

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING

KCW Administration Building

January 10, 2008

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:37 p.m. by **Dr. Elizabeth Watts**, Director, Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department, with a quorum present.

Members Present:

Jawhar Badran	Bapthol Joseph	Barbara Williamson
Cedric Douglas	Jeanne Jusevic	Suzanne Yach
Randy Fleischer	Marguerite Luster	Alyce Zahniser
Roland Foulkes	George Pedlar	LaToya Jackson, Student Rep.
Julian Gazzano	Ernestine Price	*Alex Lange, Student
Lina Gioello	Sherry Reece	Advisor Designee
Patrick Jabouin	Michael Rajner	

*** Alex Lange did not sign in, and was inadvertently noted as absent. The correction was approved by the Diversity Committee on May 8, 2008, and is noted in the May 8, 2008, Diversity Committee meeting minutes.**

Members Absent:

Phoebee Francois	Peter Valletutti
Ron Simon-Menéndez	Daniel Starman, Student Rep.
Barbara Stuart	Zach Fertel, Student Rep.

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

Dr. Elizabeth Watts, Director; Latricia Lauture; Maryse Nelson; Dr. Mary Smith; Nancy Weintraub

District Staff:

Jill Young, Director, School Boundaries; Ann Evans, District Coordinator, Smaller Learning Communities, Secondary School Reform; Joel Smith, Director, Middle Schools

Guests:

Matt Beekhuizen; Rose Espinola; Georgia Robinson

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes from December 6, 2007 were approved without change.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

This was the Diversity Committee's Organizational Meeting, at which time elections for Chair and Vice Chair took place. **Dr. Watts** announced that former Committee member **Suzanne Yach** has been reappointed to the Diversity Committee by **School Board Member Maureen Dinnen**, District 1.

Dr. Watts began the meeting by wishing everyone a very Happy New Year and thanking them for their commitment to Broward County Schools, the students, and the partnership to improve quality education in our schools.

The original members of Citizens Concerned about our Children (CCC) will be at the February meeting to talk about the CCC Settlement Agreement. **Ms. Yach** stated that, in her opinion, the Settlement Agreement's reference to "students" should include students in adult and community education, as well as vocational and technical education. She stated that, at one time, the numbers of adult students equaled the number of students in K-12, and added, "When I hear that we represent the children of Broward County, in actuality, we represent all people registered in Broward County schools."

The ESOL Department will be at the March meeting to discuss services provided by that department.

Meeting dates for Subcommittees were to be turned in to Maryse Nelson by Friday, January 11.

Members were given copies of the suggested activities for the January and February character traits, as presented by the School Board. January highlights *Respect*, and February highlights *Honesty*.

An update for Information Requests was included in the members' packets. A more comprehensive report will be available at the February meeting.

ELECTIONS

Dr. Watts presided over the election for Chair of the Diversity Committee. **Ms. Williamson** was asked to present the Nominating Committee's recommendation(s). **Ms. Williamson** announced that the Nominating Committee recommended **Roland Foulkes** for Chair of the Diversity Committee. **Dr. Watts** invited nominations from the floor. **Mr. Jabouin** nominated **Randy Fleischer**. Each nominee was invited to speak for three (3) minutes. **Mr. Fleischer** spoke first, followed by **Mr. Foulkes**.

MOTION by Mr. Joseph, 2nd by Mr. Fleischer: "We vote with pencil and paper, signed by voter (member)."

Motion passed 15-2

Written and signed ballots were collected by **Dr. Smith**, and counted by **Dr. Smith** and **Ms. Weintraub**. **Mr. Foulkes** received the majority of votes and was elected Chair of the Diversity Committee.

After a brief statement, **Mr. Foulkes** opened nominations for Vice Chair. **Mr. Joseph** nominated **Barbara Williamson**. **Mr. Badran** nominated **Ms. Gioello**. Nominations were closed. Nominees were invited to speak for three (3) minutes. **Ms. Williamson** spoke first, followed by **Ms. Gioello**.

The procedure used for Chair was used in voting for Vice Chair. **Ms. Williamson** received the majority of votes and was elected Vice Chair of the Diversity Committee.

(During the counting of ballots, the **Chair** referred to a disc from the Florida Department of Education that was placed on the tables in the Board Room. He suggested each member take a copy home. Several members recommended that the disc be translated into Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese.)

OLD BUSINESS

PRESENTATION BY JILL YOUNG, DIRECTOR, SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

Ms. Young said she came to the Diversity Committee to get input into the Boundary process and noted that the District is at the end of the process. This was her first visit to the Committee. The process is the same as in past years, with the exception that the public has had two (2) opportunities for input, rather than one (1). As a result, 34 scenarios have been submitted by the community, along with six (6) staff scenarios. Boundaries are being set for four (4) new schools: (3) elementary schools slated to open in December 2008 or January 2009, and one (1) high school, opening date not given. Elementary Z is in Parkland, Elementary A is in Sunrise, and Elementary C is in Hollywood. High School LLL is in Pembroke Pines.

Ms. Young said that, if schools are not placed in the plant survey by October 2008, the State will reevaluate our enrollment as a District and our available capacity, and determine whether or not we need new schools. If they find that we have less enrollment than we have capacity, they will tell the District to make the boundary changes. She said that now is the time to get “additional capacity in those pockets where we do have existing population growth, and have had for a long time.”

Mr. Foulkes asked for comments from the members. **Mr. Gazzano** read a letter he received from a resident of Weston, who was present at the Diversity Committee meeting. (See Attached.)

MOTION by Mr. Gazzano, 2nd by Ms. Price: “That the concerns expressed by resident Matthew Beekhuizen be forwarded to the school district for proper response.”

Motion passed 15-1

Discussion

Mr. Foulkes reminded members that maps of school boundaries have been placed on the District’s website.

Ms. Jusevic commented that anytime students are moved from one school to another, people are going to be unhappy. However, something has to be done to reduce the student population of Cypress Bay, which has in excess of 5,000 students on its campus. She said there are “plenty of seats” available at schools east of Cypress Bay.

Ms. Young responded to a question about changes affecting other schools. She said the District looks at many factors, including the diversity breakdowns. She will be taking recommendations to the Board on January 22, prior to the February and March public hearings.

Ms. Price advised **Ms. Young** to be careful of how children are labeled, i.e. Free & Reduced Lunch (FRL). She said we have to stay away from labels, especially when talking or referring to children.

Mr. Badran asked **Mr. Beekhuizen**, the author of the letter, where he got the figures and statistics he used in the letter. **Mr. Beekhuizen** responded that they appear on the District's Boundaries website. **Mr. Badran** asked what could be done to keep the inconvenience to kids at a minimum. **Ms. Young** responded that the scenarios referred to in the letter, 4.1S plus the 24-classroom addition, were selected because of the proximity to the new school site, or to Western HS.

Mr. Pedlar said the real problem is Broward County's land use. He said the county has run out of land space, and schools have to compete with other industries for land space. To a suggestion that the land requirements for building a school be changed, **Ms. Jusevic** explained that the requirements were established by the state. She went on to explain the effects of class-size requirements on our schools. The District will receive heavy financial penalties if classes do not meet class size standards in school year 08-09.

PRESENTATION BY ANN EVANS, DISTRICT COORDINATOR, SMALLER LEARNING COMMUNITIES, SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM

Ms. Evans stated she is the District Coordinator for the Smaller Learning Communities grant and had worked with **Dan Traeger** on High School Reform for several years. She took over for **Mr. Traeger**, who is now principal of High School LLL. She stated the Smaller Learning Communities (SLC) grant is the "cornerstone" of High School Reform. The District received \$8 million three years ago to create these communities in eight schools. SLCs are a way to make large schools seem smaller with more personalized learning environments.

Ms. Evans provided the members with a pamphlet that explained what the District is doing relative to High School Reform. In addition, she accompanied the pamphlet with a "blueprint for redesign," which included a glossary of terms. Everything in the pamphlet and the blueprint is available on the website at browardschools.com, under Curriculum & Instruction, High School Reform. In addition, a PowerPoint presentation was provided.

Ms. Evans reported studies have shown that 9th grade is critical and "is the last chance to save these students." Out of the students who are retained in 9th grade, only 10-15% will graduate from high school. The biggest problems lie in low-income schools and neighborhoods. She said, "Red flags are apparent in the first 30 days of school, with indicators such as attendance, behavior, and academics." Interventions have been developed specifically for 9th grade, including educating students on how GPA and credits affect them.

On a national survey of over 30,000 students in grades 9-12, 34% of the students believe school is preparing them for the future. Only 56% felt that teachers really like what they are doing, thirty-six percent (36%) felt that their classes were relevant, seventy-five percent (75%) of students feel disenfranchised in their schools.

The **High School Reform Task Force** asked themselves what a perfect school would look like. They identified the following: (1) Every student would have an adult advocate; (2) All students would be authentically engaged; (3) There would be alternative forms of assessment that would include portfolios and exhibitions, in addition to the FCAT; and (4) the use of internships and other resources.

The **Task Force** looked at reform models and liked the High School Alliance model best because it “really nailed down” the six core principles they felt were important. The District received permission to base its program on the High School Alliance model.

Ms. Evans told the Committee that local best practices have been posted on the High School Reform website. For example, there are models being used by local schools that can be found under the category of *Personalization*. The goal is to have a local best practice for every indicator under each core belief.

The following are Core Beliefs and actions:

Personalization

- 9th Grade Academies where teachers share the same group of students,
- Flexible scheduling,
- Mentoring, and
- Home rooms.

Academic Engagement

- Rigor,
- Relevance,
- Project-based learning,
- Differentiated instruction, and
- Connect curriculum to real world activities.

Empowering Educators

- To ask for what they need.

Accountable Leaders

- Cultivate student leaders,
- Building capacity with teachers as leaders, and
- Principals as instructional leaders in their school.

Engaged Community and Youth

- Sharing data with the community, and
- Ensure all students have access

Integrated System of High Standards

- Rigorous curriculum,
- Access to advance placement classes,
- Set expectations for schools.

Ms. Evans’ presentation concluded with a description of High School Academies and the successes of the program in the various schools in which the program has been implemented.

The **Chair** opened the floor for discussion. **Ms. Giello** expressed her concern that the word “parent” was not used very often in the presentation. She said she is particularly concerned about disabled

students and their families. Parents are critical to the graduation success of all students, and she feels the District is backing away from parental involvement. **Ms. Gioello** said she is worried that parents are being “written out of the success scenarios for kids.” **Ms. Evans** said that was a very good observation and added that she hoped she didn’t give the wrong impression. She said the District believes parents are very important. They are included in the “Engaged Community and Youth” Core Belief and are part of “Personalization” as well. **Ms. Evans** said it was a really good suggestion to make sure the word “parent” was included.

MOTION by Mr. Joseph, 2nd by Mr. Jabouin: “To invite Ms. Evans back to the Diversity Committee to address questions on high school reform.”

Motion passed 16-0

The **Chair** said he would like **Ms. Evans** to come to the Diversity Committee meeting in April. He asked that Members forward questions to staff prior to the April meeting. He would like the questions forwarded to the members in advance of the meeting.

SUBCOMMITTEES

The Chair asked members to consider which subcommittees and District committees they would like to participate in and to advise the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department of their choices, via email, by the February meeting.

HIRING PRACTICES, Randy Fleischer, Chair

No report

SITE VISITS, Bapthol Joseph, Chair

No report.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, Jeanne Jusevic, Chair

No report

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

No report.

TECHNOLOGY, Ron Simon-Menendez, Chair

No report.

BOUNDARIES, Jeanne Jusevic

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, Randy Fleischer

No report.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT, Jeanne Jusevic

No report.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Ron Simon-Menendez

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

Additional Dates for Site Visits

Mr. Joseph asked the Diversity Committee to consider two additional dates for site visits, to cover the visits that were cancelled, due to unforeseen circumstances. He would like to add February 6 & 8 to the schedule.

Diversity & Inclusive Community Month

The **Chair** announced that January is Diversity & Inclusive Community Month in Broward County. This is the seventh annual recognition by the Broward County Commission. The School Board would be issuing a Resolution at their January 15 meeting. In addition, individual cities would issue their own Proclamations.

Thank You to Dr. Watts

Dr. Watts was recognized by the **Chair** for guiding the Diversity Committee during the months of November and December, while the Committee was between officers due to the appointment process and the Bylaws.

Site Visit Report for 2006-2007

The 06-07 Site Visit Report was scheduled to go to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) on Monday, January 14 for review.

Motions

By Mr. Joseph, 2nd by Ms. Jusevic: “To retain February 6 & 8, 2008, to complete the 07-08 school year site visitation.”

Motion passed 16-0

(The Committee voted to extend the meeting by 10 minutes.)

By Mr. Rajner, 2nd by Mr. Joseph: “The Diversity recommends the Superintendent of Schools investigate establishing a ‘call center’ for parents/guardians whose primary language is not English. A separate number would be established for persons speaking Spanish, Haitian

Creole, Portuguese, etc. The Broward County School District will provide an update within 60 days.”

Mr. Rajner explained this action “would help reduce language barriers for non-English speaking parents and provide them with an effective means to call in absences and facilitate the ability for students to complete missed assignments in a timely manner for credit.”

Motion passed 16-0

By Mr. Joseph, 2nd by Mr. Pedlar: “To suspend site visits for the school year 08-09 to review the questionnaire and write the Site Visit Report.”

After discussion, the Motion passed 12-2.

Discussion

Prior to the vote, **Dr. Watts** advised the Committee that School Board Policy 1.5 states “The Diversity Committee will visit schools yearly to monitor compliance with the CCC Settlement Agreement.”

To the question about why this is being considered, **Dr. Watts** reminded the Committee that, following **Mr. Notter’s** presentation on the Joint Report Proposal, the members discussed the necessity of revising the Site Visitation instrument so that it would be compatible with the Report Proposal process and to better identify what the gaps are, as they relate to the Settlement Agreement.

Ms. Weintraub responded to a question about the amount of time needed to change the form. She pointed out that members of the Site Visit Subcommittee have often expressed their dissatisfaction with the instrument, stating that it does not adequately address the conditions of the Settlement Agreement and “apparently does not capture the information the Subcommittee and the Committee had requested, in the way it is currently written.” She said, in order to change the instrument, the Subcommittee would have to work with Research Services so that they could capture the information the Committee has requested. The information would have to be in a form and a format that is compatible with the instrument, itself. Right now, when you go into the schools, you are really limited as to what you can write on the form. It will take time to coordinate with the District and identify the questions.

Ms. Yach commented that, “having worked on past Reports, the magnitude it takes to bring the information forward, with clarity, is significant.”

Mr. Foulkes said this gives the Committee an opportunity to step back and look at the instrument that was developed three or four years ago. He wondered if, at this stage, it is really meeting the needs of the Committee.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:49 p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for February 7, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room of the KCW Administration Building.**

These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the January 10, 2008 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.