

Multicultural Education Concerns Advisory Committee  
April 16, 2009

MEETING MINUTES

Members Present

Dr. Ellsworth James	James Beverly
Polly Miller	Fa'aana Tosi
Jonathan Larson	James LaBelle
Atisa Logo	Dan Loring (5:30)
Lori Pickett	Damito Owen (by phone)

Members Absent

Lamin Jobarteh

Others

Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction  
Jeff Friedman, School Board Member  
Sandy Schoff, District Math Coordinator

Meeting called to order at 4:30 (no quorum)

Presentation

Ms. Schoff told the group about the adoption process for new textbooks. She presented the Algebra I, Algebra A/B and Geometry textbooks that the textbook committee had selected and invited the members of MECAC to preview the books and add any input they might have.

Quorum established at 4:40

Approval of Agenda

Moved by Mr. Larson and seconded by Ms. Logo that the agenda be approved as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

Approval of Minutes

Two corrections were made to the minutes. Mr. Larson moved and Ms. Miller seconded that the minutes be approved as corrected.

Announcements

1. **Ms. Pickett:** Alaska Literacy Project is seeing a large increase in individuals from Darfur. Mr. Friedman asked Ms. Pickett to present her information at the next school board meeting.

2. **Ms. Gardner:** Noted the addition of Sudanese LCL.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

Special Education Concerns Committee had to be cancelled due to a family emergency. They noted the receipt of the ethnic data. Ms. Pickett stated that she would like to see the meeting set on a regular schedule.

Outreach Committee met on April 4 with Mr. Larson, Ms. Owen and Mr. Loring in attendance. They discussed the following topics:

- MECAC branding & marketing (talk of using hand-bowl w/ globe as symbol)
- a local artist attended the meeting and volunteered his time to do a rendering for possible letterhead and flyer symbol
- discussion of a 2009-2010 MECAC calendar listing important events such as a parent forum on the Profile of Performance (November); and a meeting with the mayor (December); school board candidate forums to help MECAC and the community get to know board members and candidates better; kick-off team building session and orientation. The committee would like the calendar ratified at the next meeting.
- When asked for his feedback, Mr. Friedman said he preferred separate meetings with board members and candidates; felt mixing the two would be confusing. He said the committee should plan to schedule two or three joint meetings with the school board next year.

The above items were added to the agenda, voted and approved.

- Ms. Logo suggested MECAC members go in pairs to the Back to School Nights. The members liked the idea, but realize that it would be impossible to cover all of the back to school night this way. Ms. Pickett suggested perhaps a teacher who is knowledgeable about MECAC could talk to the parents.

### **Old Business**

School Feedback

- Romig Principal Sven Gustafson invited Mr. Larson to visit Romig. Mr. Larson said Mr. Gustafson is very connected to the Native community and had stated his interest in working with MECAC on Outreach issues.

### Community and School Relationships

- Ms. Gardner and Mr. Beverly gave an update of the progress on the Orientation Manual and the MECAC Webpage. Mr. Loring moved and Mr. Labelle seconded the motion that they go live with the updated site and continue to refine as time goes on. Motion passed unanimously.

### Representation at Board meetings and Template

- Website and calendar may be good ways to schedule. Mr. Loring noted that the school board wants the MECAC representative to comment throughout the meeting, as well as give the report. Mr. LaBelle emphasized the need for a template for the report because some people aren't as comfortable speaking as others. Ms. Owen suggested someone bring a laptop to each MECAC meeting to fill in the template and email out to the person attending the next board meeting. The template for the report should include

Introduction  
Last Meeting  
Resolutions Recommendations  
Upcoming meetings and events  
Questions

Mr. Beverly will do the April 28 board meeting and Mr. Larson will be the back-up. Mr. Larson will do the June 22 meeting.

### New Business

#### PSAT/SAT Training

- NAACP provides free seats for their training program.
  - It's a real issue getting information to minority families. There needs to be additional outreach to minority populations about the value of these tests.
- #### National Honor Society
- Concern that kids of color are not getting information about honor society and are not being recruited to join.
  - Dr. James asserted that minorities are automatically being put in the lowest math classes; Ms. Tosi agreed.
  - It was also asserted that schools are not making an adequate effort to talk to students about signing up early enough to take the PSAT in their sophomore year.
  - Ms. Gardner asked for the committee's help to develop a better way to get information to diverse communities.

- Mr. Beverly asked why the district doesn't measure the proficiency of counselors.
- Mr. Loring suggested the board allocate funds for people to work with students – outreach people.
- Mr. Larson asked about the graduation coaches.
- Ms. Owen asked if the MECAC could recommend that the district engage in a campaign for better outreach and communication regarding PSAT/SAT, honor society college prep, etc.
- Dr. James recommended identifying solutions at the next meeting.

#### Marketing and Branding Campaign

Mr. Loring moved and Mr. Beverly seconded the motion that the campaign be approved. Motion passed unanimously.

The calendar will be moving forward.

Mr. Loring shared a recent conversation with ASD administration about his manner of interacting with others. An individual in the administration advised Mr. Loring that some members of MECAC felt he was offensive in his remarks and that he often took control of the meetings, which was not appreciated. Mr. Loring said if the assertions were true, and if the members of the MECAC concurred, he would step down. There was unanimous consent that Mr. Loring should stay on the committee, as well as universal appreciation for his many contributions to the committee.

The meeting adjourned at 6:46 p.m.