

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING

KCW Administration Building

November 1, 2007

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:38 p.m. by **Randy Fleischer**, Chair, without a quorum present. The Committee reached quorum at 6:48 p.m.

Members Present:

Jawhar Badran	Bapthol Joseph	Michael Rajner
Randy Fleischer	Jeanne Jusevic	Barbara Stuart
Roland Foulkes	Marguerite Luster	Barbara Williamson
Lina Gioello	Ernestine Price	Daniel Starman, Student Rep.

Members Absent:

Cedric Douglas	George Pedlar	Alyce Zahniser
Ellyn Drotzer	Sherry Reece	Alex Lange, Student Advisor
Julian Gazzano	Bernie Schultz	Designee
Gary Hensley	Ron Simon-Menéndez	Zach Fertel, Student Rep.
Andrew Lewis	Peter Valletutti	LaToya Jackson, Student Rep.

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

Dr. Elizabeth Watts, Director; Jean Darius, Coordinator; Latricia Lauture; Maryse Nelson; Nancy Weintraub

District Staff:

From BECON: Dr. Phyllis Schiffer-Simon, Executive Director; Iris Kauffman, Program Coordinator; Eric Powell, Production Manager; Chris McGuire, Distance Learning Director; Joy Veasy, Distance Learning Outreach; Kitty Oliver, Kitty O. Enterprises, Inc., Consultant.

Guests:

Kellie Ordway; Lloyd Stuart

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes from September 20 and October 4 were approved without change.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Randy Fleischer

Mr. Fleischer stated there are two items he would like to have on the December agenda. They are:

- The Supreme Court decision that came out in June, *Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District #1*. It talks about quotas and using race as a factor in selection. He would like **Ed Marko** to give a report on whether or not our schools are in compliance. **Mr. Fleischer** asked for a presentation at the December meeting.
- The **Chair** would like to discuss his suggestion that Student Councils do school visitations in addition to the Committee's visitations. He believes the Student Councils could do their assessments within one week and provide the Committee with input that covers every school in the District.

The **Chair** observed that, without a quorum present, the Committee could not elect a Vice Chair to fill the vacancy created by Dr. Brown's move to Annapolis, MD.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Dr. Elizabeth Watts

Dr. Watts introduced **Maryse Nelson**, new Diversity & Cultural Outreach staff member. **Ms. Nelson** will be providing clerical support for the Diversity Committee.

Two new Committee members were introduced: **Michael Rajner**, appointed by **School Board Member Jennifer Gottlieb**; and **Patrick Jabouin**, appointed by **School Board Member Phyllis Hope**.

The District has a partnership with **OneCommUnity**, formerly NCCJ. They will be providing five non-violence summits at various libraries throughout the county. Students who are members of their high school's Human Relations Council will be invited to attend.

Mr. Notter has set up a **Behavior Oversight Workgroup** that will develop a system of measures to look at the District's prevention and intervention programs and at how to help students in the system. The **Executive Leadership Team** will review the workgroup's recommendations. Once they are approved they will be instituted throughout the District. **Dr. Watts** announced that she is a member of the Workgroup. The first meeting is scheduled for November 14.

The District now has a **Graduation Rate Task Force** that will meet for the first time on November 19. They have asked for a representative from the **Diversity Committee**. Their task is to increase the graduation rate and decrease the student dropout rate. **Dr. Watts** is a member of this task force.

The **Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration Committee (MLKCC)** is sponsoring several contests. **Dr. Watts** will email this information to the Committee members, with hard copies for **Ms. Luster** and **Ms. Price**. The categories for the contests are visual, essay, and poetry slam.

Subcommittee meeting dates should be given to **Ms. Nelson** by noon on Friday, November 2.

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

- The Department is waiting for the student suspension data from the District Expulsion Policy Implementation Department.
- The Department is awaiting information regarding schools that do not have morning student announcements.

- The information regarding International Baccalaureate (IB) students was distributed to the members. IB students are not necessarily guaranteed admission to certain universities and colleges throughout the country. However, they do receive college credits for courses while in high school.
- In response to **Mr. Douglas**' query regarding the Fire/Paramedic program in Miramar, the decision regarding participation is made by the City of Miramar.

Mr. Darius advised that **Mr. Garretson** will be at the Diversity Committee's December meeting, and **Mr. Traeger** will attend the January meeting.

Mr. Foulkes asked why Committee members who have missed three or more meetings are still on the active membership list. **Mr. Darius** explained that the list is accurate and that **School Board Members** can appoint or reappoint representatives at their discretion. At present, the Diversity Committee has twenty members.

PRESENTATION BY BROWARD EDUCATION COMMUNICATIONS NETWORK (BECON)

Dr. Phyllis Schiffer-Simon, Executive Director

Dr. Schiffer-Simon stated the presentation would be presented in three parts: **BECON** TV programs; production services; and distance learning. An information packet was distributed to Diversity Committee members.

Dr. Schiffer-Simon began the presentation by stating that **BECON** is the broadcast facility owned and operated by the Broward County School Board. It has been in existence for over 40 years. They are on Channel 19 in most cities and reach from Homestead to Vero Beach. **BECON**'s goal is to provide a wide range of educational multimedia services for the whole community and to address the diverse population in Broward County and South Florida.

Iris Kauffman

BECON's programming is designed to serve the Pre-K to Adult community. **Ms. Kauffman** named the many awards **BECON** has received.

BECON programming includes:

- Programs supporting science curriculum from pre-K through fifth grade;
- Sports Blitz;
- New Haitian Generation;
- Broward School Beat;
- Teen Talk;
- Broward Teen News;
- Reality Avenue; and
- Community Forum.

Eric Powell

While the District supports **BECON**, it doesn't cover all the expenses. Therefore, **BECON** must charge for its services. The rates they charge have been approved by the **School Board**.

Chris McGuire

There are two components to Distance Learning: Broward Virtual School and Videoconferencing.

Broward Virtual School

Broward Virtual School is a franchise of Florida Virtual School, which is a statewide program that opened in 1996. Broward County's franchise opened in 2001. Broward Virtual School is considered a school district without classrooms. This year it will serve about 70,000 students in grades 6-12, through online enrollment and classes. Students earn regular diplomas through this program. Enrollment is comprised of full-time, home school, private school, and part-time students throughout the district. Students must come into **BECON** to take the FCAT; FCAT is not given online.

Advanced Placement courses are offered online and are more rigorous than classes in traditional classroom settings. Online AP courses are offered in literature, English language, microeconomics, macroeconomics, government, and U.S. history. The most popular online course this year is Life Management Skills.

Mr. McGuire said one of the reasons **BECON** is able to serve so many students is that "through the CCC Settlement, my department receives \$200,000." **BECON** is able to provide students access to courses through the online school, the virtual school, and videoconferencing that they may not have been able to access otherwise. The primary method of getting information to students is through the guidance teams at every school. Information is given to students who may not do well in a traditional environment. The program prepares students for what they may face in college, where many classes are now online. Online classes also aid in class size reduction.

Online courses address the **Superintendent's** desire to have 24/7 access to textbooks and materials. Students can submit their work at any time of the day or night and can work at their own pace.

Videoconferencing

Videoconferencing is audio and video delivered through the Internet, high-speed telephone line, or ISDN line. Broward has the largest videoconference network in the state and possibly in the nation. Every school has the capability for videoconferencing. In some videoconferences, a teacher appears at one location and is connected to several schools at the same time. One "master teacher" delivers the lesson, and the other teachers participate with their students. Videoconferencing broadens students' exposure to the community and allows them to communicate live with students in other schools.

Joy Veasy

BECON has only three full-time teachers teaching through videoconferencing. Broward has over 4,000 students participating in 75 videoconferenced programs in 92 schools. **BECON** has worked closely with the **Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department** on several programs, including videoconferencing at the event with **Romero Britto**. They've presented *Meet the Author* events, college recruiting, and storytelling. *Building Bridges* is a partnership with the **African-American Research Library & Cultural Center** and the **Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department** that "delivers content" to elementary schools. An upcoming program involves the **Martin Luther**

King, Jr. Celebration Committee (MLKCC) and presentations through videoconferencing. Students in Haiti, Nicaragua, and South Africa will be joining in on that 3-series program. The Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department is collaborating with the MLKCC on this project. **Ms. Veasy** said several other exciting partnerships are in the works.

Kitty Oliver

Ms. Oliver is working on a 10-part series called *Crossing Cultures, Changing Lives*. This series looks at how people deal with differences and how they negotiate change. It will look at lifestyles, workplace environments, personal relationships, arts and culture, and moving from country to country. It will examine the process of change and the decisions people have had to make, and will include some of the oral histories that are archived at the **African-American Research Library & Cultural Center**. The program will begin airing on **BECON** in February 2008.

Discussion

The **Chair** thanked **BECON** for its presentation. He stated that they were invited to the Committee to discuss members' concerns about the diversity of the hosts for many of **BECON's** programs. **Mr. Fleischer** said it is his belief that the presentation "substantiates the concern of the people on the Committee." He referred to a document that was handed out by **BECON** that indicated the diversity breakdown of the hosts to be: 62 White, 8 Black, and 3 Hispanic.

Dr. Schiffer-Simon responded by saying they do not have 62 "hosted" programs, the number is closer to 10. She said most of the programs are educational delivery programs. **Mr. Fleischer** said the issue is really "that the perception out there is that there is not enough diversity in the programs and in the people who lead those programs." **Dr. Schiffer-Simon** said it is not always about the host, but often about the panelists and participants, who come from very diverse backgrounds. She said that is the "content and the meat of the program." **BECON** is open to new programs and new concepts, and is always looking for available funding for these programs.

Mr. Foulkes talked about the genesis of this discussion, which was an "unscientific observation of **BECON** following this Committee's receipt of your January program. Looking at this, concerns were raised and this is what brought us here." In July, **School Board Member Ben Williams** invited **Mr. Foulkes** to meet with **Dr. Schiffer-Simon, Eric Powell** and **Anne O'Connell** in his office to discuss this matter. Former **Student Representative Rose Espinola** participated in that meeting. **Mr. Foulkes** distributed a letter from him to **Mr. Williams**, dated August 2, 2007, which included "highlights and key recommendations for **BECON** and the **Committee**" along with a copy of the **BECON** program matrix for January, 2007, mentioned above.

Mr. Foulkes pointed out that one of the conditions of the CCC Agreement has to do with Media Centers. He commented that the **Committee** has been focusing its attention on the Media Centers in schools when the "big Kahuna" of media centers is **BECON**. **Mr. Foulkes** suggested a site visit to **BECON**. He said the images students see are very important and should not be overlooked. Kids look at television and "either they see themselves or they don't. Or they may see themselves, but not in a leadership position." He said it's all about leadership and the diversity of the leadership.

Mr. Foulkes identified nine recommendations for **BECON** that came out of the June Diversity Committee meeting and the July meeting in **Mr. Williams'** office. **Dr. Schiffer-Simon's** response to those recommendations began with a reference to the time **Mr. Foulkes** discussed his desire to host a program on **BECON**. She said she and **Ms. Kauffman** were very impressed with the proposal and wanted to move forward with the project. She said it was explained to **Mr. Foulkes**, at that time, that they needed underwriting or sponsorship to fund the project. The **Board** requires **BECON** to get "funding costs recovery" to produce these programs. She went on to say that **BECON** strives "to bring in the diversity to provide programming that you can't see on any other channel." She said one of the reasons the **School Board** purchased a broadcast channel was to provide diverse programming. **Dr. Schiffer-Simon** invited **Mr. Foulkes** to further discuss his program idea with them.

Mr. Foulkes clarified to the **Committee** that, following his appearance on a community forum related to diversity, **Ms. Kauffman** approached him with the suggestion to host a show on that subject. **Mr. Foulkes** responded that he wanted to "control and own the show, so he would go out and find the funding." He was unable to secure the funding and, thus, did not discuss it further with **BECON**.

Dr. Schiffer-Simon stated **BECON** had spoken with **Dr. Watts** regarding a tour of the facilities and discussed potential program content. She said they are looking at increasing the diversity on their Advisory Committee. **BECON** is trying to monitor viewing and demographics. They invite input on their "800 line and get comments from people aged 8-80." She summarized that they would love to host a meeting at **BECON**; they are working on the Advisory Committee; and they are constantly looking for new hosts, new programs and new content. They are looking for new sponsorships and underwriting, and invited the **Committee's** input.

Mr. Joseph requested responses to **Mr. Foulkes'** recommendations be put in writing. He commented that children don't see what is behind the scenes. They see the host, the anchor, or the villain on screen. That is what concerns the members of the Committee, and **BECON** will have to consider how to address that issue.

To **Mr. Joseph's** question regarding the ability of every school to access **BECON**, **Mr. Powell** responded that towers are down or are not functioning. However, District-based programs are distributed to all schools affected by those towers. Community-based programs can be accessed via regular TV. **Ms. Veasy** added that videoconferencing is also used to get the information to those schools with "downed" towers. **Dr. Schiffer-Simon** stated that towers were removed from about 20 schools due to safety issues. Whenever a tower is down, the school has access to programming via DVD or videotape.

The Chair ended the discussion at this point. He advised that, "We are watching and we think there is a diversity issue with your hosts and we hope you take that into account when you are doing your programming and you are looking at who's hosting and who's on and who's not. And, again, without getting defensive, I think the numbers are there and I think it's something you need to look at. Especially since you're getting so much money from the CCC contract."

OLD BUSINESS

Motion Related to Student Achievement

The **Chair** asked **Mr. Foulkes** to talk about the Motion he prepared, which was attached to the 9/20/07 minutes. **Mr. Foulkes** referred to **Mr. Notter's** visit to the Committee prior to his becoming **Superintendent of Schools**. **Mr. Notter** talked about his goals, one of which concerns student achievement.

Mr. Foulkes related that Los Angeles County noticed that their Black and Hispanic students were not producing, academically, as well as other students. He said this is a nation-wide problem. A public/private/community/school district committee in Los Angeles established a Resolution. **Mr. Foulkes'** Resolution is "an almost verbatim" version of the one in Los Angeles County. Since theirs was passed, each of the 81 districts in Los Angeles County has had to report on what has been done to address the disparities. (**Mr. Foulkes** said that, since this is South Florida, he uses the term "Black" to refer to "all students from African descent, whether they speak English, Spanish, or Creole.") **Mr. Foulkes** said he modified the Resolution, where necessary. When asked the purpose of the motion, **Mr. Foulkes** said he would like the District to focus especially on closing the achievement gap for Black students. He recommends the District develop a "Closing the Achievement Gap" branch, as has been done in Los Angeles.

MOTION by Mr. Foulkes, 2nd by Mr. Joseph: To accept the Resolution as written."

Discussion

Mr. Badran asked for a clarification on the difference between this and other schools or communities in need in the County, and shouldn't this already be part of the CCC Agreement? **Mr. Foulkes** responded that student achievement is "wrapped into each of the nine conditions. This is creating a special branch to implement recommendations that committees, such as this, make, that the Superintendent and his gaps analyses make, but to focus special attention on Black students, speaking across the spectrum. Not just Black native-born African Americans, but those with language diversities, as well."

Mr. Rajner asked what other groups fall in close proximity to the Black Community, such as Hispanics. **Mr. Foulkes** responded that, in his mind, certain Black students who also speak Spanish are included in his reference to "Black students." He said Black students "far outpace all other groups when it comes to disparities, in most, or all, indicators." **Mr. Foulkes** noted that the District's demographics indicate Black students are now in the majority.

MOTION passed 12-0

SUBCOMMITTEES

HIRING PRACTICES, Randy Fleischer, Chair

No report

SITE VISITS, Bapthol Joseph, Chair

Mr. Joseph presented the Site Visitation Report for 2006-2007 for the Committee's review and approval. He thanked Ms. Gioello, Ms. Jusevic, Ms. Price, Ms. Luster, and Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department staff for their commitment and support. He asked that the Committee vote to approve it at the December meeting.

Subcommittee Requests:

- Time certain date of completion of wiring Coconut Creek HS for BECON.
- Presentation on ESOL Services.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, Jeanne Jusevic, Chair

No report

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

Ms. Luster is waiting for the report of the breakdown on what has happened in the first weeks of school. She said what she received is not what she requested. She has observed a continuing disparity in the way discipline is carried out. Ms. Luster is concerned about first grade students being sent to the Alternative to Suspension program. She said some Behavior Specialists do not meet the District's criteria. She wants the information she requested.

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,

No report.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT, Jeanne Jusevic

The Committee is recommending no longer addressing the types of shoes students wear.

The Committee wants to add language ensuring students will earn credit for all make-up work. This change is necessary for clarification and uniformity. Some teachers are not giving credit for make-up work, but do penalize if the work is not done. Teachers are to grade the work and place the grade on Pinnacle.

A family counseling program will be added to the list of possible interventions listed in the Code of Conduct.

There will be a separate permission slip allowing students who do not have permission to have their pictures taken to be included in the school pictures for the yearbook.

Language is being considered that will clarify that schools are not liable for off-campus incidents that may require law enforcement, even if the incident was fueled at school. There is still a discussion about the extent of consequences for off-campus if, as an example, a fight began on campus.

The Committee is considering adding definitions for bullying and cyber-bullying.

They are also considering shortening the Code, since it is now 42-pages long.

Ms. Price suggested adding behavior on field trips.

Mr. Foulkes asked what is being done to address resolving conflicts between students and groups of students. He observed that it appears as though none of the current programs are working. **Ms. Jusevic** responded that the Code of Conduct Committee writes the rules; they align with the Discipline Matrix; and the expectation is that the principals and school administrators will follow through. She believes that getting a really good working definition of bullying will assist administrators in understanding the consequences and the realities of bullying.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Ron Simon-Menendez

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Gioello will represent the **Diversity Committee** on the **Graduation Rate Task Force**.

The Committee voted to extend the meeting for 15 minutes to hear motions.

MOTION by Mr. Badran, 2nd by Mr. Joseph: “That new members not be allowed to vote until they have been through the Orientation process.”

Discussion

Mr. Badran stated that Members voted for the **Superintendent’s Report**, 8-6. He said student representatives who “showed up for the first time voted to accept the report. Otherwise, it would have been 6-5.” **Mr. Badran** said members need to go through the orientation process and understand what is going on before voting on issues.

The **Committee** was reminded that there are no abstentions and that you cannot restrict members from voting.

Motion was withdrawn.

MOTION by Mr. Badran that “This Committee rescind its acceptance of the Superintendent’s progress report in regards to the CCC Settlement Agreement.”

The Committee was reminded that this motion had to be presented by someone on the prevailing side. **Ms. Price** offered to replace **Mr. Badran** as the maker of the Motion.

The Chair refused to accept this motion.

MOTION by Mr. Badran: “That the Committee rescind its vote from last month to form a Joint Report with the District.”

Discussion:

Mr. Badran said that, by agreeing to do this, the Committee “waters down” any criticism that it has. He said the District is supposed to look out for the best interests of our children and make sure that the children have equal resources and opportunities. He said the District hasn’t been doing that. The **Diversity Committee** was set up to act as an oversight committee to point out the gaps.

The **Chair** pointed out that, because **Mr. Badran** was not on the prevailing side of the vote, he could not make this motion.

The Chair ruled this motion out of order.

The Chair recognized **Mr. Foulkes**. **Mr. Foulkes** reminded Members that, previously, there have been requests for information about the makeup of the **Diversity Committee**, and other District committees, “ethnically, ancestrally, nationally.” The June 2007 minutes reflect **Ms. Espinola** and **Ms. Drotzer** also asked for this information. He had material from the **County Commission**, “who is required, by law, to report to the **Secretary of State** annually the ethnic makeup of their 20-some statutorily created committees.” He said every year the **County** submits new appointees to those committees.

At this point, the **Chair** interrupted and announced the Committee had lost quorum. This item would be tabled to the next meeting.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:40 p.m.

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

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