

CITY OF WESTLAKE



MINUTES

Education Advisory Board Meeting

Thursday, June 18, 2026 at 6:00 PM

4001 Seminole Pratt Whitney Rd., Westlake, FL 33470

Board Members:

Dr. Anita Kaplan, Chair
Krystal Lexima, Vice Chair
Jennifer Christian-Upia, Board Member
Chad Lovitt, Board Member

City Staff:

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

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Ms. Kaplan called the Westlake Education Advisory Board meeting Thursday, June 18, 2026, to order at 6:08 PM.

ROLL CALL

Present and constituting a quorum:

Board Member Christian-Upia
Board Member Lovitt
Chair Dr. Kaplan

Also present:

Greg Langowski, Vice Mayor
Odet Izquierdo, Deputy City Clerk

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Board Chair Kaplan led the pledge of allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Prior to approval, Board Chair Kaplan requested the addition of two items to the agenda: (1) discussions and updates on the new elementary school under New Business, and (2) a discussion regarding school assignments for board members, given recent membership changes.

UPON ROLL CALL:

Board Member Christian-Upia	YES
Board Member Lovitt	YES
Chair Kaplan	YES

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

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A. Minutes_Education Advisory Board Meeting - 04.30.2026 - DRAFT

Motion to approve the minutes of the April 30, 2026 meeting was made by Board Member Christian-Upia and seconded by Board Member Lovitt.

UPON ROLL CALL:

Board Member Lovitt	YES
Chair Kaplan	YES
Board Member Christian-Upia	YES

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

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- A. Updates on Dual Enrolled Students from Seminole Ridge HS and Teacher of the Year Honored, June 2 Council Meeting

The Board discussed the outcome of the dual enrollment student recognition that had taken place at the June 2nd City Council meeting. Vice Mayor Langowski noted that the school did not have a Teacher of the Year honoree present at the event nor a name was given for acknowledgment. It was indicated that Vice Chair Lexima handled distribution of remaining certificates by returning them to the school for dispersal.

The Board reflected on the timing of the recognition event, noting that it would have been preferable to hold it in May while students were still in school. It was clarified that the delay in obtaining student names was due to the dual enrollment program operating on a college academic calendar, meaning some students had not yet completed their coursework when names were first requested. A board member suggested that future coordination would be better directed to the school secretary rather than through the principal's office, to ensure more timely communication.

NEW BUSINESS

- A. New Elementary School – Discussion and Updates

The incoming principal, Darline Winewski, shared a construction update for the new Westlake Elementary School. Key developments include power and plumbing setup, pouring footers for Building A, and installing systems for wastewater and storm drains. Building C has design tweaks to improve the serving line, based on Saddlevue Elementary's feedback. Construction is set to finish by late July 2027, starting school in August.

Ms. Winewski had a role in interior aesthetics, aiming to reflect city identity with gold, white, and navy colors. Designed for 971 students, the school plans to grow as the area develops, primarily serving Westlake. Staffing isn't a concern given current interest, but increasing community confidence and awareness about the public school's offerings remains essential. Enrollment challenges are noted, tied to state policies favoring private or charter alternatives through vouchers. Funding depends on enrollment counts on specific days. Ms. Winewski discussed forming a naming committee, PTA/PTO, and a School Advisory Council, which all community members can join for decisions like uniform policies.

- B. Discussion of July 4th Westlake Event with a table for the EAB - Need Table EAB Coverage

Chair Kaplan announced that the EAB will have a table at Westlake's July 4th celebration, with a sign provided by the city. The table's purpose is to engage residents, explain the EAB's role, and collect input on education priorities. Giveaways such as bracelets and patriotic glasses were considered to attract attendees. Staffing for the table will be coordinated via email, starting setup at 4:15 PM for the 5:00 PM event.

The Board discussed an annual supply drive focused on mid-year needs like tissues and wipes for greater impact, planning further consideration in September.

The Board briefly addressed the matter of school liaison assignments for board members. Given the current vacancies on the Board, it was agreed that reassigning schools at this time would be premature. Vice Mayor Langowski recommended waiting until the two vacant seats are filled anticipated by the September meeting before making new assignments, to avoid having to redistribute them again shortly thereafter.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS/REPORTS/UPDATES

The Board noted that two seats on the EAB remain vacant. Vice Mayor Langowski encouraged members to recruit prospective applicants from within the community, observing that personal invitations are often the most effective method.

It was noted that applications are accepted through the city website under the Committees section, and submissions are directed to the Deputy City Clerk for placement on the City Council agenda.

The Board discussed scheduling its next meeting, with a consensus reached to meet on **September 17, 2026 at 6:00 PM**, allowing time for new members to be seated and for the principal to provide updates from the naming committee, which she expects to convene in August.

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 shared her excitement about updates for the new school and suggested ways to enhance the July 4th table. Ms. Torres recommended an interactive survey using jars and voting balls for community members to share priorities, including questions on residency and school attendance. Ms. Torres also proposed an annual EAB fundraiser to boost community engagement and recognition, acknowledging the legal limitations on fundraising as a city committee and suggesting a single, organized annual event as more effective.

Public Comment – Michael Meyers – Mr. Meyers, asked whether the EAB had considered restructuring as an independent nonprofit or membership organization in order to have greater flexibility in fundraising and programming. Vice Mayor Langowski acknowledged that this option had been discussed at length during the initial formation of the EAB and that the group had ultimately chosen to remain a city committee in order to retain access to city resources, legal support, and facilities.

ADJOURNMENT

Chair Kaplan moved to adjourn the meeting at approximately 7:00 PM.

Odette Izquierdo, Deputy City Clerk

Anita Kaplan, Board Chair