

Minority Education Concerns Advisory Committee
September 18, 2008

Minutes

Members Present

Ellsworth James
Lamin Jobarteh
Dan Loring
James LaBelle
Atisa Logo

Others Present

Chris Tuck, School Board Representative to MECAC
Pat Higgins, School Board Member
Val Woods, EEO

Meeting called to order at 4:40 p.m.

Mr. Loring added items to the agenda and it was approved as amended.

Announcements

Mr. Higgins said the school board has discussed drop-out rates and has scheduled work session on October 6 on the topic. He asked the members of the committee if they had anything they wanted the board to look at.

Mr. LaBelle asked if the work session was the beginning of a comprehensive plan.

Mr. Higgins said the board would need more input. He and Mr. Tuck had attended a conference in Kenai regarding connection between the school and the community. Principals and teachers would need to reach out to the community. He proposed that MECAC would have input into this plan.

Dr. James asked if there was a timeframe in place.

Mr. Higgins said the board meeting on October 6 would be the beginning of the discussion, which at this time is just brainstorming. He asked the committee members to either speak or email any suggestions to any of the school board members.

Mr. Loring commended Mr. Higgins for pushing this issue with the school board.

Guidelines and Committee Name

Mr. LaBelle will be the chairperson for a standing committee. He will email everyone to meet at the Invision Building (13th and Gambell) at 4:30 on Saturday, September 20 to continue the discussion about guidelines and the name of the committee.

Orientation Manual

Mr. Loring asked all members to contact Rhonda if they had any input for the manual.

Open Meeting Law

There were concerns about the open meeting law and how it applied to MECAC. Ms. Woods told the group that Andie Stone, from the district law firm, would be at the October 16, 2008 meeting to address the issue and answer any questions.

Interviews

It was agreed there are three applications currently on file. Mr. Loring suggested the members should actively recruit more applicants before any interviews are scheduled.

Curriculum Discussion

There was a long discussion about curriculum and the way teachers present the material. The committee agreed that sometimes textbooks do not tell the whole story. For example, ASD should take advantage of Native Elders to speak to students in the Alaska Studies classes. The committee would also like to see more basic life skills taught, mediation training and community service.

Dr. James said accountability and life skills are important. Apprenticeship programs are addressing these issues.

Board Meetings

Mr. Higgins would like to see recommendations from MECAC to the school board each month. Mr. Loring felt there didn't need to be a recommendation each month unless the committee had something. Mr. Higgins and Mr. Tuck would like to have feedback from the committee each month and have someone from the committee at every board meeting. Mr. Tuck expressed how important it is to have a MECAC person in attendance at the board meetings and what a good opportunity it is for them to speak to the community on TV and to get MECAC recognized

Mr. Higgins suggested having community outreach events. Ms. Logo liked this idea of connectivity with the community.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30.