

**The School Board of Broward County, Florida  
Central Area Advisory Council – General Meeting  
Indian Ridge Middle School  
January 15, 2026, 9:45-11:45am  
Minutes**

**Call to order at 9:40**

- Welcome and Meeting Etiquette
  - Remember to sign in
  - PLEASE inform Chair prior to recording meeting to allow those that do not want to be recorded to move from the view of the camera
  - Questions will be taken at the end of the presentation
  - Raise your hand and wait to be acknowledged
- Membership Explanations: DAC representatives must attend monthly DAC meetings to maintain their seat. After 3 absences, the seat is vacated.
- Approve November and December Minutes
  - Motion by Dee Defoe seconded by Mark Foxwell. Approved unanimously.

**School Spotlight by I-Zone provided by**

**Boyd Anderson  
Dillard**

**Nova  
Piper  
Plantation**

**South Plantation  
Stranahan  
Western**

- Reminder that meeting audio may be recorded
- Greeting from the Ridge by Mr. Murrey

**Updates:**

- Dr. Ted Toomer, Central Regional Superintendent
  - PM2 Data Update
    - ELA proficiency increase of 4 percent over last year
    - Math proficiency increase of 2 percent over last year
    - Majority of schools made gains over last year's data.
    - Growth from PM1-PM2 decreased by 1 percent from last year for ELA and remain unchanged for math
    - Most schools have their data. SAF Chairs can request data from Principal
  - Hiring Freeze
    - "Using scapel, not an ax" to fill teaching vacancies
    - "Putting children in front of new people at this point in the year can be tricky."
    - "Children don't learn from people they don't like."
    - Question about security monitors and the hiring freeze. "Hiring freeze is not absolute."
    - Parent question about whether the district is relying on principals requesting replacement teachers to fill vacancies. The District will know when there is a vacancy. Supervisor will communicate with principal about how best to fill vacancies with either on-site staff or someone from the district.
    - Parent questions about teachers on temporary leave. Answer was that substitutes will still be provided for those scenarios.
- Pamela Taylor, CAAC Chair Report
  - Hiring Freeze

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- District level teaching staff who have been identified to fill classroom vacancies will be in schools by Thursday next week.
- Field trips should not be affected by the hiring freeze.
- ESE and related students supports should not be affected by the hiring freeze.
- Hazel Health
  - Hazel Health is not mandatory—it is an optional service for BCPS students
  - If you completed the consent and no longer want your child using the service, you must submit and opt-out
  - Ask if your school has the Hazel Health supplies
- Psychological services
  - DAC was told that there is no backlog of evaluations. Please raise individual concerns to the District level.
- T. Nikki Watkins, Legislative Report
  - See attached

**New Business:**

- Stakeholder Discussion Topics
  - Hiring Freeze
    - Superintendent stated on 1/13/26 that certified teaching staff working at the District level will be deployed to fill classroom vacancies starting the following week.
    - Field Trips should not be cancelled due to hiring freeze!
    - No ESE or IEP services should be reduced or cancelled due to hiring freeze!
  - Graduation Venues
    - Current proposal would allow only the largest 2 schools (Cypress Bay and MSD) to graduate in an off-campus venue. The rest will utilize the school gym.
    - Last 8 year Western, Cypress Bay, and MSD held graduation at Hard Rock
    - Note from Parent: “A single cut off (like enrollment size) to determine ceremony location, creates unequal experiences for student who are achieving the same milestone. It’s an inequitable outcome. Students at schools with more than 550 graduates are provided a more dignified, comfortable, and celebratory environments, while students at smaller schools (through no fault of their own) are placed in a significantly lesser venue. All students are graduating from the same district and meeting the same requirements, yet their experience of this milestone differs dramatically based solely on enrollment size. This is producing unequal outcomes. Graduation is a once-in-a-lifetime event.”
    - Parent notes that the District was just celebrating a historic graduation rate
    - Concern about McFatter graduation held at Pompano Beach High School. McFatter has a 100% graduation rate and is located without the South Florida Education Center. “It bonds us as a community to graduate from meaningful places.”
    - Discussion about how the district could combine graduating classes
    - Concerns about equally celebrating students and the ability of family members to

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- attend. “None of us messed up the money so why do we have to pay for it”
- Discussion of Amerant Arena and Seminole Hardrock
- Please email [schoolboard@browardschools.com](mailto:schoolboard@browardschools.com) with your feedback.
- 11:43 AM--Motion for Extension of Time until 12:00 PM by Brooke Bordy. Second by Heath Velazquez. Unanimously approved.
- **Motion by Nikki T. Watkins: The Central Area Advisory Council recommends that Broward County Public Schools ensure transparency, equity, and community engagement in all decisions related to graduation venues, school consolidations, and budget-driven operational changes. CAAC further urges district leadership to prioritize student dignity, teacher stability, and local control while advocating for sustainable funding solutions during the 2026 Florida Legislative Session. Second by Dee Defoe. Discussion. Motion Approved Unanimously.**
- Prom Rentals
  - Sales tax has been erroneously charged. Please share out this information.
- Recess and Physical Education
  - Florida statute 1003.445 requires 150 minutes/week of PE and 20 minutes a day of recess for K-5 students.
  - Recess is currently covered by Policy 6830. “Schools shall not use participation or non-participation in physical education or recess (free play) as a way to punish or discipline students.” District staff confirmed recess cannot be used for homework or test prep.
  - PE is currently covered by Policy 4000, but Staff are drafting a new PE policy.
- Senate Bill 1078
  - Bill brought by FL State Senator Osgood
- Prisms VR
  - New virtual reality program. Will request Ms. Holtz or Mr. Barhoma to come speak about Prisms VR at a future meeting.
- Facilities
  - We’d like to hear about your school. Email [caac.chair@gmail.com](mailto:caac.chair@gmail.com)
- School Choice
  - Window closes January 28, 2026
- Bylaws
  - CAAC will be reviewing and voting on bylaws in the near future
- BCPS Cares
  - <https://www.browardschools.com/parentsstudentsstaff/bcpscares>
- DAC Elementary Subcommittee
  - Please be on the lookout for Elementary Subcommittee Meeting notices and feel free to join.

**Old Business:**

- Nurses in Schools and Hazel Health
- Elementary Testing

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- Food and Nutrition

**Open Discussion:**

**Announcements:**

- Sunshine Law and Ethics Training (10 minutes for returning members; 45 minutes for new members): <https://www.browardschools.com/Page/41329>
- Volunteer Application: [Get Involved with BCPS / Volunteer Services \(browardschools.com\)](https://www.browardschools.com/GetInvolved)

**Dates to Remember:**

- SAF Training: Tuesday February 3, 2026 7-9pm via Teams
- Budget Training: Wednesday February 25, 2026 7-9pm via Teams
- **CAAC Meeting: Wednesday February 18, 2026 6:30 PM at Indian Ridge Middle School**
- DAC Policy Subcommittee Meetings: January 16<sup>th</sup> 9-10:30am on Teams, January 26<sup>th</sup> 9-10:30am on Teams, February 9<sup>th</sup> 8-9:30pm on Teams

**ADJOURN at 12:03 PM**

**Central Area Advisory Council (CAAC)**  
**Legislative Update Handout – 2026 Florida Legislative Session**  
January 15, 2026

**Purpose of This Handout**

This handout provides a concise overview of the 2026 Florida Legislative Session as it relates to public education and Broward County Public Schools (BCPS). It is intended to support informed discussion, community engagement, and advisory action by CAAC members.

**I. Statewide Education Priorities (Florida Legislature & FLDOE)**

- A. School Choice & Voucher Accountability
  - 1. Expansion of Florida’s universal voucher system continues.
  - 2. **SB 318** proposes stronger oversight of Scholarship Funding Organizations (SFOs), including:
    - a. Dedicated voucher funding separate from public school funds
    - b. A \$250 million reserve for unexpected enrollment
    - c. Mandatory investigations of fraud and overpayments
  - 3. While framed as accountability, vouchers continue to contribute to declining public school enrollment.
- B. 2. Teacher Recruitment & Retention
  - 1. Florida faces record teacher vacancies.
  - 2. **SB 320** proposes:
    - a. Three-year instructional contracts
    - b. Salary flexibility for advanced degrees
    - c. Expanded Teacher Apprenticeship Program
    - d. Reduced reliance on Value-Added Model (VAM)
  - 3. Governor’s proposed \$30.6B K–12 budget includes:
    - a. \$1.56B for teacher salary increases
    - b. Declining enrollment supplement for districts losing students
- C. Curriculum & Classroom Regulation
  - 1. Bills under consideration include:
    - a. Expanded parental rights over materials
    - b. Restrictions on library books deemed “harmful to minors”
    - c. Classroom cameras at parent request
    - d. Mandated patriotic symbols and oaths
  - 2. Ongoing concerns about academic freedom and local control
- D. Safety & Firearms
  - 1. Proposed expansion of the Guardian Program to universities and additional personnel

**II. Broward County Public Schools (BCPS): Local Impact**

- A. Financial & Governance Challenges
  - 1. BCPS faces a **\$722 million structural funding gap** for FY 2025–2026.
  - 2. Enrollment declined by more than **10,000 students in one year**.

3. State leaders, including Governor DeSantis, have publicly suggested possible state intervention.
- B. Enrollment, Facilities & School Closures
1. BCPS is considering:
    - a. School consolidations or closures (up to seven schools)
    - b. Boundary changes
    - c. Repurposing underutilized facilities
- C. Graduation Venue Changes (New – January 2026)
1. 34 of 45 high schools will hold graduations in school gymnasiums.
  2. Schools without gyms will use Dillard High School.
  3. 11 schools will remain at NSU.
  4. Cypress Bay HS and Marjory Stoneman Douglas HS will remain at Hard Rock.
  5. Concerns raised about equity, dignity, and transparency in decision-making.
- D. Student & Staff Impacts
1. Students: - Potential school closures and boundary shifts - Reduced access to traditional graduation venues - Changes to testing and instructional time
  2. Teachers & Staff: - Continued budget uncertainty - Hiring freezes and possible layoffs - Multiyear contracts for some educators, but limited protections overall

### **III. Key Takeaways for CAAC Members**

- A. BCPS is navigating unprecedented fiscal and political pressure.
- B. State policy decisions increasingly affect local operations.
- C. Graduation venue changes raise important equity questions.
- D. Advisory councils play a critical role in elevating community voice.
- E. Stay Engaged**
  1. Attend School Board meetings
  2. Monitor legislative developments
  3. Communicate community concerns through CAAC