

City of Coral Gables

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



Meeting Minutes

Friday, June 30, 2023

8:30 AM

2151 Salzedo Street, Coral Gables, FL 33134

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, June 30, 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 8:37 a.m.

ROLL/QUORUM CALL

Members in attendance:
Chairperson Winnie Chang
Vice Chairperson Sandy Dimitris
Board Member Andrew Nadal
Board Member Erin Anding
Board Member Ana Lam

A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of May 19, 2023.

Attachments: [Draft Minutes - SCRC May 19 Meeting Cover Memo](#)

Vice Chairperson Dimitris moved to accept the May 19 minutes, Board Member Anding seconded. Motion passed.

B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No comments from members of the public.

C. NEW BUSINESS

C-1 2023 - 2025 Board Member Roster for the School Community Relations Committee (Facilitated by Solanch Lopez, Acting Staff Liaison)

Solanch Lopez, Acting Staff Liaison reviewed the current member roster.

Sandy Dimitris - Pending reappointment by City Manager Iglesias

Vacant - Mayor Lago has not made an appointment to the SCRC. Previous appointee was Sam Joseph who has termed out and is now serving on the Library Advisory Board.

Andrew Nadal - Reappointed by Vice Mayor Anderson

Erin Anding - Reappointed by Commissioner Menendez

Ana Lam - Appointed by Commissioner Castro

Winnie Chang - Appointed by Commissioner Fernandez. Previously served as the Commission As A Whole Appointee

Vacant - Pending appointment by Commission As A Whole

Sharon G Watson - Pending Reappointment by Board As A Whole

Cecilia D Slesnick - Pending Reappointment by Board As A Whole

New member Ana Lam provided an introduction. She mentioned she has two grown children and is blessed with two grandkids, one of the grandchildren attends Coral Gables Prep. Board Member Lam works with the Coral Gables Crime Watch and mentions there is a lot of information that can be provided to the schools.

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

Item was deferred as both current Board As A Whole appointees were unable to make the meeting.

C-3 Miami-Dade County Public Schools Update (Facilitated by Mari Tere Rojas, School Board Chair)

School Board Chair Rojas provided updates on programming and proffered items.

There are five weeks of summer school programming. Registration for the summer program began on May 8 and is now closed; 20 unique camps are available such as Tomorrow's Leaders Camp, Smart Start Camp, Engineering Explorers Camp, and for those interested in art Summer Art Camp. Miami-Dade has a joint relationship with the Children's Trust as a result there are over 300 different camps available throughout the district. Participating students receive free breakfast, lunch and snacks. It's been a very successful summer session.

Proffered Items:

- Revised B-5: Request Approval of Resolution No. 23-035 of the School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, recognizing the Walksafe Program at the University of Miami Kidz Neuroscience Center, including the 2023 Walksafe Statewide Poster Contest Winner.
- Revised H-1: Authorize the School Board Chair to Negotiate an Addendum to the Superintendent of Schools' Employment Agreement, Providing for an Additional Three (3) Year Extension.
- Revised H-9: Hispanic American Women and African American Women -School Board Policy 6320.02- Small/Micro, Minority/Women, and Veteran Business Enterprise Programs.
- Revised H-6: Encourage the Superintendent of Schools to Utilize the District's Communication Resources to Raise Community Awareness of Florida's Back-To-School First Sale Tax Holiday, From July 24, 2023, through August 6, 2023, and the Second Sales Tax Holiday From January 1, 2024 through January 14, 2024.

Results were received regarding Miami-Dade County Public Schools continuing to outpace the rest of the state and other districts in Excellent Student Thinking as a result of the (BEST Assessment). This program is designed to measure a new benchmark for Excellent Student Thinking. Grades for this program include 3rd through 10th in English Language Arts and grades 3rd through 8th in Math. End of course assessments will include Algebra and Geometry.

The district's mean scale scores and percentages scoring in Levels 3-5 were higher than those of the state for every grade except 4th grade. In grade 4th M-DCPS met the state mean scale score and state percentage scoring in Levels 3-5.

The Statewide Science Assessment in grades 5th and 8th and the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards Biology, Civics, and United States History EOC results have also been released.

School Board Member Dr. Dorothy Bendross-Mindingall is being recognized and is receiving the Lifetime Achievement Award from President Biden for her commitment and dedication as an educator and public servant.

**C-4 Coral Gables Family Literacy Festival Literacy Laureates Award Presentation
(Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)**

Mr. Sam Joseph provided the presentation as a past School Community Relations Committee Board Member.

- Currently, on a national level student are not performing as well as they should and are falling behind in subjects such as history, reading, writing, and civics. Parents and teachers must be involved in ensuring that children perform to the best of their abilities. This is why it is so important to reward those that are raising above.
- Introduction of Ava Volman, who was present at the Coral Gables Family Literacy Festival and is a Senior in high school and a Girl Scout. Former writer and editor of Highlights Magazine at Coral Gables Senior High. Ana mentored Mr. Joseph's daughter in Mathematics.
- Introduction of Dr. Paul George, a teacher and professor from the Historical Museum of Southern Florida who conducts enthusiastic educational city tours of Miami. Dr. George changed Sam's life; he even published a book with him. Dr. Paul George gave a brief recap on how he met Sam Joseph.
- Introduction of Judy ElAttar, a 2nd grade student from David Fairchild Elementary. Judy is the youngest spelling bee winner, winning two times. Participants of the spelling bee were students from K-thru 5th grade.

Photos of the honorees and Board Members were taken by Acting Liaison, Ms. Lopez.

Commissioner Fernandez thanked and congratulated the Committee and Community Recreation for all their efforts with the festival. Requests recommendations for the Commission As A Whole appointment, Vice Mayor Anderson seconds this request.

C-5 Discussion on Miami-Dade County Public School Curriculum Resources Review Policy (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)

The District is trying to adopt a new Social Studies textbook and opened it up to parents for feedback. Application to be part of this group closes on June 30, 2023.

Sam Josphe provides additional information and mentions the items discussed by School Board recently:

Item C-100 was reviewed at the School Board. There is an Instructional Materials Review Committees; parents serve and meet to review curriculum to ensure it's appropriate.

It's imperative that parents ensure their children meet standards. They should attend office hour, talk to Board Members, Superintendent and play an active role in children's education and find out how this will all work.

Chairperson Chang commented that it is important to demand transparency on the process of how books are pulled from the curriculum.

Attachments: [School Board Item H-7](#)

C-6 Discussion on Cavaliers Park Proposal (Facilitated by Winnie Chang, Chairperson)

Sam Joseph mentioned the Commission Meeting presentation by the Friends of Gables regarding the possible city park on the school grounds. This will be a wonderful amenity of this project, although costly it will have a positive impact.

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)

Dr. Acosta joined the meeting via Zoom and addressed the School Community Relations Committee on this item to provide additional information before the members' discussion. He expressed his appreciation to the Committee for their support in the schools' various initiatives.

The district is aware that a request for needs was made directly to principals through the SCRC Chairperson. Many principals are on summer vacation and thus no responses were received. Dr. Acosta informed the Committee that if in the future there are requests made, it should be done through the proper channels and contact the liaison for inter-governmental affairs, Martha Montaner. Going through this source will facilitate and streamline requests and ensure accuracy.

Provided examples of what other municipalities offer and their procedures.

The Village of Key Biscayne sets a budget aside, allocates this for the schools within their limits and request a needs breakdown from the School District. They use this information to delineate and decide where the money is spent according to the school's needs, whether its technological upgrades, such as instructional material, professional staff development or student development. This is usually a \$10 line item in the budget.

Miami Lakes makes donations directly to the schools and allow the principals to decide where the need is great and use the money at their discretion.

Dr. Acosta and Mrs. Montaner will work with the principals once they return from vacation to gather the requested information. Estelle Lockhart asks that a formal request be made by the School Community Relations Committee to the district on what other municipalities do.

Vice Chairperson Dimitris Sandy makes a motion to request that the City Commission include a formal educational investment budget line item in the FY24 city budget for public schools within the city limits. Board Member Nadal seconds, motion passes.

Chairperson Dr. Chang recommended everyone visits the Commissioner's office hours.

E. ONGOING BUSINESS

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

There is a room and staff availability conflict for the Oct. 20 SCRC meeting. Chairperson Chang suggests moving the meeting to Oct. 13 and requests that this be added to the next SCRC meeting agenda for discussion with the full board.

F. ANNOUNCEMENTS

F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, July 21, 2023 | 8:30 a.m.

Comments/Questions: scrc@coralgables.com

July SCRC meeting is canceled as quorum would not be possible. Next SCRC meeting is scheduled for Friday, Aug. 18.

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

F-3 Fourth of July Fireworks Celebration - Tuesday, July 4, 2023 | 5 to 10 p.m.

F-4 Gables Gallery Night - Friday, July 7, 2023 | 6 to 10 p.m.

F-5 Taste the Gables - July 1 thru 31

ADJOURNMENT

NOTE