

## STSC Members

Please **be reminded** that we are back to in-person meetings. STSC members attending via Zoom may participate but may not vote and will be counted as absent for attendance purposes.

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Meeting ID: 882 1307 5771

Passcode: 151998

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**SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY  
COMMITTEE (STSC) AGENDA  
May 24, 2023 - 9:00 a.m.**

**310 Court Street, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor Conf. Room  
Clearwater, FL 33756**

**THE PLANNING COUNCIL AND METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION FOR PINELLAS COUNTY**

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- 1. CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS**
- 2. PUBLIC COMMENTS**
- 3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**
- 4. SCHOOL DISTRICT RELATED ITEMS**
  - 1. Bus Stop Information Cards**
  - 2. Joint Public Service Announcements**
- 5. SCHOOL BUS STOP PRIORITIZATION**
- 6. OTHER BUSINESS**
  - A. Hazardous Walking Conditions Update**
  - B. SPOTLight Emphasis Area Update**
  - C. STEPS Program – Minutes**
  - D. Correspondence**
  - E. Request for Future Agenda Topics**
- 7. ADJOURNMENT**

**Next Meeting: October 4, 2023**

**Join Zoom Meeting for Public viewing and comment only**

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*Appeals: Certain public meetings result in actions taken by the public board, commission or agency that may be appealed; in such case persons are advised that, if they decide to appeal any decision made at a public meeting/hearing, they will need a record of the proceedings, and, for such purposes, they may need to ensure that a verbatim record of the proceedings is made, which record includes the testimony and evidence upon which the appeal is to be based.*

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**School Transportation Safety Committee – May 24, 2023**

**2. Public Comment**



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**SUMMARY**

Anyone wishing to provide public comment may do so at this time. Each speaker will be given a maximum of three minutes.

**ACTION:** None required; informational item only

**School Transportation Safety Committee – May 24, 2023**

**3. Approval of Minutes**



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**SUMMARY**

The meeting summary for the March 1, 2022, meetings are attached for review and approval.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** STSC Meeting Summary –March 1, 2022

**ACTION:** Approval of Meeting Summary

**SUMMARY OF SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY COMMITTEE  
OF MARCH 1, 2023**

The meeting was held on Wednesday, March 1, 2023, at 9:00 a.m., at 310 Court Street, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Conference Room, Clearwater, FL

**Members Present:**

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| Stephanie Meyer, Chair | Pinellas County School Board                |
| Carol Cook, Vice-Chair | Pinellas County School Board                |
| Matt Atwell            | Pinellas County School Board/Transportation |
| Mark Bunker            | Councilmember, City of Clearwater           |
| Mike Eisner            | Commissioner, City of Tarpon Springs        |
| Jeff Gow               | Commissioner, City of Dunedin               |
| Lisset Hanewicz        | Councilmember, City of St. Petersburg       |
| TMark Hagedwood        | Pinellas County School Board/Transportation |
| Cliff Merz             | Commissioner, City of Safety Harbor         |
| Casey Morse            | Pinellas County Public Works                |
| Doug Mullis            | Citizen Representative                      |
| Joshua Shulman         | PSTA Representative                         |

**Members Absent:**

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Roger Edelman       | Councilmember, City of Seminole                  |
| Dave Eggers         | Commissioner Pinellas County                     |
| Katie Gannon - Zoom | Councilmember, City of Oldsmar                   |
| Cookie Kennedy      | Beaches Representative, Mayor Indian Rocks Beach |
| Keith Sabiel        | Councilmember, City of Pinellas Park             |
| Scott Swearingen    | Pinellas County Long Range Planning              |
| Marshall Touchton   | Pinellas County School Board                     |

**Others Present:**

|                         |                              |
|-------------------------|------------------------------|
| Nancy Besore            | Commissioner, Safety Harbor  |
| Matt Croasmun           | Citizen Guest                |
| John Rieman             | Pinellas County Public Works |
| James Scott             | WTSP 10 Tampa Bay            |
| Kailey Tracy            | Fox 13 News                  |
| Michael Brantley        | ABC News                     |
| Loretta Rieman - Zoom   | Citizen Guest                |
| Joe Gayton              | WFLA Channel 8               |
| Joe Camera – Zoom       | Pinellas County Schools      |
| Charles Croasmun - Zoom | Citizen Guest                |
| Shirley Croasmun - Zoom | Citizen Guest                |
| Olivia George - Zoom    | Tampa Bay Reporter           |
| ABC Action News - Zoom  | News Guest                   |
| Rachel - Zoom           | Citizen Guest                |
| Jeffery Thompson - Zoom | Pinellas County Public Works |
| Mark Birenbaum          | Citizen Guest                |
| Chris Weiser            | Citizen Guest                |
| Renee Chiea             | Moms for Liberty             |
| Lindsey – Zoom          | Citizen Guest                |
| 10 Tampa Bay – Zoom     | News Guest                   |

|                       |                        |
|-----------------------|------------------------|
| Ariane Martins - Zoom | Forward Pinellas Staff |
| Dana Santos           | Forward Pinellas Staff |
| Chelsea Favero        | Forward Pinellas Staff |
| Maria Kelly           | Forward Pinellas Staff |

**1. CALL TO ORDER**

Carol Cook, Vice Chair, Pinellas County School Board, called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. and asked attendees to introduce themselves.

**2. ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

At this time Vice Chair Cook opened the floor for nominations for Chair and Vice Chair. TMark Hagewood nominated Stephanie Meyer for Chair. With no other nominations, this was seconded by Casey Morse and passed with a unanimous vote. Casey Morse nominated Carol Cook for Vice Chair. With no other nominations, this was seconded by TMark Hagewood and passed with a unanimous vote. Vice Chair Cook continued the meeting, agreeing to Chair this month since it was Chair Meyer's first meeting.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The minutes for October 19, 2022, were approved with no corrections.

**4. SCHOOL DISTRICT RELATED ITEMS**

1 - Update on Belleair Road - Casey Morse, Pinellas County Public Works, shared an update on Belleair Road. A memorial plaque has been installed on Belleair Road in remembrance of Ethan Weiser. The pavement markings along the road have been updated, along with the guardrail reflectors and reflective pavement markings. A location for an RRFB crossing has been selected, further east than where the fatal crash took place, to be able to serve students, Trail users and residents of the new residential condos nearby. School Transportation will be looking into relocating the bus stop for the next school year to be closer to the crossing. Conversations continue with Forward Pinellas and School Transportation regarding additional safety educational programs. Short videos on bike and pedestrian safety will be played during the morning and afternoon announcements. Regarding illuminating the roadway, the only lighting program the County has is for residential areas where the homeowners agree to pay for the cost of it. Due to the monthly recurring cost, the County does not provide lighting for arterial or collector roads. Solar street lighting is currently being tested by Pinellas County Public Works.

2 – Bus Stop Information Cards – TMark Hagewood shared that Pinellas County Schools is currently working with a vendor to put QR codes on the parent information cards that are sent out in the summer for the students riding the bus, giving safety tips and the school bus stop intersections. The card goes to every child eligible to ride the bus. After meeting with their communications staff, the District will be partnering with Forward Pinellas and Pinellas County to work on the PSA videos.

**5. PUBLIC COMMENT**

Mr. Matt Croasmun addressed the committee. Mr. Croasmun is the uncle of Ethan Weiser, who died after being hit by a car while trying to cross Belleair Road in Clearwater to get to his school bus stop. Mr. Croasmun has been advocating for better bus stop conditions for students who must ride the bus in the early morning hours. He shared a short presentation on the conditions of Belleair Road the morning of his nephew’s death, as well as a comparison to a similar situation that occurred in Lake Wales, where another student lost their life. Mr. Croasmun would like to know how Lake Wales got immediate attention to a lighting issue from Duke Energy, while Pinellas County has not. Questions were taken and answered appropriately.

The District will reach out to the County to see if a school safety heading can be added to “See-Click-Fix” to report school safety issues.

Municipal representatives will talk with their community partners to see where improvements need to be made around school bus stops on roads which they have jurisdiction of.

It was asked if a Request for Purchase (RFP) could be released to see about purchasing LED lighting in bulk for the bus stops that need the additional lighting, in order to save costs. The Vice Chair will speak with the superintendent and determine how much money has been allotted to lighting at bus stops.

Josh Shulman shared that the Forward Pinellas School Transportation Safety Committee is a work group made up of municipal representatives to help municipalities in the county solve these problems, while bringing in agency partners from all over the county. The RFP should come from Forward Pinellas, not the School District, especially given the fact that by procuring a large quantity, different municipalities may be able to buy off of that contract at a cheaper rate.

Ms. Favero said Forward Pinellas would take the lead on organizing everyone to take a countywide look at all of the bus stops, both existing and proposed, and will come up with a prioritization method for future improvements. There may be state money available, or there could be local funds for the effort. Forward Pinellas will work with the District, County and municipalities to identify the specifics and bring a proposed plan to the next meeting.

**6. PRIORITIZING BUS STOP LOCATION IMPROVEMENTS ON COUNTY ROADS**

This item was covered with the prior agenda item.

**7. STATE LEGISLATION RELATED TO SCHOOL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY**

Ms. Favero shared that the 2023 Florida State Legislative session is underway and there are a number of bills that have been filed that may have an impact on school transportation safety. This information is being provided for informational purposes only so that the STSC members are aware of the conversations going on in Tallahassee related to the focus of this committee. Senate Bill 588 deals with speed enforcement in school zones and the other, Senate Bill 766, would provide for enforcement of school bus passing infractions, using on-board technology, Josh Shulman inquired if it was possible to send a letter of support to the legislative delegation. He then made a motion to ask the Forward Pinellas



Board, on behalf of the STSC, to send a letter of support to the legislative delegation. This was seconded by Commissioner Mike Eisner. At this time, Commissioner Jeff Gow asked if House Bill 733 could be included in this motion, even though there is no appropriate language known, as of yet. HB 733 adjusts starts times for middle and high schools. Josh Shulman amended his motion to include House Bill 733 and Commissioner Mike Eisner amended his second to include the same. Vice-Chair Cook clarified that the District has not taken a stand on House Bill 733 and therefore she would hesitate to vote in support of House Bill 733 until there is a conversation to consider the impact on the District. She then requested the votes be taken separately on the Senate Bills and the House Bills. Josh Shulman restated his motion to just the Senate Bills and Commissioner Mike Eisner seconded and this passed with a unanimous vote. Commissioner Jeff Gow made a motion for a letter of support be written in support of the House Bill 733, adjusting start times for high school and middle school. This was seconded by Councilmember Mark Bunker and passed with a 5 – 3 vote. Questions were taken and appropriately answered.

## **8. OTHER BUSINESS**

### **A. School District Related Items Update**

For Hazardous Walking Conditions, Ms. Morse shared that in the spring, municipalities will meet up with School Transportation, local police and the law enforcement departments to review the list of areas with hazardous walking conditions. These meetings help to address hazardous walking conditions throughout the county, as well as rectify some of the issues currently on the list.

### **B. Pinellas SPOTlight Emphasis Areas Update**

Regarding the SPOTLight emphasis areas, for A Vision for US 19, the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) will be constructing a new set of interchanges along US 19 from SR 580, through Curlew Rd. The project will include a pedestrian underpass at Republic Drive and a pedestrian overpass at Northside Drive For TEILS, Forward Pinellas has been looking at some of the under-utilized industrial lands around Pinellas County. The lands have been reserved for future industrial development and it has become evident that there are some places industrial development does not want to go. Staff is looking into changing the allowable densities and intensities for other types of development in those areas which could have an impact on public schools as well. For Access to the Beaches, staff has been working closely with PSTA, the City of Clearwater and Dunedin on a free shuttle to get people out to the beaches to reduce traffic congestion and in the south county areas, the communities are working more on demand management.

### **C. STEPS Program**

Minutes and Agendas were provided in the agenda packets.

### **D. Safe Routes to School**

Funding is available for Safe Routes to School projects and the various jurisdictions are encouraged to reach out to Forward Pinellas if they're interested in seeking funds. This funding can be used for intersection upgrades and sidewalk improvements. There is a

very large amount of public involvement in these projects, such as getting the PTA involved and the school principal, but if there is interest, funding is available.

**E. Requests for Future Agenda Topics**

An update on how staff has progressed with today's conversation was requested.

**F. Comments**

PSTA is currently starting to develop its community bus plan, which is done every five years and is part of the FTA's review of busing needs for the community. One of the bigger items is going to be outreach into the community. PSTA noted that they do a good job of surveying their own riders, and what they have trouble with is surveying community members that interact with transit but not necessarily with the bus. PSTA will be reaching out to different communities and become more involved with the School District about what their future needs might be from a busing standpoint. This effort is just getting underway. The surveys will be coming out soon and the more PSTA can engage with community members, the better they can design a transit system that meet the needs of people who are actually using transit, and the biggest player in busing is Pinellas County Schools.

A memo was read by Tarpon Springs Commissioner Mike Eisner from a concerned Tarpon Springs citizen about one of the bus stops in the area that is lacking lighting and the danger it may present.

**9. ADJOURNMENT**

The Committee adjourned at 11:00 am. The next meeting will be held on May 24, 2023.

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**SUMMARY**

**A. Bus Stop Information Cards**

In 2022, the School District received a request that additional transportation safety information be provided to students that may be riding the school buses. It was noted that the district is already providing bus stop information cards to each student eligible to ride the bus, and that links to transportation safety information could possibly be added to these cards. The district will provide an update on activities to expand the amount of transportation safety information provided to students through these information cards.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None

**ACTION:** None required; informational item only

**B. TRANSPORTATION SAFETY PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

In late 2022, Forward Pinellas, School District and Pinellas County agreed to work together to develop a series of informational videos to improve awareness and understanding of safe transportation practices, related to students and families. Staff will provide an update on the status of the development of these videos and seek guidance from the Committee on how to prioritize the topics being considered.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** None

**ACTION:** None required; informational item only

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**SUMMARY**

Since receiving direction from the STSC in March, Forward Pinellas staff has been working with the School District, Pinellas County and the local governments to develop a methodology to prioritize school bus stop enhancements and to identify a funding source for improvements. Meetings have been held with planners, engineers and Florida Department of Transportation staff to develop a process that would include an initial screening process and then further evaluate school bus stops to identify those that could potentially benefit the most from evaluation and investment.

Staff will provide an overview of the criteria developed and the funding that will be sought for school bus stop improvements.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** Public School Bus Stop Prioritization Criteria

**ACTION:** As deemed appropriate, based on discussion

## PUBLIC SCHOOL BUS STOP PRIORITIZATION

1. Initial Crash Screening
2. If eligible based on crashes:
  - Are there students waiting in the dark at that stop?
  - Are there reports of stopped buses being passed at this location?
  - Are there more than 2 travel lanes of traffic at this location?
  - Is the posted speed limit above 35 mph?

Additional criteria to further screen stops that meet all of the above:

- Number of students at stop
  - Sliding scale; more students = more weight
- AADT of adjacent roadway
  - Sliding scale; more vehicles = more weight
- Roadway curvature
  - More weight if there is a curvature in the road
- Posted speed limit
  - Sliding scale; higher posted speed = more weight
- Probability of stop changing
  - Sliding scale; higher probability = less weight

*Recommended improvements will be based upon the specific needs of each stop, but could include: crosswalk striping enhancements, advance signage, flashing lights, curb/sidewalk modifications, etc.*

**6. A- E Other Business**

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**A. Hazardous Walking Conditions Update**

The Hazardous Walking Conditions evaluation will begin in March-April 2023. Each hazardous walk route will be discussed and determine if it is a hazard, and this report will be updated by July 2023.

**B. Pinellas SPOTlight Emphasis Areas Update**

Forward Pinellas staff will provide a brief update on the status of activities related to the three SPOTlight emphasis areas.

**C. STEPS Program – Minutes**

The School Transportation and Enhanced Pedestrian Safety (STEPS) Committee is facilitated by the Pinellas County School Board and was created as a forum to discuss and address traffic safety issues around Pinellas County Schools. The STEPS committee consists of technical planning/engineering staff from the local governments and agencies throughout the County. Attached are meeting summaries and agendas from their meetings since the last STSC.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** STEPS April 2023 Meeting Minutes

**D. Correspondence**

At the March meeting, the STSC requested that the Forward Pinellas board submit letters of support for various pieces of legislation. A copy of that letter is included here for reference. It should be noted that the bill filed to mandate that public school start times begin no earlier than 8 a.m. was inadvertently excluded from this letter. However, all three pieces of legislation did successfully pass the Florida Legislature. At the time of agenda packet development, only the school start time legislation has been signed by the Governor.

**ATTACHMENT(S):** Letter to the Pinellas Legislative Delegation

**E. Request for Future Agenda Topics**

The STSC members may discuss any suggestions for future agenda topics.

# **STEPS Meeting Minutes for April 2023**

School Transportation & Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Committee

Wednesday, April 19, 2023 10:30 a.m. – 11:30 a.m.

WPSC or on Microsoft Teams

## **I. INTRODUCTIONS-ATTENDANCE**

Richard Allison, Matt Atwell, Joe Camera, Rodney Due, Cynthia Hayes, Marvin Jefferson, Kelly Jericho, James Long, Jacob Marchand, Ariane Martins, Melissa Mehling, Casey Morse, Dawn Pecora, Jerry Reynolds, Norm Runkles, Hailey Sequeria, Marshall Touchton, Mike Ulbrich and Autumn Westermann

## **II. APPROVAL OF February 15, 2023 Meeting Minute**

Melissa Mehling and Norman Ruckles

## **III. NEW GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Bus Stop Safety Enhancement Criteria Review:** Chelsea Favero presented slides that will be attached with the minutes. If you have any concerns or suggestions to be added please contact her at [cfavero@forwardpinellas.org](mailto:cfavero@forwardpinellas.org).

**School times change:** if approved would not go into effect until 2026.

**Reviewing Bus stop changes:** will take effective 2023-2024 school year if approved. It would affect three schools start time if approved and notification would need be sent out by July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023.

**Summer Bridge:** June 5<sup>th</sup>-June 29<sup>th</sup>.

Times as follows **Elementary Schools:** 8:00am-2:00pm. **Middle Schools:** 8:00am - 2:00pm and **High Schools:** 8:30am-12:30pm.

Possibility of field trips on Fridays-Autumn Westermann will look into as guards only work Monday-Thursday.

Busing will be providing for Summer Bridge.

**Tampa Road School Zone:** According to Casey Morse request is in the que to be reviewed and updated to the standards. Suggested the use of portable DMS signs if available.

**Dunedin MS:** Requesting revamp of sign on southside of property to be with updated school times and no left turn. Casey will check who controls the sign, if county she will take care of, or school board GM needs to email request.

## **IV. COMMITTEE BUSINESS/UPDATES**

Crash Data-Attached

V. **OLD GENERAL BUSINESS**

**Frontier Elementary:** Schools request to change traffic pattern to only allow right turn to exit is still under review. At this point county doesn't find evidence to support the change. If that standing stays school would need to fund the project if moving forwarding with it.

**Seminole Elementary:** Casey will investigate why southwest crossbar has not been moved yet.

VI. **NEXT MEETING/ADJOURNED**

\*\*\* **May 17th, 2023**, at WPSC located at 11111 Belcher Road South, Largo  
or "Microsoft TEAMS" at 10:30a.m.\*\*\*

All STEPS meetings are scheduled for the 3<sup>rd</sup> Wednesday of the month



## FORWARD PINELLAS

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310 Court Street  
Clearwater, FL 33756



April 12, 2023

Pinellas Legislative Delegation  
Representative Linda Chaney, Delegation Chair  
200 House Office Building  
402 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300

Dear Chair Chaney and Pinellas Legislative Delegates:

This letter is to express support for SB 588 and SB 766, legislation intended to improve school transportation safety in our communities. As the metropolitan planning organization for Pinellas County, Forward Pinellas believes that ensuring the safety of our students while they travel to and from school is of utmost importance.

Each day, approximately two people are killed or severely injured on our roadways in Pinellas County, and some of those individuals are children attempting to access their schools and bus stops. This is a disturbing reality that we must make every effort to remedy. We need to take proactive measures to ensure the safety of our children and make transportation in our communities safer.

The proposed school transportation safety legislation is an important step in this direction. SB 588 will allow School Districts the option to install automatic speed enforcement equipment in designated school zones, where thousands of children are present on any given day, while SB 766 will permit the photographic enforcement of vehicles that pass stopped school buses, an occurrence all too common on our roadways.

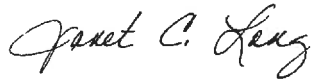
Since 2021, the Forward Pinellas Board, Pinellas County and 23 of our 24 municipal jurisdictions, have adopted the Safe Streets Pinellas Resolution. This Resolution commits us all to advocate for, and advance, strategies that will improve the safety of our transportation network. These Senate bills align with the mission of our agency and with the policy direction set by our governing board, while providing another tool for our implementing agencies to utilize to ensure the safe travel of students.

While these two pieces of legislation will not solve all our school transportation challenges, they will assist us all in making the trip to school as safe as possible for our students, whether they arrive in a bus, car, bicycle or by walking.

As our elected representatives, we urge you to support this important legislation and do everything in your power to ensure its passage. We owe it to our children to provide them with the safest possible means of transportation to and from school, and these pieces of legislation are a critical part of that effort.

Thank you for your tireless efforts in Tallahassee to represent your constituents and for your consideration of this important legislation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Janet C. Long".

Janet Long, Pinellas County Commissioner  
Forward Pinellas Chair

CC: Pinellas Legislative Delegates  
School Transportation Safety Committee Members