

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING

KCW Administration Building

January 8, 2009

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:36 p.m. by **Jean Darius, Coordinator, Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department**, with a quorum.

Members Present:

Dr. Veda Bailey
Yvette Colbourne
Randy Fleischer
Roland Foulkes
Phoebee Francois
Julian Gazzano

Patrick Jabouin
Bapthol Joseph
Andrew Lewis
Marguerite Luster
George Pedlar
Ernestine Price

Michael Rajner
Nancy Rogan
Regina Santiago
Barbara Williamson
Suzanne Yach
Alyce Zahniser

Members Absent:

Pepe Lopez
Sherry Reece

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

Jean Darius, Coordinator; Mercedes Hardisson; Latricia Lauture; Maryse Nelson

District Staff:

Ann Murray, School Board Member; James F. Notter, Superintendent; Dr. Joanne Harrison, Deputy Superintendent, Educational Programs/Student Support; Jill Young, Director, School Boundaries

Guests:

Alex Dholakia; C. L. Foulkes; Jeff Jenkins; Carine Remy; Jane E. Rosen, Ph.D., Jeanne Wechsler

(Ms. Reece arrived at 6:44 p.m.)

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

At the request of **Mr. Foulkes, Mr. Darius** entertained a motion to have a change in the agenda to include, at the beginning of the meeting, a memorial for former Diversity Committee Member **Jawhar (Joe) Sadallah Badran**, who died in Delray Beach on Monday, December 29, 2008, due to Cardiac Arrest/Heart Attack.

MOTION by Mr. Gazzano, 2nd by Ms. Williamson: “To have a change in the agenda to have a memorial for Mr. Badran at the beginning of the meeting.”

Mr. Rajner requested that a time limit be set for the memorial, not out of disrespect for **Mr. Badran**, or to the guests who were present, but because of the amount of business that needed to be addressed during the meeting. Given that, he felt the length of the tribute was inappropriate and asked that it be condensed. **Mr. Foulkes** pointed out that not everyone listed on the Tribute program was present, and, therefore, the program would be shorter than previously expected. He added, “Given that **Joe** contributed much to this Committee for four years plus, this is the least we could do for him in his memory.” **Mr. Foulkes** stated that the tribute should take twenty minutes. **Mr. Joseph** did not consider the Tribute lengthy, but nevertheless, agreed with **Mr. Rajner** that a time limit needed to be set and agreed to the twenty minutes. In response to a comment from the audience, **Mr. Rajner** asked that the public refrain from further comments and be respectful of the Committee members while they discussed the motion to adopt the “Tribute” as part of the meeting Agenda. There was a motion to present a twenty minute Tribute in memory of **Jawhar “Joe” Sadallah Badran**, former member of the School Board’s Diversity Committee.

Motion passed 18-0

MEMORIAL FOR JAWHAR SADALLAH (JOE) BADRAN

Mr. Foulkes, Jeanne Wechsler (Mr. Badran’s life partner), and Mr. Notter spoke kind words in “Tribute” to Mr. Badran.

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

“It certainly is an honor, you know, for me to be here this evening, just to share in a moment, potentially a very sad moment. However, at least for me and for places that I’ve grown up, you try to take those sad moments and try to make them just a little bit more pleasant or a little bit more happy. In that theme, I did not know Joe, personally, very well. I knew him really in a service here on the Diversity Committee. From my standpoint, the Diversity Committee, and the, what I believe, is just a phenomenal representation that’s on this committee. It’s a reflection, of Joe in the differences that we acknowledge and, most importantly, to me as a Superintendent, especially, for the quarter of a million children that we serve each day. It’s extremely important to have that diversity, to give us input, to share with us things that, frankly, we don’t know. Things that we were either consciously blind of, and more importantly, those things that we were unconsciously blind of. When I, one time you come in and you hear Joe, somebody like me, I kind of stood back, and I said, ‘Wow, you know. He seems to really have some very, very passionate and strong opinions.’ You know, I listened and listened, and I watched you all. And some people that are here, that were sitting here in those few times, your body language to me was most important because your body language was of respect, was of tolerance, was of interest. I didn’t see necessarily anger. I didn’t see necessarily people poking at each other, saying almost saying, ‘Boy, you know, I wish somebody else would start to talk.’ I did see a level of tolerance and to me that’s what makes this committee and what makes Broward County Public Schools such an important school district and sets it apart from many other school districts. That, in fact, all of us and some of our differences are able to sit together, to debate and, yep, sometimes argue. However, I believe that its always turned to the best interest of this school system and, most importantly, to the quarter of a million children that are here every single day. I don’t know that Joe went out to the classrooms. I don’t know that he visited the schools. I know he (worked) on the CCC Reports

and went out into the schools at that point in time, but there was never a doubt in my mind, that he had an interest in the students, in his way, as a priority. You all do. You wouldn't spend the time that you do, you wouldn't get aggravated on nights like this, with the meetings, sometimes, if you didn't care about our kids. And I think Joe's the classic. It's an identity. He was different. He clearly had a very strong belief system. Felt confident in himself to share it. Felt confident in himself to engage others in a rich debate over it and yet came back. And I truly believe that it was for the best interest of this public school system. Even though, even myself, frankly, there are clearly people in the community, that perhaps don't have strong positive feelings about the Superintendent. That's okay. Because you can't all be the same. It's the differences that make us stronger and better. So with that, I believe we'll surely miss Joe as a person. And even more importantly to me, we'll miss Joe as the character that he was and shared very openly, at least in my presence, very openly. His feelings about life, about politics, and so forth. But I would tell you that it was still for the right reasons, about our children, and about ensuring that we always kept our eyes open. Wide open. Right, wrong, indifferent, believed it or didn't believe it or halfway believed it, we still kept our eyes open; to ultimately help our children and help this school system continue to be a great school system. So, as the Superintendent of the nation's sixth largest school system, my heart goes out to you. I know you've suffered a loss that could never be recovered until whatever that other life is that we're supposed to go to, depending on our beliefs. So thank you for sharing him with us and Godspeed".

(**Ms. Luster** and **Ms. Price** arrived at 6:48 p.m.)

(**Ms. Francois** arrived at 7:00 p.m.)

(**Ms. Zahniser** arrived at 7:26 p.m.)

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The Committee approved the minutes of December 8, 2008, as amended.

- Page 2, at the top of the page: **Mr. Fleischer** asked that the last sentence where it begins "After discussion..." be changed to say, "As the Committee Report would not be ready until later in the meeting, the motion was withdrawn." And, cross out "After discussion".

ELECTIONS

Mr. Darius presided over the election for Chair of the Diversity Committee. **Mr. Pedlar** was asked to present the Nominating Committee's recommendation. **Mr. Pedlar** announced that the Nominating Committee received resumes from **Mr. Foulkes** and **Mr. Fleischer**. After due deliberation, the Nominating Committee recommended **Roland Foulkes**. **Mr. Darius** invited nominations from the floor. **Mr. Jabouin** nominated **Randy Fleischer**. Each nominee was invited to speak for three minutes. **Mr. Fleischer** spoke first, followed by **Mr. Foulkes**.

Each Committee Member was given a paper ballot on which to sign their name after writing the name of the individual they chose. **Ms. Hardisson** collected the ballots. **Mr. Foulkes** received the majority of votes and was elected Chair of the Diversity Committee.

After a brief statement, **Mr. Foulkes** asked **Mr. Pedlar** to present the Nominating Committee's recommendation for Vice-Chair. **Mr. Pedlar** announced that the Nominating Committee recommended **Bapthol Joseph** for Vice-Chair of the Diversity Committee. **Mr. Foulkes** invited nominations from

the floor. **Ms. Williamson** nominated **Suzanne Yach**. Nominations were closed; then each nominee was invited to speak for two minutes. **Ms. Yach** spoke first, followed by **Mr. Joseph**. Members were instructed to write the name of the individual of their choice and to sign the paper ballot that was provided.

(As the members were writing their selection on the ballots, the **Chair** took the opportunity to welcome **Dr. Watts** back. **Dr. Watts**, Director, Diversity & Cultural Outreach, was out for about six weeks on medical leave. He asked that everyone continue to keep both of her daughters, Victoria in particular, in their prayers.)

Mr. Pedlar reminded the Committee that the issue was discussed at the last meeting, “that a process for the new Members and all the Members starting the new year, to be sworn in by some or whatever oath of office having taken on the responsibility of leadership in this particular capacity.” **Mr. Pedlar** then suggested that perhaps the Committees could accommodate two Vice-Chairs because both candidates were excellent. **Mr. Foulkes** stated “that all things are possible.” **Mr. Rajner** pointed out that the By-Laws “only allow for a Chair and Vice-Chair and without an amendment to the By-Laws, that cannot be done.” **Mr. Foulkes** again stated “that all things are possible” and asked **Mr. Rajner** if he was chairing the By-Laws Committee. **Mr. Rajner** responded that “back in October, he had requested for staff to ask **Mr. Foulkes** to put the By-Laws Committee on the agenda, because the Committee had completed its work and it was prepared to be presented since October, so whenever that presentation is placed on the agenda it will be made available to the Committee.” **Mr. Foulkes** instructed **Mr. Pedlar** “to work with By-Laws and get that as one of the recommendations.”

Ms. Hardisson collected the ballots. As the votes were being tallied, **Mr. Foulkes** took the opportunity to read a letter sent from **School Board Member Dr. Parks**, addressed to the Diversity Committee, regarding former member **Jawhar Sadallah (Joe) Badran**.

Mr. Darius stated the results of the ballot count were **Mr. Joseph** received the majority of votes and was elected **Vice Chair of the Diversity Committee**.

OLD BUSINESS

PRESENTATION BY JILL YOUNG, DIRECTOR, SCHOOL BOUNDARIES

Dr. Harrison opened the presentation by explaining that one of the responsibilities under the Division of Educational Programs is the boundary process. She stated that “this year it’s a very unique situation”. She then outlined the items that would be covered during the presentation; such as, the changes that have occurred which caused them to have: 1) a different Boundary process, and 2) caused them to look at where students are placed differently. She worked with a team of experts that have looked at the data and have put together new tools that they would be sharing with the Committee during the presentation. Their number one goal for the evening would be to educate the Committee on the changes that have occurred. She addressed a concern regarding the State’s financial situation, which adversely impacts Broward County. Declining enrollment would also be covered during the presentation. Another piece is *The Level of Service*, a new Legislative requirement that “requires the School Board to make sure that students are housed in permanent facilities.”

Dr. Harrison informed the committee that they are currently out at schools and talking to communities that are going to be affected by the changes. They scheduled a community meeting for the following

night, for the following Saturday and Wednesday of the following week. She stated that over the next few years many of the schools would be placed in the process for a variety of reasons. She then turned the presentation over to **Jill Young**, Director, School Boundaries.

Ms. Young reminded the Committee about “the three drivers that are putting a squeeze on this year’s Boundary process.” The first is *Class Size Reduction*. Next year, class size will be based on a classroom-by-classroom, period-by-period basis. That means all core classrooms for Pre-K through Grade 3 must have no more than 18 students per classroom. Grades 4-8 may have no more than 22 students per classroom. Grades 9-12 may have no more than 25 students per classroom.

The next decision driver is *Growth Management Level of Service*, passed by the Florida Legislature in 2005. In 2007, the District joined with municipalities in Broward and developed an “Inter-local Agreement” which states that “you must have school capacity that is concurrent with the growth of the area.” In January 2008, the Inter-Local Agreement and the District’s Five-Year Capital Plan were approved by the Board.

Following the approval of the Inter-local Agreement and the Five-Year Capital Plan, the third decision driver is the *State Plant Survey*, which is the driver that is squeezing the Boundary process. **Dr. Harrison** advised the Committee that by law, the District must submit to the State how the School Board utilizes every one of its classrooms. The state identifies, in every building, which classrooms can be used for classroom space. Then they determine how many students can be placed in those classrooms. The State Plant Survey determines the number of seats that are available at every school in Broward County. She explained that, because of declining enrollment, even though they may have some schools that are extremely crowded, they have other schools that are under-enrolled. So when they look across the District, they see that what’s happening with the Survey is that it says that they have seats available. The District can no longer build because it has schools with available seats. The problem is that in some locations, none of the neighboring schools have any seats available. The State says that the School Board must move the children until they find available locations. In the past, the District built additions and/or added portables. However, the District is no longer permitted to do so.

Dr. Harrison commented that they are trying to educate communities because parents will not understand why, if last year all the children could fit into that building and class size was met, and everything was fine, why are they going to have to move a number of students to another location. **Dr. Harrison** stated that this is the reason why “this year’s boundary process is different, because they have to meet (and they have different years to meet “Level of Service” for different schools) Level of Service. There are Plant Surveys which are not allowing the School Board to build like they did in the past. If they were to move a portable to a site, then the school would not be adhering to the Level of Service. This is why the boundary process is different, and why their number one goal this year is to educate all communities that are affected. This is something very different.

Ms. Young directed the Committee’s attention to the Boundary Process Timeline. She stated that they have started the boundary process early. They started studying the information in June, 2008. They have met with the Board four times already. **Ms. Young** stated that they met with the Board last December and developed Initial Superintendent Recommendations, which were distributed to the Committee.

Dr. Harrison stated that they went to the Board and now they are going out to the communities. In the past, communities felt they could draw scenarios because there was flexibility. Now there are many schools that are over their Level of Service. The School Board could not let people draw scenarios that would put them in a situation to negatively affect the school. She said they are listening to communities and on the January 27, they will deliver a second set of recommendations to the Board for review. Once the review is conducted and further input is given, they conduct public hearings, where parents can speak directly to the Board Members about the recommendations.

Dr. Harrison stated that over the next few years it will be very difficult. **Ms. Young** displayed the maps which show how many schools could be affected by Level of Service. The School Board could ask the State to look at those areas that would be most affected. Instead of disrupting those families and communities, give the School Board the ability to place additions to those schools. This is just one of the processes they are considering and the Board has requested the Superintendent to take action on.

Dr. Harrison pointed out that there is another piece the Committee should be aware of. She informed the Committee that in No Child Left Behind, the students have choices. If the schools have not made AYP, students can choose to go to another school. However, space and class size cannot be used as a reason not to send children to a school. So when schools that are being looked at are under-enrolled, in some cases, many of those schools also have not made class size. Thus, where children may be moved into a school, the student can use choice to be moved out of the school. This shows that the document is ever-changing, and that is why they monitor on a very close basis. That is why they wanted to educate the Committee on where they were in the boundary process and the fact that they are looking at the three factors as they make recommendations. **Dr. Harrison** stated, "It's not that the Broward County School Board just arbitrarily decided to make all those boundary changes and have all the communities moving and upset."

Mr. Pedlar said that the program seems similar in nature to No Child Left Behind and asked, "Has this particular program been funded by the Legislature?" **Ms. Young** answered that it is not. She said the funding for the No Child Left Behind comes from the Federal government and that Class Size and the Level of Service pieces come from the State of Florida. The Federal government is saying that people have to be given a choice, and they can be moved anywhere. On the other hand, the State government is saying that you can only have 18 children in a classroom, and that you cannot have more children in a school than what fits within 110% of their existing buildings. **Mr. Pedlar** stated that there is going to be a cost factor.

Ms. Young stated that with No Child Left Behind, "there is currently a cost factor and that cost factor has come from Title I Dollars that we have. In the past, Title I Dollars was spent on providing services for the children; but now dollars must be set aside to provide transportation. So, instead of teachers and materials, \$12 million has been set aside to make sure that children who want to go to other schools are transported to those schools" She said that's at a time when the Legislature has just reported that, in this session, they feel that they should come out with another \$35 million cut to the District's budget, which is on top of the already over \$80 million this year.

Ms. Young announced that there is a new website in the making. It has not been put online for the community yet. The back-up data can be located on the website, along with answers to such questions

as how many children came from other schools; how many had reassignments; what's the class size in the different classrooms; and where is that school with Level of Service. **Dr. Harrison** stated that it was hard for people to keep track of the paper trail of information, and that once the new web site is online, the information will be updated as soon as it changes.

Mr. Darius distributed the Diversity Committee Annual Report.

Mr. Rajner asked to bring items before the Committee prior to discussing the Annual Report. **Mr. Joseph, Vice-Chair**, approved **Mr. Rajner's** request.

Mr. Rajner stated some of the reports from the Code of Conduct Committee meetings will be sent to the Diversity Committee members. He stated that there are some issues that require feedback before the Code of Conduct goes to the Board at the end of the month.

Mr. Rajner reported that the Chair of the Attendance Committee of the Code of Conduct Committee has expressed an interest in having a member of the Diversity Committee attend their meeting. He said that there was concern regarding alternative to external suspension and "grave" concerns in dealing with diversity. **Mr. Rajner** said that if the Committee chose to send a Diversity Committee member to represent them, that is something that could be implemented into the By-Laws, being drafted now. **Mr. Rajner** suggested that a Member be sent as a representative to the Committee. **Mr. Joseph** commented that it was a good idea, but based upon the agenda, he is not sure they would have time to address it, and it was not part of the evening's agenda. **Mr. Rajner** stated that this is something that causes frustration. He said he hopes that some time this year they will begin to have those conversations. He added there is a lot of important dialogue that has not taken place and important things that are going on, especially with the increased amount of weapons and violence. **Mr. Rajner** feels that the Committee should look at many areas of diversity that they haven't had the chance to do. **Mr. Joseph** stated that it was unfortunate that there was not enough time to take up the matter under New Business. However, in spite of it not being on the agenda, he asked **Mr. Rajner** to stay because he felt that it was a valid concern. **Mr. Rajner** responded that he had two emergencies to attend to and that's why he was very concerned with the meeting time. **Mr. Joseph** responded that if the body agreed, then **Mr. Rajner** could put forth a motion. **Mr. Rajner** stated that he did not think it necessary to do a motion because it is just a matter of the **Chair** designating a person to serve as the Diversity Committee representative. **Mr. Joseph** suggested that the subject be readdressed at the February meeting.

(**Mr. Rajner** left at 8:25 p.m.)

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Mr. Foulkes stated that the major amendment to the report was to add a *Findings* and *Analysis* section. He then walked the Diversity Committee through the Report, pointing out the changes that were made.

On page 2, there is a dedication to **Jawhar (Joe) Badran**. **Mr. Foulkes** stated that before his death, **Mr. Badran** played an integral role in getting the process done. That is why the Report is dedicated to him.

Additions and changes to the *Table of Contents*, on page 4, have been underlined. The word *method* has been changed to *methodology*. *Findings* and *Analysis* have been added. On page 21, the word *method* should be underlined because it was changed to *methodology*.

Next, item 3, the word *method* has been changed to the word *methodology*. Items 4 and 5 are the addition of the *Analysis* and *Findings*

Appendix H was added to incorporate the December 4 minutes. The minutes for November and January have been added, as well.

On pages 5 and 6, the date was changed from December 4 to January 8.

On page 7, the names of all the Members are listed. Members may choose whether or not to add their signature next to their name.

On page 15, Introduction, the changes that were voted for have been underlined.

On page 21, the word *method* should be underlined because it was changed to *methodology*.

Underlined and blotted out are the exclusions and additions that were made by the Ad Hoc Committee on Tuesday evening, January 6, 2009. They decided to use bullets to indicate: what they did; how they got the information; and how they came to their conclusions.

Mr. Foulkes reminded the Committee that they have already debated and discussed the Report and that it's just a matter of going over the two new sections, *Findings* and *Analysis*. All that is needed is a final vote. He added that the Report would be updated and forwarded to staff so they can send it to the School Board and that a workshop would be scheduled to discuss the Report.

Mr. Darius suggested that, on page 21, the last paragraph of methodology, the exact motion be quoted in the record of minutes: "That the Response Report be adopted with the necessary adjustments, appropriate amendments, for inclusions." **Mr. Foulkes** asked if **Mr. Darius** wanted to see the actual motion listed in the records. **Mr. Darius** responded that he would.

Mr. Darius suggested that everything be adopted as one document to avoid separate documents within one report.

(Motion to extend the meeting 10 minutes passed.)

MOTION by Mr. Pedlar, 2nd by Ms. Francois: "That the Report be adopted with the necessary amendments, changes, including the listing of names instead of signatures, as well as the inclusion of the minutes that are stipulated and the changes that were required as per the committee meeting."

Motion passed 16-1

Mr. Foulkes mentioned that in his discussions with the psychologist and social workers at Dillard following the murder of the student there, they suggested that, although there are programs in the school to help build self esteem and address identity issues, the children are still emotionally immature and that perhaps some type of “Emotional Intelligence” training should be a part of their learning experience. He stated that the suggestion came from **Dr. Janice Boursiquot**, school psychologist and social worker, who is a member of the CCC initiative. He took her suggestion seriously and feels the Committee should at least make a recommendation to the School Board to look into the matter. **Mr. Foulkes** said he is aware that the School Board is facing major budget cuts, but suggested that there are resources that can be redirected and that individuals in the District with training in “Emotional Intelligence/EQ” could provide some type of program.

MOTION by Mr. Foulkes, 2nd by Ms. Wiliamson: “That in the wake of the murder of student Amanda Collette by student Teah Wimberley with a hand gun on Wednesday, November 12, 2008 in a Dillard High School Hallway, and given copy cat weapons possessions by students at other schools around the district following that murder, and given that a number of school psychologists and social workers believe that students need a better grounding in ‘Emotional Intelligence/EQ’, the Broward School district explore ways to employ and implement this critical, currently missing, approach to problem solving and conflict resolution.”

Motion passed 17-0

Mr. Foulkes extended a special invitation to Committee members to attend a national annual conference hosted by the **National Urban Fellows** (a 40 year old program based in New York City). **Mr. Foulkes** is on the host committee. This was a special invitation to the reception held on Thursday, January 15, at the Museum of Art Fort Lauderdale. The Committee was also invited to a number of the workshops.

Meeting ended 8:40 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for February 5, 2009 at 6:30 p.m., in the Board Room at the KC Wright Administration Building.

These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the January 8, 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.