

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING

KCW Administration Building

April 12, 2007

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:41 p.m. by **Dr. Pam Brown**, Diversity Committee Chair, without a quorum. **Dr. Brown** declared it a workshop until such time that a quorum is present. A quorum was reached at 6:50 p.m.

Members Present:

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| Jawhar Badran | Julian Gazzano | Ernestine Price |
| Pam Brown | Jeanne Jusevic | Sherry Reece |
| Ellyn Drotzer | Andrew Lewis | Bernie Schultz |
| Randy Fleischer | Marguerite Luster | Barbara Stuart |
| Roland Foulkes | George Pedlar | Alyce Zahniser |

Members Absent:

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| Brian Dassler | Dane Ramson | Brittany Stevenson, |
| Cedric Douglas | Simone Ruiz-Narcis | Student Advisor |
| Lina Gioello | Ron Simon-Menéndez | Shelby Berson, |
| Gary Hensley | Barbara Williamson | Student Rep. |
| Bapthol Joseph | | Rose Espinola, |
| | | Student Rep. |

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

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

District Staff: Dr. Earlean Smiley, Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction/Student Support; Peggy Morrison-Thurston, Director, Dropout Prevention & Alternative Education

Community: Kay Pasquala

CHAIR'S REPORT

Dr. Brown announced that **Ron Simon-Menendez's** brother-in-law and **Barbara Williamson's** mother have passed away and expressed her regrets on behalf of the Committee.

Rose Espinola was not present at the meeting because she won the Coca Cola Scholarship, and there was a scheduling conflict.

Dr. Brown announced that school site visits have been completed for 2006-2007. She attended a few site visits and found them to be most interesting and encouraged everyone to participate in them next year.

The 2005-2006 Site Visit Report was distributed via Members' folders. **Dr. Brown** stated she will ask Members to take it home, read it and be prepared to vote on it at the May meeting. She commented that the report is "extremely old" and needs to go out as soon as possible.

Dr. Brown went to the Site Selection Committee meeting for the new school. It was a very long meeting, which resulted in a 10-9 vote for the school site on 36th Street in Weston. The recommendation will now go to the **School Board** for consideration.

The Chair attended the School Board meeting to advise the members of what the Diversity Committee has been doing. She will be attending the next School Board meeting, as well.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Dr. Elizabeth Watts

Dr. Watts announced that the Discipline Matrix will now be called the Administrative Discipline Matrix because it is used by administrators to deliver disciplinary consequences. The members will separate into elementary and secondary subcommittees to align the current matrix with Board approved changes to the Code of Conduct book. Meetings will be held through May. The goal is to have the Matrix ready by June 1. The information will be translated into Spanish, Haitian Creole, and Portuguese and will go home with the students. In addition, the information about the Administrative Discipline Matrix needs to be added to the Code of Conduct video that students watch. Administrators will receive training on the Matrix, and parents will be given the information, so that everyone will be talking about the same thing and have the same understanding of the process.

The Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department's website is being updated. That includes the Diversity Committee's web page. The minutes, motions and request forms will be posted on that page, along with Policy 1.5, the Committee By-Laws, and the names of the Committee members. The minutes will be sent out to members via email and hard copy.

Dr. Watts stated her belief that part of her job is, "to work with the Committee, to have a partnership, to do what is best for our students, and to streamline our processes so that we are very efficient."

Dr. Watts asked **Ms. Weintraub** to advise the Committee on some of the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department's activities. **Ms. Weintraub** announced that on April 13, the winners of the Brazil Poster and Essay Contests will receive their awards in the New River Room at the Broward Center for the Performing Arts. The three winning posters and the runners-up will be on display in the Pre-Function Room at K.C. Wright during the weeks of April 16 to April 26.

The Brazil Press Awards will honor the **School Board of Broward County** for its outreach into the community and its recognition of the Portuguese language. That award will be presented at 8:30 p.m. on April 14 at Parker Playhouse. **School Board Chair Beverly Gallagher** will be accepting the award.

The Young Diplomats will hold their last meeting for this school year. It is a Multicultural Lunch. The students will be bringing a dish that is representative of their cultures, whether ethnic or familial. They will explain the significance of the food and share it with all of the members.

Brittany Stevenson, a graduate of the Young Diplomats program and the Student Representative to the School Board, was recognized as one of only two students in Broward to receive a scholarship for being an Outstanding Senior Leader.

Mr. Darius welcomed new member **Andrew Lewis**. He was appointed by **School Board Member Phyllis Hope**, District 6.

The Motions/Information Requests form has been updated. All requests for information from the past few months have been completed.

The dates for all Subcommittee meetings that will be held in the month of June are to be turned in to the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department right away, for advertising purposes. Additionally, the District needs to know whether or not the Committee will be meeting in July.

(A quorum was reached at this time.)

The Chair asked members, staff, and guests to introduce themselves to **Mr. Lewis**, the new Diversity Committee member.

Dr. Brown advised that the subcommittees are “up and running.” She asked everyone who has not committed to participating on a subcommittee to look into it and select one they would really enjoy working on.

Mr. Foulkes presented **Dr. Watts** with a beautiful plant as a welcome gift and congratulated her on her new position as **Director of Diversity & Cultural Outreach**.

Mr. Foulkes also advised that he was so shocked to see his name as “Absent” at the March meeting, that he framed that particular page of the minutes. This was his first absence in five years. He was part of the inaugural class of the Broward County Commission’s Broward Academy and was attending a class that night. He has since graduated.

At this point, and with a quorum present, the Committee adopted the Agenda.

The minutes of March 1, 2007, were accepted without change.

PRESENTATION BY MS. PEGGY MORRISON-THURSTON, Director, Dropout Prevention & Alternative Education

(Ms. Thurston’s PowerPoint and transcribed presentation are appended.)

After thanking **Ms. Thurston** for her “wonderful presentation,” **Dr. Brown** entertained questions.

Mr. Gazzano asked if the District has programs for students who have suicide ideation or have attempted suicides in conjunction with the medical community or do we “farm those children out?” **Ms. Thurston** responded that the District does not have a specific program. However, the Smith partnership is a good place for therapy to occur and has been used for students who have expressed suicide ideation. If suicide is expressed, the psychologist is called immediately, the family is called in and attempts are made to keep the student at the home campus if appropriate.

Mr. Foulkes asked a question with six parts. Ms. Thurston’s answers follow.

1. “How old is this program?”
The federal mandate to have dropout prevention as an entitlement for students came in 1986. Broward County created a department and developed a program right away.
2. “Of the total students who passed through your various programs, do you have an idea how many have actually graduated with a full standard diploma?”
The data **Ms. Thurston** had was the number of students who went through the secondary alternative school, about 25% of the students enrolled graduate. She said she could set up various queries to elicit additional information.
3. “What is the ethnicity and cultural makeup of your students?”
That has changed over time. In 1986, the alternative schools were designed for students who were highly capable. Alternative meant they were not interested in what was classified as traditional high school experiences. At that time, there were extremely high graduation rates. Now, it is 80-90% Level 1, low-performing and dominantly minority, predominantly male and predominantly Black.
4. “Are there any gifted students in this category?”
Sometimes gifted students have difficulty with socialization, cooperation and team-building skills and, therefore, might not fit into the mainstream and show up periodically. There has also been a shift in the expulsion abeyance population, which is about 50% at each of the disciplinary centers. Now, the student is chronically a substance abuser or seller and more low-performing than in the past.
5. “For teen parents, do the girls know who the baby’s daddy is in each case?”
In some cases, it is the same daddy, which causes female relationship aggression. Many girls will not disclose, some will, and services are available for those boys.
6. “Are the boys, and/or men, brought into the process? Mr. Foulkes’ concern is that, at some point, we are going to perpetuate single-family homes. The males need to be brought into the process early on and educated because they are just going to go out and do the same thing with other girls.”
The social workers at the teen parent centers do attempt to get the males involved. But, it’s based upon disclosure of the girls. It’s a complicated issue. We have no jurisdiction over this.

Mr. Pedlar referred to a program he implemented in a prison system in Miami-Dade and asked if our dropout program is comparable. **Ms. Thurston** responded that we do not have a similar program at the BSO jail for secondary school students, but there is a program for adults for a GED option. At this time, the technology is not present at the jails for the type of program that **Mr. Pedlar** referred to, which encourages students to go on after receiving their high school diploma. **Ms. Thurston** said we are trying to do this as part of the Juvenile Justice Commitment Program. Right now we have a “fabulous” completion rate with the GED. We are trying to encourage the students to continue their education.

Mr. Badran asked what the percentage is for students receiving their GEDs. When **Ms. Thurston** responded by stating she would have to get that information for him, **Mr. Badran** asked for a “ballpark” figure. **Ms. Thurston** stated it is about 15%. **Mr. Badran** asked about the remaining students and inquired if we might be failing them in some way. He asked for examples of what teachers do to motivate them and keep them in the program. He then asked what else should be done for the remaining students so they don’t wind up “slipping through the cracks” or, otherwise, not benefiting from the program. **Ms. Thurston** said the key is extremely early identification, as soon as the risk factors begin to exhibit themselves. Then try to work within the system and with the families. She said national statistics show that if a child has been retained twice, it is likely too late to intervene. Remediation has to occur early after the first retention.

As for what the District is doing, **Ms. Thurston** said she is truly excited about middle and high school reform. Personalization is #1 in working with the students. She referred to when she was teaching and she made the students believe her classroom was safe, that she cared and she would advocate for them. There is a lot of discussion going on now about how to increase the level of personalization in the schools. That includes flexible scheduling and the ability to target the student’s academic needs.

Alternative centers have identified a large number of middle school students who are already two or more years over age for grade. They are establishing middle school academies and are developing the instructional day in a very different manner from the regular instructional day. These students are 15, 16 and possibly 17 years of age and still in the 8th grade. The intent is to get them to high school on an accelerated path so they won’t become a “statistic” in the 9th grade.

Ms. Schultz asked if teen parents have to go to the centers, or can they stay in their high school? **Ms. Thurston** said students can elect to stay in their home school, and that there are trained social workers in each area office who can assist them. **Ms. Schultz** then asked if the District still provides sex education classes. **Ms. Thurston** answered that there is still attention paid to sexuality and responsible decision-making.

Ms. Luster has concerns about the centers and teen pregnancies.

- Teachers need to be trained in cultural sensitivity when it comes to the babies’ fathers. There are differences between the cultures and races.
- The starting and ending times for school are too late. Night school starts at 5:00 p.m. That interferes with the ability to hold a job while getting an education. **Ms. Thurston** said this is an issue primarily in the North Area, and the Area Superintendent is working with transportation to address it.

- Why are girls required to report back to school two weeks after giving birth? **Ms. Thurston** said it is not a requirement. The option is available to the girls. Sometimes it is safer for the mother and child to be in the school environment than it is for them to stay at home. Most girls do not come back to school until 4-6 weeks, after the first visit to the doctor. **Ms. Luster** requested that be put in writing, that the girls do not have to come back in two weeks.
- Many of the girls have high GPAs and need to complete their core requirements. The take-home packets should have more emphasis on their academics, telling them what they need to know in order to graduate.
- Some of the questions on the Contract for Completion are not appropriate. **Ms. Luster** questions the purpose and what is done with that information. She said social workers should be trained to concentrate on the girl and the baby, not the condition of the house and whether or not the dishes have been washed. Sensitivity training is needed here.
- Group homes are a concern and need to be monitored.
- There is an Alternative to Suspension program next to the babies and mothers at Charles Drew Family Resource Center. Students in that program share the same campus and bathrooms with the teen mothers.

At this time, **the Chair** expressed the Committee's appreciation to **Ms. Thurston** for her presentation and moved to Committee Reports.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

BOUNDARIES, Jeanne Jusevic, Chair

No Report

HIRING PRACTICES, Randy Fleischer, Chair

Mr. Fleisher reported that the Subcommittee received the information it requested in February regarding the census on teachers, administration and students, with ethnic and racial breakdowns, from 2000-2007. The concern was that Hispanics were under-represented in teaching and administrative positions. He said that it looks like the District is doing a good job in reaching out to the Hispanic communities for teachers and administrators. The numbers show there has been an increase over the last seven years in Hispanics. That concern has been addressed.

Mr. Fleischer noted there is no breakdown for Middle Eastern teachers and administrators and that information will be requested.

A question was raised at their meeting about the effects of the Jessica Lunsford Act on vendors and their minority employees.

SUBCOMMITTEE REQUESTS FOR INFORMATION

#1: "Student census data 2000-2007 with ethnic breakdown. Middle Eastern census data breakdown 2000-2007 for students, teachers, administrators."

#2: "Impact of Jessica Lunsford Act investigations on vendor employees – Does it disparately impact minority employees being fired for failing background checks?"

SITE VISITATION, Bapthol Joseph, Chair

Dr. Brown presented the final draft of the 2005-2006 Site Visit Report and asked the Diversity Committee members to take it home, read it, and be prepared to vote on it at the May meeting. She would like to get it passed and give it to the School Board. “Obviously, if you have issues with it, questions and comments, we will give time to that. But, I would really like to get a vote on this at the next meeting. Please remember to read it and bring it back.”

Dr. Smiley asked if it would be appropriate to bring this report to **Senior Management** or would the Committee like her to wait until after the discussion. **Dr. Brown** asked **Dr. Smiley** to wait.

Dr. Brown then recognized **Ms. Jusevic**, who gave the Subcommittee report in **Mr. Joseph’s** absence.

Ms. Jusevic reported that the Subcommittee met and decided they would like to make a short visit to Margate Middle School to see the progress of the work that is being done, responding to an invitation by **Dr. Harrison**. **Ms. Jusevic** commented on the responsiveness of the North Area, at all levels, to the site visits and the collaborative nature in which these visits took place. The **Facilities** and **Maintenance** representatives are very responsive, and they get things done. They write the work orders and then they inform the Subcommittee of what has been done.

The Subcommittee would like to follow up with issues that they have with Apollo Middle School and is waiting for a response to its request for a meeting.

The Subcommittee will be seriously looking at the air conditioning in school kitchens and cafeterias. They have found that the kitchens in some schools are extremely hot and this is creating a possible health hazard.

They have identified ten schools for visits in 2007-2008.

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| ELEMENTARY: | Dillard, Sunland Park, Country Hills |
| MIDDLE SCHOOLS: | Westglades, Perry, Olsen |
| HIGH SCHOOLS: | Coconut Creek, Fort Lauderdale, Boyd Anderson |
| CENTER: | Charles Drew Family Resource Center |

Dr. Brown stated that last year the Committee only did five site visits. This year they want to get an earlier start so that they could reasonably visit ten schools. They want to start the approval and preparation process, and begin the visits in September. She stated this is one of the most important things the Committee does.

MOTION by Ms. Jusevic, 2nd by Mr. Fleischer: “Move to accept the provisional list of site visits for the 07-08 school year.”

Passed 13-0

Dr. Smiley asked for clarification on the purpose of a meeting regarding the Apollo Middle School site visit. **Ms. Jusevic** explained that the Subcommittee had concerns about the physical site and wanted to discuss these concerns. The subcommittee would like to establish a similar relationship with the South Area, as they have with the North Area, which is viewed by the Subcommittee as a

Best Practice Model. In fact, they would like this to replicate this model throughout the District. **Dr. Smiley** said she would pass this information on.

Ms. Drotzer said she was confused about site visits and how it relates to facilities. She was looking for clarification. **Dr. Brown** suggested **Ms. Drotzer**, and others, attend the next Site Visit Subcommittee meeting to help better understand the purpose and process and perhaps offer suggestions. **Ms. Jusevic** advised that there is a facilities component to the CCC Settlement Agreement and indicators appear on the Site Visitation Instrument. For instance, it asks about athletic fields, bathrooms, and ADA compliance.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, Jeanne Jusevic, Chair

The Subcommittee met, and the discussion centered on the achievement gap, particularly between male minorities and girls, why the gap exists, what could be investigated and what recommendations could be made.

SUBCOMMITTEE INFORMATION REQUEST:

“What diversity/sensitivity training is available? Is it compulsory? Does any of the teacher training deal with teacher expectations?”

STUDENT ATHLETICS & ACTIVITIES

No report

STUDENT SUSPENSIONS,

Mr. Foulkes reminded the Committee that, in January, four members asked to participate on this Subcommittee. They are: **Ellyn Drotzer, Gary Hensley, Barbara Stuart, and Alyce Zahniser**. **Mr. Foulkes** founded and chaired the Subcommittee from 2002-2006. **Mr. Gomez** succeeded him, but stepped down from the Committee in January. To assist whoever follows, **Mr. Foulkes** prepared archival information packets for those members that includes materials from when he was chair. In addition, a packet and letter were prepared for **Mr. Notter**.

TECHNOLOGY, Ron Simon-Menendez, Chair

No report

DISTRICT COMMITTEES:

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE, Bapthol Joseph

NOVA POLICY REVIEW, Randy Fleischer

POLICY 5000, Jeanne Jusevic

POLICY REVIEW, Julian Gazzano

Information was included in the Members’ packets summarizing the Policy Review meetings for March 7 and 21. The next scheduled meeting is April 18.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Ron Simon-Menendez

OLD BUSINESS

There was no Old Business.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Foulkes announced that the Pan-African Bookfest will be taking place this week and the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department and the Multicultural Department are co-sponsors of this annual event. A Haitian-American program will be presented through the end of May. It is the International Creole Fest.

The Broward Education Foundation holds an annual Expo for teachers at Nova Southeastern University. **Mr. Foulkes** will be presenting a workshop on the *Building Bridges* curriculum from the Peace Corps. For the last two years, all the workshops and information have been placed on CD-Rom. **Mr. Foulkes** had copies for the Committee so that the information could be shared.

Dr. Brown asked the Committee whether or not they wish to meet in July.

MOTION by Mr. Pedlar, 2nd by Ms. Jusevic: “That there be no meeting in July.”
Passed 14-0

Mr. Gazzano has questions about the retention rates and stated he personally believes they are more effective in kindergarten and first grade. He wonders how many children are being retained in third grade, which is state mandated, versus other grade levels, and how many are being retained in upper grades.

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE INFORMATION REQUEST by Mr. Gazzano:

“The number of retentions by grade level in May 2006 for the District. Please break down data by gender and race.”

Mr. Pedlar requested a copy of the list of subcommittees he is currently participating on.

Mr. Badran asked if the Committee was supposed to get an update on the Academic Contracts from **Mr. Notter**. **Dr. Brown** said she would check into that. However, she was not expecting an update from **Mr. Notter** at this time.

Ms. Weintraub announced that **Yvette Rainford**, of Facilities and Construction, won the 2007 Women’s History Match Game Contest. Her prize was \$70 in gift certificates to The Field Irish Pub and Eatery on Griffin Road.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for May 3, 2007, at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room of the KCW Administration Building**

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| <p>These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the April 12th, 2007 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.</p> |
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