Children's Services Advisory Board
Annual Retreat Meeting Summary

October 2, 2026

The Children's Services Advisory Board of Manatee County, Florida, annual retreat was held at the Lakewood Ranch Library, 16410 Rangeland Pkwy, Lakewood Ranch, Florida, on Friday, October 2, 2026, at 9:00 a.m.

ROLL CALL

CSAB Members Present:
Xtavia Bailey, Hon. Scott Brownell, Debbie Tapp, Christopher Collins, Rita Smith, Jannon Pierce, Dr. Parikh, Connie Shingledecker, Heather Felton, Carolann Garafola; Absent/Excused: Cassandra Mitchell; Absent/Unexcused: None

Also Present:
County Staff: Melissa Bomar, Lize Francis, Brenda Marquez Facio, Johanna Beville, Tracie Adams; Board of County Commissioners: Amanda Ballard; Members of the Public: Rachel Spivey, Michael Higley

WELCOME, ICE BREAKER, AND INTRODUCTIONS

Melissa Bomar launched the retreat at 9 a.m. All staff and Board members introduced themselves for the benefit of new CSAB members. Ms. Bomar facilitated an ice breaker activity for CSAB Members. At the conclusion of the ice breaker, Ms. Bomar reviewed the agenda and goals for the day.

MISSION, VISION, AND POLICY STATEMENTS

CSAB Members collaborated as a group to create and revise a mission statement, vision statement, and review the already established policy statement. A vote will take place at the next regular CSAB meeting to make the statements established.

- **Mission Statement-** To create a stronger future for every at-risk child in Manatee County by advocating and providing critical resources through strategic investment recommendations to the Board of County Commissioners.
- **Vision Statement-** A community where every child and family has equitable access to the resources, opportunities, and support needed to thrive, ensuring all children are safe, healthy, resilient, and prepared for lifelong success.
- **Policy Statement-** To evaluate and prioritize the needs of Manatee County's children and families, ensuring that the Children's Services Dedicated Millage addresses these specific areas.

ATTESTATION WITHIN THE UPCOMING APPLICATION

County staff informed the CSAB members that a cone of silence attestation would be added to the application and placed after the eligibility quiz. This attestation will, upon applicant submission, provide acknowledgement that the applicant must not attempt to communicate with, influence, pressure, or otherwise contact CSAB members regarding active funding applications outside of the established process.

APPLICATION REVIEW AND SCORING CONVERSATION

CSAB Members were split into two working groups to review a previously submitted application. The review also included scoring the application. The guidance and the matrix were also reviewed and compared to the application to verify accurateness. Members reviewed and discussed some of the application questions where scoring was significantly varied.

SCHOOL DISTRICT LITERACY INITIATIVE AND PRESENTATION

Mr. Omar Edwards and Principal Samantha Webb presented some of the steps and changes that have taken place within some of the Title I schools that had led to student behavior changes, increased student attendance, and increased overall school grade ratings. Xtavia Bailey inquired how the CSAB may be able to assist with the School District's incentivizing initiative. Children's Services Dedicated Millage funds are prohibited to directly be paid to the School District. It was discussed that a nonprofit program could provide services and operations on behalf of the School District. Further information will need to be gathered and examined for additional conversations to take place. The CSAB was unsure how results would be created and tracked for this type of request.

INCREASE TIER DISCUSSION AND INCREASE GUIDANCE DISCUSSION

CSAB Members and staff discussed the different increase tiers and the associated limits of funding parameters per tier. It was discussed that 7% COLA may be slightly too much of an increase during these uncertain financial times. 2% was mentioned, considering 2.8% is the current CPI. The CSAB was informed, by staff, that the option of "maybe" was omitted from future increase guidance matrices.

ADDITONAL BUSINESS

CSAB Members engaged in conversation regarding how to inform the Board of County Commissioners of the intensive and time laboring process of the Children's funding recommendations. It was agreed that the CSAB would start to present to the Board of County Commissioners as much as possible throughout the investment year to provide updates. A workshop between both boards was also recommended. Staff, select CSAB Members, and the BOCC liaison will coordinate together to facilitate this request.

NEXT MEETING

October 21, 2026 – 3:00 p.m., Manatee County Admin Bldg Floor 5, Manatee Conf Rm

There being no further business, the retreat concluded at 4:00 p.m.

Meeting Summary Approved.

Chair

10/21/26
Date