

EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE, 1ST FLOOR CHAMBERS
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
THURSDAY, JANUARY 19, 2012 – 6:30 P.M.

Members	Attendance	APRIL 2011-APRIL 2012	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Magdalene Lewis, Chair	P	8	0
Vice Chair Franco Ripple	P	6	2
Heather Brinkworth	P	1	0
Theresa Bucolo (arr. at 6:34 p.m.)	P	7	1
Vincent Cella	A	5	3
Catherine Cirillo	P	7	1
Laura Clark	P	5	3
Joseph Discepola	P	5	3
Edna Elijah	P	6	2
Roland Foulkes (l. at 7:11 p.m.)	P	6	2
Nancy Green	A	4	4
Trisha Halliday	P	6	2
Cici Kelly	P	3	2
Chester Ludwick	P	3	0
Dr. Maureen Persi, Ed.D.	P	7	1
Austin Scott	P	2	1
Lillian Small (arr. 6:33 p.m.)	P	7	2

Appointed members to the Board: 17
 Needed to constitute a quorum: 9

Staff

Hal Barnes, Assistant City Manager and Staff Liaison
 Junia Robinson, Neighborhood Support
 Betty Shelley, CFLCA Liaison
 Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Students

Hayley Gearheart
 Rebecca Jules
 Sophia Louissaint

Communication to the City Commission (Pending Approval by Clerk)

Motion by Mr. Discepola, seconded by Ms. Kelly, to finalize any amendments to the language of the letter (regarding the co-applicability of the site-based, school-based management system) at this meeting and then depending on how the language is finalized, submit it as a Communication to the City Commission for their approval, suggestions or changes. In a vote by roll call, the motion passed (9-5) as follows: Ms.

Brinkworth, yes; Ms. Bucolo, no; Ms. Cirillo, yes; Ms. Clark, no; Mr. Discepola, yes; Ms. Elijah, no; Ms. Halliday, yes; Ms. Kelly, yes; Mr. Ludwick, no; Dr. Persi, yes; Mr. Scott, yes; Ms. Small, yes; Vice Chair Ripple, yes; Chair Lewis, no.

Determination of quorum

As of this date, January 19, 2012, there are 17 appointed members to the Board, which means 9 would constitute a quorum. At this time, there is a quorum.

A. Opening

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m.

- **Attendance and Sign-in**

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

- **Approve Minutes (November 17, 2011)** – (not addressed at this time)
- **Introduce New Member: Heather P. Brinkworth**

[Ms. Small arrived at 6:33 p.m.]

[Ms. Bucolo arrived at 6:34 p.m.]

Chair Lewis introduced the new Board member, Heather Brinkworth. Ms. Brinkworth, a Broward County native and former reading teacher, is now a Regional Manager and Trainer for Volunteer USA Foundation in a mentoring program. Board members and staff introduced themselves to the new member.

- **Guest Introductions** - (not addressed)
- **Approve Minutes (November 17, 2011)**

Ms. Clark provided written corrections to the attending clerk.

Motion by Ms. Elijah, seconded by Ms. Small, “that the said minutes be approved as is”. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

B. Student Members to the Education Advisory Board

- **Report from Student Members**

No students were present to report.

C. Current Business

1. Charter Schools – Lillian Small

Mr. Barnes said he researched the subject based on the discussion at the November meeting. He said they pulled the minutes from the City Commission workshop, and he summarized their stance by saying the City does not want to pursue charter schools. Mr. Barnes noted that Ms. Small's name was beside the agenda item because she brought up the topic at the November meeting.

Ms. Clark commented there was a new charter school on Las Olas, and she wondered why the City would want to compete.

Mr. Foulkes reported that the County School Board is also talking about going into the charter school business.

Vice Chair Ripple recalled the purpose of the Board is to advise the City on matters within the City of Fort Lauderdale and the Board should ask itself how to go about making a recommendation on that issue. He wanted to make sure the Board did its due diligence in the matter.

Chair Lewis recommended reading the handout and postpone any discussion until the next meeting.

Motion by Vice Chair Ripple, seconded by Mr. Foulkes, to table the item until the next meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Small mentioned that a Pennsylvania school district had closed down due to monies being put into charter schools, rather than public schools.

2. Continued Discussion on Budget Issues - All

Mr. Barnes recalled that the Board came up with eight topics of discussion about how to improve the budgeting in the school system.

Vice Chair Ripple mentioned there was a comprehensive presentation to the legislative delegation by the Broward County School Board regarding BCPS budget issues. He remembered that someone from the School Board was supposed to present that to this Board, but did not. He thought it would be advantageous for the Board to hear that presentation and again requested that the School Board send appropriate personnel to give a full presentation on budget matters to this Board.

Mr. Barnes will contact the School Board to follow up and will put it either on the February or March agenda. He added he had invited the new Superintendent to attend

a meeting, but his schedule does not allow it at this time. Mr. Foulkes mentioned it may be April or May before the Superintendent can attend.

**3. Co-applicability of the Site-based, School-based Management System;
Broward County School System's Code of Conduct and Policies –
Franco Ripple**

Chair Lewis stated that the School Board selects a committee to assemble the Code, and then the administrators and teachers have an opportunity to review it. She repeated that every student is issued a Code of Conduct, has to sign for it and agree to follow the policies. Chair Lewis hoped to complete discussion on this matter at this meeting.

Vice Chair Ripple presented a letter which would be sent on behalf of this Board, under the signature of the Chair and Vice Chair. Vice Chair Ripple reminded the Board that in the September 2011 vote of 12-1, a condition of that vote was to advise the School Board of a suggested policy, and he thought a letter was the most appropriate vehicle.

Vice Chair Ripple summarized the intent of the letter: the Board believes it is in the best interests of students, teachers, staff, parents, administration, and the community to have each principal's rules be as equally transparent as the code of conduct. He pointed out that the letter demonstrates how it would not be an excessive cost burden to do so.

Ms. Cirillo reminded the Board that this letter is not about the Code of Conduct, it is about the transparency of school-based rules.

Ms. Kelly said all they need to discuss is the content of the letter.

Vice Chair Ripple emphasized that this is not just an issue about a lesbian couple, and he chose that example because it is a high-profile instance.

Mr. Ludwick did not have a problem with the letter, but took issue with using the Board as a way to communicate their message. He did not think the prior Communication to the Commission was clear on the matter.

Mr. Discepola respectfully disagreed with Mr. Ludwick, noting that a letter from this advisory board (appointed by the City Commission) carries more weight and force than one from an individual. He said they are appointed for a reason, one of which is to advise the City Commission and understand the current issues in the schools and County.

Ms. Bucolo complimented Vice Chair Ripple for the letter he had written. She commented, however, that school rules changes would be difficult to update every

single time they occur. She also thought it was confusing to send out a hard copy as well as an electronic copy.

Vice Chair Ripple asked about the electronic version of the Code of Conduct, and Ms. Bucolo replied this was the first year she had received an electronic copy, and each school received approximately the same number of hard copies of the Code as the school had “free and reduced” students.

Ms. Elijah asked Mr. Barnes if the Board needed permission from the City Commission to send the letter to the School Board. Mr. Barnes said staff recommends it goes to the Commission in a form of a Communication to the Commission, asking them to review the letter, and either give the board permission to send it out or have it sent out under the Mayor and Commission’s authority. He preferred it to go out under the Mayor/Commission authority, as it would add additional weight to the letter. He asked the Board to decide on the content of the letter and structure it as a City Commission to the City Clerk’s office. The Board can ask for the letter to go out under the Mayor/Commission authority or ask permission to send it out as a Board.

Vice Chair Ripple favored lending the Mayor’s, Vice Mayor’s and City Commission’s signatures to the letter if it would lend more authority to the Board’s recommendation. He did take umbrage with the comments suggesting there was a ‘possibility’ of sending the letter – he said there is “no if,” it has already been decided.

Mr. Foulkes remarked that he was aware (in September) they were going to send a letter to the School Board and were to discuss it at another meeting. He thought the letter was different than what they discussed at the September meeting. Mr. Foulkes stated they have no authority to write a letter directly to the School Board, it has to go through the City of Fort Lauderdale first. He commented that the BTU (Broward Teachers’ Union) is the “other player in the game,” and they have not been addressed in this letter. He recommended having a speaker from the BTU present to the Board.

Mr. Foulkes said that the issue at Blanche Ely was not the gay couple holding hands, it was that they were in a location where they were not supposed to be and they were tardy to class. He said that either those details should be mentioned, or the reference to the case be omitted from the letter. Vice Chair Ripple said he could take it out.

[Mr. Foulkes left the meeting at 7:11 p.m.]

A discussion ensued about what to do at this point, with Ms. Elijah wanting to send the letter to the City Commission for their review, and Ms. Kelly saying the vote has been taken on whether to send the letter, and the need now is review the content of the letter.

Mr. Barnes remarked if the Board chooses to standardize the language in the letter at this meeting, it could be moved forward as a Communication to the City Commission and the City Commission will be given a hard copy. It will be on the agenda for

discussion. If the City Commission has items they disagree with, they may send it back to the Board for discussion or may decide to move forward with it as is. If the Board recommends that the letter go out from the Mayor and City Commission, they will do that.

Vice Chair Ripple recommended going through the letter at this meeting to make changes. The Board proceeded to go through the letter sentence by sentence.

The first two paragraphs were noted as matters of fact, and the third paragraph began to address value statements.

In the third paragraph, there was discussion about the use of the word “transparency” and any possible negative connotation thereof.

Ms. Bucolo brought up the existing “teacher’s rules” in addition to site-based rules. Vice Chair Ripple intended to have the accessibility apply to the general school rules, not the minutiae of individual teacher’s rules. There was concern that the principals might think the classroom rules were also included in the suggested policy. It was established that classroom rules are not considered site-based rules. Vice Chair Ripple asked the Board for their approval in his asking Ms. Katie Leach (as a member of the School Board) if she thought the letter specifically referred to site-based management system.

Mr. Ludwick expressed frustration at the amount of time being spent on the letter, and wanted to move on to more pressing issues. Varying opinions were expressed, ranging from tabling the matter to finishing it at this meeting.

D. Communication to the City Commission (Pending Approval by Clerk) (Taken out of order)

Motion by Mr. Discepola, seconded by Ms. Kelly, to finalize any amendments to the language of the letter (regarding the co-applicability of the site-based, school-based management system) at this meeting and then depending on how the language is finalized, submit it as a Communication to the City Commission for their approval, suggestions or changes. In a vote by roll call, the motion passed (9-5) as follows: Ms. Brinkworth, yes; Ms. Bucolo, no; Ms. Cirillo, yes; Ms. Clark, no; Mr. Discepola, yes; Ms. Elijah, no; Ms. Halliday, yes; Ms. Kelly, yes; Mr. Ludwick, no; Dr. Persi, yes; Mr. Scott, yes; Ms. Small, yes; Vice Chair Ripple, yes; Chair Lewis, no.

The Committee then continued reviewing the letter, returning to paragraph 3.

Vice Chair Ripple said he would find a better way of saying “expressed concerns.” Dr. Persi asked to omit the last sentence of paragraph 3, and the Committee agreed by consensus.

In the 4th paragraph, Vice Chair Ripple agreed to change the language in the first sentence from, "...the EAB has expressed concerns about the lack of transparency inherent to this system" to "...we want to ensure that the site-based management systems does not lead to students and parents being unaware of rules." Vice Chair Ripple said he will remove the statement about "several incidences" since they are deleting the one instance (2nd sentence). As for the last sentence in the paragraph, various changes were suggested to soften the wording.

Regarding the 5th paragraph, Mr. Ludwick brought up an email he had received from Ms. Richards in November stating that the City Clerk was unclear as to the intention in the Communication (regarding the letter). Vice Chair Ripple responded that he believed the confusion was simply about what the action of the 12-1 vote was: he said it was to advise the City Commission that the EAB proposed a change policy to the School Board. He said he clarified that in an email and received no response, so he thought the matter was understood.

For the second sentence in paragraph 5, Vice Chair Ripple suggested the following amendment: to recommend to the School Board that the site-based rules be published online and sent home with those students who do not have internet access. Ms. Halliday was adamant about sending a hard copy home since so many do not have internet access. Vice Chair Ripple remarked that if the School Board decides to take this up, they will do what they feel is best. He then suggested making the strongest possible recommendation which would be to send it home to all students with amendments online.

In paragraph 6, the word "transparency" will be changed to "accessibility." In the second sentence, Vice Chair Ripple replaced the word "strongly" with "respectfully." Mr. Discepola suggested saying, "respectfully request" instead of "respectfully encourage." In the last sentence, "city" should be "city's."

Mr. Barnes commented that the letter would probably not go before the City Commission until their second meeting in February. In addition, Mr. Barnes recommended sending the body of the letter to the City Commission and let the City Commission decide if they want to put it on their letter head under their signature. Vice Chair Ripple said he would have the edits made and sent to Mr. Barnes by Monday, January 23, 2012.

4. Reports/Updates/Discussion

a) Reports & Updates

1) City Staff Liaison – Hal Barnes

Mr. Barnes presented a handout on City policy regarding telephonic attendance at meetings. He advised the Board it is only applicable in cases of medical emergency.

He said the Superintendent has listening tours set up, and Mr. Barnes' staff sends an email to the Board members notifying them of the times and dates. The next listening tour is Thursday, February 9, at Hollywood Hills High School, 5400 Sterling Road in Hollywood. He recommended attending the meeting, since it will be a few months before the Superintendent can attend an EAB meeting.

Mr. Barnes brought up a meeting location for this Board. He said one option was the 8th Floor Conference Room, although the Fire Bond meets there every other month, so they would have to shift back and forth. A third option is the Executive Airport, which involves driving out Cypress Creek. By consensus, the Board agreed to stay in the current room for awhile.

Mr. Barnes asked the Board if everyone received the electronic version of the minutes, and asked if that was satisfactory. The members did not object to continuing receiving electronic communication exclusively.

Ms. Clark announced that the Superintendent will be at Virginia Shuman Young on February 1 from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., along with four School Board members. There will be over 80 Media Specialists making a presentation.

2) Broward County School District – C. Webster (absent)

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

Ms. Shelley invited the Board to a Candidate's Forum at 6:00 p.m. in the Commission Chambers on January 24. The Forum will be for Mayor and City Commissioners in the upcoming elections.

D. Communication to the City Commission (Previously addressed)

E. New/Future Business

• Announcements

Ms. Halliday brought up the lack of internet access by students. In addition, she mentioned the outdated computers at some schools and wondered if Mr. Webster could find out exactly how many children do have access to the internet.

Mr. Discepola said that information was in an attachment to an email from Mr. Foulkes regarding Martin Luther King Day. He suggested Mr. Foulkes could speak about that at the next meeting.

Mr. Scott said that it would be good to have someone from the Broward Center to present to the Board with what they offer for the public schools in the City limits, since

they are in the process of requesting funding from the City and County and have stated that they provide educational programs on a daily basis.

Mr. Ludwick said that they need to develop some questions for the Superintendent. He said one question could be about consolidation of the schools and redistricting. He also mentioned that education was not mentioned in the minutes from the December meeting of the Visioning Committee for Fort Lauderdale.

Dr. Persi said they need to put the six “budgeting” solutions from their last meeting onto an agenda.

Ms. Cirillo said that next week the school will be looking at money they were supposed to get in October that has not yet been received. She added that next year’s budget is already showing cuts, and the schools are not allowed to spend money they have earned unless it is attached to a federal activity or grant. Ms. Cirillo said the process could be understood if they had the budget presentation by Mr. Webster or a School Board member.

Mr. Barnes noted the following for future agendas:

- Charter schools
- Two presentations, one from the School Board (top priority) and one from the Broward Center
- Short update on students’ internet access (he will request the information)
- Develop questions for Superintendent’s visit
- Continue discussion on recommended solutions discussed in November meeting

Ms. Cirillo asked Mr. Barnes to keep the Board posted if any schools are closing in the City.

F. Next Meeting and Closing

- **Location and Date: City Hall, February 16, 2012**

Hearing no further business, Chair Lewis adjourned the meeting at 8:21 p.m.

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