

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING KCW Administration Building October 4, 2007

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:39 p.m. by **Dr. Pam Brown**, Chair, without a quorum present. The Committee reached a quorum at 6:42 p.m.

Members Present:

Jawhar Badran	Lina Gioello	Peter Valletutti
Pam Brown	Baphol Joseph	Barbara Williamson
Cedric Douglas	Jeanne Jusevic	Alyce Zahniser
Ellyn Drotzer	George Pedlar	Alex Lange, Student Advisor
Randy Fleischer	Ernestine Price	Designee
Roland Foulkes	Sherry Reece	Daniel Starman, Student Rep.

Members Absent:

Julian Gazzano	Marguerite Luster	Barbara Stuart
Gary Hensley	Bernie Schultz	Zach Fertel, Student Rep.
Andrew Lewis	Ron Simon-Menéndez	LaToya Jackson, Student Rep.

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

Dr. Elizabeth Watts, Director; Jean Darius, Coordinator; Terri Jones; Marion Williams; Nancy Weintraub

District Staff:

James F. Notter, Superintendent of Schools; Dr. Earlean Smiley, Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction/Student Support

Guests:

Simone Ruiz-Narcis

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The previous meeting date was changed from September 6 to September 20. Due to time constraints, the comprehensive meeting summary was distributed via email prior to the October 4 meeting, with notification that hard copies would be available at the October 4 meeting. Therefore, the Diversity Committee agreed to table approval of the September 20 meeting summary to the November meeting.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Dr. Pam Brown

Dr. Brown welcomed new Committee Member **Peter Valletutti**, who was appointed by **School Board Member Eleanor Sobel**, District 1, and asked Committee members and District staff to introduce themselves.

The Site Visit Subcommittee completed the draft of the report for 2006-2007. It will be presented to the Diversity Committee as soon as possible.

The **Chair** announced she accepted a position as executive director of a leadership institute in Annapolis, MD, and that this would be her last Diversity Committee meeting. She expressed her feeling that the Diversity Committee “is in a good place now to really move forward aggressively with some of the things we have been struggling with...for as long as I have been on the Board.” She said she truly believes **Mr. Notter** wants to work with the Committee “to get to a better place.” She believes that working together on a joint procedure to look at equity in the schools would further the Committee’s efforts. **Randy Fleischer**, Vice Chair, would assume the position of Acting Chair until elections, which are to take place in January 2008. **Dr. Brown** suggested the Committee consider electing a temporary vice chair to fill **Mr. Fleischer’s** position. There were many expressions of congratulations and gratitude for her work and for the professionalism **Dr. Brown** brought to the position of Chair of the Diversity Committee.

The **Chair** observed that the Committee is still having difficulty with participation on the Subcommittees. She asked the Subcommittee Chairs to look into ways to improve the situation. In order for the Committee to be successful, Subcommittees are “going to have to take some of the load.”

DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Dr. Elizabeth Watts

Dr. Watts thanked Dr. Brown for her commitment and support.

Dr. Watts referred to a memo to all Principals that was distributed to the Diversity Committee. The memo, regarding Diversity and Cultural Awareness training, was dated September 21, 2007. The training is conducted by **Dr. Mary Smith**, of the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department. **Dr. Watts** felt it was important to emphasize the School District’s and the School Board’s commitment to diversity and to advertise the opportunities that are available.

The Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department has met with Broward Virtual University to discuss online courses for teachers.

The Department has various School Board approved partnerships with community organizations, including One CommUnity (formerly NCCJ), the Florida Institute for Peace Education and Research, and the Anti Defamation League. We are working with these partners to get student training underway.

Subcommittee meeting dates should be given to **Ms. Jones** by noon on Friday, October 5.

Dr. Watts asked **Ms. Weintraub** to talk about the “fabulous event with **Romero Britto**” that had recently taken place. **Ms. Weintraub** reported that the District sponsored an interactive event with the

internationally known, Brazilian artist, **Romero Britto**, hosted by the Broward Center for the Performing Arts, on Monday, September 17. Thirty students from both Parkway Middle School and Dillard High School were present, for a total of 60 students. In addition, three schools participated in an hour-long videoconference. They were South Broward High School, Pompano Beach High School, and Hollywood Charter Middle School for Science and the Arts. The theme was *Art Inspires*, and it provided an opportunity for students to understand how art supports curriculum and literacy, and to promote self-esteem and expression. **Mr. Britto** emphasized the importance of listening to teachers and getting an education. After the videoconference and the Q&A that followed, the 60 students on site broke into 10 teams of 6 students each, and participated in an interactive and live paint-on-canvas experience with **Romero Britto**. Each student had an opportunity to speak to, and work with, the artist. Feedback from the event was very positive. **Ms. Weintraub** said the committee is considering the possibility of offering a similar program in the future, focusing on cultural diversity and the arts. In closing, **Ms. Weintraub** announced that the 10 canvases would be on display in the Farquahr Gallery of the Fort Lauderdale Museum of Art from October 3 through October 12. Discs of the September 17 event will be available to all schools, so that students who were not present could benefit from the information that was shared.

Dr. Watts reported on the progress of the *Building Bridges* videoconference series, in collaboration with BECON and the African American Research Library and Cultural Center. The series was launched the previous week. **Marion Williams**, of Diversity & Cultural Outreach, was the facilitator. Sixty students from Charles Drew and Mirror Lake Elementary Schools participated. They learned about storytelling from West Africa. Students will take virtual field trips and be exposed to special exhibits, collections and guests from various cultures.

Mr. Darius reported on the status of Motions and Requests.

- **Dr. Phyllis Schiffer-Simon** of BECON would be available to meet with the Committee Her presentation will be scheduled.
- Regarding **Ms. Jusevic's** request for the number of schools that have morning announcements: the Department is awaiting that information.
- **Mr. Garretson** is unable to attend the November meeting, but would be available for the December meeting, to give an update on facilities and construction.
- The Department is waiting for the student suspension data from the District.

Mr. Foulkes asked for the status of the High School Reform update, noting that the District was waiting until the policy was “settled.” **Dr. Smiley** responded that there will be a presentation to the School Board on October 23 on the High School Reform Redesign. A presentation to the Diversity Committee could be scheduled for anytime after that date. **Mr. Foulkes** asked that the presentation to the Committee be scheduled for November.

PRESENTATION BY JAMES F. NOTTER, SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

JOINT REPORT PROPOSAL: SUPERINTENDENT'S CCC ANNUAL STATUS REPORT & DIVERSITY COMMITTEE'S SITE VISITATION REPORT (Attached to the Minutes)

As part of her introduction, the **Chair** advised the Committee members that the Diversity Committee is involved in 3 reports. They are: 1) the Superintendent's Report to School Board Members; 2) the Diversity Committee's response to the Superintendent's Report; and 3) the Diversity Committee's Site

Visitation Report. **Dr. Brown** stated that, in June, members talked about changing the way the reports are done. The **Chair** then recognized **Mr. Notter**.

Mr. Notter began his presentation by thanking **Dr. Brown** and acknowledging the great job she has done as **Chair** of the Diversity Committee. He congratulated her on behalf of the **Board** and the **Administration**. He then thanked the members of the **Diversity Committee** for their hard work and dedication on behalf of the children.

Mr. Notter referred to the Joint Report Proposal that was given to the Diversity Committee members. He stated it is his hope that it will bring more alignment to the three reports **Dr. Brown** referred to in her introduction. He went over each point of the Proposal.

First Arrow

Mr. Notter suggested that, under the 2nd bullet, the Committee use the identified gaps in his Report to identify the schools that would be visited in the following year. They would use this to “inspect what we expect.” Under the 4th bullet, the site visits would be a way to “monitor the implementation of the District’s action steps to address the identified gaps.”

Second Arrow

Dr. Blasik would work with the Committee to find ways to monitor the gaps and the District’s action steps to address those gaps. **Mr. Notter** said this would align the CCC Report, and the gaps in the Report, with an independent “check and balance” through the site visits. This would assist the District in assessing how the District is doing and how effective the action steps are. **Dr. Blasik** would work with the Committee to ensure the development of the proper formats to get the necessary data.

Third Arrow

This deals with the Committee’s response to the Superintendent’s Report and states that the Site Visitation Report would not replace the Committee’s response. The Site Visit Report would be like “an audit check-off. The District identifies the gaps; your Report verifies these gaps. You put together actions to close the gaps. And, by the way, you did and/or you partially did. But in these, we think you need to accelerate closing the gaps. It makes identification of the gaps a much more powerful tool.”

Fourth Arrow

If this process is agreed upon, it would take effect next school year.

DISCUSSION

Mr. Joseph asked if the Diversity Committee would receive the Superintendent’s Report much earlier than has been the practice? **Dr. Smiley** stated that, by Policy, the Report must be presented to the Board at their first workshop in August. Therefore, the Report should go to the Diversity Committee two months prior to that, in June. (There was some discussion as to whether or not the Committee would meet in July.) **Dr. Smiley** suggested that **Dr. Blasik** might be able to have the Report ready by May 30, to give the Committee June and July in which to study the Report and respond. **Mr. Joseph** said that would bring a “new relationship to the table.” He suggested the Committee have a subcommittee study the report and prepare a response. **Dr. Smiley** paraphrased **Mr. Joseph’s** suggestions: “What you’re saying is the subcommittee responds to the Superintendent’s Report and then identifies the gaps in whatever areas of the Conditions. Then we discuss the gaps along with the Report at a unified forum at

that first Board workshop in August. That's what I think I heard you say." **Mr. Joseph** said, "You heard right."

Mr. Foulkes asked if the subcommittee would bring the recommendations to the Committee in July. **Mr. Joseph** responded that the subcommittee would have more time to work on it if they did bring it to the Committee in July. **Dr. Brown** stated that this process would necessitate the Committee meet in July. **Ms. Gioello** reminded the members that the reason they had not met in July for the past two years is because of the July 4 holiday and the inability to reach quorum. **Dr. Brown** suggested moving the July meeting forward to the end of June. She said there are ways to address this issue that would work.

Ms. Drotzer said she would like every member of the Committee to have an opportunity to comment on the Report, whether or not they are members of the subcommittee. **Dr. Brown** reminded the Committee that subcommittees only make recommendations to the full Committee. Decisions come from the full Committee.

Mr. Badran asked, "If we can get the Superintendent's Report sooner by doing this, why can't we get the Report sooner by not doing this? If a Report's available, it's available." He said the Committee is here to be a counterbalance. He said the Committee has, in the past, not gotten much to work with. **Dr. Brown** answered that it's not about getting the Report earlier. "It's about moving forward, working together to figure out a better way for the Committee to do what it is charged to do for the sake of the kids. It is about a better system for monitoring the gaps." She said we have a new superintendent asking to work together with the Diversity Committee. "That's the prize she has her eye on." **Mr. Badran** responded that, it is his 'humble belief that it is in our kids' best interests for those on the District side to move forward full steam ahead with what they say they've got and for us to move full steam ahead with what we think, with where we think we need to be, and then we come together. One of the things that's held us back is not getting the reports in a timely fashion." He said keeping things separate gives the Committee more of an overseer role and keeps the "other side" a little more honest.

Ms. Gioello reminded the Committee that the Site Visit Report was never meant to be a response to the Superintendent's Report. It was meant to be an adjunct to the Superintendent's Report. In response to **Ms. Jusevic's** observation that a handful of the members are doing most of the work and are tired, **Ms. Gioello** proffered that subcommittee meeting times be changed to make it more convenient for those who work and/or have other commitments and obligations.

Ms. Price advised that site visits were a part of the Settlement Agreement. The individuals who filed felt that, if the Committee went to the schools to see what was really happening, staff would get accurate and true information. It took a long time to get the site visits going, but that was the goal from the beginning. **Ms. Price** said a current concern is reassignments and that should be looked into.

Mr. Joseph said, in order for him to support this proposal, staff needs to sit down with the Diversity Committee to redesign the site visit instrument. **Dr. Smiley** responded that there has to be modifications to the site visit instrument in order to capture aligning the process. The District believes that a reliable instrument must be used to collect the data. **Dr. Smiley** reminded the Committee that the current instrument was developed through a process and brought to the Committee for input and recommendations. It was a joint effort. The **Chair** commented that, while the current instrument is very good, it is not "user friendly." This led to further comments on the history of the development of

the Site Visitation Form from **Mr. Foulkes** and **Ms. Gioello**. **Mr. Foulkes** stated that, for two years after his appointment by **Mr. Williams** in 2001, the Committee had not gone into the schools. In early 2002, a number of members had talked about going into the schools to see if what they saw correlated to the reports they had been receiving from the District. That summer, former Committee Chair **Susan Silverberg** sent a questionnaire to the members asking why they wanted to go into the schools. **Mr. Foulkes** was the only person to respond. Later in the year, a Site Visit Subcommittee was created to work with **Dr. Blasik** and her staff to develop some type of instrument. By the summer of 2003, the subcommittee had an instrument, which was designed by Research and Development, based on the information the subcommittee had presented and the information they said they wanted to receive, which was based on the Nine (9) Conditions. From the very beginning, there was input and cooperation between the Committee and the District. **Mr. Foulkes** encouraged the members to participate in the site visits and have input in the process.

Ms. Gioello added that one of the things the Committee was successful in was adding ADA Compliance to the instrument. That was something she fought very hard for. She also expressed concern about student reassessments. **Ms. Gioello** suggested the Committee have an annual review of the site visitation instrument to see if there are questions that should be added while ensuring it conforms to the conditions of the Settlement Agreement.

Mr. Fleischer suggested the Committee enlist the help of students, perhaps by contacting Student Councils, giving them copies of the form, and asking them to walk their schools and do an assessment, then report back to the Diversity Committee.

The **Chair** commented that there would likely be much more discussion on the form and the process, but that would come after the Committee decides whether or not to accept the Proposal. The form definitely needs changing and will be changed if the Proposal is adopted.

To a question by **Ms. Price** regarding the gaps, **Mr. Notter** responded that one of the advantages of the new model is that it gives staff an opportunity to turn the gaps into action plans and then prioritize the actions. It could speed up the process for addressing the gaps. It would be easier to check the work orders to see where they stand, and, if necessary, move some of them up. To use **Dr. Smiley's** words, it would result in "fidelity of implementation" which comes from having a clear direction. The District would check the work orders and projects against the capital plan, which is adopted every year.

Mr. Douglas commented that the Joint Report would be School Board led, staff driven. Currently, the Committee examines the Superintendent's Report; identifies gaps; then the Site Visit Committee selects the schools it will visit. He said, with the new proposal, staff might as well tell the Committee to "check these schools because we believe there are problems. That sort of negates the difference between staff and Committee." Staff would be identifying the gaps. He doesn't see where the Committee will have input, other than going to the schools that have been identified by staff. **Mr. Notter** said the function of the Report is to identify the gaps. The independence of the Committee is when it verifies those gaps. In his opinion, a staff driven report is one in which only staff does the report, and only staff does the check and balance. **Mr. Notter** said the good thing about the new process is that staff does the Report; the Committee does the check and balance of the Report. Both entities work together to get things done in an expeditious manner. The plan is to ensure the Committee is the independent viewer of the report and the independent checker to make sure the gaps are identified

and the work is being done or included in the capital plan. **Dr. Smiley** referred to the Conditions of the Agreement and said that it calls for the **Superintendent** to bring forth a report each year of the Nine (9) cited Conditions in every school, with an assessment, using an instrument designed collaboratively. The **School Board** would then review the Superintendent's Report at the first workshop in August. It does not address site visitations or validating. It does say the **Committee** will respond to the Report. The **School Board** amended Policy 1.5 in 2004-2005 to grant visitation privileges to the Committee. The Policy did not speak to site visitations prior to the amendment. **Dr. Smiley** said it was an “unfinished process.” She said the District is trying to develop a process where the Committee can perform its role of validating what the **Superintendent** said in his Report. The **Committee** would identify those points it agrees with and point out what it does not agree with through what it observed during the site visits. It would advise the **Superintendent** to take another look at the gaps because the **Committee’s** findings are different from his. **Dr. Smiley** said the **Court** did not provide direction for a collaborative effort. It was the instrument “that needed to be vetted from both sides.” Then the District was directed to move forward. **Dr. Smiley** concluded by saying the Proposal makes it better because “it connects it. It’s not unfinished.”

MOTION by Mr. Joseph, 2nd by Ms. Williamson: To accept Joint Report Proposal presented by the Superintendent.

Mr. Foulkes referred to two dates under the “arrows” on the Proposal and asked what other timetables would exist? That information would be very helpful in making a decision. **Mr. Notter** said the dates would be added and forwarded to the Committee for their input. **Dr. Smiley** clarified the 2nd Bullet under the First Arrow. She said, “The process identifies the gaps. Not the Diversity Committee.” **Dr. Brown** concurred and said the Diversity Committee monitors the gaps. **Mr. Notter** added that the 1st Bullet should read: “Examine the Superintendent’s Report for the gaps.”

Mr. Badran does not believe the Proposal will make things better. He does agree with **Mr. Douglas’** belief that it is District led and takes away from the independence of the Committee.

To **Ms. Drotzer’s** request for clarification of the process and methodology, **Dr. Smiley** responded by saying the District collected the data and the Division of Research and Evaluation analyzed the data and reported it to the **Board** and to the **Committee**. In the beginning, the Site Visitation Subcommittee was given a list of schools by **Dr. Sutton** that he believed should be visited, based on the data. That process was changed to the process that exists now. The District acknowledges that the Committee’s report is anecdotal. **Dr. Smiley** envisions taking the anecdotal report and trying to align it with the data report. **Dr. Brown** concurred and said that part still needs to be worked on. **Ms. Drotzer** believes that would address some of **Mr. Badran’s** concerns because there would be the Superintendent’s Report and the independent site visitation report resulting in coming together to develop the action plan. **Dr. Smiley** added that the **Board**, “for the first time, would actually see it in the context of the Superintendent’s Report and the Diversity Committee’s findings, as well, which stimulates a balanced conversation.”

Ms. Williamson asked if the “Teaching Tools” are connected in any way with the Proposal. **Dr. Smiley** explained that the “Essential Teaching Tools” is a document that the Committee spoke about three years ago when they asked how the District ensures equity of teaching resources in every school. The District said it had a checklist so every teacher could identify what essential teaching tools they need and what to do when they don’t have the tools.

Ms. Jusevic said the District identifies district gaps, but not individual school gaps. (At this point, **Mr. Joseph** called the question. The question was called. **Dr. Brown** asked for a vote on the motion.)

Motion passed 13-2

To a question by **Mr. Badran**, **Dr. Brown** advised that, if the Committee does not like the timeline, the Committee could rescind the decision next month.

Mr. Foulkes advised that he stepped out of the room prior to the vote on the Motion because he could not vote for or against without the timetable portion of the Proposal.

Mr. Badran asked **Mr. Notter** if, in his opinion, the **School Board** is in compliance with the conditions set forth in the CCC Settlement Agreement? **Mr. Notter** replied that it is not in 100% compliance.

OLD BUSINESS

None

SUBCOMMITTEES

HIRING PRACTICES, Randy Fleischer, Chair

No report

SITE VISITS, Bapthol Joseph, Chair

Mr. Joseph asked the Committee members to stop and think about why they became members of the Diversity Committee. He said that, if the reason is to advise the **School Board** on issues of parity and equity in the schools, they might want to consider being part of the Site Visitation Subcommittee. He reminded the members that it is not necessary to be a member of this Subcommittee to participate in site visits. It does not look good for the Diversity Committee if only one (1) or two (2) members show up for a site visit. He made a plea for participation by Committee members. It only takes a few hours, once a week, to visit a school and make sure the **School Board** and the School District are doing what they are supposed to do for all students. The visits are “invaluable.”

Mr. Joseph reported that Coconut Creek High School will be visited next.

The 2006-2007 Site Visit Report will be ready in November. It would have been ready earlier, but the Subcommittee had issues with reaching quorum.

The Subcommittee met with District staff following the visit to Fort Lauderdale High School. Members are already receiving updates on the concerns that were discussed at that meeting.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, Jeanne Jusevic, Chair

No report

STUDENT SUSPENSION, Marguerite Luster/Ernestine Price, Co-Chairs

No report

TECHNOLOGY, Ron Simon-Menendez, Chair

No report.

DISTRICT COMMITTEES:

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

No report

NOVA POLICY REVIEW

No report.

POLICY 5000, Jeanne Jusevic

No report

POLICY REVIEW, Julian Gazzano

No report.

SITE SELECTION, Dr. Pam Brown

No report.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT, Jeanne Jusevic

No report.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Ron Simon-Menendez

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

Security Gate: **Ms. Williamson** told the Committee that one of the gates in the KC Wright parking garage was closed and she had to enter from the exit gate. The security guard told her that it was **Mr. Notter's** instructions that the gate be closed at 6 p.m. and the exit gate be closed at 9 p.m. She asked that the gate be left open when meetings are scheduled. Staff will look into this.

Magnet Program Criteria: **Mr. Douglas** noted that Race is one of the required fields on Magnet Program applications and asked if this is a selection criteria for placement, and if not, what it is used for. **Dr. Smiley** responded that it is not. She explained that the District was given unitary status in 2001 due to the magnet schools policy. The District proved it could address diversity around choice rather than Race. The information is for data collection purposes.

Charter Schools: **Mr. Douglas** said that there are three high schools in District 2, Miramar. They are Miramar High, Everglades High and Parkway Academy. He said Miramar and Everglades High offered an academic scholarship to BCC's Firefighter/Paramedic Academy to any high school senior who lives in Miramar. He asked why students from Parkway were excluded from that scholarship? He asked that this be an official Information Request. The Committee approved the Request.

Workforce One: Their Youth Summer Employment Program required applicants to apply online. **Mr. Douglas** said this is a disparity for students who do not have, or cannot afford, computers or do

not have the skills. He asked, "Who authorized Workforce One to allow schools and agencies to submit a paper application to participate in the Summer Youth Employment Program and students were required online access and technical knowledge and skills?" He said it came through the School Board because the BRACE counselors initiated the process. **Dr. Smiley** responded that it is Workforce One's process. She suggested he put his concerns on paper and submit it to **Mason Jackson** of Workforce One so he could address it. **Mr. Foulkes** suggested it be accompanied by a letter of support from the Committee. **Ms. Jusevic** suggested the question to **Mr. Jackson** could be, "Why would you set a process in place that only allows for online applications?" **Mr. Douglas** said his question is why would the District participate if they knew it was an unfair process from the beginning. **Dr. Brown** said, due to the lateness of the evening, this should be placed on next month's Agenda.

(Motion to extend the meeting for 5 minutes was approved.)

Free Lunch Forms: **Ms. Price** expressed concern over the fact that the Free and Reduced Lunch Committee has no community representation. She said parents are having a problem filling out the forms and kids are not eating. **Dr. Smiley** will meet with **Ms. Price** to gain additional information.

To **Mr. Badran's** comments about accepting or not accepting the Superintendent's Report, **Dr. Brown** suggested this be included in the discussions regarding the new process.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for November 1, 2007, at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room of the KCW Administration Building**

**These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the October 4, 2007 Diversity Committee meeting.
If any Committee member or other interested party would like more detailed information as to the
contents of this summary, contact the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department at 754-321-2090.**