

# City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way  
Coral Gables, FL 33134  
[www.coralgables.com](http://www.coralgables.com)



## Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 16, 2022

8:30 AM

Draft Minutes

Development Services Center, Matheson Conference Room

### School Community Relations Committee

*Chairperson Dr. Winnie Chang*  
*Vice Chairperson Sandy Dimitris*  
*Board Member Erin Anding*  
*Board Member Sam Joseph*  
*Board Member Carmen Manrara Cartaya*  
*Board Member Andrew Nadal*  
*Board Member Cecilia D. Slesnick*  
*Board Member Jennifer Ward Sando*  
*Board Member Sharon Watson*

The School Community Relations Committee will be holding its Regular Meeting on Friday, Dec. 16, 2022, commencing at 8:30 a.m. While the Committee is back to live in-person meetings, members of the public may participate in person but are also able to participate via the Zoom platform. Members of the public may join the meeting via Zoom at (<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/83893614478>). In addition, a dedicated phone line will be available so that any individual who does not wish (or is unable) to use Zoom may listen to and participate in the meeting by dialing: 305-461-6769 Meeting ID: 838 9361 4478.

To speak on an Agenda Item, please "Raise your Hand" or send a message to one of the meeting hosts using the Zoom Platform. If you joined the meeting via telephone, you can "Raise your Hand" by pressing \*9.

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## CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:33 a.m.

## ROLL/QUORUM CALL

**Present:** 8 - Slesnick, Dimitris, Joseph, Chang, Manrara Cartaya, Anding, Board Member Ward Sando and Nadal

**Absent:** 1 - Watson

## A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of November 18, 2022.

**Attachments:** [Cover Memo](#)  
[Draft Nov. 18 SCRC Minutes](#)

A motion was made by Board Member Ward Sando, seconded by Joseph, that this matter be approved. The motion passed by the following vote.

**Yeas:** 7 - Slesnick, Dimitris, Joseph, Chang, Anding, Board Member Ward Sando and Nadal

**Absent:** 2 - Watson and Manrara Cartaya

## B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments given.

## C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1 Miami-Dade County Public Schools Update (Facilitated by Mari Tere Rojas, School Board Member)

- Board Member Mari Tere Rojas is now the School Board Chair.
  - Swearing in of three (3) new board members; Monica Colucci will represent District 8; Daniel Espino representing District 5 and Board Member Alonso who is now in the former board chair cabinet district.
  - School Board meeting took place on Wednesday, December 14, new board members were present.
  - District 6 recently took part in a toy giveaway. Greatly appreciate all of those who arrived with their donations, it was a successful event. High schools were asked to help with donations; Coral Gables Senior High was very enthusiastic in their participation of the event.
  - Reading Under the Stars event was another welcomed event that recently took place. There was a phenomenal turnout, approximately 800 attended including children, along with parents and grandparents. It was an amazing enjoyable experience especially for the children.
  - There is a current partnership with Miami-Dade College. Superintendent Dr. Dotres and other professionals have indicated that teachers who are doing their residency will now be paid, hopefully this will entice more individuals to be interested in teaching. More high schools will also have teaching academies with dual classes with college credits.
  - Still having a difficult time in getting substitute teachers. As a result, some classes have been cancelled. Substitute teachers will get paid \$100.00 a day.
  - Principal for a day took place yesterday. It was a positive opportunity to see firsthand what the principal does during the day.
- School Board items proffered are as follows:
- H-3 -Comprehensive Review and Update of the Teaching and Learning Process for Reading and Mathematics Skills in Miami-Dade County Public Schools.
    - Board Member Ward Sando inquired on item regarding H-3 as textbook materials are available online for regular students but not for special needs classes. Information cannot be located on the school portal. Board Member Rojas was unaware of this situation, but this matter will be addressed with the Superintendent. It's important to ensure that the children have the necessary tools for them to shine and progress.
  - H-4 – Request Authorization for the School Board to Approve the Process for the Development of an Independent Audit/Review of the General Obligation Bond (GOB) funded School Improvement Program.
    - An internal and external audit of \$1.2 billion school board bond took place. Positive response was reported; a few recommendations were provided but nothing major. Coming to the end of this process.
  - H-5 – Amendment to School Board Policy 6325 – Cone of Silence.
  - H-8 - Miami-Dade School Board endorsement of January 2023 as National Mentoring Month.
    - This has proven to be a positive program because many children's lives have been drastically changed in a positive manner because of this program.
  - B-6 – Request Approval of Resolution No. 22-052 of The School Board of Miami-Dade, Florida, Recognizing Dr. Delia C. Garcia, Former Dean of the College of Education at Florida International University.
  - Over 100 Interventionist positions are still vacant and must filled. Funding exists but the human capital is needed.
  - Board Member Anding recommends bringing in the retired teachers for assistance with the human capital shortage.

**C-2 Coral Gables Senior High Magnet Open-House Event Review (Facilitated by Sam Joseph, Board Member)**

Board Member Joseph recently toured and attended the Coral Gables Senior High Open House and was happy to see and experience the overwhelming enthusiasm from the approximately 200-300 individuals who attended. Individuals came from as far as Homestead and Weston. School is looking very good.

- 200 seats are still available.
  - Encouraged all to attend the Open Houses.
  - Specialized school program.
  - Construction is currently in phase 3, renovating older building and putting in new chiller system. Phase 3 should be finalized by the beginning of next year.
  - Currently waiting on funding before beginning phase 4, where the gym and parking garage will be the focus.
  - Friends of Gables has been very helpful and even looking at working on a legacy project.
  - Coral Gables' Prep has preferred entry. Seats are limited.
- Secretary Lopez mentioned fundraiser for Friends of Gables through Economic Development & Community Foundation, Sip & Shop Event.

**C-3 Coral Gables Literacy Festival - Literacy Ambassador Honorees List Review (Facilitated by Sam Joseph, Board Member)**

- Not up for a vote today. Wanted to begin providing the names to the School Community Relations Committee for consideration.
- Every year the Literacy Ambassadors are honored both for youth and adults. Board Member Joseph encouraged the SCRC members to add names to the list. It's important to recognize those individuals who make literacy great. The selection of the honorees can be done sometime during the January meeting.
- Community Recreation department has developed a plaque and will be put up as a "Hall of Fame" the names of the honorees that are recognized. The date of the event will be May 20, 2023, not to interfere with Memorial Day. The date was selected as in prior occasions many were unable to attend due to vacations and holidays.
- Board Member Ward Sando inquired: Is the list limited to those individuals who have agreed to show up to the festival? Board Member Joseph commented that it's important to alert and ensure the individual is aware of the event with ample time so that they can be present and enjoy the festivities.
- Board Member Ward Sando inquired if the international group will be targeted with respect to having books in the native language or will the books be translated to English? Board Member Joseph indicated he is interested in seeing books donated in the native language. Another aspect that is being looked at is having consuls and or their staff read to the children whether in their native language or in English. The county is trying to build their relationship with various consulates including the Irish consulate and have them participate with their book donations.
- Children are also welcome to come and read.

**Attachments:** [Literacy Laureates Nominees List](#)

**C-4 Jr. Orange Bowl Parade Review (Facilitated by Sam Joseph, Board Member)**

- Wonderful family event. Event has improved each year and would be the best place to incorporate a Literacy Parade component.
- Attend the parade if you haven't already. Santa is present and the city streets look beautiful for all to enjoy! Would be great to have local participation. It's open to the community.
- Board Member Ward Sando brings up the possibility of the SCRC participating by having a float or marching at the event.

**D. OLD BUSINESS**

**D-1 Coral Gables Preparatory World History Assignment Update**

- Authorized curriculum in new State standards.
- Board Member Joseph has referred this item to the ACLU. He is asking if it adheres to federal law and is waiting for an opinion from school district attorney.

**E. ONGOING BUSINESS**

**E-1 General Updates (Facilitated by Naomi Levi-Garcia, Staff Liaison & Solanch Lopez, Secretary)**

- Board Member Ward Sando commented that on October 25, Dr. Acosta from the district invited UMCARD, Board Member Ward Sando and others to tour the new self-contained classroom at Ponce Middle School. They are starting off with six-grade, and noticed the class was already full. The teacher was great and program appears to be successful. Happy to see results.
- Secretary Lopez provided updates, indicating that Crystal Academy had their annual holiday show in the City Hall Courtyard.
- Staff Liaison Levi Garcia provided legislative updates and asked about the school district priorities, so they can be promoted by the city.
- Request made by board members for the region to attend a future meeting to provide an update on Coral Gables Prep. Academy's ABC standing.
- Board Member Manrara Cartaya inquired on updates related to Carver Middle School air conditioning situation. Sunset Elementary has similar air conditioning issues. Families have expressed their concern.

**F. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, January 20, 2023**  
Questions/Comments: [scrc@coralgables.com](mailto:scrc@coralgables.com)

**F-2 Join a local PTA or subscribe to their newsletters using the following links:**

**F-3 Hot Chocolate with Santa - Dec. 17, 2022 | 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.**

**F-4 Miami Children's Chorus "Voice of Angels" - Dec. 18, 2022 | 6:00 PM - 9:00 PM**

**F-5 Grand Chanukah Celebration at Ponce Circle Park - Dec. 18, 2022 | 4:00 PM - 6:00 PM**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 9:51 a.m.

**NOTE**

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