

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF BROWARD COUNTY, FLORIDA

DIVERSITY COMMITTEE MEETING

KCW Administration Building

April 10, 2008

SUMMARY

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order, at 6:39 p.m. by **Roland Foulkes**, Chair, without a quorum. The Committee had a quorum between 7:10 p.m. and 7:40 p.m.

Members Present:

Cedric Douglas	Bapthol Joseph	Barbara Williamson
Randy Fleischer	Jeanne Jusevic	Suzanne Yach
Roland Foulkes	George Pedlar	Alex Lange, Student
Phoebee Francois	Michael Rajner	Advisor Designee
Julian Gazzano	Sherry Reece	
Lina Gioello	Nancy Rogan	

Members Absent:

Jawhar Badran	Ernestine Price	LaToya Jackson, Student Rep.
Patrick Jabouin	Simone Ruiz-Narcis	Daniel Starman, Student Rep.
Pepe Lopez	Alyce Zahniser	Zach Fertel, Student Rep.
Marguerite Luster		

Diversity & Cultural Outreach Staff:

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

District Staff:

Dr. Earlean C. Smiley, Deputy Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction/Student Support Services; Anne Evans Secondary School Reform; Jeanette Verboom, Charter Schools

Guests:

Tobias Parker, Shontae Thomas

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Due to the lack of quorum, the Committee did not adopt the Agenda.

APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Due to the lack of quorum, approval of the March 13, 2008, minutes was deferred to the May meeting.

Mr. Fleischer expressed his concern over the fact that the March minutes were twenty-one pages long, due in large part to sections that were typed verbatim, at the request of the **Chair**.

He believes it is a “poor use of staff resources.” The **Chair** responded that there was precedent for verbatim minutes, that two years ago the minutes were transcribed by a court reporter. Following that, the Committee went to a summary format.

(**Ms. Jusevic** arrived at 6:40 p.m. **Mr. Lange** arrived at 7:03 p.m.; however his attendance is not included in quorum. **Mr. Pedlar** arrived at 7:10 p.m. **Ms. Gioello** arrived at 7:34 p.m. **Mr. Joseph** arrived at 8:00 p.m.)

CHAIR’S REPORT, Roland Foulkes

Mr. Foulkes had copies of page 1 of the February 7, 2008 minutes, in which he highlighted one paragraph. Copied onto the back of that sheet, “from the CCC presentation in February, you have the four lawsuits that have led us to where we are today. Again, just as a review and a reminder of our focus.”

The **Chair** forwarded information about a summit that was held in Sunrise. It was an “emergency call to action” summit, addressing academic underachievement in Juvenile Justice over-representation of Black and Hispanic males. He was invited to be a panelist and shared the **Diversity Committee’s** work in addressing student underachievement for all students, as well as student suspensions. From that came a new initiative called “Educate or Die”, which is based on Chicago’s Black Star Project.

Mr. Foulkes advised the members that the **City of Lauderdale Lakes** is in the process of conducting a study to see whether or not the City will file a lawsuit against the **School Board of Broward County** and the **State of Florida**, concerning the conditions at Boyd Anderson and other schools in that district. He was asked by the chair of the City’s Education Committee to comment on the CCC Settlement at a City Commission workshop. He informed the Commissioners that he is the Chair of the Diversity Committee, but his comments would be made as a private citizen. He suggested the City take a look at the District’s website to gain insight into what has been done to improve conditions.

DIRECTOR’S REPORT, Dr. Elizabeth Watts

Dr. Watts introduced new member **Nancy Rogan**, who was appointed by **School Board Member Eleanor Sobel**, District 1.

The **Committee’s** recommendation to suspend site visits for school year 2008-2009, in order to revise and update the Site Visitation Form, went to the **Board** on March 18. The **Board** deferred the item, due to concerns about the **Committee’s** responsibility to monitor the schools in relation to the CCC Settlement Agreement. **Dr. Watts** related **Board Member Stephanie Kraft’s** concern about how the Committee could “monitor” if they do not go into the schools. The item was deferred until two workshops, requested by the **Board**, have been presented:

- 1) The **CCC Settlement Agreement Orientation**, to include the CCC Attorneys, will be held on May 13. The Committee will be advised of the location and time as soon as those details have been determined.
- 2) The **workshop regarding the Diversity Committee** will be held on May 27. The Committee will be notified of the location and time.

Dr. Watts asked that meeting dates for subcommittees be given to **Maryse Nelson** immediately following adjournment.

The Human Relations Conference for high schools was scheduled for April 14 at the Signature Grand. The conference was sponsored by OneCommUnity, formerly the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ). Students would be reporting on their school's activities for this year and announcing plans for next year.

Marion Williams moderated the 2nd Martin Luther King Celebration Committee International Distance Learning Conference at the African-American Research Library in Fort Lauderdale.

Dr. Mark Quintana will address the Committee in May on the subject of E-books. This is a follow-up to the August 2007 Board Workshop on the CCC Annual Report. **Dr. Parks** asked that E-books be further discussed with the Committee to fulfill the requirements, with hard-copy textbooks, under the Settlement Agreement's Condition 1, Textbooks.

Joel Smith will address the Committee in June to present information about the new discipline management system that is being piloted in the District. Also on the Agenda will be **Russell Clement** and **Jack Ciminera** to discuss the timeline for the CCC Report.

Mr. Darius gave an update on Motions and Information Requests.

- The response from the SIU and Professional Standards Department was submitted, per a request from **Mr. Joseph**.
- The response to questions regarding ESOL was forwarded to the Committee. However, the Department is awaiting a response to one question. That response will be forwarded to the Committee as soon as it received.
- Regarding the Motion in favor of "call centers" for speakers of other languages, the **Superintendent's** decision is not to establish a call center.
- **John Miracola** is prepared to present information about Career, Technical and Adult/Community Education (CTACE), as requested.

Mr. Darius noted that the January 2008 minutes indicated **Student Representative Alex Lange** was absent. In fact, he was present but had neglected to sign his name on the sign in sheet. **Mr. Darius** asked that this correction be noted when the minutes are adopted. The **Chair** made note of this.

OLD BUSINESS

The **Chair** announced that **Ann Evans**, District Coordinator, Smaller Learning Communities, Secondary School Reform, was at the meeting to follow up on her presentation in January 2008 and answered the Diversity Committee's questions.

PRESENTATION BY ANN EVANS, SECONDARY SCHOOL REFORM

Ms. Evans began her presentation by referring to her previous visit when it was pointed out to her that the High School Redesign document did not adequately address parental involvement or include the word "parents". Subsequently, she asked the Principals' Organization to add "parents" to the Six

Core Beliefs under Engaged Community and Youth, so that it would read “Engaged Parents, Community and Youth.”

The name High School Reform has been changed to Secondary School Reform because data has shown that 9th grade is “really our last chance to save most students.” There has to be more focus on grades 6-9.

Ms. Evans referred to the list of questions submitted by Diversity Committee members, and said she would like to begin by addressing question #5: “What specifically does Broward’s initiative do to ensure at least 95% graduation of all students through the 9th-12th grade pipeline?” She started by saying that the graduation rate is a problem, not only in Broward County, but also throughout the nation. All six core principles, together, will affect the graduation rate.

1. Personalizing the Environment. Presently, teachers are sharing “common groups of students” with an administrator, guidance counselor, and a behavior specialist. All of whom are focusing in on the ninth grade. Where possible, the ninth grade is in a “separate geographical location from the rest of the school.” These students are monitored for attendance, behavior, and academic improvement. Currently, of ninth graders who are failing, only 10-15% go on to graduate. There is a mandatory transition program for Level 1 students. They will go to the high school for two weeks prior to the opening of school and will earn credit for that.
2. Academic Engagement. GLIDES is an example of project-based learning. Career, Technical and Adult/Community Education (CTACE) is part of academic engagement. **Ms. Evans** is on the leadership team for CTACE and said they are developing a 5-year strategic plan. One of the things they learned is that many of the programs have a 2-course plan. If they had 3 courses, the students would have a complete certificate in that area upon graduation.
3. Empowered Educators. These are teachers who truly make a difference in the life of the student. The “Professional Study Days” was developed in collaboration with the Broward Teachers Union. It is believed that by empowering teachers, there will be more effective educators in the classrooms, and that should result in an increased graduation rate.
4. Accountable Leaders. Forty-five minutes of every month is devoted to action research meetings. Groups are designed around the Core Beliefs, and they research to determine what will be the next steps in the plan.
5. Engaged Parents, Community & Youth. The Diversity Committee has a representative serving on the Graduation Rate Task Force. **Ms. Evans** said this is a perfect example of what is meant by “Engaged Parent, Community & Youth.” There are 148 members on the Task Force. It is comprised of parents, representatives of community organizations, and district personnel. The Task Force will present their blueprint to the **School Board** at the end of May.

Ms. Evans referred to the Small Learning Communities, and said the goals for the eight schools that are involved are aligned with the blueprint for redesign. One of the goals is to increase the graduation rate. The program has an external evaluator who looks at the data annually and reports on what is working and what is not. Adjustments are then made to address what is not working.

Stranahan High School, one of the eight schools, has been contacted by *Time* magazine. The senior editor had written an article in 2006 about the crisis in the graduation rate. Every spring since then, he followed that up with a positive article about some of the solutions being implemented. He would like to visit Stranahan High School because he has heard many positive things about their ninth grade center and has looked at their data. Stranahan will be included in the article he will be writing for the magazine.

Ms. Evans advised that, while the **District** believes the Core Beliefs are the way to go, we must remember, it will take time. We are moving in the right direction, but, again, it will take time.

To question #2: “Does Broward’s “High School Re-Design” initiative include Charter Schools (High Schools)?”, **Ms. Evans** answered that charter school principals are invited to participate in the monthly meetings.

Ms. Jusevic commented that parents were “noticeably absent” when the document was formulated. She said the average parent needs to be involved. At present, School Advisory Councils have to have a quorum in order to do business. That is 50% plus one parent and community members in order to do business. When she refers to parent involvement, she is talking about parents at the school level. **Ms. Jusevic** said part of the Secondary School Redesign should address how to “re-invite” parents back into the schools and make administration and teachers understand that parents are a resource and should be welcomed. **Ms. Evans** said she agrees completely with the comments about the importance of parent involvement. They are looking at ways to increase that participation at all schools. She does agree that statements about parental involvement need to be made more visible in the document and stated more specifically.

Ms. Jusevic stated that there is a “huge disconnect between middle school and high school.” She asked if the committee would be looking at how to better articulate between the two levels; find a better way to express expectations; and improve dialogue between high school and middle school teachers. **Ms. Evans** said the Graduation Rate Task Force is looking at “more connection” within zones and more dialogue.

Ms. Evans told the Committee that the high school FCAT test is much harder than it is at middle school. She said 70% of the high school test is higher order thinking, which is very different from middle school. Students have to be better prepared for the test before they reach high school.

(Quorum was reached at 7:10 pm with the arrival of **Mr. Pedlar**.)

Mr. Fleischer asked how this is being funded and how it will be implemented. **Ms. Evans** responded that this is a blueprint with “everything we would want in it.” She said that there are many schools not included in the grant, which could implement much of it without extra money. In some cases, it is not the money that is the barrier. For instance, barriers could be the culture of the school, limits on what teachers can and cannot do, or flexible scheduling. The plan will not be implemented right away. It is a goal, a blueprint of where they want to go. The plan is to implement a piece of the blueprint every year, and perfect that piece.

Mr. Gazzano asked for a clarification of the process and philosophy behind the plan. **Ms. Evans** responded that one of the goals is to get more “teaming” from middle school into high school. That is where money is needed. It is a difficult thing to accomplish. We are moving more towards the middle school model in high school, because they are finding that the high school model alienates more students. **Mr. Gazzano** observed that what they are really talking about is a paradigm shift.

Ms. Williamson is concerned that the plan calls for all students to be in smaller learning communities by 2010 and wondered how that will be accomplished, per Goal 2. **Ms. Evans** said that is a goal from the Smaller Learning Communities grant. They realize that it will be very difficult to implement this in all schools. The grant has been looked at, and the conclusion is that strategies are more important than structure. **Ms. Evans** acknowledged the wording is misleading.

Mr. Foulkes referred to the last page of the report, Appendix 1 that has the projected graduation rates for Broward County. He asked which formula was used to come up with these numbers. **Ms. Evans** said the last page with the graduation rates is already out of date. She said it is a very complicated process and is not consistent when you look at it from state-to-state or nationally. There are differences between some districts and the State. **Ms. Evans** said they have changed the way they will be moving forward. **Mr. Notter** wants to raise the graduation rate and wants it done quickly.

Mr. Foulkes recalled that, several years ago, he asked for the graduation numbers for Boyd Anderson High School for students from grades 9-12. He wanted to know how many students, in a given year, graduated with a “real diploma”, not a certificate of attendance. He was not able to get accurate numbers. **Ms. Evans** said a lot has to do with the coding.

Mr. Pedlar commented on the lack of a dress code in the schools. His concern is how well students are being prepared for the “real” world and a business environment. **Ms. Evans** acknowledged that the blueprint does not address that issue. **Dr. Smiley** responded to **Mr. Pedlar’s** comments by stating that, as to unified dress, “We cannot trample on the freedom of expression of our students... We can provide enrichment experiences that will snapshot for them the real world as opposed to social settings and other kinds of venues. But we cannot dictate that as a standard.” She said the Code of Conduct clearly outlines students’ rights.

Ms. Yach asked **Mr. Foulkes** to clarify the remarks he made about his inability to get data he had requested. **Mr. Foulkes** explained that the District has graduation rates for schools. He wanted the actual raw numbers of students who graduated with a real diploma out of the number of students who attended school consistently from grades 9-12. He called several schools prior to bringing his request to the Diversity Committee. He was referred to the State’s data and to other venues. The information he received was based on rates, not actual numbers, which is not what he asked for. **Dr. Smiley** responded that schools are provided with the “rate” and not the actual raw number. She said that, “If the **School Board** set this as a marker and an expectation, then the **Research Office** would aggregate it that way.” The **District** does not have that as a process at this time. **Mr. Rajner** said he found numbers on the District’s website and asked if this is the information being sought. **Dr. Smiley** acknowledged that there are numbers, but not the information being sought. It does not report how many students who started school in the ninth grade and ended their education

in the twelfth grade will receive a high school diploma. Current formulas for the State do not allow for that information, which would, in the end, actually raise Broward's numbers.

Ms. Gioello would like information about the numbers of ESE students who graduate with a standard diploma. The **Chair** said that would be a second Information Request. Both are vital concerns.

PRESENTATION BY JEANETTE VERBOOM, COORDINATOR, CHARTER SCHOOLS

To the questions related to Charter Schools' involvement in Secondary School Reform, **Ms. Verboom** stated they are not involved at this time because the plan is only in blueprint/planning stage.

Ms. Verboom explained that Charter Schools are publicly owned and privately operated. They are responsible to their own governing boards. The **School District** cannot tell Charter Schools what curriculum or textbook they must use. The **District** does look at financial matters, and students do take the FCAT. Charter Schools do get information on what the District is doing and what programs are available. They choose whether to participate or not.

Presentations were concluded at this time.

(**Mr. Douglas** and **Mr. Fleischer** left the meeting at 7:40 pm, resulting in a loss of quorum.)

SUBCOMMITTEES

The **Chair** asked if members are interested in chairing or serving on the subcommittees. He noted that **Ms. Price** and **Ms. Luster** had previously agreed to co-chair the Student Suspension Subcommittee.

The District's Technology Advisory Committee (TAC) is currently being "revamped". **Ms. Gioello** volunteered to represent the Diversity Committee on TAC. The **Chair** announced that he will represent the Diversity Committee on that committee when it resumes its meetings and will have an active role on the Technology Subcommittee, even though he is "an ex-officio member by virtue of being the Diversity Committee Chair."

Mr. Rajner asked that information about the Subcommittees be given to all members, especially new members, to help them understand the purpose and charge of each. The information will be forwarded by the Diversity & Cultural Outreach Department as a reminder; all members do receive this information during individual New Member Orientation provided by the Department.

BOUNDARIES, Jeanne Jusevic

No report.

HIRING PRACTICES

No report.

SITE VISITS, Bapthol Joseph

No report.

STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

No report.

STUDENT SUSPENSION, Marguerite Luster, Ernestine Price

No report.

TECHNOLOGY

No report.

DISTRICT COMMITTEES:

NOVA POLICY REVIEW, Randy Fleischer

No report.

POLICY 5000, Jeanne Jusevic

No report.

POLICY REVIEW, Julian Gazzano

The Committee was scheduled to meet on Wednesday, April 16, at 10 a.m. at K.C. Wright.

POSITIVE SCHOOL CULTURE, Roland Foulkes

The Anti-Bullying Task Force is part of Positive School Culture. The Task Force met and spent a good deal of time on developing a common definition for bullying. The next meeting was scheduled for Monday, April 21, at 5 p.m., in the Board Room at K.C. Wright.

Mr. Pedlar asked for clarification on what exactly the Task Force was going to do regarding Bullying. The **Chair** answered that the group had received a grant to work on creating safer school environments. They will identify what bullying is and develop consequences for certain types of bullying behaviors. He said the ultimate goal, nationwide, is to reduce violence in the schools.

Dr. Smiley responded to **Mr. Pedlar's** question about the purpose of the Task Force by stating that it is in response to legislation that will require districts to have a formal bullying policy. The **District** was already working on issues related to positive school climate and anti-bullying. When the two bills were introduced, the **School Board** separated the committee into two Task Forces, one of which was to address bullying. This Task Force is to "draft a recommended policy to bring forward, in response to the work that we've done for years" and in response to the two bills pending in the legislature.

Ms. Yach proffered that it is "absolutely critical" to have peer counselors who work in the schools, and help children who are being bullied, be represented on the Task Force. She said some of the most effective anti-bullying techniques and strategies have come from students working with other students to prevent bullying. They are the true "grass roots people". They understand bullying and have many of the answers.

Ms. Gioello suggested Best Buddies provide input on bullying against disabled students.

Ms. Jusevic said it is very exciting that the issue is getting this much attention and that it will require reporting. She believes the Task Force is "going in the right direction with this Comprehensive Plan." It emphasizes intervention, not just punishment.

Mr. Lange agreed with a comment made by **Ms. Yach** that, “kids are getting driven out by other kids. It’s not just our curriculum, or it’s not just our teachers. They’re the ones who get blamed a majority of the time. A lot of time it’s the kids.”

Ms. Yach offered an example of a very positive and effective program instituted by the District. For schools with a peer counseling program, one hour or one block per day is set aside for advisors and students working with students, bringing them together, and addressing issues. High school students counseling high school students is a very effective method.

Mr. Foulkes expressed concern that he only just learned about the Anti-Bullying initiative last month and wondered why he was not advised of its existence since it is such an important issue. **Mr. Foulkes** noted he was the “only Black male there” and wondered, “Who are we targeting with respect to this bullying policy?” He wants to know how this Task Force came about, who decided who will be on it, and why isn’t there more diverse representation?

Ms. Jusevic clarified a statement by the **Chair** regarding DAC representation and explained that, in fact, DAC learned of the Task Force at the same time as **Mr. Foulkes**. For the past year, DAC, itself, brought forth motions dealing with bullying issues.

Dr. Smiley said staff would provide the historical background for the development of the Anti-Bullying Task Force, because “straight talk is straight understanding.” If there are issues from the Diversity Committee as a whole, they can be addressed after the facts are presented. The **Chair** asked for a copy of the grant proposal to see “exactly who the players were and exactly what was presented in that document. The full, unadulterated or unedited copy of the grant proposal.”

Mr. Joseph asked if the Task Force is considering teaching teachers and administrators about bullying kids. The **Chair** responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Joseph followed his question with the comment that a chair is the facilitator of meetings, that members should be allowed to speak and express themselves, and that not all statements require follow-up comments. He said his comments reflect his reaction to the March 2008 minutes. **Mr. Joseph** said the issue for the Committee is about what is best for all kids in Broward County.

SITE SELECTION, Roland Foulkes

No report.

STUDENT CODE OF CONDUCT, Jeanne Jusevic

The Code of Conduct was scheduled for its second, and perhaps final, reading on Tuesday, April 15.

TECHNOLOGY ADVISORY COMMITTEE, Roland Foulkes

No report.

NEW BUSINESS

Ms. Jusevic announced that April 25 is the National Day of Silence, to bring attention to the bullying of gay, lesbian, transgender, and bisexual students. Several high schools and a middle school

will be participating, to show their support for a safe school environment for all students. **Mr. Rajner** reminded the members that a Broward student, Simmie Williams, was “pulled out of school” when he was 15 years old due to the bullying and harassment he experienced because he was openly gay. The young man was murdered on Sistrunk Boulevard. **Mr. Rajner** pointed out that the legislation in Tallahassee does not include sexual orientation, gender identity, or physical characteristics.

The **Chair** announced a new addition to the Agenda – *Closing Comments*. He noted that most of the time, the **Vice Chair** is often overlooked. He said **Ms. Williamson** has a “long, rich history in the education system in this County and nationally.” He asked her to comment at the end of the meeting to “send us off with some things to think about and reflect on.”

Ms. Williamson asked the members to not lose sight of why they are here. She mentioned body language and being negative toward each other. She asked that members be more tolerant, respecting differences, values, and beliefs of other people. She said the **Chair** has the responsibility to report his/her activities to the group. **Ms. Williamson** said there are “horrid” inequities in educational opportunities for minority and some majority students, those in poverty, in this county. **Ms. Williamson** said we must respect the opinions of others, even if we disagree with them. There is no substitute for good manners. “Tolerance is the oil which takes the friction out of life.”

Meeting ended at 8:30 p.m.

**The next meeting is scheduled for May 8, 2008 at 6:30 p.m.,
in the Board Room of the KCW Administration Building.**

<p>These minutes are summarized and were recorded at the April 10, 2008 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>
--