

# City of Coral Gables

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



## Meeting Minutes

Friday, April 21, 2023

8:30 AM

Police and Fire Headquarters, Community Meeting 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, April 21, 2023, 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.

## CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:41 a.m.

## ROLL/QUORUM CALL

**Present:** 5 - Slesnick, Joseph, Chang, Manrara Cartaya and Anding

**Absent:** 4 - Watson, Dimitris, Board Member Ward Sando and Nadal

### A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of March 17, 2023.

**Attachments:** [Cover Memo](#)  
[Draft Minutes - SCRC Mar. 17](#)

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

**Yeas:** 5 - Slesnick, Joseph, Chang, Manrara Cartaya and Anding

**Absent:** 4 - Watson, Dimitris, Board Member Ward Sando and Nadal

### B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No public comments.

### C. NEW BUSINESS

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

School Board Chair was unable to attend the meeting. Chief of Staff Marlene Hernandez provided updates on the Board Chair's proffered School Board items.

- B-5: Request Approval of Resolution No. 23-021 of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing the retirement of Mr. Michael Putney, former WPLG Channel 10, Senior Political Reporter and host of "This Week in South Florida" for his many years of dedication, commitment, and service to the South Florida community.
- Revised H-4: School Board endorsement of the month of May 2023 as Mental Health Awareness Month and Thursday, May 11, 2023, as National Children's Mental Health Awareness Day in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).
- Revised H-5: School Board endorsement of May 5, 2023, as School Lunch Hero Day in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).
- Revised H-6: Compensation Study for managerial exempt personnel (MEP).
- Revised H-7: Compensation Study for confidential exempt personnel (CEP).

**C-2 2023 Coral Gables Family Literacy Festival (CGFLF) Update (Facilitated by Sam Joseph, Board Member)**

Board Member Joseph provided a brief update on the Gables Family Literacy Festival Event. The 2023 event is slated for Saturday, May 20. The event is free for the entire community. Over 40 vendors participated last year. This year's vendor applications opened last week and advertisements for the event were shared. An International Village will be present at this year's event with several consulates already confirmed and a few additional ones pending. Pursuant to the re-opening of the Coral Gables Library, the Literacy Laurette presentations might take place inside the library. Board Member Joseph has also been in communication with the Mayor on the Teacher Awards.

Board Member Slesnick asked for a schedule of events. Board Member Joseph confirmed there will be a schedule of events finalized soon and further encouraged members to volunteer as readers. Board Member Anding inquired about the library opening date and Miracle Mile location.

Chairperson Chang inquired if there is something that can be done to provide students with high grades some sort of discount on the books for sale and the possibility of having a table for the School District to recruit substitute teachers. Board Member Joseph provided details on how people can connect to this event. Board Member Anding mentioned having a workshop for parents with specialist that can talk about kids reading levels.

**C-3 Discussion on school start times (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)**

Chairperson Chang is thrilled that this topic is finally being discussed. The district was ahead of its time by doing the research which is available at the bell times website. If the current proposed bills pass the implementation would not be immediate. One of the bills has a three-year implementation period written in.

Comments from Martha Montaner via Zoom: Highs Schools should not start before 8:30 am and Middle Schools should not start before 8:00 am. Conversations will continue with all the stakeholders on how to further proceed.

**C-4 Discussion on school safety in response to House Bill 543 (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)**

Chairperson Chang asked the district to start planning outreach to the community about the change and its effect on school safety. This bill does not impact schools as they are exempt, and weapons or firearms are still not allowed on school campuses. Martha Montaner reconfirmed that firearms are not permissible in school grounds.

**C-5 CGPA Minorca Campus Centennial Renovation Update (Facilitated by Sam Joseph, Board Member)**

Work is currently being performed on the auditorium. Board Member Joseph was concerned that all the seats had been taken out and he had been told by a worker that they were bringing in brand new seating which conflicts with the historic aspects of the campus. He was disturbed that the historic seats were gone and requested an update from the District.

Dr. Acosta provided an update stating that the seats are being restored and not replaced. The District has been working with the City's Historic department to ensure anything that can be restored will be restored. Board Member Joseph requested that the District provide updates during the summer to keep the community in the loop.

Board Member Slesnick mentioned that the school will be having a centennial gala in September at the Biltmore Hotel. The goal will be to raise \$100k for an outdoor learning space and artificial turf.

**D. OLD BUSINESS**

**D-1 Discussion on substitute teachers (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)**

Board Member Chang provided a brief update on the workshop results as summarized in the minutes from Feb. 24. Additional advertising is crucial in making this need known. It is important to eliminate some of the barriers.

The School Community Relations Committee Workshop Minutes of Feb. 24, 2023.

Attachments: [Cover Memo](#)  
[SCRC Feb. 24 Draft Workshop Minutes](#)

**D-2 Teacher of the Year Awards Project Review (Facilitated by Sam Joseph, Board Member)**

A video from the 2019 pilot event was presented to meeting attendees. It was a great event, although the timing was an issue as it took place during November which didn't allow much time to get the list of teachers from the district. As stated in the pilot program report, there was a cost associated with the event. Board Member Joseph is looking at partners for future events that would take on the costs. He has met with Major Lago to discuss what can be done to honor the teachers. Board Member Joseph stated that Mayor Lago would meet with City Manager Iglesias to discuss additional details on the venue and timing. A request was made for member to share any ideas on how this can be done.

Attachments: [Teachers Awards Report 2019.docx](#)

**E. ONGOING BUSINESS**

**E-1 General Updates (Facilitated by Solanch Lopez, Acting Liaison)**

Reminders regarding board terms and the Boards & Committees Appreciation Reception were provided.

**F. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, May 19, 2023 | 8:30 a.m.**

Comments/Questions: [scrc@coralgables.com](mailto:scrc@coralgables.com)

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

**F-3 Recycling Drive-Thru Event - Saturday, April 22 | 9 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

**F-4 Path of the Panther Film Screening - Sunday, April 23 | 3 p.m.**

**F-5 My Squad's Earth Month Celebration - Wednesday, April 26 | 6 p.m.**

**F-6 School Board Chair Rojas' Office Hours - May 4 & 18 | 12:30 to 3 p.m.**

**F-7 Gables Gallery Night - Friday, May 5 | 6 to 10 p.m.**

**F-8 Spring Sip & Shop - Wednesday, May 10 | 5 to 8 p.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

**NOTE**