

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

**DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING
KCW Administration Building
December 6, 2007**

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:42 p.m. by **Dr. Elizabeth Watts**, Director, Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department, without a quorum present. The Committee reached quorum at 6:56 p.m.

Members Present:

| | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|------------------------------|
| Jawhar Badran | Bapthol Joseph | Alyce Zahniser |
| Cedric Douglas | Jeanne Jusevic | LaToya Jackson, Student Rep. |
| Randy Fleischer | Sherry Reece | Alex Lange, Student Advisor |
| Roland Foulkes | Michael Rajner | Designee |
| Julian Gazzano | Peter Valletutti | |
| Patrick Jabouin | Barbara Williamson | |

Members Absent:

| | |
|-------------------|------------------------------|
| Phoebee Francois | Ron Simon-Menéndez |
| Lina Gioello | Barbara Stuart |
| Marguerite Luster | Daniel Starman, Student Rep. |
| George Pedlar | Zach Fertel, Student Rep. |
| Ernestine Price | |

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

Dr. Elizabeth Watts, Director; Jean Darius, Coordinator; Mercedes Hardisson; Terri Jones; Maryse Nelson; Nancy Weintraub

District Staff:

Dr. Earlean Smiley; Angel Aviles, Facilities & Construction Department; Juana Romaniuk, Facilities & Construction Department; Jerry Graziouse, Director, Safety Department

Guest:

Taffie Jackson

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

The Committee adopted the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

The minutes from November 1, 2007 were approved without change.

CHAIR'S REPORT

This was the first meeting following the School Board's Organizational Meeting. Hence, there was no Chair, as yet. A new Chair will be elected at the January 2008 meeting, per the Committee's Bylaws. The meeting was conducted by **Dr. Elizabeth Watts**, Director, Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department.

Mr. Foulkes again raised his concern about members who have missed many meetings and are still part of the Diversity Committee. He said it affects quorum and the Committee's ability to conduct business. **Dr. Watts** pointed out that the **School Board's** Organizational Meeting was held on November 20. **Board** members made their appointments to the Committee at that time. The matrix of Diversity Committee members has been posted on the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department's website. School Board Policy 1.7 states that members who are absent 3 times in a row, or 4 times in a calendar year, are automatically removed from the Committee. However, **School Board** members have the discretion to reappoint. The Department advises Board members of attendance on a regular basis.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT, Dr. Elizabeth Watts

Jeanette Verboom, Coordinator of Charter Schools, sent an email regarding the Charter Schools Task Force. The Task Force is charged with addressing the programmatic, operational, and financial concerns specific to Charter Schools. The **School Board** requested a representative from the Diversity Committee. The names of the Task Force members will go to the **School Board** in mid-December. **Mr. Douglas** volunteered to be the Diversity Committee representative.

The committee working on the **School Board's** new Strategic Plan held public and employee forums, as well as brown bag lunches at schools to gain student input. The members are now ready to work on Goals and Objectives. District Committee members are: **Keith Bromery**, **Dr. Katherine Blasik**, **Bob Boegli**, and **Gracie Diaz**. They asked for a representative from the Diversity Committee to participate in one of two facilitated sessions. The dates for the sessions are January 8 and 9, 2008. **Mr. Joseph** volunteered and asked that he be sent the meeting information.

At the January meeting, **Ann Evans**, from Secondary School Reform, will present on High School Reform Redesign, and **Jill Young**, Director, will present on School Boundaries.

Mr. Darius reported on the status of Motions and Requests.

- The Department received most of the student suspension data, from the District Expulsion Policy Implementation Department, that **Ms. Luster** had requested. He asked that **Joel Smith** meet with **Ms. Luster** and the Student Suspension Subcommittee to discuss the data and the format of the report.
- The Department presented information regarding schools that do not have morning audio/video student announcements capability. There are still a few schools that have not responded to the request. Once all the information has been received, it will be forwarded to the Diversity Committee members.
- The response to the request for a time certain for Coconut Creek High School's wiring for BECON was included in the Members' packets. The information included a detailed account of all BECON-related work orders throughout the District.

Mr. Darius reminded the members to renew their badges. They are to bring the old badge to the Security Clearance Department, at which time they will receive a new one. **Mr. Darius** said the badges are only necessary if they are going to visit schools.

Mr. Darius advised the members that it is “extremely important” that they give January’s subcommittee meeting dates to **Ms. Nelson** as soon as possible. Offices will be closed for several days during the winter break.

It is time to select a Nominating Committee for elections, which will be held in January, per Bylaws. It was requested that a resume and letter of interest be forwarded from members interested in becoming Chair or Vice-Chair. Nominations will be accepted from the floor at the January meeting.

Dr. Watts offered the book, *My Soul is a Witness: A History of Black Fort Lauderdale*, as a gift from **Dr. Pam Brown**, former Chair, to a Diversity Committee member who would like to have it. **Ms. Williamson** was the first member to request the book, and Dr. Watts presented it to her.

Dr. Watts referred to the “*District Matrix Subcommittee’s Response to Diversity Committee’s Student Suspensions Subcommittee Report 2002-2003*” and asked **Mr. Foulkes** to give a brief history of the document. **Mr. Foulkes** said the Student Suspension Subcommittee presented 48 recommendations to the full **Diversity Committee** in 2003. The recommendations addressed disparities in the number of Black students, particularly male students, who received suspensions. The Report was forwarded to the **School Board** in February. The **Board** responded to the Committee in 2004. The Subcommittee reviewed the response and made changes, where appropriate. Though no longer chair of the Subcommittee, **Mr. Foulkes** was interested in the status of the recommendations that were made. He corresponded with **Mr. Notter**. The correspondence went to **Dr. Smiley**, and the response was received by **Mr. Foulkes**. A Matrix was then distributed to the Diversity Committee members. **Mr. Foulkes** said, “The real task for the Suspensions Subcommittee is to stay on top of the 48 recommendations.” **Dr. Watts** told the members that the portions of the Matrix in Italics represent updated information. To a question by **Mr. Douglas**, **Dr. Watts** responded that all questions remained the same; they were not changed. The responses to the questions were updated. **Mr. Joseph** said he has a lot of questions about suspensions and said he would like to have someone address the Committee on this subject. **Dr. Watts** suggested it would be a good idea to give the Committee members time to read the document and identify concerns and questions they might have before taking that step.

Dr. Watts reported that **Mr. Garretson** was not able to address the Committee at this meeting, but he did send **Angel Aviles**, **Juana Romaniuk**, and **Jerry Graziose** as his representatives.

PRESENTATION BY FACILITIES AND CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

Mr. Aviles reported on the status of the repairs that are required under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), referring to Public Entities.

- There are 21 projects for restrooms, for which the Department requested \$31million, divided into 3 years.
- There is a new plan to address the projects already on the books. That plan was scheduled to be presented to the Board on December 17.

- Facilities & Construction Management is working on ADA accommodations throughout the District for ESE students. They are working with the Exceptional Student Education, the Safety, and the Maintenance Departments.

Discussion

Mr. Fleischer raised concerns about the accessibility of many restrooms. **Mr. Aviles** responded that the restrooms are being looked at now. He pointed out the difference between “existing” and “new” schools, as they relate to the ADA. He said 80% of the schools in the District are considered “existing” schools, which are those schools built before 1992. Not all of those restrooms have to be accessible. By code, the school is supposed to have one (1) accessible bathroom in the building. Directional signs leading to the accessible bathroom are required. He said the District goes beyond that.

Mr. Douglas asked if **Mr. Aviles** had a list of the schools and the locations of accessible bathrooms. **Mr. Aviles** responded that this information appears on a database. **Mr. Douglas** asked if there is a list of the 21 projects referred to earlier and, as a parent, how he could access that information. **Dr. Smiley** responded that as a parent, as a citizen, a Public Records Request could be made to the Superintendent’s Office, or the Area Office where the school is located.

When **Ms. Jusevic** asked if this information is available on the District’s website, **Ms. Romaniuk** stated that it is. It appears as ADA construction information under each school. **Dr. Smiley** referred to the Superintendent’s 2006-2007 CCC Report; there is a matrix that shows the schools and the status for each school. That report is available on the web. It could be accessed by going onto the District’s website/Departments/Research Services, then click on the desired report.

Mr. Foulkes referred to the Information Request he made on December 7, 2006 asking for a complete update on the status of repairs resulting from Hurricane Wilma, to include “actual amounts expended, received, reimbursed since November 2005.” He wants an updated version of **Mr. Garretson’s** previous report, what the actual costs are, and the status of each item. **Dr. Smiley** said that information is available and will be forwarded.

Mr. Joseph asked for a clarification of the specific purpose for asking **Mr. Garretson** to address the Committee. **Mr. Foulkes** responded that the request was for an update on the status of repairs and the costs related to Hurricane Wilma. He reminded the members that site visits were postponed, due to the damages incurred at many schools. **Mr. Joseph** stated that the information presented at this meeting did not address those concerns and advised that this should be in the form of an Information Request. **Mr. Foulkes** asked that a copy of **Mr. Garretson’s** previous report be distributed to Committee members prior to his visit. The report was issued from the Safety Department, “*Hurricane Wilma Expense Reporting Departments.*”

MOTION by Mr. Fleischer, 2nd by Mr. Joseph: “Facilities & Construction Management Department ADA Compliance provide information to the diversity Committee regarding ADA compliance of school bathrooms and plans to renovate school bathrooms to become ADA compliance (sic).”

Motion passed 15-0

Ms. Jusevic raised the issue of non-compliant classrooms. **Mr. Aviles** stated that schools built prior to 1992 must have a minimum of one (1) accessible classroom for students. Each grade level has to be accessible.

Mr. Rajner asked how the District accommodates teachers who have accessibility issues. **Mr. Aviles** said the teachers would have to make the requests at the Equal Educational Opportunities (EEO) Department and be evaluated to ensure the requests are valid under ADA.

Mr. Joseph referred to a previous response related to classroom accessibility and students in wheelchairs. **Dr. Smiley** agreed with **Mr. Aviles'** statement that not all classrooms have to be accessible. However, programs and common areas must be accessible. A school's master schedule addresses students' needs and assigns students to the classrooms that are, or will be, made accessible. "The IEPs or 504s would dictate personal accommodations that must be made for the students that are scheduled into that school."

Mr. Joseph asked **Mr. Graziose** about high thresholds in schoolrooms. **Mr. Graziose** said schools are inspected twice a year. Thresholds cannot be more than 1/2 inch. That is the safety code. Thresholds that are higher are placed on the Safety Inspection Report and work ordered. All general areas are to be accessible and ramped. He said most of the money is spent on the older eastern schools to help them meet the codes.

To an observation by **Mr. Badran**, **Dr. Smiley** stated that the District does have some instances where students have been assigned to classes that are not accessible to them. Class size reduction has compounded this problem. The District addresses the concerns as they are raised.

Mr. Graziose referred to the report previously mentioned by **Mr. Foulkes** and stated he was the author of that report. Further discussion on this issue was tabled to a time when **Mr. Garretson** would be present and able to address the Diversity Committee. **Mr. Graziose's** report, which is comprised of his notes related to the Hurricane, will be available for that meeting.

Mr. Graziose continued. He said there is a claim for every District site in the county, with the exception of Pine Ridge Center, which was under construction at the time. There are 614 claims for storm-related damage. Total cost of the claims came to \$68, 417, 033.69. Of the amount due from FEMA (approximately \$61.7 million), about half has been received by the District, thus far. FEMA has granted a time extension for work completion to October 2009. Currently, the District has 197 appeals with FEMA. Hurricane Rita was closed out two (2) weeks ago; the District is currently closing out Hurricane Francis. **Mr. Graziose** is presently working on five (5) hurricanes.

Dr. Watts ended the discussion and thanked the guests.

OLD BUSINESS

None

SUBCOMMITTEES

HIRING PRACTICES, Randy Fleischer, Chair

No report

SITE VISITS, Bapthol Joseph, Chair

Mr. Joseph thanked the members of the Diversity Committee who have participated on the site visits. More members are attending the visits, and it has made a difference. He announced that Country Hills Elementary would be visited on Friday, December 7, at 9:00 a.m.

MOTION by Mr. Gazzano, 2nd by Ms. Williamson: “Motion to send the Site Visitation Report for 2006-2007 to the Broward School Board.”

Motion passed 15-0

The Site Visitation Report for 2006-2007 was previously presented for the Committee’s review and approval. **Dr. Watts** announced the Report will be sent to the Executive Leadership Team for review, after which it will be transmitted to the School Board.

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:

SCHOOL BOUNDARIES, Jeanne Jusevic

A meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, December 11, at Noon. They will be discussing boundary scenarios. **Ms. Jusevic** encouraged members to go on the District website and look at the scenarios for high school LLL. Various scenarios could have an effect on the diversity breakdowns of affected schools. **Ms. Young** is scheduled to visit the Diversity Committee in January and could address member concerns at that time.

DISCIPLINE COMMITTEE

No report

NOVA POLICY REVIEW

No report.

POLICY 5000, Jeanne Jusevic

No report

POLICY REVIEW, Julian Gazzano

The September report is attached. The December report was not available at the time of the Diversity Committee meeting.

SITE SELECTION, Randy Fleischer

Mr. Fleischer and **Mr. Darius** attended the Site Selection meeting. Four sites were proposed to relieve overcrowded Cypress Bay High School. There were 2 sites in Davie, one at the Bonaventure Golf Course, and one on the Ron Bergeron site near Cypress Bay. The **Site Selection Committee** again supported the Bergeron site. He stated that it was reported that **Mr. Notter** was interested in Davie. **Mr. Fleischer** said the Town of Davie does not want a school there because it would take away from their tax base.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT, Jeanne Jusevic

The main issue at this time is whether or not to allow students to make-up work they missed. This is related, in many cases, to parents not calling the schools for excused student absences and parents' understanding of the process. **Ms. Jusevic** said that, in some cases, there is language difficulty and an inability or difficulty in understanding taped messages. **Ms. Jackson** said she works in her school's office and hears the tapes. Many times the messages cannot be understood because of lack of clarity and/or accents. **Ms. Jusevic** explained it is the purview of the Code of Conduct Committee to write the rules. It is the responsibility of the District to ensure that site-based management is apprised of the changes to the rules and enforces the Code of Conduct. **Mr. Rajner** suggested schools could establish phone numbers specifically for persons who speak other languages, or don't speak English clearly. People who speak those languages would monitor those calls.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Ron Simon-Menendez

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

Behavior Oversight Committee

Mr. Foulkes reported on the new Behavior Oversight Committee. He related that, when **Mr. Notter** visited the Diversity Committee in March 2007, he laid out five (5) key priorities he wanted to focus on. They were: student achievement; inclusivity within the community; teachers; labor relations with employees at all levels; and communication. He developed an oversight committee to focus on prevention and intervention. **Mr. Notter** wants a system that "addresses the issues and does not put students out on the street." **Mr. Foulkes** said the Committee needs to look at the suspensions issue "and all of the other disparities related to all students, but related to minority students, in particular." He said he was asked by **Mr. Notter** to be part of this Committee.

Mr. Foulkes said there was a meeting of the Florida Council of Independent Schools Conference. One of the sessions was "*Reporting on Disciplinary Infractions to Colleges.*" He said the focus in the past has been on changing what is done within the K-12 system. The effect of multiple suspensions on a student's ability to enter college was never discussed. This panel had Admissions Directors from various schools. They said that colleges do look at the disciplinary history of students applying for admission. **Mr. Foulkes** advised that there is a Common Application, used by students applying to multiple colleges and universities. It eliminates the need to fill out more than one application. There is a section that asks:

1. "Have you ever been found responsible for a disciplinary violation at an educational institution you have attended from 9th grade, or the international equivalent, forward, whether related to academic misconduct, or behavioral misconduct, that resulted in your probation, suspension, removal, or expulsion from the institution? Yes or no."
2. "Have you ever been convicted of a misdemeanor, felony, or other crime? Yes or no."

Mr. Foulkes said Admissions Directors take that information very seriously. He said the District needs to rethink how freely referrals are written or SROs are called in, and it needs to be sensitive to issues kids face every day, such as their socioeconomic status. **Mr. Foulkes** referenced an Urban League report titled, "*What Equality Would Look Like in Broward County, Florida: The State of African-Americans in Broward County and the Economic Impact of Unequal Levels of Educational Attainment Between African-Americans and Whites.*"

Nominating Committee

Mr. Darius asked for volunteers to serve on the Nominating Committee. The following members volunteered: **Mr. Badran, Mr. Jabouin, Mr. Joseph, Mr. Rajner, and Ms. Williamson.**

2006 CSC Strategic Plan

Mr. Foulkes distributed copies of the 2006 Children's Services Council Strategic Plan. The Plan goes to year 2010.

HIV Report by FIU

Mr. Foulkes announced that December 1 was World Aids Day. He said FIU just completed a five year study of HIV prevention in Broward County amongst minority communities. He distributed the report to the members.

Motions – Mr. Darius facilitated motions under New Business.

MOTION by Mr. Foulkes, 2nd by Mr. Joseph: "That the Diversity Committee request the School Board of Broward County to identify and report the racial and ethnic makeup of its appointees to the Diversity Committee and to all other district boards, committees, councils, etc. in line with United States Office of Management and Budget's statistical Directive 15 – (New "Race and Ethnic Identification," 1997). The first such report will cover the January-December 2007 calendar year; and, a mid-term report (January-June 2007) will be forwarded to the Diversity Committee BEFORE OR at its January, 2008 meeting. The final 2007 report will be forwarded to the Diversity Committee at its March 2008 meeting."

Mr. Douglas asked **Mr. Foulkes** if he is looking at quotas. If so, it would limit his "opportunities to participate. This is up to the discretion of the Board Members." **Mr. Foulkes** said it had nothing to do with quotas. It has to do with seeing where we are in 2007, given the changing demographics in Broward County. He said the Motion resulted from an article that was published, titled "*Minorities Lacking on City, County Advisory Board. Growing Population Not Reflected on Boards.*"

(The Committee agreed to extend the meeting for 15 minutes.)

Mr. Vallettuti wanted a clarification of the "etc." in the motion. **Mr. Foulkes** said it refers to "boards, committees, councils, task forces, organs or bodies of governance and decision making." He said it refers to that and nothing more. After further discussion, **Mr. Darius** called for a vote.

Motion passed 10-4.

MOTION by Mr. Fleischer, 2nd by Mr. Rajner: “That the Diversity Committee utilize Student Council members to respond to surveys similar to the work of the Site Visitation Committees so that the Diversity Committee can be better informed as to which schools have problems with technology, textbooks, AP and Honors courses, athletic facilities and equipment, media centers, disciplinary practices, cafeterias, water fountains and overall school facilities.”

(Committee agreed to extend the meeting for 15 minutes.)

Discussion involved having student focus groups during site visits, reviewing copies of student surveys, the appropriateness of input from elementary school students, having community input, its affect on the Committee’s oversight obligation under the Settlement Agreement, and placing the instrument on the website for students to use anonymously.

Dr. Smiley informed the Committee that there are two **School Board** approved processes in place to obtain student feedback. They are the Speak Up, Speak Out process and the Student Survey, which works through the Research & Evaluation Department. The survey instrument is updated each year. A concern regarding placing the survey on the website is that the instrument could be misused and misinterpreted by members of the community. That could result in “this Committee moving down a path that would not be sanctioned by the Board or the community that we serve.” **Dr. Smiley** said, “To bring an official Motion to determine the work agenda of the Student Council, without a process in place to engage their comments as a governing body,” is inappropriate and should be re-addressed.

Discussion continued. The question was called.

Motion failed 3-10

MOTION by Mr. Joseph, 2nd by Mr. Foulkes: “Broward County School Board disaggregate Black ethnicity and Hispanic ethnicity based on country of origin and/or primary languages spoken at home on all its student’s registration forms.”

Motion passed 13-1

Committee Approved Information Requests

- 1. Mr. Fleischer: “The Diversity Committee has requested that the School Board Attorney review the U.S. Supreme Court case of ‘Parents Involved in Community Schools v. Seattle School District No. 1 et al.’ decided June 28, 2007 and that the Board attorney report to the Diversity Committee as to the School Board’s compliance with this ruling on racial classifications being used to determine school assignments.”**
- 2. Mr. Foulkes: “The names, TOTAL number, and lengths of time of schools that have been WITHOUT a BECON tower, COMCAST cable access, services, programming, etc. AND, the date(s) certain when EVERY BROWARD SCHOOL will be on all of BECON’s broadcast media.”**
- 3. Mr. Foulkes: “One of the BECON staff mentioned that BECON receives \$100,000 through the CCC Settlement. Please secure clarification of this ASAP.**

- a. What is the exact amount?
 - b. Is it an annual allocation?
 - c. When did the allocation begin?
 - d. What is the money used for specifically?
 - e. What has it been used for specifically since the CCC Settlement Agreement of 2000?
 - f. Who authorizes the disbursement of these funds?
 - g. If this is true, why was November 1, 2007 THE FIRST TIME the Diversity Committee learned of this?"
4. Mr. Joseph: "Number of students arrested by SROs broken down by ethnicity for school year 2005-2006, 2006-2007."

Meeting was adjourned at 8:51 p.m.

The next meeting is scheduled for January 10, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room of the KCW Administration Building

These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the December 6, 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.