

# City of Coral Gables

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



## Meeting Minutes

Friday, August 18, 2023

8:30 AM

Police and Fire Headquarters, Community Meeting Room

### School Community Relations Committee

*Board Member Erin Anding*  
*Board Member Winnie Chang*  
*Board Member Sandy Dimitris*  
*Board Member Joshua Goodman*  
*Board Member Ana Lam*  
*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, Aug. 18, 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 8:33 a.m.

## ROLL/QUORUM CALL

**Present:** 8 - Board Member Anding, Board Member Lam, Board Member Chang, Board Member Goodman, Board Member Dimitris, Board Member Nadal, Board Member Slesnick and Board Member Watson

## A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of June 30, 2023.

**Attachments:** [Cover Memo](#)  
[Draft Minutes - SCRC June 30 Meeting](#)

Board Member Slesnick motioned to approved the June 30 meeting minutes, Board Member Lam seconded. Motion passed. Vice Chairperson Dimitris was not present for the vote.

## B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

April Jones - Coral Gables resident and Coral Gables Preparatory Academy PTSA member:

- On behalf of the Eagles Nest Fund, extended an invitation to the upcoming Centennial Gala scheduled for Sept. 23, 2023 at the Biltmore Hotel. Additional details and ticket information can be found at [www.eaglesnestfund.org/gala](http://www.eaglesnestfund.org/gala).

## C. NEW BUSINESS

SCRC members introduced themselves as new members have joined the committee.

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

Chief of Staff Marlene Hernandez presents on behalf of the School Board Chair Rojas; unable to attend since it is the second day of the new school year.

**Proffered Items:**

- Revised H-2: Instructional transformation to support rapid and sustainable improvements for students who are not proficient in reading and mathematics in third through tenth grade in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).
  - Chairperson Chang asked that the School Board consider looking into newer researcher to keep students consistent.
- Revised H-7: School Board Endorsement of the month of Sept. 2023 as National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS).
- Revised H-8: School Board endorsement of Hispanic Heritage Month in Miami-Dade County Public Schools from Sept. 15, 2023, through Oct. 15, 2023.
- Revised H-9: School Board endorsement of "Ethical Governance Day 2023" in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (M-DCPS) on Oct. 18, 2023, Sponsored by the Miami-Dade County Commission on Ethics and Public Trust.
  - Board Member Goodman inquired if Coral Gables Senior High School had participated in the past and if they were participating this year. Stated that it was a good idea to invite city officials to the event.

Chairperson Chang asked about the status of sending information regarding gun safety. Ms. Hernandez stated that this matter has been shared on social media.

Alejandro Perez is taking over Dr. Acosta's position with the district overseeing the Coral Gables schools. Mr. Perez is the central region director overseeing Coral Gables feeder pattern which encompasses 18 schools. He is a former Coral Gables principal. He provided his contact details stating that he can be reached at 305-499-5050.

Vice Chairperson Dimitris asked about the History textbook review as she received an email from the instructional review committee stating that no one attended the review and requesting additional volunteers. Asked for clarification about what constitutes a full day at the committee meeting and what happens if no one reviews. Sam Joseph stated that he participated in the review process and that there is a communications issue with the district, along with the review committee being a big time commitment.

Board Member Nadal asked about the process for the books being taken out and added. Ms. Hernandez stated it's an Academic and Innovation process, however Acting Staff Liaison Lopez will receive additional details and will distribute to the board.

Board Member Anding provided comments on the importance of ensuring that small children learn to swim at a young age.

**C-2 Appointment of Board-As-A-Whole Members (Facilitated by Solanch Lopez, Acting Staff Liaison)**

A motion was made by Board Member Anding, seconded by Board Member Dimitris, to reappoint both Cecilia Slesnick and Sharon Watson as Board-As-A-Whole members. The motion passed by the following vote.

**Yeas:** 8 - Board Member Anding, Board Member Lam, Board Member Chang, Board Member Goodman, Board Member Dimitris, Board Member Nadal, Board Member Slesnick and Board Member Watson

**C-3 Discussion on Oct. SCRC Meeting Date (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)**

The regular meeting room is not available on Oct. 20 and Acting Liaison Lopez will be out of office. Vice Chairperson Dimitris motions to move the meeting up a week to Oct. 13, Board Member Goodman seconds. The motion passes.

Items C-4 and D-1 are related.

**C-4 Discussion regarding PTSA Zoom Meeting held with Dr. Rosenfeld of Miami Beach (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)**

Chairperson Chang indicated that schools in Miami Beach are structured differently from other jurisdictions. Their budget is fully for programming and not for beautification. The committee reviewed the notes from the PTSA Zoom meeting and discussed.

Acting Liaison Lopez will follow up with the district on how other cities distribute funding if similar programs are present.

Board Member Goodman also serves as Vice President of the Little Carver PTA and provided background on PTA group and how Miami Beach runs their program. He asked how many families in Coral Gables send their kids to public schools.

Chairperson Chang indicated that the Miami Beach program was a process of twenty years to get to where they are today. Miami Beach was able to have their own budget via conducting their own community survey, thus serving their residents accordingly to their specific needs. Perhaps something to look at is to conduct a city-wide survey and collect the necessary information such as what is the number of families within Coral Gables that utilize public schools and or would they want to use public schools. Acting Liaison Lopez explains that the city already conducts a bi-annual community survey but that it is not specific to schools, while there is a general question regarding education within the survey.

A request is made to go back to the schools and clarify that the SCRC wishes to know what their programmatic enrichment needs currently are.

District Administrative Director Aillette Diaz will reach out to the principals and provide Acting Liaison Lopez with the requested information before the next SCRC meeting. Board Member Slesnick brought up using museum funds for this program again. Limiting it to 5K per school to start with.

Board Member Goodman motions for a resolution to the City Commission requesting for a consultant and or trained expert to conduct a thorough needs assessment and serve as an education officer. The motion does not receive a second.

Vice Chairperson Dimitris mentioned to gear toward STEM or teacher certification programming.

Estelle Lockhart circled back to the survey discussion and states that it would need to be very technical and would need to be statistical and solely on education. Mentions that Miami Beach did a compact and 50/40 split to help fund feeder schools as well. States that the city needs a full-time employee to work on these items. Workshops need to be planned and well thought out. She also states that there needs to be a nationwide comparison.

Sam Joseph indicated that Somerset is a charter and it's not included in the list district's list. Requested notes from workshop summit from 2018 meeting with Miami Beach. Ms. Levi-Garcia should have details of such meeting. Mr. Joseph agrees that another workshop/community meeting is required. A Chief Educational Officer is needed.

Chairperson Chang agrees that a workshop for a strategic plan is needed. A discussion on scheduling a workshop will be added to the next meeting agenda.

Board Members Goodman and Slesnick encourage PTSA presidents to speak with their principals to discuss the request for programmatic needs assessment and make sure they respond. Board Member Slesnick asked Board Member Watson to let PTSA know through her contacts.

Attachments: [Notes Dr. Rosenfeld Meeting](#)

## D. OLD BUSINESS

- D-1 Discussion regarding supplemental funding for area schools from the City of Coral Gables to address deepening budgetary pressures on public schools (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)

Item was discussed jointly with item C-4. See above for minutes.

A Resolution of the School Community Relations Committee requesting that the City Commission include a formal educational investment fund budget line item in the Fiscal Year 24 City budget for public schools within City limits.

Attachments: [SCRC Resolution Re: School Funding Cover Memo](#)  
[Minutes - SCRC May 19 Meeting](#)  
[June 30 Meeting - Item D-1 Minutes](#)  
[Speaker Cards 2-1](#)  
[CCMTG July 11 2023 - Agenda Item 2-1 - Resolution of the SCRC requesting that](#)

Attachments: [Coral Gables Schools - Principal's Needs Assessment](#)  
[Coral Gables Resident Students Breakdown](#)

## E. ONGOING BUSINESS

- E-1 Notice Pursuant to Resolution No. 2020-245 (Facilitated by Solanch Lopez, Acting Staff Liaison)

Members bring up the idea of charging developers an education fee, similar to the Art in Public Places fee. This topic has been mentioned in the past.

Board Member Slesnick brings up commission appointees briefing their commissioners after each School Community Committee meeting. Important to ensure that Commissioners are aware of the needs this Committee has.

Project: Temple Judea

School: Ponce De Leon Middle School & Henry S. West Laboratory School

Attachments: [07 12 23 PZB Staff Report - Temple Judea w attachments](#)  
[Temple Judea List of Property Owners](#)

Project: 33 Alhambra

School: Coral Gables Preparatory Academy

**Attachments:** [07 12 23 - 33 Alhambra - PZB Staff Report w Attachments B and C](#)  
[33 Alhambra Concurrency Statement](#)  
[33 Alhambra List of Property Owners](#)

**E-2 General Updates (Facilitated by Solanch Lopez, Acting Staff Liaison)**

No general updates.

**F. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, Sept. 15, 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 Navy Band Concerts - Thursday, Aug. 24, 2023 | 12:30 to 1:30 p.m. & 7 to 9 p.m.**

**F-4 My Squad - Fitness and Bath Bombs - Wednesday, Aug. 30, 2023 | 6 to 9 p.m.**

**F-5 Downtown Community Cleanup End of Summer Edition - Thursday, Aug. 31, 2023 | 5 p.m.**

**F-6 Gables Gallery Night - Friday, Sept. 1, 2023 | 6 to 10 p.m.**

**F-7 School Board Chair Rojas' Office Hours - Thursday, Sept. 7, 2023 | 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

**NOTE**