

# City of Coral Gables

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



## Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 15, 2023

8:30 AM

2151 Salzedo Street

Police and Fire Headquarters, Community Meeting Room

### School Community Relations Committee

*Chairperson Winnie Chang*  
*Vice Chairperson Sandy Dimitris*  
*Board Member Erin Anding*  
*Board Member Joshua Goodman*  
*Board Member Ana Lam*  
*Board Member Andrew Nadal*  
*Board Member Cecilia D. Slesnick*  
*Board Member Sharon Watson*

The School Community Relations Committee will be holding its Regular Meeting on Friday, Dec. 15, 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 8:35 a.m.

## ROLL/QUORUM CALL

**Present:** 7 - Board Member Anding, Board Member Lam, Chairperson Chang, Board Member Goodman, Board Member Nadal, Board Member Slesnick and Board Member Watson

**Absent:** 1 - Vice Chairperson Dimitris

### A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of November 17, 2023.

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

**This Minutes was approved**

**Yeas:** 5 - Board Member Anding, Chairperson Chang, Board Member Goodman, Board Member Slesnick and Board Member Watson

**Absent:** 3 - Board Member Lam, Vice Chairperson Dimitris and Board Member Nadal

### B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

**Sam Joseph:** Thanked the SCRC for the recent discussions and resolution regarding education that was presented at the City Commission meeting. Stated that there is work to do on community education to ensure everyone is informed on what resources are available.

## C. NEW BUSINESS

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

Miami-Dade County Public Schools rated 'A' school district this year and has been for the last four years. Numerous challenges have been overcome caused by the pandemic including students mental health which impacted the academic outcome and the influx of approximately 21,000 immigrant students. This year there have been no learning gains based on the assessments; Miami-Dade County Public School remained an 'A' school, but neighboring districts dropped down to 'B' ratings. Congratulations to teachers and everyone that has played a significant positive role in keeping education strong for the children's benefit. The School Chair thanked the prior and current Mayor for allowing her satellite office hours at City Hall.

Board Member Slesnick asked for a breakdown of County statistics to see how they drill down to the Coral Gables schools. She encouraged Commissioners to meet during satellite hours to have a better understanding of the public school system. Board Chair Rojas stated that she is available to any Commissioners that wish to meet.

The deadline for the magnet school program applications is Jan. 15, 2024. There are winter school programs for those students that need additional help with their education.

Board items proffered include an item on Fentanyl education, which is very important to educate children, educators, parents, and guardians on the dangers of Fentanyl. Recently an event was held on: Say NO to Fentanyl was a successful event. Literature was provided with additional details on the event.

- H-2: Review of policies, procedures, and established practices regarding school hardening, student drop-off, and related school safety and security measures at school sites in Miami-Dade County Public Schools (Miami-Dade County Public Schools). Due to security concerns not, all details can be provided or discussed for the safety of the children.

- H-3: Miami-Dade County School Board Endorsement as of January 2024 as National Mentoring Month.

- Additional item proffered relating to the Heimlich maneuver. It is important to act promptly and know what to do to save the life of an individual. This program will be on a voluntary basis. The program is co-Sponsored by other board members.

Sam Joseph asks for update on the Coral Gables Preparatory Academy auditorium. The School Chair hopes to see it open its doors in January. In addition, Sam expressed his appreciation to Board Chair Mari Tere-Rojas for her dedication and time.

**C-2 Presentation on Riders Robotics League (Facilitated by Max Ringelheim of Riders.ai)**

Chairperson Chang inquired: How are you partnering with schools and education? Max Ringelheim provided feedback stating that they have partnered with Carlos Vazquez who runs a non-profit company in Miami called Miami Edteck, he is passionate about STEM education technology. Max is also on the board of STEM for Miami-Dade County Public Schools along in joining Mr. Vasquez's board. All of this has spearheaded strategic partners along with grant access programs.

Board Member Slesnick inquired on the cost of these programs into the classrooms. The most popular kit is the "Pro-kit" running under \$2k. Education kit for Infento education kit runs between \$1k—\$2k, there are a total of 4 kits and are for elementary, middle to high school children. Riders is geared to middle and high school age groups with a special annual license fee for Miami-Dade County Public Schools in the amount of \$40.00 per student.

Board Member Nadal asked if children are allowed to join even if their school is not part of the program. Max states that while they can, it is mainly geared toward classrooms since very advanced topics are being covered.

Board Member Slesnick had another query about if this is through a club or a class? Max: Within STEM classes but also through robotic clubs.

Over 200 hours of coding took place during the last global competition. Max further explained that kits come with a two-year warranty along with tech support email. Teachers will be provided with a guide sheet.

Chairperson Chang requests outcome statistics from their work with Miami-Dade County Public School, for example Science scores pre/post program. Max is happy to have his contact details provided to teachers and other interested.

Attachments: [Presentation](#)

## **D. OLD BUSINESS**

### **D-1 Discussion on the People with Disabilities Planning Group (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)**

Item presented by former board member Jennifer Ward-Sando & former board member Sam Joseph.

Sam Joseph provided a brief synopsis. Special Needs (the name at the time during 2015) was initiated due to the need for the group and ensured that everyone had full access to various programs thus ensuring inclusion to those within the community. Jennifer explained how she ran the group once she was appointed. Some details below:

- Several informal meetings during Fall, Winter, and Spring for one hour over Zoom platform. Members included School Community Relations Committee representative, Disability Affairs, Parks, etc.

Discussion one which School Community Relations Committee member will take over. Board Member Ana Lam volunteers. The role would include, among other duties to meet with the representative of the Disabilities Affairs Board and act as a liaison for the group and report back with comments or concerns. This is one of the projects since 2015 lead by the School Community Relations Committee board.

Motion made by Board Member Watson, second by Board Member Slesnick that Board Member Lam be appointed to this initiative. Motion passed.

## **E. ONGOING BUSINESS**

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

Staff Liaison Lopez provided an update on the SCRC resolution that was heard and discussed at the Dec. 12 Commission Meeting. The request for education to be included in the next iteration of the City Strategic Plan was approved by the Commission. The request for a survey requires further discussion and feedback from the School District and Board Members. A Sunshine Meeting will be scheduled between the City and School Board Chair Rojas to further discuss before the item returns to Commission in February.

Holiday Sip & Shop event had to be canceled due to weather conditions.

## **F. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, Jan. 12, 2024 | 8:30 a.m.**

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 Carolers in Downtown Coral Gables - Dec. 15 & 16 | 7 to 9 p.m.**

### **F-4 Hot Chocolate with Santa - Dec. 16 & 17 | 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.**

F-5 Merrick House Holiday Celebration - Dec. 17 | 2 to 5 p.m.

F-6 Giralda Live - Jan. 5 | 7 to 11 p.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:48 a.m.

**NOTE**