

**THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**DIVERSITY COMMITTEE  
Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building  
November 5, 2009**

**SUMMARY**

**CALL TO ORDER**

The meeting was called to order, at 6:33 p.m. by **Roland Foulkes**, Chair, with a quorum.

**Diversity Committee Members Present:**

Randy Fleischer	Jeanne Jusevic	Michael Rajner
Roland Foulkes	Catherine Owens	Nancy Rogan
Phoebe Francois	Ernestine Price	Barbara Williamson
Julian Gazzano	Graham Rabinowitsch	Suzanne Yach
Bapthol Joseph	Student Representative	

**Members Absent:**

Andy Ansola	Marguerite Luster	Leslie Sparks
Patrick Jabouin	Cynthia Oliver	Alyce Zahniser

**Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:**

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

**District Staff:**

James F. Notter, Superintendent; Dr. Joanne Harrison, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Programs & Student Support; Dr. Katherine Blasik, Associate Superintendent, Research Development & Assessment; Leona Miracola, Director, Innovative Programs; Jack Ciminera, Database Researcher III, Research Services

**Guests:**

Clementees Foulkes; Aneatra King, Broward County Library

**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

The Committee adopted the Agenda.

**APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

The Committee approved the October 1, 2009 Minutes.

**CHAIR'S REPORT**

**Mr. Foulkes** congratulated **Dr. Harrison** on her return to the Broward County School District. **Dr. Harrison** said she has always valued working with the Diversity Committee. She feels fortunate to have another opportunity to continue making meaningful contributions.

## **PRESENTATION BY JAMES F. NOTTER, SUPERINTENDENT**

**Mr. Notter** talked about his discussions with the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and the School Board regarding defining the “new normal”. He said Florida is not going to revert back to what it was like when property values escalated to such high extremes, and the belief that they could not increase any higher. There would no longer be a huge influx of people migrating to Florida. Last year was one of the first times, since the Great Depression, that Florida had more people leaving than it had coming in. **Mr. Notter** indicated that these are real benchmarks to measure the quality of life and the length of time it can be sustained. He said this plays a key role in determining what needs to be done in order to continue to offer a quality education as a major urban system.

**Mr. Notter** stated that six months ago, the transition into the “new normal” was terrible, as a result of the \$1.8 billion reduction in the Capital Plan. In addition to the impact on bricks and mortar, there has been a significant impact on technology. Approximately 80-90,000 end units have warranties set to expire at the end of the year. He feels this is just one area where staff has to consider the impact it will have on the teaching and learning process. **Mr. Notter** said that the lifespan of buses has been increased from 10 to 13 years in terms of replacement. This means more costly repairs. Currently, the District maintains 1,250 buses; however, with the additional repairs that the three-year extension has added to the fleet, mechanics will not be able to keep up with the demands. Although this change was forced upon the District, in terms of managing reductions, **Mr. Notter** believes the lifespan extension is a bad business decision. The Broward County School Board, once recognized as the leader in technology, now has to define a “new normal” for transportation.

Among the many factors that have significantly impacted what the State has to offer its residents, the fact that Tallahassee still has not produced a financially feasible plan to fund the State and the deductions they continue to draw from funding for education and health, does little to improve Florida’s financial situation. **Mr. Notter** said health care went from \$14 million to \$11.5 million. He commented that this mirrors the national scene in terms of a crisis. The District has been forced to become experts in areas such as finances and health care in order to allocate funds where they are most needed. In addition, the School Board has to remain competitive.

**Mr. Notter** said he began sharing his concerns with ELT six months ago regarding the charter school movement in Broward County. He has been proactive and supportive of charter schools, which have 20,000 students in Broward. He announced that 27 new charters would be approved, with opening dates in 2010 and 2011. Staff has projected that 16 to 18 charter schools will open, with the expectation that 3,500 students will be housed. **Mr. Notter** stated that no other facility compares to what the Broward County School System has to offer, yet 3,500 students will be lost to charter schools. He does not believe that the buildings, quality of teachers, and amount of quality programs offered at Broward County schools have attributed to the losses. **Mr. Notter** said, looking at the complexities of the economic conditions, how the State of Florida is funded, and what it means to future growth, he sees no positive signs. **Mr. Notter** suggests that everyone work together to come up with recommendations on how to retain their current student body and recapture students that have left the traditional public school system. He invited Committee members to share what they feel is the “new normal” within the community at upcoming meetings and to figure out what needs to be done to survive.

**Mr. Notter** said charter schools have bypassed “feeder patterns” by expanding their grade levels to accommodate students. Their capacity is built around their existing student body. He commented that safety and security are the main concerns for the parents of these students, not course offerings. Another determining choice factor is that boundary is not an issue in charter schools.

**Mr. Notter** said one of the greatest things resulting from the CCC Settlement Agreement was the fact that the issues were brought. Compared to other counties, the Broward County School System is doing considerably better. **Mr. Notter** said learning from the preparations and precautions taken during hurricane season, the School Board should use a similar model to prevent situations from occurring. Defining the “new normal” can help prepare both students and staff, so that students can continue to succeed and receive a quality education, which is their right.

**Mr. Notter** noted that part of the greatest accomplishments of 2008-2009 are: (1) the revised educational equity definition; (2) the creation of the new data system - CCC Online Tool; and (3) the revised Site Visitation Instrument. He stated that, due to the legislature, the whole State is in trouble because no one is willing to make a move in terms of new revenue streams.

AT THIS POINT, THE **CHAIR** OPENED THE FLOOR FOR DISCUSSION.

**Mr. Rajner** thanked the Superintendent and School Board Staff for their commitment and support in supporting the development of Gay-Straight Alliances throughout Broward County schools. School Board member **Jennifer Gottlieb** attended a November 3, 2009, forum, which featured a youth at Dillard who shared the story of holding the dying Amanda Collette in her arms. **Mr. Rajner** stated that there has been resistance against such forums from some school principals.

**Ms. Owens** said, although she is greatly concerned about the charter school movement, she would not consider sending her child to any of the public high schools located in her community. **Ms. Owens**, member of the Hallandale Education Advisory Committee, announced that they are preparing a position paper on charter schools as in Ben Gamla to present to the Commission. She believes the strategy of having small sectors and focus groups within charter schools creates a segregated student body, which would exclude those that do not fit in. **Ms. Owens** said this would take away from the 59% African Americans in District 1, Hispanics, Christians, and others not fitting the mold. She feels the minority populations and people from the lowest socioeconomic groups will be left “holding the bag.” **Ms. Owens** stated this would drastically change the quality of education. **Mr. Notter** said, if charter schools continue to grow and students leave the public school setting, the concentration of disadvantaged students would greatly increase. A child from a disadvantaged background enters kindergarten with a 5,000-word vocabulary versus a child not receiving Free/Reduced School Lunch who starts with a 20,000-word. Regardless of a child’s vocabulary, the same “cookie cutter” approach is used: 180 days to teach the child, teachers receive the same pay, etc. **Mr. Notter** is very concerned because, although Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) legislation was designed to protect poor children, the majority of children taking advantage of the program are Level 3 and 4 students. The school that loses more Level 3 and 4 students creates a situation where the Level 1 and 2 students increase proportionately, which makes it difficult for the school to get a passing score on the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT). **Mr. Notter** said this is just one anomaly that needs to be addressed in the “new normal”. He said the School District has done everything necessary to ensure that they meet all the laws. He expressed concern that **Ms. Owens** has no high school in her

neighborhood where she could comfortably send her child. He said this should be one of the main focuses of the Superintendent and Staff.

**Ms. Price** said that charter schools are private schools backed by public school funds. She commented that, although charter schools use the title Broward County Public School, by no means are they considered a public school since they are not like all other schools in the county. **Ms. Price** said she is for “quality public schools, not quality other schools.” She suggested the Broward County School System first address the issues surrounding its existing public schools, by bringing them up to par, instead of opening new charter schools. **Ms. Price** agrees with **Ms. Owens**, that charter schools are creating segregated communities.

**Ms. Yach** is concerned about the rumor that the entire Boca Raton school system wants to withdraw from Palm Beach County Schools and convert to charter schools. As a result, 1,000 parents attended the Palm Beach County School Board meeting to oppose the changes. In addition, 6,000 members protested the accountability program and testing via the Web. She announced that a new accountability program could take away 37-40% of the funding that supports Adult Education.

**Mr. Fleischer** acknowledged that the Broward County School Board system has come a long way over the years since the CCC Settlement Agreement. The 2008-2009 CCC Settlement Agreement Status Report indicates that approximately 39 out of 47 indicators have been 100% met by every school. There are 3 indicators that were met by 90%, and 5 indicators that are less than 90%. **Mr. Fleischer** asked for the list of schools that are less than 90% compliant with the 5 indicators. He suggested that the School Board focus their attention on the Report. **Mr. Fleischer** acknowledged the current financial crisis and the lack of funding from Tallahassee and commented that the School Board needs to maintain what it already has. He said, from the Committee perspective, they should recognize the situation and lower their sights. This would allow them to determine the best course of action for everyone. **Mr. Fleischer** stated that although the School Board has shown great improvement, the Committee will continue its vigilance in order to ensure equity and parity for all.

**Mr. Joseph, Vice Chair**, thanked **Mr. Notter, Dr. Harrison**, and **Staff** for their never-ending support. He especially thanked the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department for “going miles beyond the call of duty in ensuring the finalization of the Site Visitation Instrument.” **Mr. Joseph** suggested the School District conduct a disparity study as soon as funds are available. He is not concerned with school location. Regardless of where a school is located, all students should receive a quality education. He commented that a lot of schools are being neglected due to politics. **Mr. Joseph** understands that desperate times call for desperate measures and requested that adjustments be shared or cut at the same level.

**Mr. Foulkes** thanked the Superintendent for attending the Diversity Committee meeting. He asked if there is a way to request a moratorium on charter schools so that money coming into the District could be used to fund public school issues instead of going directly to charter schools. **Mr. Notter** responded that it is not legally possible.

**Mr. Foulkes** congratulated **Mr. Notter** for setting up the new Commission on Ethics. The **Chair** presented **Mr. Notter** with a Certificate of Appreciation. **Mr. Notter** accepted the Certificate on behalf of “Team Broward” and the Community.

## OLD BUSINESS

### **PRESENTATION ON THE DIVERSITY COMMITTEE'S RESPONSE TO THE 2008-2009 SUPERINTENDENT'S CCC SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT STATUS REPORT**

**Mr. Foulkes** thanked all Members who contributed to the Report, particularly, **Mr. Fleischer, Mr. Gazzano, Mr. Joseph, Ms. Price, Mr. Rabinowitsch**, and former Diversity Committee members **Dr. Bailey** and **Mr. Pedlar**.

**Mr. Foulkes** walked the Committee through a PowerPoint presentation of the Report and opened the floor for input, discussion, and comments.

**MOTION by Mr. Joseph, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Price:** “That based on the content of the Superintendent’s CCC Lawsuit Settlement Agreement Update, 2008-2009, and our assessment of it, and though the district is moving closer to full compliance, the Diversity Committee finds the district to be “Not In Compliance” with the terms of the CCC Lawsuit Settlement Agreement.”

**Passed: 13-0**

**MOTION by Mr. Joseph, 2<sup>nd</sup> by Ms. Price:** “ That the Diversity Committee adopts its 2008-2009 Response Report to the Superintendent’s CCC Lawsuit Settlement Agreement Update, 2008-2009 (With pre-School Board Workshop-January 19, 2010 ---amendments where necessary).” After discussion, the Motion was withdrawn.

## 2008-2009 RESPONSE REPORT SUGGESTED CHANGES AND COMMENTS

**MR. RAJNER** SUGGESTED THE FOLLOWING:

- Add an acknowledgement section at the bottom of the cover page to recognize contributions made by former members, such as **Dr. Bailey** and **Mr. Pedlar**.
- Page 3, first line: Replace “*second*” with the year 2009. He suggested “*second*” be placed in brackets due to its significance.
- Page 4, second section, number 2: “*Convene a series of community symposia....*” He does not recall the Committee having a discussion about this recommendation.
- Suggests that outside sources be used as a point of reference.
- Page 13, number 6: Suggests removal of entire contents beginning with: “*Specifically, the calculated and well-timed...*” and ending with “*Sixth, and last...(December 2008-January 2009).*”
- Page 15, number 1: Remove section that begins: “*Though, it ought to be!...*” **Mr. Rajner**, Legislative Director of Dolphin Democrats, stated that in no way have they played any role in the Report.

- Page 15, number 3: Remove section that begins: “(100% Democrats...)”
- Page 15, number 6: Remove last statement: “(This one year term must be increased to 2 years per Policy 1.7).” He suggested that it be included in the Recommendations section.
- Page 15, number 7: Remove entire section: “Quality of Appointments...”

(Motion to extend the meeting by 10 minutes passed.)

**Mr. Joseph** apologized to **Ms. Miracola** because the lack of time did not allow the opportunity for her to make a presentation. He commented that perhaps the next Diversity Committee **Chair** would extend a new invitation for Innovative Programs to present.

**Mr. Fleischer** is very upset that additional changes were made to the Report without the Committee’s approval and/or input. He said **Mr. Foulkes** added additional information to the Report after the Ad Hoc Committee approved the version presented at the last Ad Hoc Committee Annual Report Meeting, October 22, 2009.

**MR. FLEISCHER SAID:**

- Page 8 of the approved Report was originally a one-page chart; however, the page has now been expanded to three pages.
- Page 13, number 6: was originally just a five-line paragraph. Now it takes up an entire page. He suggested it be removed from the Report and observed that six more pages have been added before the *STRENGTHS* section.
- **Mr. Fleischer** said this is the first time he is seeing the charts on pages 9, 10, and 11.
- Page 7: Footnotes providing different diversity definitions were newly added.
- Previously, **Mr. Foulkes** was cited as the only source for definitions. In the final Report presented to the Committee, an additional source has been added to each area cited.
- Page 15: Nothing was previously mentioned about the *Dolphin Democrats*.
- Page 18 or 19: Suggested removal of one of the tables because they appear to be very similar.
- Page 26 and 27: Suggested that *A. Disaggregation...* be removed from each condition, as it has already been included in the General Comments on page 25. The same suggestion has been made for *E. Fiscal impact...*
- Page 28: The original conclusion was edited and additional information has been added.

(Motion to extend the meeting by 5 minutes passed.)

**Mr. Fleischer** suggested members take advantage of the different venues available for them to participate in making decisions and/or providing feedback or sharing their concerns.

**Chair, Roland Foulkes** thanked Diversity Committee Members for their service over the past year. He distributed a letter of thanks, and his Chair's Report, together with a "Certificate of Recognition," to each Diversity Committee member and each Diversity Department Staff and Senior Administration.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**Mr. Rajner** announced that The White House Office of National AIDS Policy will host a town hall meeting at Dillard High School, 2501 NW 11 Street, Fort Lauderdale on Friday, November 20, 2009, from 6:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to receive community input from the South Florida community as part of the development of the nation's first National HIV/AIDS Strategy to end HIV/AIDS.

**Meeting ended 8:45 p.m.**

**The next Diversity Committee meeting is scheduled for December 3, 2009 at 6:30 p.m.,  
in the Board Room, Kathleen C. Wright Administration Building.**

**These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the November 5, 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.**