

Mayor's Young Leaders Advisory Council (MYLAC)

December 16, 2023

Minutes

Proceedings of the Mayor's Young Leaders Advisory Council taken on December 16th, 2023, via Zoom and in-person commencing at 9:06 am.

Committee Members Attending

Olivia Albertie, Amber Bansal, Aria Brown, Henry Bryan, Jason Fearon, Cayden Force-Cunniff, Anjali Gusani, Kayleigh Gutierrez, Amenda Idumwonyi, Samya Jones, Zhian Legare, Jailyn Martinez, Skye Mason-Raper, Sy'Teria Morrell, Adna Mutic, Krish Patel, Akilah Prier, Sai Rathnam, Celicia Ross, Jordin Stone, Jaden Tran, William Waller, Daniel Warner, Jaice Wilkins, Gary Williams, Zion Williams, and Katie Wong

Staff Attending

Zachary Brown and Michelle Clowe

(9:06) Anjali Gusani, MYLAC Vice President, officially starts meeting

(9:07) Anjali Gusani introduces the guest speakers from Duval County Public Schools Office of School Choice: Sharwonda Peek, Marshana Rivers, and Jennifer Lisella-Marcellus

(9:08) Sharwonda Peek begins presentation

- Students need the help of Student Choice

(9:10) Jennifer Lisella-Marcellus reviews agenda

- Introduction
- Icebreaker

(9:11) Introductions

- Mrs. Jennifer Lisella-Marcellus
 - Wolfson High School graduate
 - Graduated from Florida State University
 - Transitioned to education in her 30s
 - First career was in Museum Studies
 - First museum job was with the Smithsonian

- Code.org Facilitator
 - Mrs. Marshana Rivers
- First Coast High School graduate
- First person in her family to graduate from college. She graduated from Florida A & M, University of Florida, and St. Leo University.
- Educator at all levels, K-12 and college
- Worked many jobs within the education system
- Has taught abroad and taught in 25 of the 50 states in the United States
 - Mrs. Sharwonda Peek
- Currently a Doctoral Learner at Grand Canyon University
- Graduated from Bishop Kenny High School
- Attended Jacksonville University and the University of North Florida
- 2 Grandchildren
- Education is her passion

(9:15) Icebreaker

Membership answered these following questions on a big piece of paper:

- What advice would you give your 8th grade self?
- To date what is your favorite high school experience?
- What is missing from your high school experience?
- What advice would you provide families to support a high schooler?

(9:22) Answers for icebreaker are shared

Mrs. Marshana Rivers calls on students to share their responses.

- Office of School Choice wants students voices to be heard and represented
- Students need to tell the Office of School Choice what they need at their schools to create change

(9:33) Icebreaker ends

(9:34) What the Office of School Choice does

129,000 Duval County Public Schools (K-12) and Florida is a choice state

- One Application Window
- Two applications: Magnet or Special Transfer Option
- Families may make up to two magnet choices
- The lottery is randomized by grade level
- Application window for the 2024-2025 school year will open January 1st
 - Parent Support
 - Support Technicians

- Department email: school_choice@duvalschools.org
 - New choice schools
- Rutledge Pearson STEAM Elementary School (Fall 2023)
- Chaffee Trail Middle School (Fall 2024)
- Highlands Elementary School (Fall 2024)
- Southside Estates Elementary School (Fall 2024)
 - Main job is to work with magnet schools and special transfer option schools and help them engage with that school's theme.
- They ensure that those students are getting what they need from the school that they are attending
- Each of the speakers from Office of School Choice work with 20-25 schools in Duval County
- They need students from these schools to speak up, via email, to the Office of School Choice to appropriately address issues
 - High School Acceleration Application process opened December 18th and closes January 18th
- AP, IB, Ace program, early college, and dual enrollment programs
- Merit based

(9:38) Recruitment

- Community-based outreach

The Office of School Choice sets up tables to give out important information

- Riverside Arts Market
- First Wednesday Art Walk
- Collaboration with Jacksonville Public Library
- Duval Early Learning Coalition (rising kindergarten students)
 - School-based outreach
- Parent Academy Courses
- School Showcase Saturday
- Transition Nights

(9:46) Volunteer Opportunities

- School Showcase Saturday

School tours held at high, middle, and elementary schools across Duval County.

High school, middle school, and elementary school alumni come out to support and sell their school to parents of young students.

- January 27th, 2024 (Middle schools and high schools) and February 3rd (Elementary) from 9am – 10:45am and 12:30pm – 2pm
- You can volunteer at schools you have attended or attend to help parents make their decision on whether or not to send their children to that school.
- Get in contact a school you attend or attended and Office of School Choice to volunteer
 - Community outreach events
- Riverside Arts Market
- First Wednesday Art Walk
 - Create an alumni social media post to support schools you have attended

(9:50) Membership answers Office of School Choice survey

(10:08) Office of School Choice presentation ends

(10:09) Attendance was taken by MYLAC secretary, Kayleigh Gutierrez

(10:13) MYLAC Vice President, Anjali Gusani, speaks to membership

- Meeting minutes from previous meeting were approved and seconded by membership
- Media release form reminder
 - Turn in your media release form if you haven't to participate in photos with the MYLAC membership
 - Turn in via email or in person at the next meeting
- Two guests from St. John's County, Mayukha Das and Sahiti Reddy, were introduced to membership as two high school students who want to create a MYLAC program in St. John's County.
- Attended to learn how MYLAC works and on behalf of the St. John's County Commissioner

(10:14) Break begins

(10:32) Break ends and Anjali Gusani resumes meeting

- Starting this meeting, seniors will stand up and announce news regarding their application process to colleges every meeting

(10:36) Upcoming MYLAC meetings announced

Early release Wednesday meetings were selected because of conflicts in the upcoming speakers' schedules.

- Wednesday, January 31, 2024 (2:30pm - 6:00pm)
 - Guest speaker: Dr. Saralynn Grass, CEO of Kids Hope Alliance

- Wednesday, February 28, 2024 (2:30pm - 6:00pm)
 - Guest speaker: Dr. Tracye Polsen, Director of Strategic Partnerships, Office of Mayor Donna Deegan

(10:37) Tech Help Day at Taylor Residences announced

Members who attend will help seniors learn and understand technology. For example, showing them how to use their phones or tablets.

- Date: Monday, January 8, 2024 (1:00pm – 3:00pm)
- Location: Taylor Apartments, 6701 Chester Ave., Jacksonville Fl, 32217
- Members must sign up for this event

(10:39) Zachary Brown speaks to membership

A paper was handed out to MYLAC members that detail upcoming events; Zachary Brown reviews this sheet.

- Practice Run Teen Initiative, January 6, 2024 (10:30am – 1:00pm)
 - Collab with Abdul Hai Thomas from the Center for Children’s Rights
 - Location: Emmett Reed Center, 1093 W. 6th St., Jacksonville Fl, 32209
 - Practice run for mandatory Teen Initiative project that is on March 16th
 - Entire membership must work on this project
- Teen Initiative Project, March 16th, 2024 (8:00am – 5:00pm)
 - Mandatory for every member to be there
 - If you do not attend your eligibility for the MYLAC scholarship may be negatively affected
 - Collab with Abdul Hai Thomas but MYLAC is hosting
 - This will be held the day after a mural reveal in the community
 - Huge community event
 - Ideas for this event will be discussed and shared at future meetings within the membership and with Abdul Hai Thomas
- Reminder: It is important that every member check emails and messages sent by MYLAC. We need stronger communication to create change.
 - If you have to miss a MYLAC meeting, please let Zachary Brown know beforehand

(10:46) Membership breaks out into Teen Initiative planning groups

- Packets are handed out with planning questions for the Teen Initiative project

(11:49) Members gather in a circle to share ideas and answers from packet about Teen Initiative Project

- What we hope to achieve with this event
- Provide and promote resources for parents and students
- Positively impact literacy in young people within that area
 - Theme for event: Carnival/fair
 - Name of Teen Initiative project: Marching in on Literacy

Planning groups for the Teen Initiative project:

- Games/Activities: Janice Wilkins, Skye Mason-Raper, and Amanda Idumwonyi
- Craft Table: Katie Wong, Samya Jones, and Sy'Teria Morrell
- Reading Buddy Table (Sock puppets): Kayleigh Gutierrez, Celicia Ross, and Gary Williams
- Creating Flyers: Cayden Force-Cunniff, Henry Bryant, and Aria Brown
- Book Donations: Jordin Stone, Anjali Gusani, Daniel Warner, and Jaden Tran

Noteworthy ideas that were discussed about Teen Initiative project

- Promoting creativity
- Games similar to Mad Libs
- Brain games
- Flyers with important resources for parents and young adults
- Creating books activity
- Socratic seminars
- Book readings and handouts
- Theater games
- Sock puppet creation to be used as “reading buddy”
- Passport stamping used to make sure the event is organized and children participate in each activity
- We need an efficient schedule

(12:28) MYLAC meeting officially ends