

APPROVED
EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE, 1ST FLOOR CHAMBERS
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.

Members	Attendance	APRIL 2011-APRIL 2012	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Magdalene Lewis, Chair	P	4	0
Katie Leach, Vice Chair	A	3	1
Theresa Bucolo	P	3	1
Vincent Cella	P	4	0
Catherine Cirillo	P	4	0
Laura Clark	P	2	2
Joseph Discepola	A	2	2
Theron Douglas	A	1	3
Edna Elijah	P	2	2
Roland Foulkes	P	4	0
Nancy Green (arr. 6:53 p.m.)	P	2	2
Trisha Halliday	P	3	1
Cici Kelly	A	0	1
Dr. Maureen Persi, Ed.D.	P	4	0
Franco Ripple	A	3	1
Lillian Small	A	2	2

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

Staff

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

Students

Rebecca Jules

Communications to City Commission

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by Ms. Elijah, that the Education Advisory Board recommend to the City Commission of Fort Lauderdale to hold a series of community forums around Fort Lauderdale in consultation with the charter school systems of Pembroke Pines and Coral Springs to explore the “who,” the “what,” the “when,” the “where,” the “why” and the “how” for one or more charter schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale. In a roll call vote, the motion passed (6-4) as follows: Mr. Cella, yes; Ms. Cirillo, yes; Ms. Clark, yes; Ms. Elijah, yes; Mr. Foulkes, yes; Ms. Green, no; Ms. Halliday, no; Dr. Persi, no; Ms. Bucolo, no; Chair Lewis, yes.

Motion by Ms. Green, seconded by Ms. Cirillo, to ask the City Commission for the source of the interest in charter schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

A. Opening

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

- **Attendance and Sign-in**

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

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

- **Approve Minutes (June '11)** (not addressed at this time)
- **Introduce New Member(s)** (not addressed at this time)
- **Guest Introductions: Scott Mire**, guest speaker on Charter Schools

Rebecca Jules, a student representative from FLHS, introduced herself. Rebecca's father also introduced himself.

Mr. Foulkes introduced his mother, Mrs. Foulkes.

Mr. Persi introduced himself.

- **Approve Minutes (June '11)**

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by Ms. Elijah, to approve the minutes of the June 16, 2011 minutes as presented. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- **Introduce New Member(s)**

Ms. Richards said there is a new Board member, Cici Kelly; however, she was unable to attend the meeting

B. Communications to City Commission (not addressed at this time)

C. Student Members to the Education Advisory Board (not addressed at this time)

D. Current Business

1. **Discuss the subject of implementing Charter Schools in the City**

Scott Mire remarked that he was invited by Ms. Clark to attend the meeting. He said he is an architect with a firm that builds charter schools, and also works with a development company called The Alliance Companies. That entity does turn-key services for charter schools (purchase land, build the school and lease it back).

Mr. Mire showed a rendering of a project they completed in Pembroke Pines, a K-8, separated gender, 1,328 capacity school. He also showed a charter school he worked on in the City of Homestead.

Mr. Mire stated that the first question the City should consider in the establishment of a charter school is location. He thought another consideration might be involved if locating in the downtown area, and that would be use of the City's resources.

Charter schools receive the same financing from the State, but the public schools can tax and build a facility based on a tax base. In the case of a charter school, the developer puts up the money and leases it back to the school. Charter schools can afford approximately \$700-\$1050 per student. Within those economic parameters, they cannot build in downtown Fort Lauderdale.

Mr. Mire suggested three possibilities for a school in the downtown area:

- Performing arts school (in conjunction with the Performing Arts Center)
- Science-based school (in conjunction with the Science & Discovery Center)
- Business, Law and Government Management school (use internships)

If the City were to get involved in the establishment of a charter school, they would either build and provide the facility for the school, or provide a piece of land with a long-term lease agreement. In the first two examples above, Mr. Mire said they would probably get someone to build the facility; and, in the third example, the City could provide a facility in the City Hall area.

Regarding the school at Pembroke Pines, Mr. Mire commented that they probably built the facilities on the expensive side, and it does not work well to have the teachers be public employees, due to cost considerations in the long run. Having a quality operator is an essential component of a successful charter school.

Mr. Mire was confident that a charter school in this area would fill to capacity, but advised checking the area's demographics within the range of the school. He added it is not economically feasible to operate a school with less than 500 students, and advised a range of 1200-1500 students.

Ms. Clark asked about the financing of a charter school (private vs. public), and Mr. Mire replied that the private developers are more "ruthless" than cities are in terms of the bottom line, as it requires about a \$15M investment. He added that when they build a charter school, they have to build in the range of 50-60 square feet per student. Charter

school developers also do not have to comply with the State Requirements for Educational Facilities, which has numerous requirements driving up the cost of the facility. He again suggested an independent operator should run the school.

Nancy Green joined the meeting at 6:53 p.m.

Mr. Foulkes thought the political climate favors expanding into charter schools, privately and municipally. He questioned, however, why the City of Fort Lauderdale would want to add another charter school, when they just closed one. He said he wanted to hear from Mr. Dodge (Pembroke Pines) and someone from Coral Springs regarding their experiences.

Mr. Mire explained that a charter school is considered to be an amenity, another choice. He commented that a major difference between a charter school and a public school is that if the charter does not perform, it goes out of business. A charter school in the downtown area would add to economic development of the area.

Ms. Elijah wondered if the downtown would be the only area available for a charter school, and if homeowners would be taxed for a municipally run charter school. Mr. Mire answered that outside of the downtown core area, prices are less expensive and it could be done without City help. Incentives could be offered to charter school companies in those areas. However, in the downtown area, the City would need to provide financial help. He emphasized that a charter school has to fill a need - it has to be special in some way. Charter schools are provided State revenue which is funded by taxpayers, but that is existing revenue. The revenue would go directly to the charter school instead of the school board. He added, however, the charter schools are chartered by the school board. City incentives offered to charter companies would come out of the taxpayers' pockets.

Dr. Persi wondered if the charter school trend would ultimately decimate the public school system, perhaps siphoning out the "niche" students.

Mr. Foulkes mentioned that Coral Springs Charter was ranked among the top 1000 high schools in the nation, and Pembroke Pines Charter was also ranked highly. He noted they are both municipally run charter schools, and none of the privately run charter schools made the list.

Mr. Mire commented there is a huge variety of charter schools and he just mentioned the big ones. He thought that in 20 years, the larger operators will have moved in and nudged many of the Mom & Pop schools out of business.

Ms. Clark asked how the students for a charter school are selected, and Mr. Mire responded that it is by lottery. It may also be first come/first served. However, it is not based on academic performance, and a charter school cannot kick a student out for poor performance.

Ms. Clark wondered if the vacant building across the street would be big enough to house 500 students. Mr. Mire said he thought the building was too small, but perhaps could be expanded. He continued that the City would probably ask the building owner to remodel it and then sign a lease with the owner. If the school needs a new building, the City would have to pay for it or lease it to somebody (who will build it) on a long-term lease. Mr. Mire remarked that the City could make money off a charter school.

Mr. Mire explained that the funding is based on the student count on the first few days of school.

Ms. Bucolo was curious if there had been an “outcry” in the City for a charter school. While nobody seemed to know, Mr. Mire said that, as a developer, they look for areas with underperforming or overcrowded schools.

Mr. Persi (from the audience) asked if there was a financial downside for the Board of Education, and Mr. Mire replied that if the school is not successful financially or underperforms, it (the school) is out of business. He continued that charter schools are private ventures and have all the positives and negatives that come with that.

Chair Lewis brought up the issues of “where” and “why.” As a developer, Mr. Mire said he would pick a location where he would be sure he would not go bankrupt. As a City, they would probably pick a location where they think it “ought to go.” The “why” goes together with the “where.”

Mr. Mire remarked he has not yet run into school boundary issues as they relate to charter schools, and he believed their boundary is set by their charter. Mr. Foulkes thought parents could send their student to any charter school of their choice. Mr. Mire commented further that their boundaries may be county-wide.

Ms. Bucolo mentioned that her school has a hard time keeping students with the existing competition of St. Mark’s, St. Anthony’s and Bethany. She cautioned that the Board should conduct research to ensure that the school is placed correctly.

Mr. Persi commented that every time a student leaves the public schools, they take \$5600 with them. He thought that was a consideration for the school district in terms of a financial burden.

B. Communication to City Commission

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by Ms. Elijah, that the Education Advisory Board recommend to the City Commission of Fort Lauderdale to hold a series of community forums around Fort Lauderdale in consultation with the charter school systems of Pembroke Pines and Coral Springs to explore the “who,” the “what,” the “when,” the “where,” the “why” and the “how” for one or more charter schools in the City of Fort

Lauderdale. In a roll call vote, the motion passed (6-4) as follows: Mr. Cella, yes; Ms. Cirillo, yes; Ms. Clark, yes; Ms. Elijah, yes; Mr. Foulkes, yes; Ms. Green, no; Ms. Halliday, no; Dr. Persi, no; Ms. Bucolo, no; Chair Lewis, yes.

Ms. Clark, Ms. Cirillo, and Chair Clark noted they have issues with the topic, but voted "yes" to explore it.

Motion by Ms. Elijah, seconded by Mr. Foulkes, to send the above motion as an official Communication to the City Commission. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Cirillo was concerned about the City taking on another financial burden (of a charter school) when there are already many excellent options available. She thought that Pembroke Pines and Coral Springs built the charter schools because they had so much vacant property. She added that some children from charter schools in Fort Lauderdale had such meager skills at summer school at Bennett that it was impossible to help them.

Mr. Foulkes added that he is aware of a similar situation in Fort Lauderdale, but cautioned against taking away from the successes of charter schools and their options for parents.

Ms. Green stated that on the east side of Broward County/Fort Lauderdale, the options are greater than those on the west side because of the strong magnet programs there. Parents on the west side do not have those options unless they opt to have their children bussed to the east side of town. She reiterated there are tremendous opportunities for the parents regarding availability, but there is a difference on the two sides of town.

Ms. Bucolo mentioned that the virtual university is also becoming popular.

Ms. Green wanted to ask the City Commission where the proposal for a charter school evaluation by this Board came from. She wondered if there was a groundswell of public asking for this, or if it came from a business presentation by a charter school company. Chair Lewis also wondered if the City is looking into charter schools because other cities are doing it.

Mr. Foulkes commented that Broward County Schools is the largest employer in Broward County, and he felt the District could not sustain itself in terms of size. He further commented it is important for municipalities to start looking at what role they can play in the education of their citizens. He hoped that parents would attend the community forums (proposed in his earlier motion) and voice their opinions on charter schools associated with the City.

Ms. Richards stated that the Communication to the City Commission may be on the agenda for the August 23rd meeting of the City Commission, but that she would confirm and advise the Board. She said the conference meeting starts at 1:30 p.m., and she invited Board members to attend if they wished or could. She also encouraged the Board members to provide any additional information in their communication or a report to the City Commission from their discussions on Charter Schools.

Motion by Ms. Green, seconded by Ms. Cirillo, to ask the City Commission for the source of the interest in charter schools in the City of Fort Lauderdale. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

C. Student Members to the Education Advisory Board

Rebecca Jules (Fort Lauderdale High School junior) wondered if the homeowners have to pay more if there are charter schools. If there is no impact on the homeowners financially, she wondered who it does impact, and why it would not be a good opportunity.

Ms. Cirillo replied that every child in the public school is “worth” a certain amount of money to the schools. Every time a child does not go through the Broward County School System, the system loses that amount of money. Additionally, for every 22-25 children who do not come through the system, the District loses a teacher. As a result, teachers lose their jobs, class sizes increase, and it is harder to educate the children.

In response to a question about any concerns she may have, Ms. Jules said it was difficult to adjust to a new teacher midway through the semester when the class size limit (25) took effect.

She also commented that the school has all the classes she is interested in (science). In response to a question by Dr. Persi, Ms. Jules said she is taking AP Chemistry, AP English, AP Calculus, and E-commerce. She plans to take American History Honors. She is involved in volleyball and track, and is a member of DFYIT (Drug Free Youth in Town) and NHS.

Ms. Richards commented that as requested by the Board, letters inviting the Principals of Dillard, Fort Lauderdale, and Stranahan High to recommend student members to the Board had been sent, and she had also followed up with faxes and emails. So far, she received one response, which was for Ms. Jules. She reminded the Board that they would be reviewing the applications at their meeting in October, and encouraged the members in the interim to also follow up with the Principals, which she would be doing as well.

Ms. Halliday mentioned that another student from Fort Lauderdale will be attending next month’s meeting.

Mr. Foulkes said he had contacted the advisor for the Broward County Student Government Association and was told students from three schools would be attending starting next month.

D. Current Business

2. Co-applicability of the site-based, school-based management system; Broward County School System's Code of Conduct and Policies – Franco Ripple

Motion by Ms. Cirillo, seconded Mr. Foulkes, to defer this item to the next meeting when the presenter, Mr. Ripple, can attend. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

E. Old/Ongoing Business

1. RSA Roomservice Amenities – School Toiletries

Ms. Clark reported that she contacted RSA to follow up on the toiletries that the company had proposed donating to the students, and they sent a box of 100 toothbrushes, shampoos and conditioners. She wondered if they should split them up and bag them for the three schools, or deliver them to one school.

Motion by Ms. Cirillo, seconded by Ms. Elijah, to deliver the items to one school. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Dr. Persi suggested sending the items to Lauderdale Manors, as toiletries were items on their wish list.

Motion by Mr. Foulkes, seconded by Mr. Cella, to send the toiletries to Lauderdale Manors. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

2. Other Reports/Updates/Discussion

a. Reports & Updates

1) City Staff Liaison – Julie Richards

Ms. Richards reminded the Board that they wanted the students to be in the early part of the agenda so that they could leave early if they needed to, and the agenda outline had been amended to reflect the Board's desire.

2) Broward County School District – C. Webster

Mr. Webster was not present, but Chair Lewis announced there would be a presentation on Channel 10 that evening about School Board spending.

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

Ms. Shelley was not present.

F. New/Future Business

1. Announcements

Mr. Foulkes announced that the School District has received 44 applications for the position of Superintendent, and the application deadline is now passed. He said he was not sure who was on the interviewing committee.

2. Good of the Group

Mr. Foulkes mentioned that he brought several Social Science and History textbooks for viewing. Some of these will be adopted for the next five years. He was in a group that went through 32 books to recommend textbooks based on diversity representation of all kinds.

G. Next Meeting and Closing

- **Location and Date: City Hall, September 15, 2011**

Hearing no further business, Chair Lewis adjourned the meeting at 8:17 p.m.

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