

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

**DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING
Kathleen C. Wright Administration Center
February 5, 2009**

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:36 p.m. by **Roland Foulkes**, Chair, with a quorum.

Members Present:

Dr. Veda Bailey	Bapthol Joseph	Leslie Sparks
Yvette Colbourne	George Pedlar	Barbara Williamson
Randy Fleischer	Ernestine Price	Suzanne Yach
Roland Foulkes	Michael Rajner	Alyce Zahniser
Julian Gazzano	Regina Santiago	

Members Absent:

Stephanie Desir-Jean	Pepe Lopez
Phoebee Francois	Marguerite Luster
Patrick Jabouin	Sherry Reece
Andrew Lewis	Nancy Rogan

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

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

District Staff:

Ann Murray, School Board Member; Dr. Joanne Harrison, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Programs/Student Support

Guests:

Mary Fertig; Chris Fertig, Esq.; Clementees Foulkes; Darlene Lidondici, Esq.; Assad S. Mirza; James Sparks

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee approved the January 8, 2009 minutes without change.

The **Chair** welcomed **Leslie Sparks**, the newest member of the Diversity Committee, who was one of the plaintiffs of the CCC lawsuit.

INSTALLATION OF OFFICERS AND MEMBERS

Maureen S. Dinnen first swore in the **Chair**, next the **Vice-Chair** and the remaining Diversity Committee members thereafter.

CHAIR'S REPORT, Roland Foulkes

Mr. Foulkes stated that he wanted to return to the committee and subcommittee structures. He said that there have been a few active subcommittees over the past year, and these subcommittees have been the engines driving the Diversity Committee. Having nine chairs, one for each CCC Settlement Condition, would help the Committee by sharing the workload. The Hiring Practices and the Site Visitation subcommittees would also exist.

(**Mr. Pedlar** arrived at 6:50 p.m.)

(**Ms. Zahnizer** arrived at 7:05 p.m.)

Mr. Foulkes announced the new subcommittees and suggested the following members to chair them:

Five-Year Capital Plan – **Mr. Pedlar**

Assignment & Reassignment – **Mr. Gazzano**

Technology – **Ms. Yach**

AP & Honors – **Dr. Bailey**

Student Standards of Service – **Ms. Colbourne**

Athletic & Activities – **Mr. Lewis** (**Mr. Lewis** was not present to accept.)

Media Centers – **Ms. Rogan** (**Ms. Rogan** was not present to accept.)

Student Discipline & Suspension - **Ms. Francois** (**Ms. Francois** was not present to accept.)

Hiring Practices – **Mr. Fleischer**

Site Visitation – **Mr. Joseph**

Ad Hoc Joint Meeting Diversity Committee and Broward County Diversity Advisory Council – **Ms. Zahniser**

Mr. Foulkes proposed a new subcommittee that would focus on the broader issues regarding diversity. He commented that the subcommittee's work should encompass all the different areas regarding diversity, whenever possible. **Mr. Rajner** will spearhead this committee.

Mr. Foulkes stated that an initial organizational meeting would be scheduled before the March Diversity Committee meeting, so that he may meet with these point persons to examine where the committee is going over the course of the next year and to discuss where their focus should be directed in addition to the CCC Update. **Mr. Foulkes** reminded the Committee about the School Board's Workshop on the Diversity Committee Annual Report that will take place in May, and that the 2007-2008 Site Visitation Report still needs to be completed. In addition, the Committee still must decide which schools they would like to return to for site visits.

Mr. Joseph reminded the members that last year the Committee obtained Board approval to suspend Site Visits for 2007-2008 because they wanted to revise the instrument that is used during site visits. This is the first time the instrument will be revised since site visits began. He asked for volunteers to serve on the Site Visit Instrument Ad Hoc Committee. **Dr. Bailey** said she would like to be involved in the process. **Mr. Pedlar** asked if it would involve the Committee meeting with school board personnel. **Mr. Joseph** responded that school board personnel would be involved during the initial and final stages. **Mr. Pedlar** stated that the document needed simplification because it is cumbersome and cannot be understood by all. **Mr. Foulkes** agreed that the 16-page instrument is not useful for the Committee, although it provides the schools with the guidelines the Committee uses to assess whether or not the schools are in compliance with the CCC conditions. He recommended that a unique 2-page monitoring tool be created that targets what the members will be looking for.

Mr. Foulkes announced that on Saturday, February 7, 2009, a number of teacher workshops, sponsored by the Broward Education Foundation, would be held at Nova Southeastern University. The Diversity Committee and the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department have been involved with it for the last four years. **Mr. Foulkes** informed the Committee that he would be presenting a workshop on the *Building Bridges Across Cultures Curriculum*, which is being sponsored by the Peace Corps. **Mr. Foulkes** said he would “provide the means” for using the following books in the classrooms: *Uncommon Journeys*, *Voices From the Field* and *Crossing Cultures with the Peace Corps*. These books are free of charge to teachers.

Mr. Rajner asked the **Chair** if he would be addressing the District-wide committees at a future meeting. **Mr. Foulkes** stated that it would be covered during the evening’s meeting and asked if **Mr. Rajner** wanted to continue to serve on the Student Code of Conduct. **Mr. Rajner** agreed. **Mr. Foulkes** informed the Committee that he would continue to serve on the District Technology Advisory Committee.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT, Dr. Elizabeth Watts

Dr. Watts thanked everyone for their support during her medical leave and said that she was very happy to be back.

Dr. Watts informed the Committee that Policy 1.5, is going to a School Board Workshop on March 31, 2009. She stated that Board Members requested that the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department work with the Committee to realign and streamline functions of the Committee around Equity and Diversity, and that a clear definition of Equity be integrated into the policy. The Department researched many large school districts and the Council of Great City Schools and found different Equity definitions. **Dr. Watts** said that “in some camps, Equity is about closing the achievement gap, and in other camps Equity is about equal access”.

Dr. Watts called the Committee’s attention to a handout that was circulated earlier in the meeting. It was a diagram that looked at the Board’s charge to the Diversity Committee and showed the Diversity Committee as Embracing Equity and Diversity. She advised the members that this was done to realign the functions of the Diversity Committee and that their advisory and problem-solving role would continue to address Diversity and Equity. **Dr. Watts** announced that a CCC Online Tool will be used to collect data and will be shared with the Committee at an upcoming meeting. She said that the Committee would be given indicator progress updates and would conduct school site visits as part of

equity. There is also an *Educational Equity Act Plan* that the District is required to submit to the State annually. The Committee would also focus on aligning the CCC Report to the Educational Equity Act Plan. **Dr. Watts** advised the members that the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department provides Diversity and Cultural Awareness Training and professional development for schools and District personnel. **Dr. Watts** stated that human relations and gender are also important diversity issues.

Dr. Watts said she asked the **Chair** to create an Ad Hoc Committee on Policy 1.5 that would work with staff to come up with recommendations for realigning the Committee's structure; to include two subcommittees: Diversity and Equity. She asked members who were interested to see her after the meeting.

Dr. Watts stated that, under the leadership of **Dr. Harrison**, a District workgroup developed a *Textbook Survey*, which will gather school data on the student to textbook ratio by core course. She said that it will be used to ensure that gaps are filled. In the past, the District piloted a program called *Destiny*; however, due to budget concerns, that program has been put on hold. **Dr. Watts** said the District wants to stay transparent and will continue to update the Committee on the progress.

Mr. Foulkes established an Ad Hoc Site Visit Instrument Committee with the task of revising the existing instrument and/or creating a separate individualized, shorter instrument that could be used effectively when visiting schools. **Mr. Joseph** will act as Chair; the following Members volunteered to serve: **Dr. Bailey, Mr. Gazzano, Mr. Pedlar, Ms. Santiago, and Ms. Sparks.**

OLD BUSINESS

PRESENTATION BY MARY FERTIG REGARDING THE CITIZENS CONCERNED ABOUT OUR CHILDREN (CCC) SETTLEMENT AGREEMENT

Ms. Fertig began her presentation by acknowledging 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** closed her presentation by suggesting that the photos of the Diversity Committee members be included in next year's presentation as a continuation of the story. She also stated that they are pleased that **Leslie Sparks** is now a member of the Diversity Committee.

The **Chair** thanked the **Fertigs** and their associates for making the presentation and for their commitment to the CCC Settlement Agreement. He stated that the Committee must continue to be vigilant regarding the issues because there are still many inequities, as the Superintendent's Report revealed. **Mr. Foulkes** added that in 2008 he and **Mr. Joseph** returned to the schools mentioned in the presentation with staff and took pictures of the same areas. Those pictures were shown later in the evening.

Ms. Yach stated that although it is seldom a topic spoken about she wanted to comment that in addition to the children of Broward County, thousands from the adult student population have also been impacted by the CCC Agreement when it comes to parity, equity, equal access and educational opportunities.

To **Mr. Joseph's** thanks to the **Fertigs** for keeping the CCC alive, **Mr. Fertig** responded that they are not keeping it alive, it is the Diversity Committee that has kept it going. He added that it was the CCC's decision "not to leave it in the hands of the lawyers or the hands of the CCC, but in the hands of a Committee." He implored Committee members not to underestimate the power that has been given to them based upon the agreement. **Mr. Fertig** suggested that next year's presentation include documentation of what the Committee has accomplished, thus far.

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. She thanked the Committee for their work and for the fact that, for the first time, they got the **School Board** to view the CCC Settlement Agreement presentation.

Ms. Price stated that she is in agreement with **Mr. Fertig's** suggestion to include their accomplishments in the presentation, because she feels that it is a good way to show that the Committee is nearing their goals to make it better each day. She said that she cannot say enough about the Committee and the dedication and time they have taken to ensure success. **Ms. Price** said that "looking back at Blanche Ely and Sanders Park, which had about 115 kids, with students coming from all areas, and the issues with *Starbursting*, with children being placed in three or four different schools who because of the CCC are now in one school, it's a good thing." She said that the feeder pattern is important to her. There are some areas she would like to see connected as a means to determine where the Committee is going and which areas should be their next focus.

Mr. Foulkes requested the following comments by **Mr. Sparks** be verbatim:

"I would like to say good afternoon. My name is **James Sparks**, and I'd just like to commend you guys because I haven't been here a lot. But I've been reading, and I get the minutes of all the meetings, and I've been watching, and there are other issues. And one of the things I'd like to say, just a little encouragement to you is that: when we started off it was **Ms. Price, Janice, myself, and the Fertigs**. And we had other little people that would come in on this occasion and that one, but it was just us. And just a little history. The School Board said, once we begin to ask them for stuff. I remember the first day I stood on that side and I was on the side by **Mr. Marko** and I asked them, let my daughter go from Miramar High School to Hallandale High. And they said no she couldn't go. And I asked why? He says, 'Well, we have an agreement with **Mr. George Allen**, and that agreement prevents her from going.' So, every time, and then we begin to bring members each week, every Board Member we bring other people who were trying to get their kids to go different schools. And every week **Mr. Marko** and **Mr. Allen**, they even had **Mr. Allen** come in, and it was just **Mr. Allen** and **Mr. Marko**. It was those two people, and under the agreement had, we couldn't get it done. When the School Board needed something done that they wanted to change their policy, they would call **Mr. Marko**, I mean **Mr. Allen** in. He and **Mr. Marko** would sit down and go over it, and they just sign it off, and the next thing you know we're in another area. And that's how the agreement was. So we didn't want that. I mean I would have loved to been down there and sit down and say, 'Hey, I don't want it, lets go.' That would have been good. But what we found out is people was concerned, and people was working.

And we wanted people, and you are the people. So listen, there were three of us. They use to refer to us as the group that met under the shady tree in the park. And in on one of our lawsuits. I believe that's in the law books. And the reason was referred to us like that, because the School Board wanted minutes of our meetings. And because it was all us working, who wanted to take time to do minutes and other stuff. So we just said we met in the park at night, and there were no lights. We even asked them, they said okay, get a tape recorder, and tape your minutes. Said okay, you guys give us a tape recorder and furnish all the tapes, and we'll do that. And they wouldn't even do that. But anyway, just a little history. We had nothing. You guys got a lot of power, and we tried to give you, we tried to give you information that you wouldn't have to go through the hurdles that we went through. In other words, when we've had public information, we had to go to Federal court, to get a judge to get the School Board to give us. And then we only wanted, say maybe ahh the week of February 10th lets say. Instead of giving us the week of February 10th, they rented a 20 foot U-Haul, taped everything for five or four years, put it in the U-Haul, backed it up to the office and say here's the thing, you got the U-Haul for a week, unload it when you get ready. That's just how bad public information got. You understand what I'm saying? You don't have to do that. You have staff. They've got to get you the information. You want to go to visits? We had to go to Federal court to get that. You got that. You don't have to go through all that. You guys need to really just sit down and begin to just do what you have to do. Because I brought my granddaughter, this is my granddaughter, this is **Leslie's** daughter, and that's my grandson. He's about the same age that Leslie was when we started the lawsuit. We don't want to have to go through that with any of your grandchildren and any of your children, you know. And I'm, I'm kinda emotional, and I, I'm really blessed just to be here. I'm really blessed that you guys are here, and I really appreciate you. Thank you very much, hear?"

Mr. Foulkes informed the Committee that over the years he has held communication with all three of the CCC's attorneys. During his previous year as **Chair**, he contacted them because he wanted to "touch base with them and get grounded in the lawsuit Settlement Agreement and find out what the Committee should really be doing at this stage." He said they met with him on several occasions and gave him suggestions. **Mr. Foulkes** said the attorneys helped him to address one of his biggest concerns by giving him some insight and guidance on how to proceed in writing the Diversity Committee's first formal report in response to the Superintendent's 2007-2008 CCC Settlement Agreement Status Report. He informed the attorneys that a copy of the final Report, which still has to go before the Board, was sent to them with a request for input. **Mr. Foulkes** received an email from **Levi Williams**, another attorney involved with the CCC lawsuit, that raises some issues the **Chair** feels the Committee should think about.

Mr. Foulkes requested the email from **Mr. Levi Williams** be verbatim:

"I am sure that there are at least as many recommendations as there are issues for our response to you, but in this season of reductions and budget cuts...those who understand the definition of equity and the difference between equity and equality must stand guard. What do I mean? While certain schools and communities did not share EQUITABLY in the resources allocated to similar schools over the last five years...these very same schools and communities may now be called upon to share EQUALLY in the burden of cost cutting. I would submit that equity would dictate that schools share in the cost reduction efforts proportional to their 5-year average allocation of resources, above and beyond FTE allocations, as compared to other schools in the District. Otherwise, I fear we may again be asking those who received the least to sacrifice the most with nothing but a promise of a better tomorrow for that

community while others enjoy a more prosperous today. Just some of my quick thoughts. Take care, my friend and be well. **Levi Williams, Esq.**”

Mr. Foulkes commented, “I think that, for me, set our task in this current budget.”

Mr. Fertig asked that **Ernestine Price** be recognized for her resilience in attending one School Board meeting after another, in spite of “suggestions that she was crazy, that she was not to be believed, and that she was just speaking for herself.” He acknowledged that the treatment that **Ms. Price**, **Mr. Sparks** and **Mr. Williams** received was terrible. **Mr. Fertig** said that **Ms. Price** not only rallied the community, but also the **School Board**, and that she was the one who called **James** and **Evelyn Brown**. He thanked both **Ms. Sparks** and **Ms. Price** for prevailing.

Ms. Price stated that she gets emotional every time she thinks about the 15 years spent searching for representation, and when she finally sat across the table from the attorney, she felt relieved that her case was accepted. She informed the Committee that **Mr. Fertig** took the case without accepting a dime, and at the conclusion of the case they discovered that **Mr. Fertig** had mortgaged his house. **Ms. Price** said that there were many days when they stayed late to work on the case, she would pick her kids up from school and return to the meeting to find that the attorneys had food waiting for the children. She said that it is because of “them, their time, energy and love, which was put into the case, that has brought the Committee here today.” This is the reason she is so passionate when she talks at the meetings, and she is grateful for them. She said that during that time there was a black and white system. When she thinks about the other ethnic groups, families and cultures that come here, she knows and understands what they have been through and what they are going through because she experienced the same things. She said, “The lawsuit had to go on because parents need to know how an adult or somebody is treating their child or allowing things to happen.” She said it took someone to mortgage his home, use his firm and his staff workers to take pictures and although none of them knew what they were doing, they worked from the heart and succeeded. **Ms. Price** stated, “There is a history. I don’t care what happens, there is a reason why it’s happening. So let’s find out why and what we can do to correct it?” She thanked **Mr. Sparks** for joining the lawsuit in spite of being unemployed for two years. **Ms. Price** stated that they were fighting for “quality education for every child” regardless of their ethnicity, sexual orientation, or financial status.

Mr. Foulkes informed the Committee that in 1974 he was the first Black student to graduate from Pine Crest, a private prep school. He recently learned there is a Black Student Association at the school. Pine Crest invited **Mr. Foulkes** to talk about his experiences. **Mr. Foulkes** stated that Pine Crest is “one of the best schools in the nation, if not the world,” and he would like for every child in Broward County to have the same world-class education he had at Pine Crest.

Mr. Foulkes extended an invitation to the **Fertigs**, to make the same presentation at Pine Crest and said that the Diversity Committee would also be welcomed. He said the students at Pine Crest should know what their peers have and still are experiencing in the public school system today.

Dr. Watts informed the Committee that, by request of the **Board Members**, the **Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department** updated the photos of the CCC Settlement Agreement. Staff members, along with **Mr. Foulkes** and **Mr. Joseph**, went to different sites and took footage and pictures. She reminded the members that the DVD was an update. The members viewed the three-minute 2008 video update.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Foulkes moved on to District Committees and asked for volunteers. Committee members were in agreement that they would like to hear the list of committees before making a decision to join.

Mr. Foulkes listed the following District Committees and their representatives:

- Code of Conduct – **Mr. Rajner**
- Charter Schools Task Force – **Ms. Price**
- Attendance – **Mr. Joseph**
- Site Selection – **Mr. Foulkes**
- Technology – **Mr. Foulkes**

Mr. Foulkes requested that Subcommittee chairs and District Committee representatives submit reports prior to each meeting.

Mr. Rajner discussed the Attendance Committee, which examines issues, such as the *Alternate External Suspension Policy* and whether students who refuse, or do not sign up, to go to one of the sites will be allowed to make up their work. Another concern is a policy to be presented to the School Board, by the Attendance and Code of Conduct committees, to penalize students who have behavioral issues by creating potential academic issues. Former Diversity Committee member Jeanne Jusevic is also on that Committee.

(**Mr. Rajner** left the meeting at 7:49 p.m. for medical reasons)

(A motion to extend the meeting 15 minutes passed.)

In response to Members’ inquiry about the Policy Review Committee, **Dr. Harrison** stated that the Board is streamlining the process to incorporate more community input. Once the new process is in place, it will be shared with the Diversity Committee.

Mr. Joseph stated that **Mr. Fleischer** and **Ms. Williamson** are willing to participate in the Ad Hoc Site Visit Committee. He said they would work with the Site Visitation Subcommittee to go over the instrument. **Mr. Joseph** set a 60-day timetable in which to complete the assignment.

Meeting ended 8:45 p.m.

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

These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the February 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.