

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA
DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING
March 5, 2015**

SUMMARY

Members Present

Harve Brosten	Thomas Lauder
Rebecca Dahl	Esther Mizell
Susan Edwards	Beverly Perkins
Gaspar Garcia	Frederick Perry
Andrea Gundersen	Ernestine Price
Reverend Luc Harrigan	Michael Sirbola
Lillie Harris	Bryan Wilson
Charlie King	

Members Absent

Andy Ansola
Francesca Blanchard
Jamie Cutler, Student Representative
Douglas Harrison
Aaliyah McCrary, Student Representative
Mary Williams, Student Representative

Student Support Initiatives Staff: Michaëlle Pope; Terri Jones; Latricia Lauture

Diversity, Prevention & Intervention Staff: Marion Williams

Parliamentarian: Patricia McDougale

Guests: Diane Kushner; Angela Ward; Mary Ann Haywood; Melinda Sproc; Mary Collis; Danita Kilcullen; Edward Bender; Jack Gillies

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order at 6:36 p.m. by **Mr. Lauder**.

ADOPTON OF THE AGENDA

The Agenda was adopted as presented.

APPROVAL OF THE SUMMARY MINUTES

The February 5, 2015 Minutes were approved as revised.

CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Lauder said, he was able to get the file regarding the Office of Civil Rights (OCR) case, from 2011-2014, regarding Virginia Shuman Young (VSY) and Beachside Montessori. He provided members with preliminary information from his recent review of the file. He said, from what he read, the practice of holding kindergarten seats for those people who paid \$5,400 for pre-k ended after OCR started looking into the case. There was not mention of discrimination of that practice, by then the policy had been changed. There was no reprimand from OCR of this past practice. **Ms. Dahl** would like to know what the breakdown of students in VSY is now, by assignment codes, which will give the Committee a lot of information and something to compare. It would be interesting to find out, in a year or two years, how the racial demographics might change due to the end of "Pay for Pre-K" practice. She said, "We need to look at what is happening now at YSY." "I don't understand what you are looking for from 2011 data." **Mr. Lauder** said, he could ask for the current enrollment information. He said, "There are a lot of un-answered questions." He keeps seeing the phrase "Montessori is not for everyone." "What does that mean?" "How does the District know, without testing students ahead of time, that Montessori is not good for a student? We don't know how many people paid for Pre-K." **Mr. King** said, "They have fixed it so they are no longer going to be selling our neighborhood seats out from under us." "We now get 25 seats per grade." "We need to look at this going forward instead of a "got-you" thing." If your main motivation is to prove that VSY is

too White of a school, it is a lot less White than Bayview or Harbordale. He said, I would like to know how many people got in via the lottery. It is really an elite-preference school. **Mr. Lauder** said, "There is no information in the file about the lottery or about how many people paid for a seat." **Ms. Edwards** said, it really bothers her when members speak out of order and do not follow procedure and protocol. This is supposed to be a Diversity Committee where all members should be recognized equally. **Mr. Sirbola** said, "If a random lottery is currently being used, the racial breakdown should mirror the diversity of the County." He suggested requesting lottery breakdown numbers. **Mr. Garcia** said the gravity of this issue hits to the heart of what the Committee is charged to do. He requested that the Chair consider an Ad Hoc Committee to study the issue.

Motion by Mr. Lauder that "we request any documentation regarding the lottery process for VSY and Beachside, as well as the paid Pre-K program at both schools, since 2009."

Motion passed 15-0.

Ms. Price questioned why the Committee is looking into something that happened years ago and is no longer in practice. There are a lot of things the Committee needs to be doing. She said the Committee needs to revise the Bylaws. Many schools need things that are in-line with the nine conditions; the Committee needs to look into those things. **Mr. Lauder** said, "We are looking into this because if this situation was happening at two schools how can we trust that this is not going on in other schools."

VICE-CHAIR'S REPORT

Mr. Perry said, "it is disturbing, after two months, that the District could only come up with 360 students to visit the Rise Above Exhibit; there was availability for 750 students." He said, "I call that an F." "The District was unresponsive and uninterested in this exhibit. They did offer buses and students and it was testing week for students." **Mr. Perry** said, "this is the only County that was not able to bring 100% of the student allotment to learn the story of the Tuskegee Airman and to learn the code/core values: work hard, never give up, do your homework, etc." He said, "We failed in the Broward County School District; I am ashamed." "I have gotten an inside chance to see how things work."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Ms. Pope discussed the efforts and activities in relation to March as Women's History Month. She said, "The Office of Civil Rights (OCR) will be conducting surveys and parent focus groups in regard to high-level courses and advanced placement classes." She said, "In response to the Committee's request to meet with OCR, they have scheduled parent focus group meetings, March 16 and 17, 2015, to be held at Piper and Dillard High Schools. Members are invited to attend these sessions." **Ms. Pope** said, "In response to the request from the Committee regarding Pre-K admittance process to VSY and Beachside, a packet with VSY and Beachside admittance and School Choice Policy 5004.1 was provided." **Ms. Pope** quoted a motion from the last meeting: **Motion by Francesca Blanchard, "I move to have an area assigned for a website address to be placed on the Diversity Committee page where the community can send us complaints or concerns directly."** In response to this motion, the Chief of Staff has said, "there a number of dedicated avenues in place for parents to bring complaints to the District, including: Office of Quality Service; School Board meetings and workshops; and reaching out to District leaders and staff." The Chief of Staff said, "It is not in the purview of the Committee to receive complaints; a website will not be provided at this time." **Ms. Pope** quoted another motion from the last meeting: **Motion that "the Diversity Committee be informed of any and all current, pending and new complaints regarding issues of any civil rights discrimination practices, lawsuits, investigations, proceedings filed by any entity and that fall under the purview of the Diversity Committee's jurisdiction. Timely notification but no longer than 30 days."** The Chief of Staff said, "Lawsuits, matters of investigation, complaints are confidential until resolved, by law. When resolved they do become public records and at that time the information can be requested." It was suggested that the Committee restate the motion with the wording "as soon as it becomes

public record.” **Ms. Pope** asked **Marion Williams** to give an update on the Red Tail Exhibit. **Ms. Williams** said, “staff was provided the dates of March 11th, 12th, 13th. Due to the District initiative, Above the Influence March, which includes 4,000 students and buses to transport them, students were not available on March 13th for the Red Tail Exhibit.” She said, “We were given 6 slots of 40 students each. Staff scheduled 240 students each day for Wednesday and Thursday.” She said, “She was not given the Tuesday date as an option, though Tuesday is a testing date. All timeslots given, were filled with students.” **Ms. Pope** said, “The Tuesday-Thursday time-period is a testing period, she received special permission to fill the availability given. In addition, a lot of the School Board buses were in use, she said she had to also get permission to use an outside company to assist in transporting students for the Red Tail Initiative.” **Ms. Pope** said, “Staff went through extra measures to make this happen. While the numbers might not be what **Mr. Perry** had hoped, I believe staff made a valiant and good effort to get students to participate as much as possible, given the circumstances.” **Mr. Perry** said, “The report he received was different from that; he will look into it.”

Mr. Lauder said, “Regarding the second motion; does it need to be re-worded?” **Ms. Pope** said, “The Committee could re-word, add attachment or leave it with the understanding that once the items become public record they would be given to the Committee.” **Ms. Gundersen** said, “Lawsuits are public record. If the Diversity Committee has to wait until everything is public record and it is finished or that we should have to peruse court records; why are we here?” **Ms. Pope** said, “Why the Committee is here is outlined clearly in Policy 1.5-Diversity Committee. The motion speaks to more than lawsuits, parts of the motion request for confidential information. If you would like to speak further with **Mr. Moquin’s** office or the Office of Legal Counsel, we can facilitate that.” **Ms. Gundersen** suggested the Committee find out what statues are being used to determine what is confidential before amending the motion. **Ms. Pope** said, “She can request that and get back to the Committee.” **Mr. Lauder** requested a breakdown of the motion as to which parts of the motion is confidential so the Committee can act on the motion.

Mr. Wilson said, “Is it possible for **Ms. Gundersen** to speak with the Chief of Staff regarding the motion, then come back to the Committee with what it means in relations to confidentiality and revising the motion?” **Ms. Pope** said, “as long as it is the will of the Committee, it could happen.” **Ms. Gundersen** said, “She didn’t mind asking what statues the District is using to determine confidentiality but it is beyond her purview to decipher School Board law.” **Mr. Lauder** asked that **Ms. Pope** contact **Mr. Moquin’s** office and/or the General Counsel’s office to get clarification on what statues are being used for the confidential items in the motion.

Ms. Mizell said, “The Florida Government in the Sunshine Law provides a right of access to governmental procedures at both the State and Local level.” She said, “If the Committee is requesting access to information, we have a right to have it.” **Ms. Mizell** requested that members be given the parliamentary book, so they can participate accordingly.

PARLIAMENTARIAN’S REPORT

Ms. McDougle said, “She will forgo her report except to say decorum and procedure is more important than ever when there are differences of opinion and emotions run high.” She said, “Members should be recognized by the Chair in order to speak and every member is also obligated to obey the orders of the Chair.”

Mr. Lauder said, “He invited members of the Harbordale and Walker Elementary communities to come and address the Committee.” He thanked the community members for their patience in waiting for their place on the agenda.

Ms. Dahl asked: “how will the presentation be delivered? Are the speakers going to tell us what particular group they are from? Are there people from Walker present? You didn’t ask the Boundary group to be present; was there a reason for that?” **Mr. Lauder** asked, “Is there a reason for your question? Do you want to interrogate our guests?” **Ms. Dahl** said, “She does not believe she was being negative; she would like the questions answered.” **Mr. Lauder** said, “do you have to keep interrupting everyone; please don’t. If you have a question after the guests speak, perhaps they can answer you.”

COMMUNITY SPEAKERS

Angela Ward said, “She will be speaking as a member of Harbordale SAF Co-Chair.” She said, “Part of the District policy is for the Diversity Committee to be informed of boundary changes, including the positive or negative impact on the diversity of schools in relation to boundary changes.” **Ms. Ward** discussed the status of Harbordale; indicating capacity is 480 with 450 students currently enrolled. Approximately 260 of the students are in the boundary of the school. The diversity is 77% white with the balance being other ethnicities. She said the school has a broad diverse population and the community embraces that. She said it was discussed at the SAF committee meeting that the new boundary will remove the diversity component that the reassignment process brings. **Ms. Ward** said, “The SAF Co-Chairs of Harbordale Elementary are requesting that the Diversity Committee request that the District prepare an analyst of the diversity impact on Harbordale, based on the boundary change, positive or negative.” She said, “We believe the impact would severely change the demographics of our student population.” **Reverend Harrigan** asked if the Committee could visit the school. **Mr. Lauder** said, “He thinks they could do a fact-finding tour of the school and would encourage a visit to Walker Elementary as well.” **Mr. King** said, “The Board voted 7-1 in favor of the Boundary proposal.” He said, “**Mr. Lauder** has alleged multiple conspiracies to derail this proposal.” **Mr. King** said, “**Mr. Lauder** has interjected himself in this; he is from Plantation, this is a Fort Lauderdale issue.” He said, “If you want you can follow **Mr. Lauder** down this path but I don’t think it leads anywhere but to his website.” **Mr. Lauder** said, “**Mr. King** when you referred to Walker as a Dog-(expletive) school, what did you mean?” **Mr. King** said, “I didn’t write out the expletive, it was a blank.” He said, “**Mr. Lauder** is referring to an email from a couple years ago, before he was on this Committee.” He said, “He was frustrated with the vote, and lack of Board concern, regarding his submission for a boundary change for VSY.” **Ms. Dahl**, said, “She believes **Leslie Brown** can give the information you are asking for. This will be a phased-in process and the siblings of reassigned students, currently at Harbordale, will be given choice seats.” **Mr. Wilson** asked if the requested information, is readily available. **Ms. Pope** said, “A request for the information can be processed. There might be a projection staff can make, on how the demographics might change.” **Mr. Sirbola** said, “we have a live representative of the community here; I would like us to do whatever they want just because they are the public.” **Mr. King** said, “This process is about approximately ten students; it is squaring off the boundary rectangle, all questions have been answered already. This is an anti-change movement.” **Ms. Ward** said, “I came here with a request to the Committee who has a diversity component to it. She said I am not here to sway points of view, she just wanted to request demographic information.”

Motion by Ms. Dahl: “to extend the meeting by 15 minutes.” Motion passed 11-3.

Discussion followed on a possible motion requesting the possible demographic boundary change at Harbordale Elementary. **Ms. Pope** said, “If the Committee agrees to make and pass a motion, she will bring it forward to the appropriate staff.” **Ms. Gundersen** said, “to clarify what she heard **Ms. Ward** requested: Request that the Diversity Committee ask the School Board to do an analysis of the diversity impact based on a boundary change.” **Ms. Ward** said, “Yes, you captured the request.” She said, “as her personal, public opinion, as a former Executive Director of Florida Diversity Counsel of South Florida and Central Florida, she finds it concerning how aggressive and negatively passionately about the issue of diversity in this Committee. She said she thought this was the appropriate avenue for the request and she hopes the Committee moves the request forward.” **Mr. Lauder** said, “He spoke with **Roland Foulkes**, past Diversity

Committee Chair, who is very familiar with and is trying to get recognition for Walker Elementary and Old Dillard Museum. It is a proud community.” He said, “Yesterday **Dr. Osgood** basically said I cannot show interest in the community because I am not from there. She took her kids out of Walker. I think this proposal will have an adverse effect on Walker.”

**Motion by Ms. Mizell: “to extend the meeting an additional 15 minutes to work on the Bylaws.”
Motion passed 8-6.**

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE BYLAWS

Mr. Garcia thanked the subcommittee members for their work: **Ms. Price, Ms. Mizell, Ms. Perkins, Ms. Dahl, and Mr. Brosten.** He said, “They met five or six times, with great decorum, of which he wished the greater Committee could incorporate.” He said, “They kept the same format as the current bylaws.”

Motion by Mr. Garcia, seconded by Ms. Gundersen that “as a substitution for the present Bylaws the Bylaws submitted by the [sub] Committee be adopted by the Diversity Committee and submitted to the School Board for final approval.”

Mr. Lauder said, “Hearing no objection, each article of the Bylaws shall be subject to debate and possible amendment one article at a time.”

**Motion by Mr. Wilson “to strike ethnic/racial in Article III, Membership, first sentence, page, 1.”
Motion passed 14-0.**

Ms. McDougle suggested the following revisions:

- Page 2, Section 6, insert the current edition of Roberts Rules; with no comma after the word “Order”.
- After discussion, Article IV, Page 3, Section 2, third sentence, strike ~~following Robert’s Rules of Order (Newly Revised,~~ adding **by ballot.**
- Section 4 should become section 2, 2 will become 3, section 3 becomes section 4.

Discussion followed on previous section 2, “The August meeting will be chaired by the current chairperson of the School Site Visit Subcommittee.” **Mr. Garcia** said, “The rationale was is, this is the only subcommittee chair that continues from year to year.” **Mr. Lauder** suggested keeping it, as in years past, the Director or Executive Director.

Mr. Lauder said, “due to lack of time the Committee will hold on this topic and put this at the top of the agenda for next general meeting.”

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2015, at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room, Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building.**

These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the March 5, 2015 Diversity Committee meeting. For more information a Public Records Request may be submitted by contacting Public Relations & Government Affairs Department, SBBC, at 754-321-2300.

Approved 040215