

Minority Education Concerns Advisory Committee Meeting
November 20, 2008

Minutes

Members Present

Dan Loring
James LaBelle
Atisa Logo
Ellsworth James (5:45)

Others Present

Chris Tuck, School Board member
James Beverly - new member awaiting Board appointment
Lori Pickett - new member awaiting Board appointment
Joseph Jackson
Aaron & Joe (Dimond student and his father)
William Johnson
Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent of Instruction

Discussion started at 4:40 without a quorum present. There was discussion of education items in the news lately.

Mr. Loring asked Aaron to share his views on several education issues. Aaron responded by saying that a relationship with teachers is critical.

Mr. Johnson shared his concerns about traffic safety at the schools. He discussed his testimony at the November 20 School Board Meeting regarding the traffic situation at Begich Middle School.

Mr. Johnson also spoke about his concerns with disruptive students in a class impacting the education of the others.

Ms. Gardner explained the training being done on the issue of classroom management.

Mr. Tuck also told the group about the efforts of the SEL program (social/emotional learning).

Mr. Loring said the district has been looking at alternatives to suspensions and Mr. Tuck shared the board's perspective and the discussions they have been having. Ms. Gardner affirmed the programs in place including Creating

Successful Futures I and II; Aggressor/Victim/Bystanders; Change of Heart/Be the Change.

Mr. Loring asked if MECAC, under the FERPA Act, could have access to teacher evaluations. Ms. Gardner felt that would not be possible, but she would double-check.

Mr. Tuck expressed concern that some parents feel they can't control their own children and stressed the importance of teaching respect early.

Ms. Pickett reminded the group that many parents don't have the luxury of time to spend with their children and we can't ask parents to do what they cannot do.

Mr. Johnson said many parents feel disempowered with so many voices in the conversation.

Mr. Loring thanked Mr. Johnson for bringing this issue to the committee's attention. He said to follow the money. Where the district puts its money is where it puts its priorities.

Mr. Tuck discussed the role of the legislature and interest of citizens in education.

Mr. Johnson agreed and then mentioned the need for more recreational opportunities on the east side of town.

Feedback on Policy draft

The committee felt it was generally a good document; made some suggestions. Ms. Logo, Mr. LaBelle and Mr. Loring will attend the policy meeting to share.

Dr. James arrived at 5:45.

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order when a quorum was established at 5:45 with four of seven members present.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Logo moved
Mr. Loring seconded
Passed unanimously

Approval of Minutes

Mr. LaBelle moved

Ms. Logo seconded
Passed unanimously

Announcements

Dr. James apologized for conflict that caused his late arrival.

Mr. Tuck announced that the Covenant House Vigil is tonight.

Ms. Logo told the group that Rosemary Miller, former teacher, is leaving the state and is giving away teaching supplies.

Old Business

Reminder of policy sub-committee meeting on November 25, 11:00-12:00. Group revising policy will meet at Dr. James' office from 12:00-2:00 on Saturday, November 22.

It was decided to table the discussion about the MECAC Guidelines

New Business

Committee Communication

Dr. James reported on the Education Summit. He felt the Summit was excellent.

Mr. Loring thanked the district for inviting MECAC.

The committee asked that interviews for the candidates be scheduled.

Schedule of School Board meeting attendance

Mr. Loring moved and Mr. LaBelle seconded the creation of a rotating schedule. Motion passed with unanimous consent. Dr. James will draft a schedule for the committee's approval.

2nd Vice President Position

Mr. Loring moved to create a 2nd vice president position and nominated Mr. Jobarteh. Ms. Logo seconded and the motions passed with unanimous consent.

Public Comment

Mr. Jackson shared his frustration with finding an advocate for his son who had been suspended from school. He finally got Dr. James to stand up with him at his son's appeal. Mr. LaBelle thanked Mr. Jackson for telling his story and said he shared some of the same experiences.

Mr. Jackson felt that whenever a student gets into trouble they should be given a card with an advocate's name.

Mr. Loring made a motion to obtain under FERPA, a legal opinion as to whether or not MECAC, as a district committee, has the right to review the outcome of disciplinary hearings and teacher evaluations. Mr. LaBelle seconded the motion for purpose of discussion

Ms. Logo had to leave at 7:05 p.m., thus losing a quorum.

Mr. Jackson requested that Citizens' Complaint Form be revised and simplified. It also would be nice if it could be completed online.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07.