

City of Coral Gables

405 Biltmore Way
Coral Gables, FL 33134
www.coralgables.com



Meeting Minutes

Friday, February 17, 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, Feb. 17, 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

Board Member Ward Sando moves to excuse Board Member Watson who is serving on the M-DCPS Assistant Principal of the Year committee and was conducting school visitations. Board Member Slesnick seconds, motion is approved.

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

Absent: 1 - Manrara Cartaya

Excused: 1 - Watson

A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of January 20, 2023.

Attachments: [SCRC Jan. 20 Draft Minutes](#)
[Cover Memo](#)

A motion was made by Board Member Joseph, seconded by Vice Chairperson Dimitris, 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: 1 - Manrara Cartaya

Excused: 1 - Watson

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Daniel Stankiewicz – Chair of Capital Improvements at Carver Elementary PTA

- Expressed his appreciation to all who provided aid including Board Chair Rojas and her Assistant Ms. Fernandez, the principal and this committee.
- Much was done since last year. Temporary structure, roof, leaks, all were handled. Waiting on updates on the shade structure, which is still pending. Board Chair Rojas states that this is in the planning phase and the budget has been requested.

Estelle Lockhart -

- Candidate Forum sponsored by numerous PTAs and PTSAs is being finalized. Current sponsors are Friends of Gables, Little Carver PTA, Ponce Middle PTA. Coral Gables Preparatory PTA is pending final confirmation.
- This is the second year this virtual forum will be held. There is also an educational component in the classroom related to the elected roles.
- Virtual event will be on March 2nd at 7:00 pm. Link to join will be provided via flyer. Mrs. Lockhart is also working on a press release providing details on the event. Board Member Joseph will be the moderator for this event.

C. NEW BUSINESS

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

Board Chair Rojas will be in attendance at the Technical Career College Expo at Youth Fair grounds later in the day. Various schools will be represented. This event will provide students with ample opportunities of seeking vocational careers and options in lieu of attending a university.

Productive Board Meeting on Wednesday, February 22. Proffered items are mentioned below.

- Revised Good Cause 2 H-13: Comprehensive Review of Transportation Guidelines, Including Student Discipline Actions, While Students are riding a M-DCPS Bus. This item was co-sponsored by numerous board members and received positive response. Unable to discuss any details related to a recent incident that occurred on a bus; due to an open and pending investigation. It is important to have an in-depth evaluation, comprehensive review of current procedures for employees, administrators and all those involved in the process. The Comprehensive Review includes student discipline action, while students are riding a Miami-Dade County Public School bus. Evaluation of current procedures, including bullying, harassment, etc. will take place.
- Revised 3 H-4: Fentanyl- A fake prescription pill, widely available, and increasingly lethal. This item is to address the Narcan issue. Awareness and research are crucial. Age-appropriate campaign geared to students, parents, grandparents, and guardians alerting them on the dangers of these drugs. Chairperson Chang mentions that education to children on the effects on the brain is key to dissuade use in the future.
- Revised H-5: School Board Endorsement of Thursday, March 2, 2023, as Read Across America Day. The event will impact the children in a positive way, those interested in reading to students should contact school principals.
- Revised B-3: Request approval of Resolution No. 23-005 of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing former Miami-Dade Schools Police Chief Edwin Lopez. New Interim Chief of Police Silva. Update on officers: Currently have a workforce of almost 500 officers in the schools looking out for the safety and wellbeing of the children and staff. This has been possible due to the Chief's diligence. Very appreciative of the Mayor and Commissioners with their police assistance in the past.

Immigration Update:

- Many new students arriving; thus far a total of 12,420 and possibly more to arrive.
 - Cuba: 9,431
 - Haiti: 472
 - Venezuela: 1,124
 - Nicaragua: 1,393

Board Chair Rojas and Superintendent are soon to travel to Washington. Federal monies are needed. They will meet with many elected officials in key positions. Funding is needed for ESAL programs. Parental component is key in the learning process of the children. Continued efforts to recruit substitute teachers.

Attendance Boundary Calendar (ABC): Frances Tucker is not on advisement or targeting. No longer a school under Board Chair Rojas.

School Board Chair Rojas shared the "Tweet My Story" contest information.

Teacher Award event program was reviewed and discussed in a previous meeting.

Magnet Schools of America: Schools at the Gables did very well overall.

Mental health professionals and counselors have been hired for the benefit of the children and their families. Arduously working with children who are experiencing difficulties especially after the pandemic. Some children appear to need the additional help.

Soon to have an event on Fathers in Education, grandfathers, all male figures are invited to partake in at the schools. Event and participation of the male figures in children's life will provide a positive impact on their kid's lives.

Efforts are being made to entice new teachers in entering the teaching force by collaborating with the University of Miami and Miami-Dade College. Efforts are being made to target children at an early stage in their lives to get them interested in seeking a career in teaching. An area that requires focus is teacher's salary; although their salary has been increased this is still a main area of concern.

C-2 Discussion on vocational rehabilitation services for deaf hard of hearing and visually impaired students (Facilitated by Jennifer Sando, Board Member)

Board Member Ward Sando recently attended the ESC sub-committee meeting. Recruiting is needed. Graduation statewide has fallen. Want to get more vision and deaf children interested in attending vocational rehabilitation classes. It's important to have public schools help identify students with special needs and provide them with information on how they can apply for state funds.

C-3 Discussion on election forum educational questions (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)

Board Member Joseph confirmed there is a planning committee. He will assist with the timing of the event. He can pass the questions along but is unable to guarantee they will be used.

Secretary Lopez will share selected questions with Board Member Joseph. Board Member Joseph mentioned that in the past the School Community Relations Committee held its own forum gearing toward education and the partnership.

Questions from the SCRC:

1. Have you visited a Coral Gables public school in the past?
2. What is your experience with the school system?
3. How do you plan to assist Miami-Dade County Public Schools with home rule and legislative issues?
4. If you have school aged children, where do they go to school?

Board Member Slesnick inquired on the number of candidates in each group. Secretary Lopez provided details associated to the 2023 Biennial Elections located within the City's website.

C-4 Additional New Business Discussed

Chairperson Chang will attend the Chamber of Commerce's Business in Education meeting next week on Thursday. She will bring up small businesses offering something for teacher appreciation week.

Chairperson Chang would like to schedule a workshop regarding new ideas on how to solve the substitute teacher shortage. Possibly looking at including Economic Development and the Chamber within the workshop.

Ideas discussed include a Sub-Drive: currently you need to go to Downtown twice, how can we decrease the barriers. Board Member Anding mentions to consider using retired teachers or those members from the Adult Activity Center; it's an untapped resource. Note from Estelle Lockhart: consider having the chairs of the Miami Beach and Pinecrest education committees attend the workshop as they are very robust supporters of their city schools.

School Community Relations Committee will have a discussion prior to scheduling the workshop with outside members. A discussion item will be added to the March agenda, followed by a possible Community workshop.

Board Member Joseph motions to host a Substitute Teacher Brainstorming Workshop on Friday, Feb. 24 at 10 a.m. Board Member Ward Sando seconds, motion passed. Board Member Anding was not present for the vote.

D. OLD BUSINESS

E. ONGOING BUSINESS

E-1 General Updates (Facilitated by Solanch Lopez, Secretary)

Naomi Levi Garcia will be taking off for maternity leave. Ms. Levi Garcia has been promoted to the City Attorney's office as a full time Assistant City Attorney and no longer acting as Intergovernmental Affairs Manager. Solanch will be acting liaison to the SCRC until the position is filled.

F. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Next SCRC meeting will take place on March 17.

F-1 Join a local PTA or subscribe to their newsletters using the following links:

F-2 Movies Under the Gables Moonlight: Beethoven - Friday, Feb. 17 | 6 to 8:30 p.m.

F-3 Farmers Market at Merrick Park - Saturdays | 8 a.m. to 2 p.m.

F-4 My Squad - Movie in the Park - Wednesday, Feb. 22 | 6 to 9 p.m.

F-5 Music at McBride Plaza - Thursdays | 5:30 to 7:30 p.m.

F-6 School Board Chair Rojas' Office Hours - Thursday, March 2 & 16 | 12:30 to 3:00 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 10:05 a.m.

NOTE