

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

**DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING
Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building
February 4, 2010**

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:35 p.m. by **Roland Foulkes**, Chair, with a quorum.

Members Present:

Andy Ansola	Shevrin Jones	Coral D. Pusey
Barbara Beasley-Williamson	Bapthol Joseph	Graham Rabinowitsch
Mariah Brown	Jeanne Jusevic	Student Representative
Student Representative	Raphael Lopez	Michael E. Rajner
Randy Fleischer	Marguerite K. Luster	Nancy Rogan
Roland A. Foulkes	Catherine Owens	Suzanne Yach
Julian Gazzano	Ernestine Price	

Members Absent:

Patrick Jabouin	Alyce V. Zahniser
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Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

Maryse Nelson; Nancy Weintraub

District Staff:

Dr. Katherine Blasik, Associate Superintendent, Research Development & Assessment; Jack Ciminera, Database Researcher III, Research Services

Guests: Benjamin J. Williams, Vice-Chair, School Board Member; Phyllis C. Hope, School Board Member; Beatrice Esdelle, School Advisory Board, LLKS; Mary Fertig; Chris Fertig, Esq.; Darlene Lidondici, Esq.; Hannah-Marie Miller; Linda Taylor

Ms. Hope inquired about the process for reporting Diversity Committee members' attendance to School Board members and said she wants to be informed of her appointees' status. **Ms. Nelson** responded that attendance reports are electronically sent to Board members' secretaries quarterly. In addition, they receive vacancy notifications and reminders monthly. Jeopardy of removal notices are forwarded to both the appointing office and the individual Diversity Committee member in jeopardy of being removed for having missed three consecutive or four total meetings for the calendar year, as per Policy 1.5. All appropriate staff members are also copied on the notification.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted a Revised Agenda as submitted by the **Chair**.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee approved the minutes of January 7, 2010, as amended.

- Page 2, under DISTRICT UPDATES, first sentence amended to say: **Mr. Rajner** reminded the Committee and Staff, that **Phoebe Francois** resigned from the Diversity Committee, due to being appointed as a Magistrate Judge.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

Mr. Williams swore in the **Chair**, the **Vice-Chair** and remaining Diversity Committee members.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Roland Foulkes

Mr. Foulkes distributed folders containing public information for upcoming events and a list of 104 behavioral ground rules, with a statement that "Each Diversity Committee Member selects one per meeting." In addition, handouts highlighting items to be discussed during the Chair's Report were circulated.

Mr. Foulkes read the following statement and requested it be included in the minutes verbatim:

"The Diversity Committee is, and must continue to be, the District's watchdog with respect to monitoring compliance with the Nine Conditions of the Citizens Concerned about Our Children/CCC Lawsuit Settlement Agreement, as well as, Educational Equity, Parity, and Inclusive Diversity. This Committee walks a fine line between control by the very organization which appointed it, and which the Committee monitors, and advance the community and student interests for which the Committee has been charged by the Court (Judge Kenneth L. Ryskamp). Therefore, ALL appointed members of the Diversity Committee MUST remain ever vigilant, focused, committed, and as independent as possible."

END OF VERBATIM.

Mr. Foulkes announced that **Mr. Jones** agreed to serve as his parliamentarian. The parliamentarian "shall be responsible for advising the Chair on matters of parliamentary procedure according to Robert's Rules of Order (Newly Revised). The parliamentarian shall be a person recognized as having expertise." **Mr. Foulkes** said the Diversity Committee is the only Committee that has staff serving in this capacity. **Ms. Jusevic** pointed out that according to Robert's Rules, once a parliamentarian is appointed from the membership, he or she loses his or her voting privileges. **Mr. Foulkes** said he would reconsider the matter.

Mr. Foulkes announced that **Mr. Jones** would serve on a newly formed Ad Hoc Subcommittee on Diversity Committee Policy 1.5, Bylaws, Process, Guidelines, and Protocol. **Mr. Foulkes** highlighted the list of concerns members shared at the January 7, 2010 Diversity Committee meeting. He said all items would be addressed and asked members to forward any additional concerns to staff.

Ms. Williamson reminded the Committee that at the January 7, 2010 meeting, she had requested that the Committee be trained in group process skills. She restated this request.

Mr. Foulkes is looking into having a member represent the Committee on the Charter Schools Task Force.

Mr. Foulkes informed the Committee of the different ways in which they could provide input on the monthly Diversity Committee meeting agenda. He also encouraged members to meet with their appointing School Board Member on a regular basis.

Mr. Foulkes said there have been few responses in regards to the numerous recommendations the Diversity Committee has submitted to the School Board over the years. He feels a better follow-up mechanism and/or process should be established. Members are to forward their concerns to staff.

Mr. Foulkes introduced a new initiative for the Diversity Committee to recognize exemplary students on a periodic basis.

MOTION by Mr. Gazzano, 2nd by Ms. Price: “Based on the example of Margory Stoneman Douglas Freshman Garrett Mayersohn – 2009 Student of the Year Disability Awareness Award Recipient --- that during any given year each Diversity Committee Appointee bring one (1) student’s name/credentials before the Committee for special recognition and opportunity to briefly address the Committee.”

MOTION includes the following REQUIREMENTS:

- (1) Student is not related to/in family of a School Board member or any other district committee member;**
- (2) The Student’s name and credentials will be forwarded to the monthly Chair/Vice-Chair and Executive Leadership Team (ELT) meetings and those bodies will select the student (or, students) to be presented to the Diversity Committee for selection;**
- (3) Following that vote, the Chair will issue an invitation to the student (or, students) and their families to attend the next regularly scheduled monthly meeting;**
- (4) Student(s) should have demonstrated and/or be recognized by their communities for “Diversity, Inclusion and Educational Equity Leadership-in-Action”;**
- (5) Students need NOT be members of the Broward County Student Government Association;**
- (6) Dedicated students who are “UNSUNG HEROES” in Closing the Achievement Gap and Advancing Inclusion, Equity and Parity are especially welcomed with respect to one or more of the Nine Conditions of the Citizens Concerned About Our Children/CCC lawsuit Settlement Agreement;**
- (7) Self-nominations are NOT accepted; and,**
- (8) Through direction of the Diversity Committee, staff will notify all area superintendents and directors, schools, principals, assistant principals, guidance directors and teachers about this ongoing Diversity Committee student recognition.**

Passed 18-0

Mr. Foulkes made the recommendation that the Committee host four (4) of its monthly general meetings in a different quadrant within Broward County, in order to increase community participation. Members voiced the following concerns:

- Different locations would most likely not increase public attendance.
- Change in location would cause a drop in Committee membership attendance, thereby having a negative affect on quorum.
- Safety concerns, due to having to drive to unfamiliar places and being out later past the normal hour.

After discussion, **Dr. Blasik** asked that the Committee take into consideration the limitation of sites due to hours of operation, cost, and equipment availability.

MOTION by Mr. Gazzano, 2nd by Mr. Lopez: “That the Diversity Committee expand its access to Broward’s diverse communities by convening four (4) of all its meeting per year outside of school board/district facilities. For example: In the North West, North East, South West, and South East quadrants of the county.”

Failed 5-12

DISTRICT UPDATES

Dr. Blasik reminded Committee members to complete the security clearance process. The authorization signature of the Department Head (**Dr. Blasik**) is required on the Security Clearance form prior to visiting the Security Clearance Department. Security clearance is mandatory for participants of the school Site Visitation Team(s).

Dr. Blasik is still looking into providing Internet access to the Diversity Committee. A follow-up will be given at the March 4, 2010 Diversity Committee meeting.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

SITE VISITATION INSTRUMENT AND PROCESS FOR PILOT, Bapthol Joseph

Mr. Joseph said it has taken the Site Visitation Subcommittee and Staff approximately one year to create the Instrument. The goal was to align the Instrument with Indicators of the CCC Settlement Agreement, thereby making it easier for Site Visit teams to determine compliance.

Mr. Joseph thanked **Mr. Fleischer** and the members of the Ad Hoc Committee on Site Visitation Form, members of the Site Visitation Subcommittee, and Staff for their work on the Site Visitation Instrument.

Mr. Joseph announced that all Site Visit members would receive training in the use of the Instrument and what they should look for during school visits, prior to officially visiting a school. Schools are expected to provide their school profile prior to the actual site visit.

Ms. Yach congratulated **Mr. Joseph** for his work and thanked him for the significant changes to the Instrument.

Mr. Lopez shared the following concerns about the Instrument:

- Page 2, Condition 1 - TEXTBOOKS: Should the condition of textbooks be one of the criterias?
- Page 5, Condition 4 – ADVANCED ACADEMICS: To ensure balanced placement throughout the District, what is the criteria for student placement?
- Page 6, Condition 5 – ATHLETICS & EXTRA-CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES: Would drama club, theater, debate team, or band qualify as an extracurricular activity?
- Page 7, Condition 6 - MEDIA CENTERS: Should periodicals be uniform throughout the District? If not, why was the differentiation made in the instrument?
- Page 8, Condition 7 - DISCIPLINARY PRACTICES: The item focuses on internal and external suspension sites. **Mr. Lopez** said the Instrument does not ask what action precipitated the suspension. Without this information, he feels a person would be unable to judge whether punishment is being equally administered. **Mr. Lopez** said disciplinary history is another important factor in determining and ensuring that the same treatment is being administered district-wide.

Mr. Joseph responded that he could only answer the question about periodicals. Each school must supply reading materials that are geared towards the student population. **Mr. Joseph** said Staff would answer the remaining questions. **Mr. Lopez** is concerned about reading uniformity within the schools. **Mr. Joseph** clarified that the question refers to magazines and other reading materials, not textbooks. **Mr. Lopez** said it is a disservice to students, if the opportunity to read similar materials and learn the same things is not made available district-wide. **Mr. Foulkes** reminded the Committee that the Instrument is in the pilot phase and encouraged **Mr. Lopez** and Committee members to forward their concerns to Staff.

Dr. Blasik informed the Committee of the Site Visitation Subcommittee plans to pilot the Instrument by visiting four schools in April and May 2010. The four schools are: Dillard Elementary, Nova Middle, Blanche Ely High, and the Whispering Pines Center. **Mr. Joseph** said anyone wishing to participate during the pilot test, must visit 3 out of 4 schools for their comments to be taken into consideration.

Dr. Blasik said the revised Site Visitation Procedures are aligned with the previous guidelines. The draft was presented to the Broward Teachers Union. They supported it. **Dr. Blasik** said the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department is making arrangements to ensure that when Site Visit teams arrive at schools, that everything is in place and they have access to the people they need. After visiting a school, the time-line for the Site Visitation Subcommittee to prepare an overview is three weeks. Thereafter, the Subcommittee is also responsible for sharing that report at an upcoming Diversity Committee meeting. **Dr. Blasik** said moving forward, the plan is to include Site Visitation reports in the Diversity Committee's Response Report to the Superintendent's Annual Report.

Mr. Rajner suggested the Site Visitation Subcommittee create a user guide for the Instrument. The guide should provide instructions on how to fill out each section and in certain areas the range of acceptable answers. He also recommended the use of a larger font size on the finalized Instrument. **Mr. Rajner** said page 4, under Protocol, is missing: "While class is in progress, do not disturb." He requested that protocol regarding student interaction also be included.

MOTION by Mr. Gazzano, 2nd by Mr. Pusey: “To accept the new Diversity Committee Site Visitation Form.”

Passed 18-0

PRESENTATION REGARDING THE CITIZENS CONCERNED ABOUT OUR CHILDREN (CCC) SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT, by Mary Fertig, Chris Fertig, Esq., and Darlene Lidondici, Esq.

Ms. Fertig acknowledged the individuals who were involved in the CCC and the activities leading up to the Settlement Agreement. Among those mentioned were: **Ernestine Price, Dr. Janice Boursiquot, Chris Fertig, Pam and John Wilkes, Darlene Lidondici, Rodney Collins, James Sparks, Leslie Sparks, and Levi Williams.**

Ms. Fertig narrated a PowerPoint presentation. She began by stating the CCC was formed in 1995 to address the inequities facing children in the Broward County school system. The founding members were participants on the Superintendent’s Desegregation Task Force. **Ms. Fertig** stated that for many years there was total denial as to what was going on in the system and that it was a hard reality to face.

The CCC was settled in August 2000, with the School Board’s acknowledgement of educational disparities and a written commitment to change. The Settlement Agreement did not protect any one group of children, but all children. The Diversity Committee was formed in order to monitor the conditions of the CCC Settlement Agreement. The settlement provided the framework for the School Board to work with students and communities to ensure equal access and opportunity for every child. The Board agreed to implement studies to achieve equity, in books, instructional needs, curriculum, technology, facilities, athletics, media centers, and student assignment.

Ms. Fertig complimented the Diversity Committee for the work they have done over the years. The Committee has written policies, exposed inequities, and drafted reports. She said the Committee has accomplished a lot through their hard work. **Ms. Fertig** said, although it is 2010, the job of the Diversity Committee is not over.

Ms. Fertig shared current photos taken of Blanche Ely and Boyd Anderson High Schools. Additionally, she gave a brief summary of the issues surrounding the student assignment and reassignment process. These examples demonstrate the Committee still has work to do.

At the close of the presentation, **Ms. Fertig** thanked the Diversity Committee for their hard work and acknowledged that it is a tremendous task. She encouraged members to continue bringing issues forward to the School Board. **Ms. Fertig** warned the Committee not to become distracted by improvements. She asked that they not forget important items such as the Boyd Anderson library.

(Motion to extend the meeting 15 minutes approved).

Mr. Joseph thanked the **Fertigs** and **Ms. Lidondici** for their presentation. He asked Committee members to be more vigilant, energized, and objective in the final Response Report to the Superintendent’s Annual Report. He suggested gaps in service, instances of disparity, and lack thereof be included in the Report.

Mr. Rajner suggested the **Fertigs** date photos used in the presentation for historical purposes. He said he was horrified by some of the photos shown. He asked **Mr. Williams**, “(1) Why has the School Board allowed such situations to continue for so long, and (2) why has the School Board not formulated an emergency plan to rectify the problems?” **Mr. Williams** responded that major construction has been going on at both Blanche Ely and Boyd Anderson High to overcome some of the Committee’s concerns. Processes have been put in place and there has been great improvement. **Mr. Williams** was shocked by some of the photos. He said repair can be classified into two groups, new construction and on the job maintenance. Schools can request funds from the District to supplement maintenance issues and cannot limit the amount of funds dispersed for the repairs. **Mr. Williams** said he would convene a meeting with the appropriate staff to address the maintenance repair issues at Boyd Anderson.

(Motion to extend the meeting 15 minutes approved).

Ms. Price said that, although each School Board Member represents a particular area, they are all responsible for providing quality schools for the entire Broward County school system.

Ms. Owens said she decided to become a Diversity Committee member after witnessing the inequities in services her children were exposed to after being placed in Advanced Programs. She said, “These programs are located in the worst schools.” After sharing her concerns, **Ms. Owens** was informed that new processes were now in place to track progress through transparency. She said she has not witnessed equity or transparency within the Broward County School Board System, and added that it is difficult for all Administrators to know what is going on, e.g. in all the bathrooms, unless they are physically there. **Ms. Owens** suggested a process be developed to encourage students to take digital pictures via their cell phone and forward the information to staff. She was outraged that so many repairs are incomplete.

Ms. Owens requested the Committee invite Facilities to a future meeting. **Mr. Foulkes** said he would discuss the possibility of adding Facilities to the March 4, 2010 Diversity Committee meeting agenda, during the Chair, Vice-Chair, and Staff meeting scheduled for Friday, February 12, 2010.

Ms. Yach expressed concern about the cleanliness of schools. She recently read in a World Class Research article that the availability of overall resources is the number one determining factor of any student’s success.

Mr. Rajner said the photos show maintenance neglect. He asked if the District researched vandalism as one of the reasons for property damage. **Ms. Lidondici** said the issue was raised and put to rest during the CCC Settlement Agreement Lawsuit. There were few reports of vandalism. She said vandalism does not give you the kitchens shown, the bleachers, the falling acoustical ceilings, mold and/or mildew.

Mr. Fertig asked **Ms. Yach** to clarify a rumor he heard that there is no ADA compliant ability for “a wheelchair student” at Lauderdale High school to get on the stage to participate. **Ms. Yach** said she is unsure if the condition still exists. **Mr. Williams** voiced concerned and said the School Board has funds specifically set aside for ADA projects.

Mr. Foulkes commented that the Committee has its work cut out. He asked that members remain focused and vigilant. **Mr. Foulkes** said perhaps the photos showing current school conditions could be added to the Diversity Committee's webpage. He said rules about adding photos documenting school conditions to the website and including the same pictures in the Diversity Committee Response Report should be researched. He said this is necessary to prompt responses from Administration and getting the word out in the community for the interest of others.

(END OF DISCUSSION)

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Foulkes opened the floor for Agenda recommendations. **Ms. Price** requested an update report on ADA accessibility for schools located in the East.

Mr. Foulkes asked members to forward their Subcommittee selection to Staff so that the process of scheduling meetings can commence.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mr. Foulkes announced that he accepted Northeast High School's invitation, asking him to Chair a "Black History Luncheon" taking place Friday, February 26, 2010, at 11:00 a.m. on school premises, Room 12 North. The luncheon is centered around a past program, *Post Graduate Alternatives for Secondary Students*. The group consists of ESE students, ranging from the ages of 18-22. The Committee gave consensus for **Mr. Foulkes** to attend the function as their representative.

Mr. Joseph announced his resignation from the Diversity Committee, effective at the close of this meeting.

Dr. Blasik reminded the Committee about the Florida's Task Force on African American History First Annual Town Hall Meeting, scheduled for Friday, February 19, 2010 at 6:00 p.m., at the African American Research Library and Cultural Center.

As per the **Chair**, the following item has been added to the March 4, 2010 Diversity Committee meeting Agenda: Presentation of Subcommittees, Chairs, and Purpose/Charge

Meeting adjourned 9:00 p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for March 4, 2010 at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room, Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building.**

These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the February 4, 2010 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.