

**EDUCATION ADVISORY BOARD MEETING
100 NORTH ANDREWS AVENUE, 1ST FLOOR CHAMBERS
FORT LAUDERDALE, FLORIDA
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 20, 2011 – 6:30 P.M.**

Members	Attendance	APRIL 2011-APRIL 2012	
		Present	Absent
Dr. Magdalene Lewis, Chair	P	6	0
Theresa Bucolo	P	5	1
Vincent Cella	P	5	1
Catherine Cirillo	P	5	1
Laura Clark	P	3	3
Joseph Discepola	P	3	3
Edna Elijah	P	4	2
Roland Foulkes	A	5	1
Nancy Green	A	3	3
Trisha Halliday	P	5	1
Cici Kelly (arr. 6:37 p.m.)	P	2	1
Chester Ludwick	P	1	0
Dr. Maureen Persi, Ed.D.	A	5	1
Franco Ripple	P	5	1
Austin Scott	P	1	0
Lillian Small	P	4	2

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

Staff

Julie Richards, Staff Liaison
Charles Webster, BCPS Liaison
Betty Shelley, CFLCA Liaison
Brigitte Chiappetta, Recording Secretary, Prototype, Inc.

Students

Hayley Gearheart
Rebecca Jules
Sophia Louissaint
Mara Stamm

Communications to City Commission

A. Opening

Chair Lewis called the meeting to order at 6:30 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 (September 2011)** (not addressed at this time)
- **Introduce New Member(s): Austin Scott; Chester Ludwick** (taken out of order)

Mr. Ludwick introduced himself, a retired educator from Broward Schools.

Mr. Scott, a Fort Lauderdale native, works at Cardinal Gibbins High School and stated an interest in athletics.

The student members introduced themselves:

- Hayley Gearhart, junior from Fort Lauderdale High.
- Rebecca Jules, junior from Fort Lauderdale High.
- Sophia Louissaint, junior from Stranahan High.
- Mara Stamm, junior from Stranahan High.
- **Guest Introductions** (taken out of order)

Ms. Shelley from the CFLCA introduced herself.

- **Approve Minutes (September 2011)**

Motion by Ms. Elijah, seconded by Mr. Ripple, to approve the minutes of the September 15, 2011, meeting. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

[Ms. Kelly arrived at 6:37 p.m.]

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

C. Student members to the Education Advisory Board

- **Review of applications**

Hayley Gearheart.

Ms. Gearheart said she is the Junior Class President at Fort Lauderdale High. She is also the Vice President of NHS, is ranked #2 in her class and is taking five AP classes. She hoped to achieve more community involvement by attending this Board.

Ms. Elijah asked Ms. Gearheart to elaborate on “organization and “operation” on her application. Ms. Gearheart relayed that after Hurricane Katrina, she and her sister formed “Operation Give Hope.” They made and sold bracelets, sending the proceeds (\$2K) to the Red Cross to help hurricane victims.

Mr. Ripple asked Ms. Gearheart about the leadership councils (Harvard and Congressional Youth Council) that she is involved in. Ms. Gearheart replied that in 8th grade, she was nominated for an Orlando conference, and after that, invited to the Harvard Council. She spent 10 days at Harvard University in teambuilding activity.

Mr. Discepola asked her how she will disseminate what she learns here to the rest of her student body. Ms. Gearheart responded she will use the regular student officer meetings she attends as Class President, which other students can attend. She said they also have infrequent auditorium meetings. Mr. Discepola wondered if she can send out written updates to the rest of the student body, and Ms. Gearheart mentioned they have a Facebook page that most of the juniors have joined. There are also morning announcements at the school for the entire student body, a school calendar for events, and the opportunity to post posters. Mr. Discepola emphasized that it is important for the student members to pass the information they get at this meeting to the entire school, and vice versa.

Ms. Halliday wondered if Ms. Gearheart would take any information from this Board to SAC (Student Advisory Council) and SAF (School Advisory Forum) meetings, and vice versa. Ms. Gearheart relayed that her mother is the SAC president, and she asks her mother to pass information on.

Rebecca Jules.

Ms. Jules said she is excited to be a part of this Board as it gives students a voice in decision-making. She wants to take information back to create a better environment for students.

Mara Stamm.

Ms. Stamm commented she hopes to become a teacher and is a member of UTAPP. She is a swim captain for her team, and also helps other students learn how to swim.

Mr. Ludwick asked what events she competes in, and Ms. Stamm said that she has done the 500-free, 100-breast stroke, 200-free, 100-back, 400-relay, 200-medley relay.

Mr. Cella wondered what grade or subject she wants to teach, and Ms. Stamm replied that she wants to be a second grade teacher, because her second grade teacher was very inspiring. Mr. Cella also asked what type of volunteering she does, and Ms. Stamm said that she helped at an animal hospital and has also helped backstage at dance recitals.

Ms. Stamm said that UTAPP is a program to help students learn to become teachers.

Chair Lewis asked Ms. Stamm about the other students who want to be teachers, and Ms. Stamm replied that there is a mix of students in UTAPP and they work well together.

Mr. Discepola asked how each student learned of the opportunity to become a student member of the advisory board.

- Ms. Stamm heard from her teacher who leads the UTAPP program, and said there were four who were interested.
- Ms. Jules said her guidance counselor recommended her for the program.
- Ms. Gearheart said she helped teachers set up their classrooms over the summer and her class sponsor told her she was nominated for the program by the guidance counselor.

Ms. Small wondered why no “young men” were involved. Ms. Gearheart said that they were picked by the guidance counselor, and just happened to be two females. Ms. Stamm guessed the same thing happened at her school – the guidance counselor gave names to the principal and the principal chose the students.

Sophia Louissaint.

Ms. Louissaint said she is part of the student government at Stranahan and said that one of her teachers selected her because he knew she was part of the student government and NHS and had leadership qualities.

Chair Lewis asked what she does at her school to help other students, and Ms. Louissaint replied that she started a club at her school called “Signing Buddies,” which is two clubs put together. The work with students at her school who have mental challenges, and also volunteer with the Deaf Literacy Family Academy.

Ms. Elijah asked about medical magnet students. Ms. Louissaint said that her school has two magnet programs, engineering and medical, and she is part of the medical magnet. She is taking genetics.

Mr. Ripple asked what she was studying. Ms. Louissaint said she wants to be a forensics crime scene investigator.

Ms. Elijah asked Ms. Louissaint to tell her about the poem she wrote about 9/11. She said she wrote a poem in sixth grade which her teacher submitted to National Hall of

Fame of Poetry and it was published in a book in 2007. She went to a ceremony in Las Vegas to be inducted.

Motion by Ms. Small, seconded by Ms. Elijah to accept all the young people that have come here as Board members. In a voice vote, the motion passed unanimously.

- **Report from Student Members** (Included in previous agenda item)

D. Current Business

1. Election of Vice Chair, Education Advisory Board

Chair Lewis reminded the Board that the former Vice Chair (Ms. Leach) is now a member of the School Board, so the Board needs to select a new Vice Chair.

Ms. Small nominated Mr. Ripple for Vice Chair, and Mr. Ripple accepted with honor.

Ms. Elijah nominated Ms. Clark for Vice Chair, and Ms. Clark said she cannot accept due to time constraints.

Ms. Elijah nominated Mr. Discepola. Mr. Discepola felt Mr. Ripple would be more worthy to hold the position.

Mr. Ripple noted that Mr. Foulkes mentioned in an email that he wanted to be considered for Vice Chair, and Mr. Ripple nominated Mr. Foulkes.

It was confirmed that Mr. Foulkes could be nominated even though not present.

Chair Lewis asked for a vote on Mr. Foulkes for Vice Chair. In a roll call vote, the vote failed (2-11) as follows: Ms. Bucolo, yes; Mr. Cella, yes; Ms. Cirillo, no; Ms. Clark, no; Mr. Discepola, no; Ms. Elijah, no; Ms. Halliday, no; Ms. Kelly, no; Mr. Ludwick, no; Mr. Ripple, no; Mr. Scott, no; Ms. Small, no; Chair Lewis, no.

Chair Lewis called for a vote on Mr. Ripple for Vice Chair. In a roll call vote, the vote passed (13-0) unanimously.

Mr. Ripple assumed the position of Vice Chair.

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

Vice Chair Ripple said he had received an email from Ms. Pope, saying she would not be able to attend this meeting and that she would brief Mr. Webster on everything necessary to complete the Board's discussion on this topic. Vice Chair Ripple briefly

explained the subject for new members. He said he hoped that they would be able to agree that principals and schools will be required to post their site-based management systems on the internet, bulletin board, or other means to inform students and parents.

Mr. Discepola asked Mr. Webster what type of flexibility an individual school principal has in moving away from the District's Code of Conduct. Mr. Webster said the Code of Conduct is the framework that applies universally. Each principal is charged with managing their schools, and teachers are charged with managing their classrooms. They have a certain amount of discretion. He used the situation of chewing gum as an activity that would be a discretionary item (in a classroom). Sometimes groups of teachers get together and set a rule for a group of classrooms. If an issue arises with that item, a complaint can escalate to the principal, and then to the Area Director/Superintendent and then the Superintendent. Given the individual circumstances of a school, the rules have to be adaptable to that specific school, and he said that seems to work. The process has to guarantee a safe learning environment for the students.

Mr. Discepola asked what type of oversight there is to make sure individual principals are not overstepping their boundaries or contradicting what the District has set. Mr. Webster replied there are groups of people who oversee the rules. These groups are teachers and BTU, parents (PTA, PTSO, SAC, PTO, SAF), and the District (hotline for students to report to S.I.U. – "Silence Hurts"). He believed the system is working, but maybe not at 100%.

Mr. Webster remarked that Mr. Ripple was correct in his concern about an incident, and he noted that it has been resolved (the students were taken care of).

Ms. Kelly said she has been involved on a school level with the hotline, and she said a student does not get resolution from the District Office with that, as the District calls the principal of the school and the principal contacts the parents to say, "I hear you have a complaint." Ms. Kelly thought that put parents in a bad position, in direct conflict with the principal.

Mr. Webster said it was not supposed to happen that way – it is supposed to go to the EEO Department, who would conduct an investigation.

Ms. Kelly said she knows of cases where an issue has been reported to an Area Director and the information came right back to the principal of the school. She emphasized that parents should be able to bring up matter to the Area Director without fearing that they will go the principal. She spoke in favor of clearly defined and publicized rules at each school, so that parents and students can see them.

Mr. Cella wondered how realistic (or unrealistic) it would be for a principal to make the rules readily available for people to view.

Mr. Webster remarked that a parent has every right to come before the Board that sets policy and make suggestions.

Ms. Bucolo, speaking as a principal, said that as far as the budget is concerned, they solve that problem by putting notices on the internet or sending them out in a "blast." Hard copies are sent if needed. However, she said that "things come up" that require changes to the rules, so it is not realistic to have all the basic rules listed, obtain parental signatures and then have to do it again when a rule is added or changed.

Vice Chair Ripple clarified that this discussion is not about what happened at one or two schools. It affects all schools, and is not a vendetta against any principal. He acknowledged there are "major rules, minor rules," and violations of those. He used the example of not walking on the grass as a minor rule, and handholding as a more serious rule that is "easy" to violate.

Mr. Ripple added that perhaps a copy of the rules could go home to the parents at the beginning of the year, and then addendums could be posted online.

Ms. Cirillo stated that at her school they do have specific rules and those are sent out with the agenda in the fall. She added those rules are not currently on the website, but can easily be scanned and posted, and she will do that.

Chair Lewis brought up the problem of Code books never making it to the home, or students signing their parents' names for them that they have received the Code.

Mr. Ludwick commented that if a rule is made at a school, it must be enforceable. He said it is the principal's responsibility to enforce the rules of the School Board as well. He added that he had worked in the Area office and when those calls would come in, the first thing done was to call the principal, find out why the caller was upset, and ask whether the principal had talked to him/her. If the principal had not talked to the caller, he was instructed to call the person and then inform the Area Director. If the issue cannot be resolved that way, it would go through other channels.

Mr. Ludwick added that the mark of a strong principal is enforcing the rules, even though he or she might hear from a parent.

Ms. Small thought most of the principal's rules have to do with the safety of the students in that particular environment, and should be posted.

Ms. Stamm commented that last year her school had agendas, but only the freshmen got them this year. She added that they had a fashion show last year to display what students could and could not wear to school. She said they were not doing that this year, and have not received a Code of Conduct this year.

Ms. Louissaint said her school has a large percentage (75%) of underprivileged students and many of them cannot access the internet at home, and so the parents cannot see them either. She has suggested having them put in writing for her school.

Ms. Bucolo mentioned that at her elementary school, they were given hard copies based on the number of students in the "free or reduced" program.

Ms. Cirillo mentioned that they received the copies in four languages at her school. She estimated that 75% of students at Stranahan and Fort Lauderdale have cell phones and many have the internet on the phone. Ms. Clark disagreed, noting that many of her daughter's friends do not have internet access on their phones.

Ms. Cirillo commented that Comcast currently has a special offer for low-cost computers and internet access for \$10 per month. In order to qualify the offer, the person must qualify for "free or reduced lunch."

Ms. Clark remarked that lots of students also move frequently. She then brought up the library, hoping that the Board should be very proactive talking about the budget. She said that they do not have P.E., art or music at her school, and asserted that teachers do not have time to teach P.E. She continued that both teachers and staff at her school are overloaded.

Ms. Clark asserted that "something is not right" when other schools such as Palm Beach and Dade County that get the same amount of funding as Fort Lauderdale schools, but do not cut teachers and "specials" such as P.E. She hoped they could discuss that at the next meeting.

Vice Chair Ripple brought the discussion back to the Code of Conduct. Regarding to sending printed material home to the parents, he calculated that a 3,000 student school where each principal sends home one piece of paper with rules per student equals six reams of paper. He did not think that was an extravagant amount of paper, and said that updates could be accessed online.

Mr. Cella asked the students if the students are unaware of the rules that the principal has set. Ms. Gearheart answered students seem to have a general idea of what is going on, and she gets specific rules from the classroom rules. Ms. Stamm agreed, suggesting that new rules should "pop up" noticeably on the website. Ms. Louissaint said that in her school they do class assemblies at the beginning of the school and go over the rules with the students. Ms. Jules said her teachers post the classroom rules in the classroom.

Vice Chair Ripple asked the students if they were knew of any instance at their schools where someone broke a rule because they were not clear on it and got in trouble for it. No students replied.

Mr. Discepola said it is fairly obvious that most parents do not read the rules. He did not think the main issues were chewing gum and talking in class, but were discrimination or disparity in punishment. He thought if a parent was really motivated (but did not have internet access at home), they could go to a public library and look up the rules. He felt that transparency and some uniformity would help create consistency in how the Code of Conduct is upheld in individual schools.

Ms. Halliday requested for the next meeting that Mr. Webster inform the Board what the School Board has decided to do about charter schools and also what is happening with the school boundary changes, especially on the east side.

Mr. Webster said the workshop on the boundary changes is scheduled for the coming Tuesday. In terms of charter schools, Mr. Webster says that it has always been an equity issue. There was \$50M in PICO funds this year and the legislature gave all those dollars to charter schools. Different rules exist: charter school class size determinations are on a school-wide average, and public schools are class by class. There are also issues in terms of audits. The School Board is going to try to bring those issues and others to the attention of the legislature. He said there is a lot of red tape involved with charter schools, and they are asking the legislature for the ability to start a charter school.

Vice Chair Ripple reiterated that his motion will be a move to increase transparency in the schools so that all the rules are clear and students are protected from concerns that are a little more difficult to deal with, such as gender, color, and sexual orientation discrimination.

Motion by Vice Chair Ripple, seconded by Mr. Cella, to advise the School Board of a suggested policy to be drafted at some point in the near future that the site-based, school-based management rules are posted in equal accordance with the School Board's Code of Conduct, where feasible. In a roll call vote, the motion passed (12 -1) with Mr. Cella dissenting.

Mr. Cella remarked that he voted "no" because he felt the rules were already clear, and that making them more clear would not affect discrimination in any way.

E. Old/Ongoing Business

1.

2. Other Reports/Updates/Discussion

a. Reports & Updates

1) City Staff Liaison – Julie Richards

Ms. Richards welcomed the new student Board members.

She asked the Board to define the topic of the previous budget related discussion for the next agenda.

Ms. Clark thought it would be "Reinstating Specials" in regards to the budget.

Ms. Bucolo noted that not every school lost their specials – her school still has P.E., art and music.

Ms. Clark brought up the lack of staff for the libraries, such as a Media Specialist.

Vice Chair Ripple thought that they wanted to establish a relationship with the new Superintendent about the budget issues. He also thought they wanted a more wide-ranging discussion about the budget, to include specials.

Ms. Clark also mentioned that the budget is being balanced "on the back of the elementary school teachers."

Ms. Kelly asked if they could find out how the budget cuts affected middle schools and high schools. Vice Chair Ripple suggested inviting the individual they had before from the Budget Department. Ms. Clark wanted to hear from the person who came up with the budget design that cut elementary funding.

Ms. Cirillo said that she has been a budget keeper in the District for 18 years, and every department has been cut, not just teachers. She said everyone has to be more creative in how they spend their money and what is purchased. She has been frustrated in her job, having to buy from higher priced vendors because they are approved by the District.

Mr. Webster agreed the cuts are across the board. He said if this Board gives him specific questions, he will try to get them answered as best he can. He knows that the cuts were made by area, but he was not privy to detail below that level. He reminded the Board that they took a large cut this year, and they were also penalized because the year before the School Board chose to spend the federal jobs money to keep from cutting teachers. He recommended talking to elected officials, letting them know that education cannot continue this way. While budgets are being cut, mandates are increasing. He offered to bring in a legislative program and explain it.

Vice Chair Ripple suggested having the PowerPoint presentation (and the person who normally presents it) that is delivered to the legislative delegation.

Ms. Elijah brought up that the School Board is in the red, and they had discussions before they made the cuts. She questioned the validity of asking the School Board why

they did what they did when they have already made the cuts. She thought it should have been done while they were making the decisions, not after the fact.

Ms. Richards suggested the following topic for the next meeting's agenda: "Discussion on Budget Issues."

2) Broward County School District – C. Webster

Mr. Webster spoke highly of the new Superintendent, highlighting his business background and enthusiasm. He said the Superintendent is going to have "listening tours" in each school member's district, and there will be one at Fort Lauderdale High School on November 14. These tours are for him to hear people's concerns and become aware of the issues.

He mentioned that Martin Luther King Elementary and Larkdale Elementary were on "intervene status" but their test scores have improved to the point where they have been removed from the list.

Mr. Webster reminded the Board members of the "Take your Sales Tax to Work" program, where employers can contribute their sales tax preparation fee to schools.

Mr. Webster also expressed appreciation to Ms. Richards and members of the Board for their efforts.

3) Council of Ft Laud Civic Associations – B. Shelley

Ms. Shelley also noted appreciation to Ms. Richards for the information she sends out in her emails.

She reported that Target had "adopted" Lauderdale Manors, giving them books for their library.

As far as the Council, she said that they have been discussing the Visioning Committee. She said the Committee is still looking for ideas about what residents want and see in terms of visioning 15-20 years from now. She announced their website and recommended providing them with ideas.

F. New/Future Business

1. Announcements

Ms. Small, as a member of the Trailblazers of Broward County, Inc., invited all members to a Centennial Production October 29th (Saturday) from 2:30-6:00 p.m. at the African American Research Library. It is called "Echoes to the MGM Season" (mangoes,

guavas and mullet). It will include a display, music, PowerPoint presentation, and cuisine.

Mr. Scott announced that the BCA (owned by the School Board) put on one of the largest sporting events in Florida with over 700 high school students participating earlier that day. The event featured basketball, swimming and diving, wrestling, track and field championships.

G. Next Meeting and Closing

- **Location and Date: City Hall, November 17, 2011**

Hearing no further business, the meeting was adjourned by Chair Lewis at 8:33 p.m.

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