

School Community Relations Committee (SCRC) Meeting

Minutes

Date: November 14, 2025

Time: 8:30 AM

Location: Coral Gables- Police and Fire Building – 2151 Salzedo Street

A. CALL TO ORDER

B. ROLL CALL

- Winnie Chang
- Cecilia Slesnick
- Sandy Dimitris- *absent*
- Joshua Goodman – arrived at 8:50 am
- Andy Gomez
- Mary Palacio
- Sharon Watson -*absent*
- Sam Joseph
- Miguel Vias

C. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES – November 14, 2025

All in favor of approving Minutes for meeting held on November 14, 2025

D. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No Public Comments

E. NEW BUSINESS

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

- School Board Chair was not present at the meeting.

E.2 Discussion on details and timeline for presenting on Coral Gables Laureate nominations

- Literacy Fest takes place during May, therefore it is important to begin discussions soon (during December in the next meeting) the Board should review qualifications

desired for the selected individual, including their background, visibility in the community, and overall suitability. All Board members will have the opportunity to provide input and vote in January. Board member Joseph will circulate a list of potential nominees and remind the members of the many individuals and organizations who are contributing to the community, such as Deanna Figueroa and her Interact Club. It is important to include as many community-engaged individuals as possible. The purpose of the Family Literacy Festival is to show families the importance of being involved in their children's education and being active within the community. It was further suggested that incorporating a financial literacy speaker would be beneficial. Nominees should be contacted in January to ensure they have sufficient time to plan and schedule their participation.

- Chairperson Chang provided details regarding former Literacy Laureates such as: Dr. Maria Mayer who Miami-Dade Public Schools; the New York calls her the female Indiana Jones, because she discovered the smallest mammal in Madagascar. She's a former scholar; she's wildlife correspondent for Nat Geo; she's written two books.
- The second category was for City Beautiful Literacy Laureate. Dr. Riley was awarded posthumously.
- Captain Briskin E. Scott, a retired Nasa astronaut, also received the City Beautiful Literacy award.

E.3 Reminder to the SCRC of Board-As-A-Whole appointees

- Attendance requirements were discussed among board members.
- Moved by Board member Joseph and seconded by Board member Palacio to appoint Ana Lam to the SCRC as a Board as a whole appointee.

Chairperson Chang introduced a new item not previously added to the agenda.

- Disabilities Affairs Board member typically is an individual who facilitates meetings and serves as a liaison.
- Board Member Palacio provided updates from previous meeting with the Disabilities Affairs.
 - Board will reconvene on what initiatives the SCRC will take and will be a topic of discussion for their next meeting.
 - Different disabilities were represented such as mobility, individuals with MS, parents of children with autism and various other disabilities.
 - Additional communications will be had.

E.4 Discussion from Chelsea Granell regarding the Strategic Plan

- Supporting excellence in education remains a key priority for the City of Coral Gables. This will be one of the main issues the City will advocate during the upcoming trip to Tallahassee. The City will support legislation that advances educational excellence by ensuring adequate and sustained funding.
- Expanding access to diverse academic opportunities and strengthening the teaching profession while fostering safe learning environments to ensure Florida remains a top destination for business and residents.
- Safety improvements and traffic calming, which have been discussed in previous SCRM meetings, will also be addressed during the trip to Tallahassee; requests for improvements will include but not limited to roadway and drainage, utility coordination, and geotechnical work to support the design and construction. Further details were mentioned.
- Question was raised on how does the “adequate funding” work and how much of the money will each of the schools will be received. Liaison Granell elaborated on query and mentioned the number of students and the dollar amount allocated and the amount of money requested was \$570,46.80 per student. The total property taxes collected from the city taxpayers related to the school board for 2025 fiscal year is \$163,895.00. Further statistics were mentioned.

Board member Slesnick elaborated on the various ways schools are funded, noting that funding structures differ based on multiple factors. Also indicated that Board members meet with the commissioners and update them on details of the SCRC meeting.

Board member Goodman emphasized the importance of Coral Gables in having a Chief Education Officer who will ensure to advocate for the schools and serve the residents.

Board member Vias also emphasized the importance of making education a priority.

- The city schedules brief meetings with representatives such as Demi Busatta and Senator Ileana Garcia and within this limited time the city drives several appropriation requests.

Board Member Goodman successfully coordinated a meeting with Senator Calatayud on December 5 at 4:00 pm; parents and their children have been invited to the meeting. This meeting will provide a valuable opportunity for students to learn about civics and engage directly with the elected representative.

Ms. Rodriguez-Diaz, Administrative Director from Miami-Dade County Public Schools indicated that Miami-Dade Public Schools and other administrative directors travel to Tallahassee weekly during the legislative session. She is extending an invitation to join forces on a future Tallahassee trip.

- The City has not finalized the Strategic Plan yet.
- Quiet Excellence consultant's recommendation preparing a Mutual Support Agreement Recap. Liaison Granell elaborated on the distinction between developing a strategic plan under the city and establishing a Mutual Support Agreement. Pros and Cons were discussed.
- Team discussed difference between measurables and deliverables.

F. OLD BUSINESS

G. ANNOUNCEMENTS

ADJOURNMENT

Next meeting: December 19, 2025.

Meeting adjourned at: 10:30 am.