

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

**DIVERSITY COMMITTEE
Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building
October 1, 2009**

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:47 p.m. by **Roland Foulkes**, Chair, with a quorum.

Diversity Committee Members Present:

Andy Ansola	Patrick Jabouin	Student Representative
Randy Fleischer	Jeanne Jusevic	Graham Rabinowitsch
Roland Foulkes	Marguerite Luster	Michael Rajner
Phoebee Francois	Catherine Owens	Nancy Rogan
Julian Gazzano	Ernestine Price	Suzanne Yach

Members Absent:

Bapthol Joseph	Regina Santiago	Barbara Williamson
Cynthia Oliver	Leslie Sparks	Alyce Zahniser

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

Dr. Elizabeth L. Watts, Director; Maryse Nelson; Nancy Weintraub; Marion M. Williams

District Staff:

Cynthia Park, Director, Advanced Academics Programs; Jack Ciminera, Database Researcher III, Research Services

Guests:

Dr. Veda Bailey; Clementees Foulkes; Andrew Kinlock

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee approved the September 3, 2009 minutes with the following changes:

Page 2, beneath **CHAIR'S REPORT**, paragraph 2 – last sentence changed to say: Both the **Chair** and **Mr. Rajner** recognized the contributions **Ms. Weintraub** has made. She is one of the original members of the Children's Services Council's Cultural Competence Committee and has actively participated on the Committee since its inception.

Page 4, first sentence beneath Return to Summary format changed to say: **Dr. Watts** thanked **Dr. Harrison** and **Dr. Blasik** for allowing her the opportunity to provide leadership

to District departments on the CCC Online Report Tool. The Tool was developed by **Jack Ciminera** and **Russell Clement**.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Roland Foulkes

Mr. Foulkes announced the automatic removal of **Dr. Bailey** and **Mr. Pedlar** from the Diversity Committee as a result of the suspension of **Beverly Gallagher** from her position on the School Board.

Mr. Foulkes read aloud a letter he recently sent to both **Mr. Notter**, Superintendent, and **Mr. Marko**, General Counsel, regarding the automatic removal of appointees. **Mr. Foulkes** is concerned that additional members would suffer the same consequence should a similar situation occur in the future. The letter also inquired if General Counsel would represent appointees should the need arise.

Mr. Foulkes circulated copies of the response letter he sent to the School Board concerning the appearance of the word "Negro" in the 2009/2010/2011 Code of Student Conduct.

Mr. Rajner stated that although he agreed with **Mr. Foulkes** that there are individuals who identify themselves as "Negro", "Colored", "Black", and/or "African American", his concern went beyond the use of any term. His main objection was the fact that neither the Diversity Committee nor the Code of Student Conduct Committee was notified of such changes and that the material was printed without seeking their input. **Mr. Rajner** said that Staff was very transparent in showing the origin of the "copy and paste" information from the State, who in turn received the information from the Federal government. However, like many others, the situation was first brought to his attention after reading about it in the newspaper and from members of the African American community who were outraged by the verbiage. **Ms. Price** said it is a part of history that should be acknowledged. She said the School Board is not to blame, and there is nothing they could have done to prevent the changes as the information trickled down from the Federal government.

Mr. Foulkes stated that the Code of Student Conduct was distributed during the summer, at which time he had the opportunity to read it. He decided that it was a nonissue, considering other issues that needed to be addressed. He said others should have taken advantage of the same opportunity to voice their objections before school began. **Ms. Jusevic** pointed out that copies were not made available to parents until after the first day of school.

Ms. Luster was offended by the word "Negro". She said incentives given to students for returning signed documents immediately create a "pressured environment" which may encourage many adults not to read the item and just turn in the signed portion. **Ms. Luster** feels parents should be given sufficient time to read and understand materials before they are signed and returned. This is important because once a student gets in trouble, the Code of Student Conduct is the first thing that is mentioned.

Ms. Jusevic announced that, as a result of contract renegotiations between the Code of Student Conduct Committee and the Broward Teachers Union (BTU), the Diversity Committee is no longer welcomed to participate in their meetings. **Mr. Rajner** suggested the Superintendent talk with BTU about reinstating Diversity Committee representation on the Code of Student Conduct Committee.

Mr. Foulkes informed the Committee that at the May 26, 2009, School Board Workshop, former School Board Member **Beverly Gallagher** raised the concern that the Superintendent redrafted his organizational charts without input from the Diversity Committee or any other advisory committee. **Ms. Gallagher's** goal was to ensure the inclusion of all committees in the earlier phase of decision-making. **Mr. Rajner** commented that at the February 25, 2009, Code of Student Conduct meeting, community representation was not welcomed. He said parents were outraged because their input was not being heard. **Mr. Rajner** said Union representatives referred to students as "thugs who belonged in jail." He said they did not take into account that, if students could not resolve their problems, they would end up being processed by the Criminal Justice system. **Mr. Rajner** said African American men usually get "stuck with that end of that stick." He said the Code of Student Conduct Committee should welcome input early on. **Mr. Foulkes** said he would share these concerns at his meeting with **Mr. Notter** on Thursday, October 8, 2009. **Mr. Foulkes** informed the Committee that **Bernie Schultz**, Senior Vice President of the Broward Teachers Union, was once a member of the Diversity Committee. **Mr. Foulkes** suggested the Committee explore having a meeting with Union officials present.

MOTION by Mr. Rajner, 2nd by Mr. Fleischer: "That the Superintendent reinstate the representation of the Diversity Committee to the District's Code of Student Conduct Committee."
Passed 14 - 0

Ms. Jusevic referenced the *Newsweek* article, "*Is Your Baby Racist*" which makes the comparison between children who are exposed to discussions of different appearances and cultures, etc., and those who are not. **Ms. Jusevic** stated the African American community does a better job of discussing racism with their children. She said many communities avoid this discussion out of fear. **Ms. Yach** believes that race is no longer an issue as it once was in America.

Mr. Foulkes commented that in February 2009, during Black History Month, Attorney General Eric Holder, stated that, "When it comes to the issue of race in America, we are a nation of cowards." **Mr. Foulkes** reminded the Committee about the South Florida Diversity Summit, scheduled for Saturday, November 7, 2009, at Nova Southeastern University. The event will be sponsored by the South Florida Diversity Alliance, under the theme "Multiple Identities – A Nation of Cowards."

The **Chair** recognized **Mr. Rabinowitsch** for his work as Chair of the Politics & Ethics Workshop on September 25, 2009, at a Student Government Associations conference. This was one of ten different workshops focusing on "Ethics In Society".

District Updates, Dr. Elizabeth Watts

Revised Policy 1.5, Diversity Committee has been moved up from its originally scheduled date of October 27 to the October 13, 2009, School Board Workshop. The Educational Equity definition approved by the Committee at its September 3, 2009, meeting will be presented to the Executive Leadership Team on Monday, October 5, 2009.

Dr. Watts informed the Committee that, in addition to the Proposed CCC Indicators and Site Visitation Instrument, Diversity Committee members' feedback was presented at the September 8, 2009,

School Board Workshop. A major concern at the Workshop was periodicals. Board Members requested that the Committee be aware that they do not want schools penalized for not having the funds to subscribe to certain periodicals. Another issue dealt with whether or not all magazine purchases were necessary. It was suggested that there be a Media Advisory Board at each school. Historical reference materials should be reviewed prior to being weeded out of the collection.

Dr. Watts advised that once the work on rebuilding the Online Tool with the Revised Indicators has been completed, the information will be shared with the Committee. They can also expect periodic indicator updates.

Dr. Watts announced the recent resignation of **Jean D. Darius**, former Coordinator, Diversity & Cultural Outreach. The Department is still awaiting word on whether or not the position will be filled.

PRESENTATION, CYNTHIA PARK, DIRECTOR, ADVANCED ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The mission of the Advanced Academic Programs Department is to facilitate equitable instructional environments where able learners can, and want to, reach their highest academic potential and to conduct business with integrity and a sense of urgency.

Advanced Academic Programs is an advocate for all able learners to assist schools in creating instructional environments that:

- are rigorous and demand that students reach their potential;
- differentiate instruction and motivation according to the needs of the learner;
- are vertically aligned to standards for success in college and the work place.

CULTIVATING ACHIEVEMENT AND THINKING SKILLS (CATS)

Cultivating Achievement and Thinking Skills (CATS) is an elective support course for students concurrently enrolled in rigorous courses. CATS primary target is the upper Level 2 student who is now enrolled, or will eventually enroll, in an Advanced Placement (AP) course. The District supports affording all upper Level 2 students the opportunity to take an AP course. The curriculum emphasizes study skills (e.g. Cornell note-taking), organizational skills, and career/college information, and provides a place where students may be given the opportunity to “work on the work” as well as receive emotional support and mentoring.

SPRINGBOARD

SpringBoard is a comprehensive curricular support program built upon national standards necessary for success in college. The program provides in-depth training for all Math and English teachers, on-line support and assessment, and ongoing mentoring through The College Board. The goal of the program is to prepare all middle school students for the rigor of high school advanced placement/honors course work.

GIFTED LEARNERS

By recognizing the special needs of gifted learners, the School Board of Broward County is committed to providing programs designed to meet their unique talents and abilities. The State of Florida defines a gifted student as "one who has superior intellectual development and is capable of high performance."

Gifted Education offers services which meet the unique needs of each individual student. The gifted curriculum is aligned with the Sunshine State Standards, and opportunities are facilitated for students to become self-directed, independent learners who achieve at high levels commensurate with their ability and potential.

CITY ACADEMY

The CITY Academy is a congregated setting for intellectually talented students from grade three to eight. The CITY Academy is designed to provide specialized instruction and a peer group for gifted children who require a differentiated program to meet their special needs. It is intended to be an environment that values and enhances above-average ability, passion, creativity, and task commitment in the students. The CITY Academy is a school within Arthur Ashe Middle School, which is expected to evolve into CITY Magnet.

Ms. Park said the “standards required for academic success is a specific language. It is a mindset every student needs to have the ability to function in. To be successful the student must come to own the frame of reference required for academic achievement.” **Ms. Park** stated that a lot of students have problems answering questions due to their lack of exposure and limited frame of reference. It is her estimation that exposure to multiple meanings of vocabulary words and the realization that words can be used in different contexts are in a student’s best interest. **Ms. Park** commented that if conversations surrounding different frames of references are not taking place, the result is children attending school with narrow frames of references. She reasoned that this would put the language of academic achievement out of a student’s reach.

Ms. Park referenced the book *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell, which examines the factors that contribute to high levels of success. The book points out the importance of discussing cultural differences and the different frames of references that exist. **Ms. Park** stated that some students are not succeeding because of the inability to communicate. She said sometimes people are overly sensitive when it comes to talking about cultural differences.

Ms. Park stated that although there is a big emphasis on reaching students at the middle and high school, the Advanced Academic Programs Department is also concerned about preparing students at a younger age for academic achievement. Currently in the developmental stages, the "womb to tomb" plan for college-readiness is designed to target all phases of human development with education and awareness regarding aspects of raising children on a path that will prepare them for college. The plan includes initiatives to (a) encourage parents and parents-to-be to value college-readiness and (b) help parents and parents-to-be to implement college-readiness strategies in their home.

Ms. Park is of the opinion that the bottom line regarding the differences in statistical achievements within cultural groups has nothing to do with race or diversity. She said it is about poverty.

DISCUSSION

Ms. Owens asked what determines the placement level for students going into an AP, IB, or Honors. **Ms. Park** said that, in the past, students were chosen by teacher recommendation or by test scores. Now, any student can sign up for these programs, as long as they meet the requirements and express sincere motivation to perform well. Parents can override any teacher, and/or counselor recommendation

and enroll their child in any rigorous course. They just need to fill out the parent preference form, available online (<http://www.broward.k12.fl.us/advancedacademics/>), with the understanding that they will provide academic and/or emotional support for the student. They must have realistic expectations of grades the student may receive in such a challenging course. Furthermore, Level 3 and above students are automatically enrolled into AP courses. PSAT scores are also taken into consideration. Currently, there are more than 32 different types of AP courses. Schools are required to carry a minimum of six; however, the majority of schools offer approximately eleven.

Ms. Owens said her concern stems from a Hollywood Beach workshop she attended. Discussion was focused on the low graduation rates and academic achievements of African American, Hispanic, and minority Students. There is currently a 19% differential gap between African American students and those enrolled in AP courses. **Ms. Owens** commented that the perceptions of teachers are subjective, and unless a student has an advocate providing them with choices, they will fall through the cracks. **Ms. Park** strongly disagrees with statistical reports that indicate the differences in academic achievement results are due to race. She feels the real cause is the frame of reference a child goes to school with, in addition to their level of poverty, which limits their exposure to things a wealthier child would experience. **Ms. Park** said if focus remains on race or poverty, the system will not get anywhere. The bottom line is socioeconomics, which creates a lot of restrictions.

Ms. Yach asked if there is a proportional differentiation between an individual coming from poverty vs. an affluent environment. **Ms. Park** said there is. **Ms. Yach** added, during research, she found information that indicated children who visited museums were more successful and had a significantly higher potential for learning.

Ms. Yach asked who set the academic standards and whether or not the standards must be taught. **Ms. Park** said the standards come from the Department of Education. They are umbrella standards that can be taught on different levels, which allows teachers to use examples familiar to each student. **Ms. Park** said the way to determine if a student understands a frame of reference is by talking to him or her. Teachers are required to teach the standards to students who do not know them. Eventually, students will be given an end-of-the-year content test in core subject areas, to ensure that each student has mastered the Sunshine State Standards requirements.

Copies of the presentation materials will be forwarded to the Diversity Committee via Staff. **Ms. Park** accepted an invitation for Advanced Academic Programs to make a presentation at Blanche Ely High school on Tuesday, October 20, 2009, at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Foulkes asked what kind of professional development is available for teachers to modify and expand their teaching frames of reference. **Ms. Park** admitted that, although sometimes not effective, many teachers teach the exact way they were taught as children. **Mr. Foulkes** thanked Advanced Academic Programs, **Dr. Watts** and Staff, for the presentation.

OLD BUSINESS

Additional copies of the first DRAFT of the Diversity Committee's Response to the Superintendent's CCC Settlement Agreement Status Report 2008-2009 were distributed to the members. **Mr. Foulkes** stated that the DRAFT Report indicates that the School Board has not been in compliance for the last

four years. Based on the data the Committee received, they are also not in compliance for the current school year.

Mr. Foulkes thanked **Dr. Watts**, **Ms. Williams**, **Mr. Fleischer**, and former Diversity Committee member **Dr. Bailey** for their contributions to the Ad Hoc Committee.

After recognizing the **Chair's** dedication and efforts in ensuring the completion of the Diversity Committee's Response Reports for the last two years, **Mr. Rajner** provided the following recommendations to the 2008-2009 Response Report:

- (1) Add a new section to reflect the contributions of former members who participated during the last cycle, such as **Dr. Bailey**.
- (2) Page 5 of 50: That verbiage be included to indicate that, although there is noncompliance, there has been an increasing ability to have partial compliance. He feels changing the dialogue to a more positive tone recognizes the increase in effort the District has made to meet the overall benchmark of success.
- (3) Page 6 of 50: Asked that specific situations be reflected in the statements made toward resilience and endurance.
- (4) Page 7 of 50: He is uncertain if whether or not Leadership should be qualified.
- (5) Page 8 of 50, Under Limitations: Wants it to be rewritten because he feels the commentary in some areas may create a more hostile situation with the Board. He also indicated that the statement "Though it ought to be..." is not generally found in research papers or other reports.

Mr. Rajner wants the Report brought to a higher professional standard. He said cutting back on extra commentary and backing up statements would encourage people to read the Report. **Mr. Foulkes** indicated that a lot of the verbiage found in the 2008-2009 Report was copied from the first Diversity Committee Response Report for 2007-2008.

Ms. Price indicated that her name and that of two others do not appear on the report, although they participated on the Diversity Committee. She asked that the Response Report not "sugarcoat" issues, but tell things exactly the way they are.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Foulkes welcomed new Diversity Committee member **Mr. Ansola**, appointed by School Board Member **Robin Bartleman**.

The Ad Hoc Committee for the Annual Report is scheduled to meet on Tuesday, October 20, and Thursday, October 22, in order to complete the Final Response Report. **Mr. Foulkes** reminded the Committee about the importance of member participation and encouraged them to share their recommendations by attending the meetings or via email submission to Staff.

Mr. Jabouin commented that, although several opportunities have been given for members to participate in writing the Response Report, and providing recommendations, the lack of quorum at the last two meetings indicates a lack of interest. **Mr. Foulkes** agreed that quorum has been an issue and, asked again, for member participation.

The Diversity Committee will vote on whether or not the School District is in compliance with the terms of the CCC Settlement Agreement Status Report 2008-2009 at the November 5, 2009, meeting.

Reappointment of previous Diversity Committee members and new appointments will occur after the November 17, 2009, School Board Organizational Meeting.

A School Board Workshop to present the Diversity Committee 2008-2009 Response Report is scheduled for December 8, 2009.

Meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.

**The next Diversity Committee meeting is scheduled for November 5, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room, Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building.**

These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the October 1, 2009 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.