,423 students with disabilities (not including the gifted population). In 2009-2010, the district had 32,030. In 2010-2011, they are seeing a small decrease: 31,696.

Ms. Rusnak continued that another area the D.O.E. monitors the District on is the over- or under-representation of students with disabilities in different racial areas. The District is at .91 risk ratio, and the State is at 1.6 (a ratio of "1" being the norm).

Mr. Foulkes brought up the question he raised at the last meeting: when looking at the exceptionalities under the gifted category, there were 5,100 white students. In the black category there were 1,699 students and 2,947 were Hispanic. Under "specific learning disabled," the highest number of students is black, followed by white students. His main concern was the gifted category and Mr. Foulkes said he cannot understand why so few black students are listed as "gifted" when they (black students) are the largest percentage of students in the District up until this year. Mr. Foulkes stated that the State of Florida defines a "gifted student" as one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance" (Rule 6a-6.03019, Fla. Admin. Code).

Ms. Rusnak explained that the reason Mr. Foulkes' numbers were more than hers was that his numbers included "gifted" while hers did not. In Broward, there is a .89 risk ratio of a learning disabled student being identified as black. The State as a whole is a 1.04. She said her goal is to be at 1.0 or lower.

Ms. Park stated that the State of Florida sets the definition of who is "gifted." There are three criteria: IQ of two standard deviations above the average (130); show a need for the program in areas of giftedness; and show majority of characteristics of behaviors typical of gifted children (measured by a standardized instrument). A Committee reviews the criteria to determine if the student is eligible, and then there is a parental option to take or not take advantage of the program.

Ms. Park continued that there should be a direct correlation of black gifted to the overall black student population. She cited several reasons why that is not the case:

- The intellectual assessment (IQ tests) is culturally biased.
 - For students in the Free and Reduced Lunch program (who have cultural experiences limited by poverty) or ELL students, there is a Plan B where those students can get in with an IQ (116) with one standard deviation and one point above the mean.
- Lack of understanding in the community as to what "giftedness" is.
- Disparity in parent advocacy from community to community

She said the District started a universal screening project in 2004 and have found that the disparities are greater in the higher grades than in the lower grades. They now screen all second graders and refer qualified children automatically for gifted services – this has resulted in a dramatic decrease in the disproportionality.

Last year the District “shopped” for a less expensive screening test and they are using the new test this year. They have just screened 40,000 children. The school psychologists will work beyond contract to test the FRL and ELL students over the summer months.

Ms. Park continued that they need teachers who are trained to advocate and screen children themselves.

She remarked that gifted education is not about being separate or elite, it is about having needs around the giftedness met so that the student can accelerate, and having a teacher who can run the classroom smoothly.

She suggested Board members could attend the Gifted Advisory Meeting and see the new diversity among the members. She also suggested visiting Parkway Middle School of the Arts, which has a cluster (a school within a school) for gifted children in grades 3-8. She hoped that the program would eventually become a model for the District, the State and the nation.

Ms. Small mentioned a student at Walker Elementary who appears to be gifted who needs advocacy and wondered what could be done for him. Ms. Park replied that she hears the same thing every day, and it is difficult because there is only one Gifted Coordinator, and Ms. Park takes all phone calls from parents related to giftedness. Ms. Park invited the parent to call her office to find out how to go about getting tested. Once identified as “gifted,” the child will get a binding educational plan and some legal rights. Ms. Park reiterated that they screen universally only at the second grade level. However, she added, a parent can request through the ESE Specialist to have a younger child evaluated. Ms. Park explained the process to Ms. Small.

Ms. Park continued that differentiated instruction is crucial for all students, not just the gifted population.

Ms. Sade Smith said she was tested when she was a student at Walker Elementary and Gloria Walker was the person who tested her. She suggested Ms. Small contact Ms. Walker. Ms. Smith asked permission to be excused to attend her awards ceremony.

[Ms. Smith left the meeting at 7:08 p.m.]

Ms. Elijah commended the gifted program as being a catalyst in getting students through high school and into college. She spoke of her son’s experience as a gifted student.

Ms. Elijah wondered if the children with an IQ of 116 are as successful going through the gifted program as the children with an IQ of 130. Ms. Park replied that they do not have hard data to show that, but teachers cannot tell the difference between the Plan A and Plan B students.

Ms. Small was curious how long the Parkway program had been in existence, and Ms. Park said this was its first year. The program was at Arthur Ashe for two years before that, but did not do well at that school. Parkway is a better location, as it has District-wide transportation and the Performing Arts Magnet. Ms. Park said if they had a large building, they could fill it with all the students on the waiting list for the program.

Dr. Persi wondered if there had been any discussion with the State regarding removing the IQ test as a criterion for the gifted classification. Ms. Park said they have been discussing the definition with the State for the past 20 years. She said many advocates for gifted education object to any change in the rule or elimination of the IQ criterion because it would let more children into the category – they want to protect funding. Ms. Park explained that the gifted children get 1.5 times the funding than that for “regular kids.”

Vice Chair Leach brought up the under-enrollment at some schools in Fort Lauderdale (and thus, empty buildings) and wondered if the Board had thought of utilizing those buildings for a magnet school for gifted children. Ms. Park stated that the Gifted Advisory Committee brought this subject up to the Superintendent and it was basically rejected because there are so many other things going on. Ms. Park noted there is a bias against spending money on gifted students when regular teachers are being laid off – the gifted students are perceived as “privileged.”

Mr. Foulkes wondered how they control for the biases of the psychologists who are also diagnosing and interacting with students who may not be from their background. Ms. Park said she has strong confidence in the job the psychologists are doing – she meets with them all the time. She also gets feedback from the parents who call to ask why their child was not picked, and she then looks at the Committee decision and what test was administered. If the child is from a different culture, she examines how the child was evaluated and rarely finds anything out of order.

Mr. Foulkes wondered who uses the “Gifted Indicators Checklist.” Ms. Park responded that the Committee collects that information from teachers, guidance person, and others who have objectively observed the students. Mr. Foulkes noted that the checklist may be culturally biased as well. Ms. Park said there is a slightly different checklist that goes with Plan B.

Dr. Persi brought up the WISC (Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children) and Stanford-Benet tests, and wondered if the State pays for all of the tests, and Ms. Park replied that she thought the State or District pays for them. She continued that if they could go to group IQ testing, they could lower the identification costs more, but statutes do not allow that. The District does pay for group screening tests.

Ms. Pope, Director, Diversity and Cultural Outreach, explained she was asked to come to this meeting to respond to questions raised at last month’s meeting, specifically about

the District's perspective about the Diversity Committee's work, as well as the work of the Diversity and Cultural Outreach Office.

Ms. Pope explained how the Diversity Committee came about.

- In 1987, School District formed a Biracial Committee
 - To bring compliance with the desegregation order
- Later on the Biracial Committee collaborated with Desegregation Task Force
 - Addressed 7 areas: student achievement, student assignments, magnet, facilities, transportation, extracurricular activities, diversity in faculty and staff
- Lawsuit by Citizens Concerned for our Children against the District
 - Claimed District did not meet equity and parity for students, particularly students name in lawsuit
 - Settled in 2000
 - Included funds to pay for CCC legal fees, and to specific plaintiffs
 - District did not necessarily admit blame (Item 7 in agreement)
 - Nine Conditions of Agreement (what the District agreed to do to address the issues)
 - Survey schools regarding number, quality and age of textbooks, identify gaps, implement plan to provide equal allocation of current textbooks
 - Survey technology within schools, identify gaps, implement plans to bring schools to parity in regards to allocation and capacity of computers
 - Implement and develop standards of service for all schools
 - Develop plan to establish core of advanced placement and honors courses at every high school, and develop plan for distance learning
 - Inventory of athletic equipment and facilities at all high schools, identify gaps and bring to parity based on District standards; offer a core of athletic and other extra-curricular activities including academic clubs in each middle and high school and put into place a marketing plan to assure equal opportunity based on campus activities; a plan to assure equity in athletic field uses and revenue sharing at Lockhart and all other stadiums
 - Survey all school media centers, identify gaps, implement plan to provide equal allocation and access to media center materials including district-wide take-home policy
 - Collect data on current disciplinary practices, implement plan to address the conclusions of said analysis to ensure equity
 - Structured public analysis of the 5-Year Capital Plan and subsequent 5-Year Capital Plans to allocate funds to bring school facilities into parity with District standards

- Utilize for student assignment purposes, the Diversity Committee's recommended and Board approved definition of diversity and never use any one factor alone
- Establish additional Committee functions for existing Diversity Committee

Ms. Pope explained the difference between indicators and conditions. The Courts did not outline indicators for the above conditions – they said that the School Board would abide by what is listed. The Committee looked at the conditions and had to determine a way to measure how the School Board was doing in meeting the conditions, and that is how the language of indicators came in. The Committee and staff then developed indicator criteria.

Ms. Pope mentioned that lack of compliance is determined by the indicators which were produced not by the Courts, but by the Committee. This has resulted in some disagreements between the District and the Committee on whether the conditions are met. Ms. Pope stated that there is a commitment on the part of the District to move forward with the items in the agreement. She added, however, that the District has issues meeting the conditions as they are outlined with the indicators.

She said that since 2000, many things have changed in the District such as funding, new laws, expectations and issues. An example of that is a new law requiring 50% of instructional materials to be digital, which conflicts with the lawsuit condition of a hard-copy textbook for each child. She said the District is not in 100% compliance for those reasons. She added the indicators need to be reviewed.

Vice Chair Leach acknowledged 100% compliance is asking a lot, and asked Ms. Pope for a percentage of what the District is in compliance with the conditions. Ms. Pope answered that she does not believe compliance should be 100% on anything because things are always changing. According to the legal document, the District is supposed to look at the data and address it, not necessarily be 100% compliant.

Vice Chair Leach asked what the data revealed. Ms. Pope said the District monitors each condition annually and that is provided in a status report. She said they have seen improvement. The role of the Diversity Committee is to review the report and make recommendations.

Mr. Foulkes shared some data from the most recent status report (August of 2010):

- In 2007-2008, out of 44 indicators, 35 were met (74.5%)
- In 2008-2009, 42 indicators, 38 were met (80.9%)
- In 2009-2010, 32 indicators, 26 were measurable, 23 were met (88.5%)

He pointed out that while the percentage of indicators met went up, the number of indicators went down.

Mr. Foulkes then read for the record two definitions of compliance from Dr. Katherine Blasik:

- Based on mathematics, if it is not 100% evident, it is not met. In the spirit of the CCC agreement, there should be equity and parity across all schools in order for an indicator to be met. If an indicator is not met, it is not in compliance. (October 2, 2008)
- If an indicator shows “met,” it means that part of the condition has been met. If all indicators have been met, then the condition has been met. If the indicator has not been met, it will state why on the status column next to the appropriate indicator. (September 2008)

Mr. Foulkes explained the tension between the Diversity Committee and the Board: the Committee is appointed by the people they are supposed to “watching.”

Ms. Pope remarked that she has been trying to get the District’s position on what compliance is, and has not yet received an official statement. However, the Legal Department and Superintendent do not necessarily endorse the definitions of compliance set forth by Dr. Blasik. She thought those definitions were Dr. Blasik’s personal opinions during a discussion of the issue, not the official position of the District.

Vice Chair Leach commented that the fact that the Board did not prioritize the compliance of the conditions when they did have funding demonstrates a “black eye.”

2. School Adoptions

Dr. Persi reported that she emailed questions/comments to Ms. Richards and felt the Board should discuss them before adding additional schools. She wished to hear from those members of the Board with knowledge of the adoptions up to this point regarding their success. She thought the wish list was a good idea, but now wonders if they are just spinning their wheels.

[Mr. Foulkes and Vice Chair Leach stepped away from the meeting at 8:00 p.m.]

Ms. Elijah said they had originally received wish lists and direction as to what to do, but if the Board feels that they need to be directed on other issues that are needed to bring to said schools or open up for other schools, she thought it would be a good discussion point.

[Mr. Foulkes returned at 8:02 p.m.]

Dr. Persi suggested criteria of why they want to move ahead with a wish list or the whole idea of adoption.

Ms. Shelley said she was on the Board when the adoptions first started. They picked two schools because the communities said they needed it. Someone from Lauderdale

Manors later approached the City Manager and requested to be added. At that same time, another group was working on that project out of the realm of this Board, so the Board's project starting "spinning its wheels."

Ms. Shelley said they used to meet at the schools and they did do some things at Arthur Ashe and at Sunland, but never had a clear idea of what they wanted to do. In addition to that, there was a turnover of principals, and they had to "start over" every time that happened. Overall, she felt it was not done properly.

Ms. Halliday said she did not mind continuing, but wanted some objectives and also a person assigned to the schools.

[Vice Chair Leach returned at 8:06 p.m.]

Ms. Elijah said they need direction for the current year and need to decide if and how the program will continue.

Ms. Halliday wondered if they had any feedback from the schools this year, and Chair Lewis said they had not from Arthur Ashe or Lauderdale Manors. Dr. Persi reminded the Board that last month she reported she had been at Sunland with the incentives gifts, and that the Principal had called and thanked the Board.

Dr. Persi also recalled that in the past they had committees for the different schools, but with the constant turnover, nothing came into fruition. She thought maybe they should focus on one school before adding any others.

Vice Chair Lynch asked about the mission of the Board and it was noted that the Purpose is stated at the bottom of the agenda.

Chair Lewis suggested establishing a Committee to serve for one year to decide on rules and objectives, and maybe select one school.

Ms. Small recommended discarding the school adoption program, as she thought they have not received sufficient cooperation from the schools. She thought if a committee was to be formed, it should be a fact-finding committee to develop a connection with all of the schools in the City.

Mr. Ripple commented that adopting schools is not within the purview of the Board if one goes by the Purpose – "to advise the City Commission" or "which will impact education facilities located within the City." He agreed with Ms. Small that they might continue to do this, but on an ad-hoc basis for some school that has an immediate need. He said the school needs to come halfway to the Board.

Ms. Bucolo spoke as a principal, noting they are always appreciative of items they receive, but she had no idea for the last nine years what happens on this Board that

affects the schools in Fort Lauderdale. She thought a communication piece was missing. Ms. Bucolo also said that the schools are doing wonderful things that are not being advertised.

Vice Chair Leach wanted to move more in the direction of the purpose, that is, advising the City Commission about what is going on in the schools in the City. She advocated keeping the lines of communication strong and current.

Ms. Cirillo commented that her school is also losing money, as is Ms. Bucolo's. She said they have to look at the purpose of the Board and let the City Commissioners know what is missing at the schools. She said they have no playground at their school, because the cafeteria was built on the blacktop. She said the City has to plan in conjunction with the District, and she wants to find out why there are unfinished projects at Fort Lauderdale High.

Ms. Elijah did not think it was the Board's role to bring matters like that to the attention of the City – she thought other procedures existed for that purpose. Ms. Cirillo said that the principals have gone through the normal routes to get the issues resolved.

Chair Lewis wanted to appoint a committee to establish the Board's mission statement, objectives and aims for the schools. She appointed Dr. Persi, Mrs. Small, Mr. Foulkes and she asked for two more. Ms. Richards interrupted, saying she would first like to get information for the Board regarding protocol of establishing committees.

Chair Lewis then suggested tabling this discussion until the next meeting.

Vice Chair Leach remarked that she had since been told that if there is a playground and something is built on the space and they have moved the playground, then the school gets to have a playground. However, if they add construction that does not impact the playground in any way, then there are no capital dollars that can be spent on a playground. She added it is up to the District, not the City, to provide funding for playgrounds.

Mr. Webster commented that the Board first chose schools for adoption that were "under stress," and thought that might have been just one more thing for the school to handle. He suggested that whatever the Board decides to do, they should look at more receptive principals and schools.

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by Vice Chair Leach, that this Board suspend its school adoption program until further notice. In a vote by roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Foulkes suggested that the Chair send a letter to all the schools explaining who the Board is and asking for the school needs. He acknowledged that the program is a good

one and he sees the needs, but under his motion, the program would cease until the Board decides which direction to go as it relates to the purpose of the Board.

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by Ms. Leach, to extend the meeting for 15 minutes as he thought someone else had some issues to discuss. Chair Lewis said the Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Foulkes announced that the Hallandale Education Advisory Board is co-hosting a Community Forum in Hallandale on June 13 with the Diversity Committee and the Special Hallandale High School Community Task Force. He said there are serious problems at Hallandale High School that they are addressing. He wanted to see a similar forum take place in Fort Lauderdale as a way to reach to the community. He had flyers and other information to share.

Motion by Mr. Ripple, seconded by Mr. Foulkes, to suspend rules and go to Section E (New/Future Business) and then return to Section D because there is one item in New and Future Business.

Dr. Persi said since they were not following the agenda, she had a question about the Room Service Amenities. She said she did not get a letter, and asked Ms. Richards about the status of that. Ms. Richards said she sent the Board members an email confirming that the letter to Room Service Amenities from the Mayor was sent. She did attach a copy of the letter, although it was not a copy of the letter after the Mayor had signed it.

Dr. Persi wondered where they would go as a Board with the donation of toiletries, and Chair Lewis said since the request had been made, she did not think they should cancel the program.

Mr. Ripple withdrew his motion temporarily in order to finish the current conversation.

At the request of Chair Lewis, Mr. Ripple restated his motion as follows: **Motion** by Mr. Ripple, seconded by Mr. Foulkes, to table the discussion of Part D of Old/Ongoing Business and move ahead to Part E of New/Future Business. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

E. New/Future Business (taken out of order per motion)

1. Charter School – Resources available

Ms. Richards alerted the Board that this item was just a notice that the topic will be on the agenda for the next meeting as a discussion item.

Mr. Ripple said he was formally seeking consensus from the Board to discuss an incident that happened at Blanche Ely High School in Pompano Beach regarding

gender discrimination. He said he had sent copies of two articles from the South Florida Times to Ms. Richards for distribution to the Board members.

[Dr. Persi left the meeting at 8:42 p.m.]

Mr. Ripple said the incident was in direct contradiction to the Broward County School Board's stated policy of non-discrimination based on sexual orientation as well as gender identity and gender expression. The North Area Superintendent followed up with a letter to the students stating that all schools in the District have the ability to avail themselves of site-based or school-based policies. He thought the schools cannot have policies that contradict the District policy.

Mr. Ripple wanted to have staff personnel from the School Board present at the next meeting who are responsible for oversight of school-based policies and rules in order to question them.

Mr. Webster commented that every student and parent receive a copy of the Code of Student Conduct, and are required to sign a statement that they have received it. It was noted that displays of affection would not be in the Code of Student Conduct.

[Mr. Cella left the meeting at 8:45 p.m.]

Mr. Ripple further commented that his office did a random sample of all the Broward County public high school web sites and in no part of the sample could they find listed clearly anywhere the site or school specific code of conduct or policies. He felt schools are able to set their own rules but not make them apparent.

Mr. Ripple repeated that in the interest of time, he sought Board consensus to put this matter on the June agenda.

Mr. Foulkes commented on the incident and school rules on public displays of affection, remarking that he thought the incident had gotten too much press when there are serious issues that need attention.

Mr. Ripple responded to Mr. Foulkes' comments by saying that this issue is equally important as the other types of discrimination they spend time discussing on this Board. He referred to previous comments by one of the student members regarding ongoing gender discrimination at the schools.

Mr. Foulkes seconded the motion (to put the item on the June agenda).

[Ms. Cirillo and Ms. Small left the meeting at 8:54 p.m.]

[Ms. Elijah left the meeting at 8:55 p.m.]

D. Old/Ongoing Business

1. Other Reports/Updates/Discussion

a. Reports and Updates:

1) City Staff Liaison – Julie Richards

Nothing to report.

2) Student Members to EAB (none present)

3) Broward County School District – C. Webster

Mr. Webster reported that there is a Boundary Meeting scheduled for June 1 in Western High School, one on June 6 at Boyd Anderson. He reminded members to take their sales tax to school.

The Community Budget Task Force is scheduled to deliver their recommendations to the Board at the next meeting.

Dillard High School won the jazz band competition, and Parkway has a jazz band that is also excellent.

Vice Chair Leach asked Mr. Webster if there was a meeting on the next day regarding furloughs. Mr. Webster said there was a Board workshop to address Reciprocal Use Agreements and also, as part of the standard agenda, the budget. The meeting will begin at 12:30-1:30 (Reciprocal Use) and 1:30–3:00 (budget).

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

Nothing to report.

F. Next Meeting and Closing

- **Location and Date: City Hall, June 16, 2011**

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 p.m.

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