

# City of Coral Gables

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



## Meeting Minutes

Friday, December 17, 2021

8:30 AM

Draft Minutes

Police & Fire HQ - 2151 Salzedo Street

## School Community Relations Committee

*Chairperson Ariel Fernandez*  
*Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph*  
*Board Member Erin Anding*  
*Board Member Winnie Chang*  
*Board Member Sandy Dimitris*  
*Board Member Carmen Manrara Cartaya*  
*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, December 17, 2021, 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: 786 635 1003 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.

DRAFT

## CALL TO ORDER

Meeting called to order at 8:32 a.m.

## ROLL/QUORUM CALL

**Present:** 7 - Slesnick, Joseph, Chang, Fernandez, Manrara Cartaya, Anding and Board Member Ward Sando

**Absent:** 1 - Dimitris

**Excused:** 1 - Watson

## A. APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

School Community Relations Committee Meeting of November 19, 2021.

**Attachments:** [Cover Memo.docx](#)  
[Draft Nov. 19 SCRC Meeting Minutes.pdf](#)

A motion was made by Board Member Ward Sando, seconded by Anding, that this matter be approved. The motion passed by the following vote.

**Yeas:** 5 - Slesnick, Chang, Fernandez, Anding and Board Member Ward Sando

**Absent:** 3 - Dimitris, Joseph and Manrara Cartaya

**Excused:** 1 - Watson

## B. PUBLIC COMMENTS

No members from the public requested to speak.

## C. NEW BUSINESS

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

School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas provided information regarding the resignation of the Superintendent of Miami-Dade County Public Schools Alberto Carvalho. Stating that currently the only action that has taken place from the Miami-Dade County School Board is the approval of an item granting the Chair of the School Board the authority to negotiate the terms of the Superintendent's departure. As well as scheduling a special school board meeting to provide guidance regarding the parameters being used to identify a qualified candidate for the position. This special meeting will take place on Jan. 5, 2022.

School Board Member Rojas provided a follow-up to the homework policy concerns brought up in the SCRC meeting on Nov. 19, 2021. The School Board Member sponsored an item asking for a review of the district's homework policy, the full report will be turned in to the School Board by Feb. 2, 2022.

School Board Member Rojas provided an update on the following schools:

**Coral Gables Preparatory Academy:**

- Playground is in good condition but currently being unused.
- Booster parents are supplying materials and working in partnership with the atomic artist regarding the physical education shelter.
- Selective structural repairs have been finalized.
- The auditorium renovation and fire alarm replacement are currently in planning but on schedule.
- Coral Gables Mayor Vince Lago and School Board Member Mari Tere Rojas will be visiting the school regarding the cafeteria.
- The renovation project is currently on schedule with some aspects of the project being in the planning stage.

**Sunset Elementary:**

- Renovations are planned throughout the school.
- Some renovations are already underway (painting cafeteria, etc.)
- School Board Member answered a question from Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph regarding the dwindling numbers of home school registration, stating that there is a lack of enrollment in the home school component, the home school gets reduced in number every year.
- Discussion around Sunset being on its way to becoming a 100% magnet school. District will provide a response via email on several of these concerns.

**West Lab:**

- Conversations are being had regarding seats at West Lab, but information from the region is needed.
- Seats available for the upcoming school year; 36 seats in kindergarten (priority is given to siblings of current students and military families) and 44 seats in 6 Grade (priority is given to current fifth-grade students).

**Coral Gables Senior High School:**

- GOB phase 2 project is currently being negotiated, tentative board award on Feb. 9, 2022, with final completion of the project for Jan. 2024.

On Dec. 11, 2021, School Board Member Rojas held her fifth annual toy giveaway, which was a great success.

Miami-Dade County public schools and facilities will be closed starting December 18, 2021, to January 2, 2022.

A discussion was had regarding Coral Gables schools and their accessibility to residents. Some of the ideas brought up to solve this issue are:

- Purchasing seats from West Lab Elementary exclusively for Coral Gables residents.
- Starting a charter school.

•Purchasing sites near existing schools / developing unused sites within schools to build annex to increase capacity.

•Preventing attendance boundaries from stretching further outside city limits.

Vice Chairperson Sam Joseph expressed his concerns with the current capacities of Coral Gables schools. Stating that schools are currently hard to attend now and with the influx of new constructions, new families moving to the Gables, the school facilities and capacities are no longer going to be able to serve the population.

Board Member Cecilia D. Slesnick requested a map that shows all the schools in the city as well as their boundaries overlaid and populations of schools.

**Attendance Boundary Committee (ABC) Meeting.** School Board Member Rojas encouraged members of the SCRC and the public to attend the ABC Meetings. The School Board Member will be providing the complete meeting schedule to facilitate participation.

District Response on Sunset Elementary School Items:

Attached is the municipal chart of schools for the City of Coral Gables. In addition, the itemized responses below address the issue regarding Sunset Elementary School, proffered by the Central Region administration.

### **Response for Sunset Elementary School**

1. *Technically, there is not a limit on boundary students attending the non-magnet program at Sunset. However, at some point, empty seats are filled, and the school may be over capacity in some grades.*
2. *No one from the school or Region Office has been approached by the District to make this a full district-wide non-boundary magnet school.*
3. *There has been no reduction in number of students accepted. The difference is that the language program now begins in Kindergarten so there are less non-magnet seats occupied than before in first grade. The school used to have 4-5 KG non-magnet classes, and the balance of the first grade students (approximately 200 in total) were new applicants. Now (this is the second year) students apply to the magnet program in KG. The school currently has 9 KG classrooms with 205 students.*
4. *Students in the non-magnet program attend the "home school" if they live within the boundary. They may also participate in the gifted program even if they are not in the magnet program.*

*NOTE: All students that enter in KG are placed in the magnet program in their choice of Spanish, French or German. They are all magnet students. This year, 1st grade students are also all magnet students because attended the school last year .*

**Attachments:** [City of Coral Gables Students](#)

### **C-2 Publicizing for Coral Gables the US News and World Report ranking of Sunset Elementary and West Lab as premier schools (Facilitated by Carmen Manrara Cartaya, Board Member)**

Brief discussion regarding publicizing the ranking of one of the City's Schools on e-news. The article will be forwarded to the Director of Communications Martha Pantin.

**C-3 Outreach to PTAs for schools such as Fairchild and Tucker Elementary (Facilitated by Carmen Manrara Cartaya, Board Member)**

Board Member Carman Manrara Cartaya will be reaching out to the Fairchild and Tucker PTA with an invitation to attend the February SCRC meeting.

**C-4 Discussion on traffic studies (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)**

Item tabled for February meeting.

**C-5 2022 Meeting Schedule**

Attachments: [2022 Committee Meeting Dates](#)

Board Member Ward Sando moved for the 2022 meeting dates to be approved as amended, seconded by Board Member Slesnick. This was passed. A second motion was made by Board Member Chang to move the Jan. meeting to the 28 and hold a workshop on Jan. 14. Motion seconded by Vice Chair Joseph and passed. The workshop will assess the SCRC's priorities and goals; and whether they would like to be involved in the ABC process.

**C-6 A resolution by the Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs regarding self-contained classrooms**

The Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs Staff Liaison Raquel Elejabarrieta and Chairperson Maria Palacio-Pike presented to the SCRC their Boards resolution regarding self-contained classrooms and asked the SCRC to adopt a similar resolution as well.

A resolution by the Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs urging that the City of Coral Gables support and request Miami-Dade County Public School to ensure that there are self-contained classrooms for students with disabilities in public elementary, middle and high schools within the City boundaries.

Attachments: [Resolution - Self-Contained Class.doc](#)

A similar Resolution was adopted by the School Community Relations Committee to be presented to the Commission along side the Coral Gables Advisory Board on Disability Affairs.

**Yeas:** 7 - Joseph, Chang, Fernandez, Manrara Cartaya, Anding, Slesnick and Board Member Ward Sando

**Absent:** 1 - Dimitris

**Excused:** 1 - Watson

**D. OLD BUSINESS**

**E. ONGOING BUSINESS**

**E-1 Review of the School Community Relations Committee's role (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)**

The role of the SCRC was reviewed. A request was made to provide committee members with a copy of the Education Compact and for this to be discussed at the January meeting.

Attachments: [R-2015-87 As Amended.pdf](#)  
[Signed Resolution 2016-07 \(1\) School Improvement Projects.pdf](#)

**E-2 SIP Committee Member Assignments Review (Facilitated by Ariel Fernandez, Chair)**

Item tabled for January meeting.

Attachments: [SIP Descriptions](#)  
[SIP Descriptions 2022 Updates Proposed by Vice Chair.docx](#)

**E-3 Notice Pursuant to Resolution No. 2020-245 (Facilitated by Naomi Levi Garcia, Staff Liaison)**

Item was discussed. No action required.

Attachments: [Staff Report - PAD Bonus Height w attachments.pdf](#)

Staff Liaison Naomi Levi Garcia notified the board of a zoning code change for the Central Business District stating that no density will be added to the area, in fact the changes will limit density in exchange for height that would allow for higher ceilings and a more high-end unit design.

**F. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**F-1 Next SCRC Meeting - Friday, January 14, 2022**

Questions/Comments: [scrc@coralgables.com](mailto:scrc@coralgables.com)

**F-2 Movies Under the Gables Moonlight - Friday, Dec. 17 - 6:30 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.**

**F-3 North Gables Harvest Market - Saturday, Dec. 18 - 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.**

**F-4 Hot Chocolate with Santa - Saturday, Dec. 18 - 10 a.m.**

**F-5 Sensory Friendly Holiday Park - Sunday, Dec. 19 - 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

**ADJOURNMENT**

Meeting adjourned at 10:27 a.m.

**NOTE**