

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING

KCW Administration Building

September 20, 2007

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:34 p.m. by **Dr. Pam Brown**, Chair, without a quorum present. The Committee reached quorum at 6:40 p.m.

Members Present:

Jawhar Badran	Bapthol Joseph	Barbara Williamson
Pam Brown	Marguerite Luster	Alyce Zahniser
Randy Fleischer	George Pedlar	Alex Lange, Student Advisor
Roland Foulkes	Ernestine Price	Designee
Julian Gazzano	Sherry Reece	LaToya Jackson, Student Rep.
Lina Gioello	Barbara Stuart	Daniel Starman, Student Rep.

Members Absent:

Cedric Douglas	Jeanne Jusevic	Bernie Schultz
Ellyn Drotzer	Andrew Lewis	Ron Simon-Menéndez
Gary Hensley	Simone Ruiz-Narcis	Zach Fertel, Student Rep.

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

Dr. Elizabeth Watts, Director; Jean Darius, Coordinator; Mercedes Hardisson; Nancy Weintraub

District Staff:

Dr. Earlean Smiley, Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction/Student Support; Dr. Katherine Blasik, Associate Superintendent, Research, Evaluation, Assessment & Boundaries; Jack Ciminera, Research Services

Guests:

Taffie Jackson; Lloyd Stubbs

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes of June 7, 2007, were approved with the following addition changes.

Page 2, paragraph 2, under Chair's Report: "**Mr. Foulkes** referred to a show on BECON having to do with the High School Reform Bill (House Bill 7087, A++Plan for Education) signed by then Governor Bush at McFatter."

Page 6, paragraph 1, line 1, under Discipline Committee Report: Add “Mr. Jim Freeman, an attorney from the Advancement project...”

Page 6, paragraph 1, line 2, under Discipline Committee Report: Delete “tracks” and add “researches, reports, and litigates on...”

Page 6, paragraph 1, line 3, under Discipline Committee Report: Add “...what the real issue is, institutional/systemic racism, ...”

Page 6, paragraph 3, line 8, under Discipline Committee Report: Add “dealing with these issues, based on guidelines provided in Broward’s Discipline Matrix.”

Page 7, paragraph 1, line 2, under New Business, BECON: Add “...from BECON (based on the BECON Program Schedule distributed at the Diversity Committee’s January 2007 meeting) ...”

Page 9, paragraph 2, line 2, under Diversity Committee’s Membership: Change sentence to read, “**Mr. Foulkes** pointed out that on August 7, 2003, the same request was made and the Committee was told by then Chair Casanas-Simon and subsequent Chair Bill Rettinger that the question of ethnicity couldn’t be asked of the members.”

CHAIR’S REPORT, Dr. Pam Brown

Dr. Brown asked the Committee members to introduce themselves and announced that there were three new members: Student Advisor Designee **Alex Lange** and Student Representatives **LaToya Jackson** and **Daniel Starman**.

The Chair advised the members that a presentation on the Superintendent’s CCC Settlement Agreement Status Report for 2006-2007 was scheduled for later in the meeting.

School Board Members Ben Williams and **Maureen Dinnen**, who represent Fort Lauderdale, convened a community meeting in June 2007. Following that, a Stakeholders Committee, comprised of major movers and shakers, was developed and met to talk specifically about issues concerning Fort Lauderdale’s schools. The goal was to develop strong community partnerships. The meeting was very successful. The participants agreed to meet every two months to continue the dialogue and work together to improve the schools in the city. Identified issues are communication, safety, and parent/community involvement. **Dr. Brown** is the facilitator for the Stakeholder group, as well as the Parent/Community Involvement subcommittee. **Mr. Notter** attended the Stakeholder meeting, along with the Area Superintendent for Fort Lauderdale Schools. **Dr. Brown** stated that she is very happy with the dialogue and the commitment of the stakeholders to improve Fort Lauderdale’s schools. **Mr. Foulkes** stated that he had attended the meeting and was very impressed with the level of participation from the community leaders and activists. He is serving on the Safety subcommittee.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT, Dr. Elizabeth Watts

Dr. Watts announced that **Marion Williams**, formerly with the Multicultural Department, has joined the staff of Diversity & Cultural Outreach. She has replaced **Florence Bastien**, who is on sabbatical leave for this year.

Dr. Watts attended the Diversity Committee's site visit to Fort Lauderdale High School on September 19, and said the visit did seem very much like a partnership.

The Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department is launching a *Building Bridges* Distance Learning Videoconference Series for elementary school students, in conjunction with BECON Distance Learning and the Broward County Public Library System. The videoconference series will focus on literacy and cultural awareness around the world.

Mr. Darius advised that the following information was included in the Members' packets:

- Per a request by **Mr. Foulkes**: a report of a meeting with BECON, which was held in the office of **Board Member Ben Williams**.
- Per a request by **Randy Fleischer**, Chair of the Hiring Practices Subcommittee: the information received regarding students from Middle Eastern countries. The data on administrators was not included because the District advised that it does not capture that information in that format.
- Per a request by **Mr. Foulkes**: the profile of students in the Talented 20 Program for 2006.

A request was recently made by **Ms. Luster** regarding student suspension data. **Mr. Darius** is awaiting information regarding the current school year. He requested that this information be updated and forwarded every three months.

OLD BUSINESS

CCC Settlement Agreement Status Report, 2006-07

(An explanation of the Report was presented by **Dr. Katherine Blasik**, Associate Superintendent, Research, Evaluation, Assessment & Boundaries, and by **Jack Ciminera**, Research Services. A copy of their PowerPoint presentation is attached to the minutes.)

Dr. Blasik stated that this was the third update on the CCC Settlement Agreement. The indicators in the report were identified jointly by staff and the Diversity Committee to ensure the District had the necessary pieces of information with which to monitor the conditions that were set under the Settlement Agreement. To meet the criteria, the indicator had to have been "Met" in every school in which the indicator was applicable. "Nearly Met" means that 90-98% of applicable schools met the criteria. If a school did not meet the criteria by 90% or more, it "Met by less than 90%". "Unable to Determine" is a new category. The final category is "Not Applicable".

Dr. Blasik moved to the nine conditions of the Settlement Agreement.

Condition 1: Textbooks

Dr. Blasik stated that the area of Textbooks continues to be a problem when it comes to the actual count. To report on whether or not every student has a textbook for every course that uses a textbook, that information is not available at this point. There is a pilot tracking system being used at several schools that will be instituted District-wide. **Dr. Blasik** referred to a question previously posed by the Diversity Committee, with a request to have it included in the Annual Customer Survey. The question asks if the school assigns a set of textbooks to take home. The range of agreement was from 83% from students, 80% from parents, and 66% from teachers.

Dr. Blasik discussed the issue of lost books and equipment that had been raised by the Diversity Committee. She stated that, by December 2007, all data that has been collected by the schools on those individual obligations would be put into a master file. That information will follow a student at each grade and level. The obligations identified in 06-07 come to \$1.8 million. Only \$178 thousand of those dollars have been collected. The system being put in place will report the student's obligation to the parents and apprise them of the status. Students who lose a textbook will still get a replacement so that they will not be without one. **Ms. Gioello** asked if students are held responsible for textbooks and items lost due to hurricanes and storms, and **Dr. Smiley** responded that staff has made provisions for that. To **Mr. Foulkes'** question about a loss prevention unit, **Dr. Blasik** said we do not have a specific unit; however each school does have a system in place, along with SIU, to address these types of occurrences, as well as fires and hazardous materials.

(The **Chair** asked the Committee to determine the format for questions. The decision was to ask questions at the end of each section.)

Ms. Price asked if parents are notified early because books do become obsolete after time. If a student loses a book in elementary school and returns it in middle or high school, it is no longer useful. That book is out of date. **Dr. Smiley** stated that the Standard Practice Bulletin has been revised to include yearly notification. The District considers it a hardship to allow losses to accumulate and be reported to the parent, along with a bill that may be quite large. Regarding losses due to Hurricane Wilma, bills were submitted to FEMA according to its requirements and regulations. Students were not assessed percentage losses for materials included in that process.

Mr. Starman believes the obligation process is chaotic. It is very dependent on paper records, and his concern centers on the possibility of false obligation notices and records. **Dr. Blasik** responded that the electronic tracking system should help to address that issue.

Condition 2: Technology

Five of the six indicators have been met. **Dr. Blasik** referred to the Diversity Committee's request to follow up on whether or not the program funds for technology were used or are those dollars still available. The Public Support Technology Funds were used last year, and the program is no longer in place. The carry-over dollars have been spent.

Mr. Joseph referred to Condition 2.3 and that 80.4% of the teachers state that they have been given adequate training in technology in 2007. He asked what the District does as a next step when they see a number like this. **Dr. Blasik** said the District looks for variations from school to school and sends teams in to work with the teachers. She noted that the numbers are showing an overall increase in access to computers. The ratio for student access to a computer has been met, and every teacher has access to a computer. Schools need to make sure that the computers are being used by the teachers.

Mr. Badran asked about high speed Internet access. **Dr. Smiley** assured him that all schools have such access. To increase access, schools are utilizing wireless carts.

Dr. Smiley confirmed for **Ms. Luster** that centers are included in the discussion. **Ms. Luster** asked about homework assignments for students who do not have access to computers. **Dr. Smiley**

answered, “Any teacher or school that requires a student to submit homework online without first validating that the access is there is in violation of School Board policy.”

Ms. Gioello asked about outdated operating systems. **Dr. Smiley** said the District has standards for operating systems, ETS has communicated those standards, and every principal and teacher has the written standards. Sometimes there are older computers in the schools because of a reluctance on the part of individuals to learn new operating systems.

Condition 3: Standards of Service

Dr. Blasik talked about BEEP (Broward Educational Enterprise Portal). It is a “very strong tool” that provides lesson plans and access to resource materials for the classroom teacher. There is still a lot to do to address the Level 1 and 2 students, and the District will continue to work on that area.

Condition 4: AP and Honors

Dr. Blasik told the Diversity Committee that there are six AP core courses that every school must offer. Occasionally a school may feel that there is not sufficient enrollment that year to offer the course. The school is told that is not a reason to not offer it. Those core courses must be offered every year. The Diversity Committee had asked her department to look at the numbers and see if there are any courses that are offered in almost all schools that are not core courses. There are three courses that fall in that category. They are AP Psychology, AP Statistics, and AP U.S. Government and Politics.

Dr. Blasik pointed out that a gap still remains between Black and White student participation in AP and high rigor courses. A great deal of effort is being put into ensuring that capable students are taking those courses. **Dr. Smiley** put Springboard in place in the middle schools to prepare those students for the higher rigor courses in high school.

Mr. Gazzano asked if there is a correlation between the AP numbers and the students who are in the IB program. **Dr. Blasik** answered that IB students who take the AP test do not have to be enrolled in the AP course. For instance, if a student takes IB statistics, he or she can take the AP test at no cost to the student. The District pays for the cost of the test. She said the majority of IB students do take the AP test.

Mr. Joseph wanted to know what is being done to bridge the gap between the minority and the new majority. This was a reference and a reminder that the numbers have shifted, and the White population is no longer the majority group in the District. He said we should begin to recognize and acknowledge the change. Regardless of the shift, a gap does still exist. **Dr. Blasik** said the District is working to reach out to the “college ready and the near college ready.” The key is to increase the rigor in middle school. **Dr. Smiley** said what the middle school reform mandate does is require the District to offer middle school students high school courses for credit. A problem with that is the generation of an official transcript for middle school students when they get to high school. The courses, which earn a “P” for Passed, are not included in the GPA. The State legislature has mandated that the courses be offered but have not yet addressed the GPA issue. **Mr. Joseph** said he is less interested in the numbers of Black and Brown students who are taking the AP courses than he is in preparing the students for academic rigor when they are in elementary school. How do we identify capable students, ensure they are ready in elementary school, and reach out to the students and the families to get them into the classes? **Dr. Smiley** answered that the District has universal screening very early on to identify

students with potential. Teachers are trained on vertical teaming. She talked about Essential Teaching Tools, which is used to gauge if teachers have the tools they need to instruct in a quality manner. **Dr. Smiley** suggested the site visit teams ask teachers if the Tools are being used when they visit the schools. The Essential Teaching Tools (see attached) can be found on her website.

Mr. Pedlar expressed his concern about the level of “cushioning” that is being given to students rather than preparing them for the reality of having to go for a job when they leave school. Students need to be prepared for the diversity and the reality of the workplace. They will have to compete head to head with their peers. He is concerned that they will expect the same kind of “cushioning” rather than understanding that they will have to produce and not be supported in their jobs. The **Chair** responded that, while this is a bit removed from the topic at hand, which is the Report, her feeling is that, because students are not starting out on an equal footing, the District has to create something to equalize them to get them to the point where they can take AP courses and compete with their peers successfully.

Mr. Gazzano asked if a student graduates from the International Baccalaureate program, is there guaranteed placement in certain colleges in the country? **Dr. Smiley** said she does not have an answer to that question but will research it.

Jack Ciminera presented the remaining portion of the Report.

Condition 5: Athletic Facilities and Extracurricular Activities

Mr. Ciminera noted that two of the indicators have been met. The two remaining are the athletic facilities in high schools (86.6%) and core extracurricular activity (87%). **Ms. Gioello** noted the inequity in athletic facilities for male and female. **Dr. Smiley** stated that they file an EEO report each year on equity for boys and girls, and there has been no issue with the facilities. There is an issue in the participation levels for boys and girls. Now that cheerleading is a sport, the numbers should improve.

Dr. Brown commented that there are two systems at work here. There is a quantitative system for tracking indicators and the Diversity Committee’s qualitative system for tracking inequities. Referencing **Ms. Gioello**’s comments, the quantitative results for facilities are not the issue when the site visit team goes to the school and looks at the qualitative conditions of the same facilities. This is a vital discussion for another time.

Ms. Gioello commented on the “deplorable” access issues related to disabled students and their participation in athletics. She stated this equity issue must be addressed.

Mr. Badran asked if 5.1 (The athletic facilities at the high school meet the District standards...and are in satisfactory condition.) and 5.3 (Schools identified as offering core extracurricular activity.) can be met and if so, when? **Dr. Smiley** stated her belief that the District will get close but that it would vary from “one 5-year capital plan to the next.” She feels that the District will always be within the 86-100% range, mostly due to maintenance requirements for athletic facilities. **Dr. Blasik** added that many schools aren’t meeting the standard because of construction, fields being moved, class size reduction, and high student population. The goal is 100%, but it may take a while. **Mr. Badran** referred to 5.3’s core extracurricular activity, which is at 87%, and asked how long before the District would be able to add the activities to the remaining schools to bring them to 100% compliance. This issue will be looked at.

Mr. Foulkes raised the issue of Lockhart Stadium and the fact that it would be available for only one more year. **Dr. Smiley** responded that the City's priority remained spring practice for the Orioles at Lockhart. The District is looking at other options for addressing this issue. A big problem is the lack of land for construction of a replacement stadium. **Dr. Brown** suggested the Diversity Committee keep this issue in their minds for a follow-up discussion.

Condition 6: Media Centers

Five of the eight indicators have been met. **Mr. Ciminera** pointed out that there is much work left to do to meet Indicator 6.8 (No more than 50% of the collections have publication dates prior to 1991/older than 15-years.). This standard has not been met at any of the 4 levels. "Area Superintendents will be receiving quarterly reports by school, and they will take action to ensure collections have a majority of materials less than 15 years old." **Ms. Gioello** observed that there has been an improvement in the age of the collections at schools that the Diversity Committee visited.

Condition 7: Discipline

Four of the seven Indicators have been met, and one has been nearly met. **Mr. Ciminera** stated that the challenge continues to be "data quality and the results in aggregate." To remedy this, the District is addressing the format for data collection.

Mr. Joseph asked how the Indicators 7.2 (The District will summarize on a school-by-school basis the proportion of disciplinary actions that comply with the Discipline Matrix prescription, as well as, external, multiple external, and internal suspension rates, and the proportion of alternative placements.) and 7.3 (The school uses the Discipline Matrix to determine internal and external suspension.) are being addressed. He said that when the Discipline Matrix is not applied as it was intended, the "Brown and Black children suffer more. What is being done to see this condition go up to 80-90%?" **Dr. Smiley** said the District retrained all individuals who would utilize this Matrix in the school. She added that the **School Board** instructed the District to include the Matrix in the Student Code of Conduct packet that went home to parents so parents would know what is expected and what the consequences would be. It is also posted on the District website. The Matrix was given to teachers to help them understand the process. They are working to ensure the data is entered correctly in the appropriate columns.

Mr. Foulkes distributed a copy of the letter to parents that accompanied the Discipline Matrix that was sent home. This is something the Suspension Subcommittee has asked for since the introduction of the Matrix. He expressed his appreciation. However, one thing they asked for that has not happened is a workshop for parents about the Matrix.

To a question from **Ms. Luster** about Behavior Specialists, **Dr. Smiley** stated there is a job description for this position, and she will provide her with a copy. (See attached.)

Condition 8: 5-Year Capital Plan

Mr. Ciminera stated that the Capital Plan identifies District priorities, and this year's Plan was finalized in August 2007. The Plan includes ADA compliance projects. This is a long-range effort to improve the level of compliance.

Ms. Luster expressed concern that, in some schools, money that was budgeted for upgrades was not spent, and the problems within that school are the same or getting worse. **Dr. Smiley** said she would like to talk with her further about this situation.

Mr. Badran asked for a timeline to get Indicator 8.5 (The Five-Year Capital Plan contains a listing of ADA facilities compliance projects. The District ensures that facilities meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act [ADA].) to move from 27% to 70-80% range. **Dr. Blasik** said this is a follow-up type question. The information would have to come from the Facilities Department. **Dr. Brown** said, "It would be very helpful if this question was attached to District indicators of what the goal was and where they are trying to go."

Ms. Price asked when the Kathleen C. Wright School Board Administration Building would be ADA compliant. **Dr. Brown** said that was another follow-up question. They should at least have the goal for the timeline.

Mr. Foulkes suggested **Mr. Garretson** meet with the Diversity Committee to give a status update. **Dr. Brown** will try to have it on the November agenda. It was suggested that **Angel Aviles**, Accessibility Projects Specialist, also be invited.

Ms. Gioello volunteered to serve on the Facilities Task Force as a representative from the Diversity Committee. **Dr. Brown** made it official.

Condition 9: Student Assignment

Mr. Ciminera reported that the Indicator has been met.

Upon conclusion of the presentation, **Dr. Brown** expressed her hope that in the future, the District's goals would be included with the quantitative indicators. She added that, as the Diversity Committee's qualitative report becomes part of the process for looking at equity, the final combined document would become more "user friendly."

Motion by Julian Gazzano, 2nd by Barbara Stuart: "Move to accept the document."

Mr. Foulkes stated that the document is the Superintendent's Report, and that **Mr. Notter** will be at the Diversity Committee meeting in October. He suggested waiting until **Mr. Notter's** presentation on the report before voting on it. **Mr. Joseph** responded that, in the past, the document was accepted or rejected following **Dr. Blasik's** presentation and felt that the process should continue. He reminded the members that **Mr. Notter** is the new Superintendent and that the report was written by the former Superintendent. **Mr. Badran** stated, in his opinion, the vote is really a reflection of whether or not the Diversity Committee believes the District is in compliance with the CCC Settlement Agreement.

(At 8:30 p.m., the Diversity Committee voted to extend the meeting for five minutes.)

Ms. Gioello suggested tabling the motion to the next meeting. After further discussion, the vote was taken.

Motion Passed 8-6.

Dr. Watts advised the Diversity Committee Members that the Report went to the **School Board** on August 3, 2007. The **Board** had some questions on each of the nine Conditions, and departments are completing their follow-up. **Dr. Watts** will forward to the Diversity Committee the **Board's** questions and the responses from the Departments. She further stated that **Mr. Notter** will be at the October meeting to discuss the joint report proposal, with the Superintendent's Report as the quantitative section and the Site Visit Report as the qualitative section.

SUBCOMMITTEES

HIRING PRACTICES, Randy Fleischer, Chair

No report

SITE VISITS, Bapthol Joseph, Chair

Mr. Joseph reported on the visit to Fort Lauderdale High School that took place on Wednesday, September 19. It was a very good visit. The team did find some issues that are common to other schools they visited and has requested a follow-up meeting with District personnel. Academic rigor was observed in all the classes they visited. He stated that the visit pointed out a "myth in the school system." When you have a school with a minority/majority and the principal is not minority, the myth says that this cannot work. **Mr. Joseph** stated that Fort Lauderdale High School showed that this can work. The school made it on a list of Top 500 Schools in the Nation. He said the school has a caring and committed staff.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, Jeanne Jusevic, Chair

No report

STUDENT SUSPENSION, Marguerite Luster/Ernestine Price, Co-Chairs

No report

TECHNOLOGY, Ron Simon-Menendez, Chair

No report.

DISTRICT COMMITTEES:

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

No report

NOVA POLICY REVIEW

No report.

POLICY 5000, Jeanne Jusevic

No report

POLICY REVIEW, Julian Gazzano

Report attached.

SITE SELECTION, Dr. Pam Brown

No report.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT, Jeanne Jusevic

No report.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Ron Simon-Menendez

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

The Chair recognized **Mr. Foulkes**, who asked to make a presentation to the Director of Diversity & Cultural Outreach. **Mr. Foulkes** attended the Seminole Tribes' celebration of their 50th Constitutional and Charter Anniversary. He was instrumental in developing a Resolution from the School Board honoring the date. In his presentation to **Dr. Watts**, **Mr. Foulkes** gave the following data: Native Americans comprise about 1% of the U.S. population but are the most ethnically diverse; one study found Native American tribes account for 50% of the identified ethno-cultural groups in this country; tribal membership usually forms the basis of identification, with Native American or Indian identity being secondary; there are 517 tribes recognized by the U.S. government, 365 recognized by individual states, and 52 self-identified groups. All guests at the event were given a commemorative book, a copy of which **Mr. Foulkes** presented to **Dr. Watts**. The book contained a copy of the School Board's Resolution and a copy of a picture of Mr. Foulkes presenting the School Board's Resolution and the County's Proclamation to the **Honorable Mitchell Cypress**, Chairman of the Seminole Tribe.

Dr. Brown thanked **Mr. Foulkes** for all he has done, and is continuing to do, for this community and for the Diversity Committee.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:35 p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for October 4, 2007, at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room of the KCW Administration Building**

These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the September 20, 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.