

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

Members	Attendance	APRIL 2011-APRIL 2012	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Magdalene Lewis, Chair	P	7	0
Vice Chair Franco Ripple	A	5	2
Theresa Bucolo	P	6	1
Vincent Cella	A	5	2
Catherine Cirillo	P	6	1
Laura Clark	P	4	3
Joseph Discepola	P	4	3
Edna Elijah	P	5	2
Roland Foulkes	A	5	2
Nancy Green (arr. 6:43 p.m.)	P	4	3
Trisha Halliday	A	5	2
Cici Kelly	A	2	2
Chester Ludwick	P	2	0
Dr. Maureen Persi, Ed.D.	P	6	1
Austin Scott	A	1	1
Lillian Small	P	5	2

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

Staff

Hal Barnes, Staff Liaison
Betty Shelley, CFLCA Liaison
Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Students

Hayley Gearheart
Rebecca Jules
Sophia Louissaint

A. Opening

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:33 p.m.

- **Attendance and Sign-in; # of Appointed Members – 16; # Needed for Quorum – 9**

As of this date, there are 16 appointed members to the Board, which means 9 would constitute a quorum. Following roll call by Ms. Chiappetta, it was determined there was a quorum in attendance.

Hal Barnes introduced himself, noting he is the Manager for Neighbor Support. He explained that Ms. Richards has resigned from the City and asked him to extend her sincere gratitude to the Board and well wishes for the Board's continued success. Mr. Barnes said he is filling in temporarily, and possibly a permanent liaison will be assigned by January.

- **Approve Minutes (October '11)** (Not addressed at this time)
- **Introduce New Member(s): Austin Scott; Chester Ludwick**

None.

- **Guest Introductions**

Two individuals introduced themselves, along with Ms. Shelley.

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

Ms. Cirillo brought up the email from Ms. Richards regarding Vice Chair Ripple's motion, which needed to be changed.

Motion by Ms. Cirillo, seconded by Ms. Small, to approve the October 20, 2011, minutes with the necessary correction. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

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

C. Student Members to the Education Advisory Board

- **Report from Student Members**

Ms. Gearheart reported that on Monday, Superintendent Runcie came to Fort Lauderdale High School, and she and her mother attended. Ms. Gearheart said she was able to meet him prior to the speech, and was very impressed at how open he was with accepting students' questions and concerns. Ms. Gearheart said there were about eight students attending and most asked questions. The bulk of the audience was made up of teachers and parents. Rather than answering specific questions, Ms. Gearheart said that he was "collecting concerns."

Ms. Louissaint reported that they did a survey about how many students have internet access and where the closest library to the school is. By the next day, they will be able to tally the results. So far, 80-83% of students are without internet access at home, and

50 said the closest library to them was 30 minutes from home. Ms. Louissaint commented that the free and reduced lunch count went up by 50% from last year.

Ms. Clark commented that at her school, about 85% students are on free and reduced lunch, and they do not have internet access at home either.

[Ms. Green arrived at 6:43 p.m.]

Ms. Small asked how many computers they have in the school library, and Ms. Louissaint thought they had 30. She said they are available after school for homework and are provided by a grant.

Ms. Cirillo asked Ms. Louissaint if she thought students at Stranahan were aware of the Comcast deal for internet service, and she said some students were informed at a student body meeting. Ms. Cirillo asked if Ms. Louissaint could speak to one of her administrators to get the information distributed.

Ms. Jules reported she had been chosen to be part of HOPE (to help other young women).

Mr. Ludwick asked if the students would inform the Board of any activities that the community might enjoy or be involved in, such as plays and concerts. He also expressed hope that they would be able to get a representative from Dillard High School.

D. Current Business

1. Discussion on Budget Issues

Chair Lewis asked Mr. Barnes if he had any information on the issue, but Mr. Barnes said that Ms. Richards was going to leave it up to the Board.

Ms. Clark said she also had the opportunity to meet the new Superintendent, and was very impressed with his concern for the teachers and students.

Regarding the budget, Ms. Clark said she wants to reinstate the “specials” into all the elementary schools in Broward County, and especially in Fort Lauderdale. She said at her school, the principal cut Music and P.E., and now they only have Science and Library Media for specials. Ms. Clark noted that she distributed packets to the Board members, and pointed out how important specials/electives are to students. She emphasized the importance of educating the whole child. Studies have shown that most individuals tend to favor the left side of the brain when thinking, while downplaying the right side of the brain. The left side of the brain tends to focus on logical thinking, analysis and accuracy. The right side of the brain tends to focus on creativity, aesthetics and feelings.

Ms. Clark distributed a report on the effects of having a library in a school and how those schools were "A" schools. She summarized that students in schools with good libraries learn more, get better grades and score higher on standardized tests compared to peers in schools without libraries. She emphasized the advantage of having qualified library media specialists.

Ms. Clark noted that 32 elementary schools do not presently have a library - they have high school clerks checking books in and out. She noted the importance and advantages of having a trained person ordering books for the library to meet the needs of the students and teachers. In some schools, there is no one to check out books.

She spoke about reading contests that she has at her school library. She said there are pictures of these events on the web at Oakland Park Media Center. They also have an illustrated book contest at the public library.

Ms. Clark then spoke about music instruction. Statistically, she said, children who study music tend to do better on math. She said many students, including Title I students, do not have access to instruments or music lessons since music has been cut.

Referring to her handout, Ms. Clark mentioned a health statistic, which is that the United States has the highest obesity rate in the world. She refuted the idea that teachers are teaching P.E. She said at her school they play a 15-minute exercise video in the morning - some teachers do it and some do not. She referred again to her handout, pointing out that exercise improves blood circulation, increasing oxygen to the brain which helps students perform better on tests and pay better attention in class.

Dr. Persi remarked that research speaks to the fact of teaching the "whole child," and yet the schools are cutting the arts, music and physical education. She commented on the importance of physical exercise to balance the student's daily life and "get rid of energy." She wondered what the Board could do in a concrete way to alleviate the situation.

Ms. Elijah asked Ms. Clark if she had the opportunity to discuss the specials with the Superintendent. Ms. Clark said she did tell him about the cuts and how it was affecting the teachers, and she said he is planning to put together a group of teachers to inform him of what is going on inside the classroom. Ms. Clark added that all elementary schools in the county have lost their planning time every other day.

Ms. Elijah wondered where the Superintendent would be meeting the teachers and what schools would be involved. She thought the Board should wait until after those meetings to make their suggestions. Ms. Clark said the Superintendent said he wanted to reach out to every school level (elementary, middle and high) and meet every month.

Ms. Small asked Ms. Clark how the BTU plays into the cut on the planning, and Ms. Clark said they filed a grievance a month ago. Ms. Clark added that no elementary school in the County has planning. Chair Lewis verified that middle and high schools still have their planning time.

Mr. Discepola thought it was a good question as to what the Advisory Board could do, as their role is limited. He thought the recurring issue was the value system associated with the budget allocations. He suggested inviting more teachers to the Board meetings to determine what is absolutely necessary for children's school success. He stressed looking at the research to see if the issues are by causation or correlation, i.e., did those schools have more money to begin with and have different demographics of a student population, or are the results actually tied to the cuts? Since he has a background in statistics, he questioned the validity of the research.

Ms. Bucolo said that when the budget came out in the spring, her colleagues labored over the budget cuts, looking at mandates and all considerations. She cut to "bare bones," but tried to keep a balance as best as she could. She was able to keep half-time P.E., art and music teachers. She put the media specialist back into the classroom because of her certification. She mentioned that office personnel, as well as teachers, are not getting breaks.

Ms. Clark thought the District office was wrong to mandate the cuts on the principals, and Ms. Bucolo said her first priority was saving jobs. She thought part of the issue was that the parents do not see the cuts, and until they feel it, she did not think there would be a major outcry.

Ms. Clark said this is the first year for her school not to have specials, and they have been an "A" school up to this point. She wondered if they would be an "A" school this year. Ms. Bucolo noted that class size went up, but they are still trying to provide all the usual activities with limited staff.

Ms. Clark said that her school will not have a Christmas/Holiday program this year, because there is no music teacher. They will not have the art expo or participate in the City of Oakland's annual parade because there is no art teacher. She said she will still have a book fair, and that brings parents to the school.

Ms. Small commented that the Retired Educators' Association could be a good source for volunteers, and Ms. Clark said that Kiwanis Club members volunteer also.

Dr. Persi said she wanted to hear from others who are involved in the schools (rank and file), and what they perceive the solutions to be.

Darcy Brown, SAC Chair at Fort Lauderdale High School, who also sits on the Broward County Task Force for parent and community involvement, spoke. She is on the nonprofit subcommittee, which works on how to get nonprofits more engaged in the

schools. She met with Superintendent Runcie and 47 Presidents/CEOs of nonprofits, who are anxious to “get into the schools.” They want to provide specials in Broward County.

Ms. Cirillo said it has been time-consuming clearing their volunteers and mentors this year due to staff cutbacks. She suggested utilizing staff who are not busy in the summer to provide the clearance functions.

Ms. Cirillo continued that unfunded mandates from the State are devastating the District, because there is no money to fulfill the mandates. She said they need to look more at the business side of education and where the waste is occurring. She suggested looking at the lowest extreme first and working up from there. She predicted that small schools might be closed and children might have to be bused. Ms. Cirillo thought it was not fiscally responsible to have small schools remain open with full staff. She said it was time for the School Board to take action. She also criticized summer school sessions that only have a few children enrolled, and suggested closing the schools for the summer break.

Mr. Ludwick returned to Dr. Persi’s comment about what possible solutions may exist. He said the budget is already set for this year, but they can try to make plans for the next time around. He said there are principals who do not make good decisions for their schools in terms of curriculum.

Mr. Ludwick stated that one of the biggest problems in Broward County and Fort Lauderdale is poor representation at PTA meetings. Due to that, schools can make changes that are not beneficial to the students.

In addition, Mr. Ludwick thought that principals throughout the District could communicate better with each other and bring recommendations to the City Commission. He said they cannot solve the problems of the School Board, but this Board can funnel their concerns to the City Commission and ask them to speak for the Board.

Dr. Persi complimented the Board because six solutions are “right here”:

1. Nonprofits
2. Mentors’ applications that need to be pushed forward
3. Unfunded mandates that need to be dealt with
4. Consolidation and redistricting
5. Summer school to be looked at by a blue ribbon committee
6. Possibility of closing schools during the summer

Ms. Clark added a seventh solution: the School Board needs to analyze why other counties did not have to cut specials and planning.

Ms. Bucolo mentioned that her school will begin taking furlough days. Principals will take 5 days; assistant principals, 4; teachers, 2 days. She also commented that the Fort Lauderdale principals have begun meeting with the new City Manager, and commented positively on their interaction.

Ms. Small said she refused to teach summer school throughout her career, noting that if the student does not “get it” during the school year, she did not see them “getting it” during a summer session. She also brought up the Board’s past efforts to get mentors, and noted that the obstacle was the clearance process.

Dr. Persi wondered if they got a response from the City Commission to the letter they sent. Chair Lewis said there was no response.

Ms. Small offered to check with Commissioner Dubose to find out the most recent discussion the City Commission had on charter schools.

Mr. Ludwick remarked that he is not a fan of charter schools and thought the principals of the public schools do an excellent job. He thought spending more money under the current constraints did not make sense. Several Board members expressed agreement. A discussion ensued on charter schools versus public schools.

Ms. Cirillo said the City needs to market the public schools, and Dr. Persi said that would be #8 on the list of solutions.

Ms. Bucolo said that the District is requiring the principals to submit marketing brochure ideas for the graphics department to produce and distribute. She added that the schools are doing a great job and the community as a whole needs to get the word out.

Mr. Barnes remarked that it was an excellent discussion on the budget, and he volunteered to research the City Commission minutes for their discussion on the charter schools.

E. Old/Ongoing Business

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

Chair Lewis reviewed that Vice Chair Ripple proposed that the City Commission get involved and also wants the information posted in the schools. Chair Lewis stated that every student in all the schools receive a Code of Conduct book and sign for it. She felt there was no need to post information that is already in the Code book.

Ms. Small requested tabling the item until Vice Chair Ripple could be present.

Mr. Ludwick felt that principals do use the Code of Conduct to run their schools and customize rules for the specific location. He felt going to a “cookbook type of recipe” was not desirable because they are working with human beings. All the principal has to do is make sure the student is not having his/her Constitutional rights violated. He thought that students are aware of the rules.

Dr. Persi pointed out that on p. 9 of the September minutes that Vice Chair Ripple made a motion which was passed 12-1. She thought Ms. Richards was just asking for clarification of that motion. She also said she was not totally sure that all the high school students know the rules.

Mr. Ludwick understood from Vice Chair Ripple’s email that they were supposed to discuss the topic again. Mr. Discepola responded that on p. 9 of the minutes (of September), they already decided by vote to increase the transparency on the school rules, not create new or additional rules. He thought the question from Ms. Richards was as to who was expected to ask the School Board to have some sort of policy to increase transparency so that there is a method through which parents and students can access each individual school’s policies and rules.

Chair Lewis stated that all student handbooks are the same, from elementary to high school. She did not see the reason for taking the discussion further.

Ms. Bucolo said they do hand out the Code - they have it on the internet and they have a video. She said the previous discussion centered more on site-based rules. She added that a need for additional rules could pop up at any time, and wondered if she would then have to communicate those new rules and have a signature.

Dr. Persi reiterated that the motion was made and passed and there is no turning back.

Mr. Barnes noted in Vice Chair Ripple’s email that he said he would be sending a letter to the School Board, and he assumed that letter would be representing this Board. Mr. Barnes preferred that Vice Chair Ripple bring the drafted letter to the January meeting for review, so that it does not go out from an individual Board member. He suggested it go out either from the Board or the City Commission. He recommended a brief discussion at the January meeting to decide if they want to do a Communication to the City Commission, based on the letter. Then the City Commission could make the recommendation.

Motion by Mr. Discepola, seconded by Dr. Persi, to table the discussion until Vice Chair Ripple is back to discuss the letter he may send on behalf of the Advisory Board to the School Board (whether it is directly to them or through the City Commission) so they are fully informed of the language of the suggested policy. In a vote by roll call, the motion passed unanimously (10-0).

Ms. Elijah asked who would communicate directions to Vice Chair Ripple, and Mr. Barnes responded that staff will communicate to him.

2. Other Reports/Updates/Discussion

a. Reports & Updates

(1) City Staff Liaison

Mr. Barnes had three items for the Board:

- He reported that a Board member who was not present asked to participate via the teleconference system. Unfortunately, staff could not meet his request, as the ordinance is structured so that the caller has to have a medical situation, which was not the case. He reminded the members that if they wish to participate in that way, he needs three days notice for the IT people to set up the system. If it is not a medical emergency, the person calling in cannot participate in the meeting, has no voting rights, and is accounted as absent.
- Secondly, he would prefer, with the Board's agreement, to send minutes and agendas only by email (for budgetary reasons). If anybody cannot access the information via email, staff could send out the information by regular mail. The Board agreed by consensus to receive information via email. Mr. Barnes noted that Ms. Richards' phone number is still accessible. Also on the website, the Neighbor Support Telecommunication information is posted. He will bring that information to the next meeting along with a few extra copies of the minutes and agendas.
- Thirdly, he suggested moving the meetings to the 8th Floor conference room, which is set up conference style and would facilitate a more informal meeting style. He would check room availability, and asked if the Board would like him to explore that option. Chair Lewis agreed to that request.

(2) Broward County School District – C. Webster

Mr. Webster was not present.

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

Ms. Shelley announced that Dr. Lewis was elected to the Board of the Council of Civic Associations representing her district.

She also invited everyone to the Council Christmas party, December 13, 6:00 p.m. on the 8th floor. It is a potluck dinner, and the Council furnishes ham, turkey and beverages.

Ms. Shelley reported that the Council discussed the use of parks, and most wanted to keep parks for traditional uses.

F. New/Future Business

1. Announcements

Dr. Persi thanked Mr. Barnes for being the interim liaison. On behalf of the Board, she wanted to extend well wishes to Ms. Richards.

Mr. Barnes asked for topics for January's agenda in addition to the item pertaining to Vice Chair Ripple's topic. Ms. Small requested charter schools as an item. Dr. Persi asked for a continued discussion on solutions on how to assist the School District in a positive way. Mr. Discepolo suggested having all the cities in Broward County have an alternate budget proposal for the Board's discussion.

Ms. Jules said she "always hears" about the cuts, but did not understand why the cuts are being made. Mr. Ludwick explained that the price of homes, and the corresponding tax base in Broward County and in the City of Fort Lauderdale, has gone way down. When that happens, the City and County do not get as much tax money, so the Treasury is cut and the budget shrinks.

Ms. Clark recommended reading the local newspaper (online or hard copy) for information about the Broward School system.

Ms. Cirillo said that their former Vice Chair will visit Bennett on Tuesday and has appointed Vice Chair Ripple to be on the Diversity Committee. Ms. Cirillo expressed interest sitting on the Budget Committee, if there is a vacancy.

Chair Lewis asked the Board if they were ready to invite the Superintendent to attend one of their meetings, and Ms. Clark said she had already extended an invitation to him, but said she would get back to him regarding a time. Mr. Barnes suggested February, as they have a lot of items to discuss in January.

G. Next Meeting and Closing

- **Location and Date: City Hall, January 19, 2012.**

Mr. Barnes reminded the Board there will be no December meeting. The January meeting will be in this room, and there will be discussion as to whether they will relocate at a future date.

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

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