

CITY OF WESTLAKE



MINUTES

Education Advisory Board Meeting
Thursday, January 08, 2026 at 6:00 PM

Westlake City Hall, located at 4001
Seminole Pratt Whitney Road, Westlake,
Florida, 33470

Live Broadcasting:
<https://cityofwestlake.my.webex.com>
Meeting ID: 2632 121 1205 | Password:
hello
Or
United States Toll: 1-650-479-3208

Board Members:

Dr. Anita Kaplan, Chair
Lisa Barron, Vice Chair
Krystal Lexima, Board Member
Jennifer Christian-Upia, Board Member
Dr. Christopher A. Tompkins Sr, Board Member
Chad Lovitt, Alternate Board Member

City Staff:

Greg Langowski, Councilmember Liaison
Zoie P. Burgess, CMC, Acting City Manager
Odet Izquierdo, Acting City Clerk

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Ms. Kaplan called the Westlake Education Advisory Board meeting of Thursday, January 8, 2026, to order at 6:01 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present and constituting a quorum:

Board Member Lexima
Chair Dr. Kaplan
Alternate Board Member Lovitt

Also present:

Greg Langowski, Vice Mayor
Odet Izquierdo, Acting City Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Kaplan led the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chair Kaplan requested a motion to approve the agenda.

Motion by board member Lexima to approve the agenda, seconded by alternate board member Lovitt.

UPON ROLL CALL:

Board Member Lexima	YES
Chair Kaplan	YES
Alternate Board Member Lovitt	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (3-0)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes_Education Advisory Board Meeting - 011.06.2025 - DRAFT

Motion by Board member Lexima moved to approve the minutes as corrected. Alternate board member Lovitt seconded the motion.

UPON ROLL CALL:

Board Member Lexima	YES
Alternate Board Member Lovitt	YES
Chair Kaplan	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (3-0)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

A. Welcome Chat Lovitt - Council Approved - Alternate EAB Member

Chair Kaplan welcomed Chad Lovitt to the board, expressing pleasure that he was joining them and excitement about working together on new initiatives.

Alternate Board Member Lovitt responded that he was excited to be on board. Chair Kaplan noted that Lovitt was no longer an alternate but a full voting member for this meeting.

B. Roger Dean Stadium Event Council Approved, need support of date and time from Seminole Pratt High School. Gain estimated cost of a new Scoreboard for the High School sports field.

Chair Kaplan noted that they awaited support from Chair Barron for the Roger Dean Stadium event date to be coordinated with Seminole High School but had concerns about availability

Alternate Board Member Lovitt confirmed April 18th was open, despite a potential Boy Scout sleepover, which might complement the event with activities like color guard ceremonies.

The board considered any scheduling conflicts with high school parades but agreed to keep April 18th since it was council approved.

Board Member Lexima emphasized identifying school fund needs first. The board suggested reaching out to school staff, noting that coach Rick and athletic director could be contacts.

Chair Kaplan offered to lead in contacting the high school to assess needs and solidify participation on April 18th.

The Board explored promotional efforts like social media and newsletters, aided by city support. Seminole Ridge High School was chosen as the beneficiary to boost participation and coordinate activities, ensuring involvement.

C. Review of Spirit/ Fundraising Restaurant Events i.e. Jabrewski's, Carmela's (date, time and school signage), and future restaurant locations.

Chair Kaplan reviewed fundraising efforts, noting that while amounts were smaller than hoped, the mayor doubled the amount to award to Golden Grove Elementary, the only school responsive to the funding process.

Board member Lexima shared Carmela's interest in promotional signage at Golden Grove, but board noted school's typical payment requirement for advertising.

The Board opted to decline promotional signage and focus on event-specific marketing. They scheduled Carmela's fundraiser for February 11th after the February 3rd city council announcement, running from 7 AM to 5 PM, requiring participants to mention the Westlake fundraiser for the 10% donation.

D. Strategies for developing relationships with our schools and restaurants

Chair Kaplan introduced this agenda item by reading from the Education Advisory Board's official purpose statement, emphasizing four key responsibilities: serving as a liaison between the city, school district, and schools; promoting public awareness of school programs; recognizing accomplishments of students and educators; and monitoring school district activities.

The discussion led to developing a new initiative to recognize outstanding teachers. Board member Lexima suggested creating yard signs similar to Golden Grove's "student of the month" signs, but for recognizing teachers and administrators.

The conversation evolved into proposing a certificate of excellence program, where the board would recognize outstanding teachers from their three schools on a trimester basis

The board decided to start with one teacher recognition per trimester across all three schools, rather than one from each school, to keep the program manageable initially. They established a timeline for the three annual awards, corresponding roughly with the academic year's format.

Board members explained that recipients would be presented with their certificates at city council meetings, requiring two weeks advance notice to include the presentation on the meeting agenda. The board agreed to

gather recipient information by March 12th for an April 7th council presentation, establishing their first award cycle.

The board discussed the selection process, determining that school principals would nominate teachers based on their own internal criteria, whether through student voting, peer nomination, or administrative decision.

The board discussed the importance of establishing consistent communication contacts at each school, recognizing that middle and high schools often have multiple assistant principals and specialized communication staff. They agreed that initial contact should be with principals to identify the appropriate ongoing communication liaisons.

E. Potential Trade School Event - Who, What, Where, When, Why?

Chair Kaplan noted that this item had been assigned to Dr. Tompkins, who was absent from the meeting. The board briefly discussed the concept, which had evolved from initial trade school discussions into broader career night possibilities for middle school students.

Board member Lexima suggested this initiative should be deferred to the following school year due to the extensive planning required and the approaching end of the current academic year. The board agreed to table this item for future consideration, noting they already had substantial initiatives planned including the Roger Dean Stadium event, restaurant fundraisers, and the new teacher recognition program.

The conversation touched on avoiding duplication of existing school programs, with members noting that schools already have established career guidance programs and the board should focus on filling gaps rather than competing with existing services.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS/UPDATES

Chair Kaplan shared information about a Westlake resident seeking resources for his adult autistic daughter who had aged out of the school system.

Board member Lexima provided extensive resource information, she offered to connect the resident with appropriate contacts, noting her experience in special needs services.

The board discussed the broader need for adult disability resources in the community and the potential for creating a resource database on the city website to help residents access available services.

The board scheduled their next meeting for March 12th at 6:00 PM, establishing deadlines for their teacher recognition program. They confirmed that recipient information must be provided to the council member by March 12th to allow time for certificate preparation and agenda inclusion for the April 7th council meeting.

Board member Lexima committed to reaching out to Western Pines Middle School to establish initial contact and begin building the relationship necessary for their recognition program and future fundraising events.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

This section of the agenda allows for comments from the public to address the Board. Each speaker will be given a total of three (3) minutes to comment. Please address Board from podium, and prior to addressing the Board, state your name and address for the record.

Public Comment - Alicia Torres - 5447 Whippoorwill Circle – Ms. Torres asked for Roger Dean Stadium Event clarification. Ms. Torres touched on the teacher recognition program she suggested monetary awards directly to teachers but agreed with the board's decision on maintaining school-level awards to avoid policy issues. Ms. Torres distinguished career nights from trade information sessions and advised against duplicating the effective "Showcase of Schools," urging the board to address actual unmet needs like a resource database suggestion.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kaplan adjourned the meeting at 7:29 PM.

Odet Izquierdo, Acting City Clerk

Anita Kaplan, Board Chair