

CITY OF WESTLAKE



MINUTES

Education Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, March 12, 2026 at 6:00 PMa

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

Live Broadcasting:

<https://cityofwestlake.my.webex.com>

Meeting ID: 2869 271 9448| 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

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 Thursday, March 12, 2026, to order at 6:01 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present and constituting a quorum:

Board Member Christian-Upia
Board Member Lexima
Vice Chair Barron
Chair Dr. Kaplan

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 Vice Chair Barron to approve the agenda, seconded by board member Lexima.

UPON ROLL CALL:

Board Member Christian-Upia	YES
Board Member Lexima	YES
Vice Chair Barron	YES
Chair Kaplan	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (4-0)

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes_Education Advisory Board Meeting - 01.08.2026 - DRAFT

Motion by Vice Chair Barron moved to approve the minutes, Board member Lexima seconded the motion.

UPON ROLL CALL:

Board Member Lexima	YES
Vice Chair Barron	YES
Chair Kaplan	YES
Board Member Christian-Upia	YES

With all in favor, motion carried without dissent (4-0)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Spirit / Fundraising Activities: Carmela's -Funds raised, Taco Bell, Gator Shack, KFC, Chipotle, Marco's Pizza

Chair Kaplan opened discussion on fundraising activities by reviewing the progress of various restaurant partnerships.

Chair Kaplan inquired about the status of other restaurant partnerships; the board proceeded to give their updates on their assigned restaurants.

Chair Kaplan asked what the board should do when restaurants don't respond. Board member Lexima suggested they should just move on and also recommended considering other fundraising options beyond dining events.

Board member Lexima suggested exploring alternative fundraising opportunities, mentioning that there's supposed to be a 5K event and recommended getting ahead of that to ensure the Education Advisory Board could participate and potentially receive proceeds.

Vice Chair, Barron suggested organizing a 50/50 raffle at Spring Fest or similar community events.

The discussion revealed challenges with restaurant fundraisers.

The board discussed the challenge of getting high school participation. Vice Chair, Barron mentioned attempting to coordinate with the high school by dropping off flyers and requesting website posting but noted communication difficulties.

Chair Kaplan reported that at a recent new school meeting, she spoke directly with Principal Hatcher, asking if he had heard from anyone about the board's activities. Chair Kaplan had also informed him about the upcoming Roger Dean event, but he indicated he hadn't heard about that either.

The board concluded that restaurant spirit nights might not be the most lucrative fundraising approach and should explore more effective alternatives.

- B. Roger Dean Updates: Seminole Pratt H.S. Feedback Tompkins, Special Refreshment Prices, Activities, Marketing Efforts.

Chair Kaplan expressed concerns about the upcoming Roger Dean event, noting the lack of communication from Seminole Ridge High School despite multiple outreach attempts. She questioned whether the event was worth pursuing without adequate school participation and turnout.

The original concept involved the high school's color guard and sports teams attending the event, but the school had not been responsive to coordination efforts.

Vice Chair Barron suggested that if they're going to make the event successful, they need a coordinated marketing strategy. She mentioned posting multiple times on Facebook community pages.

The board discussed various marketing approaches:

HOA Newsletters: Chair Kaplan mentioned attempting to work with the master HOA. Board member Lexima suggested reaching out to City council member Gary Werner, who produces a newsletter that reaches multiple communities.

Facebook Community Groups: The board discussed posting in individual neighborhood Facebook groups, with each member having access to different community pages. Vice Chair Barron noted the importance of strategic timing for social media posts.

School Participation: The board emphasized that without high school buy-in and promotion, family turnout would be limited.

Given the communication challenges with Seminole Ridge High School, Board member Lexima suggested changing the beneficiary school, potentially to Western Pines Middle School where they might get better reception. The board discussed the restriction that they can only support schools within Westlake city limits.

Board member Lexima proposed making the event competitive, with whichever school has the highest ticket turnout receiving the proceeds. This would require outreach to all three eligible schools.

The board ultimately decided not to move forward with the Roger Dean event at this time, citing insufficient school participation and inadequate time for proper marketing and coordination.

- C. Teacher Awards: Award Criteria, March 6, Teacher Selections, March 12, Teacher Identified, April 7, Award Presentation Frequency.

Chair Kaplan noted that the original timeline called for teacher identification by March 6th and presentation at the April 7th council meeting, but this timeline was no longer feasible.

The board decided to defer the teacher awards program until the next full school year to allow proper planning and development of criteria. Vice Chair, Barron had prepared comprehensive award criteria in which she shared with the board.

Chair Kaplan suggested using the main topic categories and allowing schools to determine which specific criteria are most appropriate for their level (elementary, middle, or high school).

- D. Saddleview Tours- Dates for EAB Members

Board members discussed scheduling individual tours of Saddleview Elementary School. Due to sunshine law restrictions, members cannot tour together but must schedule separate visits.

Board member Lexima discovered that Saddleview's website has a schedule a tour section, noting that tours are generally conducted on the first Thursday of every month at 2:30 PM. Board member Lexima suggested calling to explain they're from the Westlake Education Advisory Board.

Several board members committed to scheduling individual tours in the coming weeks.

- E. Trade School Event - Seminole Pratt H.S. Feedback

Chair Kaplan noted this item was assigned to board member Tompkins, who was not present. The board discussed the potential for volunteering at existing trade school events at Seminole Ridge High School rather than creating new programming.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. Read for the Record Day - Thursday, February 26th - at Golden Grove Elementary.

Participants: 14 Volunteer Readers from Cresswind Women's Club including Mayor O'Connor, 26 teacher classes, 433 students attended readings

Chair Kaplan provided a detailed report on the successful Read for the Record Day event at Golden Grove Elementary School. The event reached 433 students in grades 1, 2, and 3 across 26 teacher classes.

Chair Kaplan explained that she had only 10 days to organize the event after discovering the school wasn't initially registered to participate. She worked with the literacy coalition and received confirmation from Linda Edgecomb to proceed.

The Cresswind Women's Club provided crucial volunteer support. The volunteers were enthusiastic about the experience. Chair Kaplan noted that all volunteers came back smiling and expressed willingness to participate again next year or help with interim reading activities.

The event was particularly meaningful as it represented the board's first major successful volunteer initiative at a local school.

B. Invitation to the Western Pines Middle School Principal, Phillip Preddy, to speak at an EAB Meeting

Chair Kaplan proposed inviting Western Pines Middle School Principal Phillip Preddy to speak at an upcoming board meeting. She noted that Preddy had previously served as assistant principal at Golden Grove Elementary, providing some familiarity with the local school system.

Board member Lexima mentioned that Western Pines, school needs mentors for their choice programs. These programs require professionals familiar with the respective fields to provide mentorship.

The board agreed that this would be valuable outreach, especially given their challenges with high school communication. Vice Chair, Barron volunteered to reach out to Principal Preddy to extend the invitation.

The board also discussed the transition that will occur when the new Westlake school opens, with one-third of Western Pines staff potentially moving to the new school, along with some students including current fifth graders who can choose to stay at Western Pines.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS/UPDATES

Vice Chair, Barron raised concerns about community engagement for the new school planning meetings. She had attended recent meetings about the new school and noted significant community interest in other areas, such as the standing-room-only turnout for Project Tango meetings.

Board member Lexima acknowledged that meetings typically see higher turnout when there's a specific controversy or upset that motivates attendance. She predicted that when boundary discussions become more concrete, community participation will increase significantly.

The board also discussed the need to solidify attendance policies, with Chair Kaplan noting concerns about board member attendance and the existing guidelines about missing consecutive meetings. The current policy was developed when the board met quarterly, but with more frequent meetings, the attendance requirements may need adjustment.

Chair Kaplan emphasized the importance of notifying the board when members cannot attend meetings and suggested members should review meeting recordings when they miss sessions to stay informed on ongoing initiatives.

Board member Lexima suggested prioritizing volunteer opportunities as the board's primary focus, particularly with the new school opening approaching. She felt that establishing the board's presence through volunteer work would be crucial for future effectiveness and community recognition.

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 commented on the fundraising approach, noting restaurant spirit nights generate minimal funds, making them more suited for smaller groups. Concerns were also raised about Seminole Ridge High School's non-responsiveness, urging Chair Kaplan to address this directly.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kaplan adjourned the meeting at 7:32 PM.

Odet Izquierdo, Acting City Clerk

Anita Kaplan, Chair