

ANCHORAGE SCHOOL DISTRICT  
ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

MINORITY EDUCATION CONCERNS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

MINUTES  
August 28, 2008

Members Present

Dawnyale Bolds  
Dan Loring  
Atisa Logo  
Ellsworth James  
James LaBelle  
Damito Owen  
Fa'aana Tosi (by phone)

Others Present

Carol Comeau, Superintendent  
Jeff Friedman, School Board President  
Chris Tuck, School Board member  
Rhonda Gardner, Assistant Superintendent

Pictures were taken (individual and group) and for ID badges.

Ms. Bolds called the meeting to order at 5:13 p.m.

Ms. Bolds welcomed Ms. Comeau, Mr. Friedman, and Mr. Tuck and thanked them for attending.

Ms. Comeau welcomed everyone and thanked them for their involvement. She told the group she welcomes recommendations and wants the group to help ASD to connect with various communities. She is always happy to attend community gatherings. She is committed to individual student achievement.

Mr. Friedman added that this is the only committee appointed by the board and advisory to the board. He is looking forward to an active committee and more informal meetings as well.

Mr. Tuck, as the board liaison to MECAC, said he is looking forward to participating this year.

Ms. Gardner gave the draft of the Orientation Manual to the members. There was discussion of the open meeting law. The committee requested additional legal information.

Ms. Bolds asked the committee for direction on replacing Karen Jenkins, who has stepped down. Mr. Loring suggested recruiting efforts. He knows of a Hispanic citizen who might be interested in serving on the committee.

Lamin Jobarteh arrived at 5:42 p.m.

- Ms. Owen suggested continuing recruiting efforts to a pre-determined date.
- Mr. Jobarteh favored focusing on the three current applicants.
- Ms. Logo proposed recruiting for a Hispanic member now and then look for an Asian member for the next seat.
- Mr. Tuck advised opening up recruitment and not targeting specific groups right now.
- Dr. James recommended opening up the recruiting process for additional applicants and reevaluate all again. He believes the Hispanic community is feeling left out.
- Ms. Bolds thinks one must be from that cultural community to truly represent them.
- The committee agreed to open a period of active recruitment.

Mr. Loring asked about the status of the Orientation Manual.

- ~Ms. Bolds asked for feedback on the manual.
- ~Mr. Loring requested a meeting date to continue the process.
- ~Ms. Bolds asked members to review the document, highlight concerns, and come to the September meeting prepared to decide how to proceed. She will ask for suggestions under Old Business and set date if needed for another meeting. The goal is to have the Orientation manual complete by the first of the year.

Ms. Gardner clarified that the name of the committee had not changed.

- There was discussion of possible name change.
- Dr. James preferred the existing name.
- Ms. Owen believes the group has raised the awareness of the name and its purpose and is concerned about changing that.
- Ms. Tosi didn't think the name change was necessary.
- Mr. Tuck shared his perspective focused around the majority/minority issue.
- Dr. James believes there is some stigma associated with the word "minority", but understands the perspective of other members. He supports removal of the word minority.

- Mr. Loring was conflicted by the issue of whether MECAC represents all families, or is representing only certain groups.
- Mr. Tuck said he couldn't speak for the board, but suggested MECAC tells the board what they want the board to consider. He will then communicate that to the board.
- Ms. Owen wants to keep the initials as well as the term "education". She is concerned that money is going to divide people of different languages, only not all diverse people. She suggested Multicultural Education Advisory Committee.
- Ms. Husa agreed the group needs to look at their mission. She has strong aversion to the term "minority"; supports multicultural to keep acronym the same.
- Mr. Jobarteh liked multicultural because the group represents many cultures.
- Ms. Logo said part of the mission statement focuses on success for all. Minority could mean anyone struggling, not necessarily people of color. She understands people's connotation of the word, however. The name must have the word "education".
- Ms. Bolds understands the committee needs to work on the name.

#### Review of the Guidelines

- There was much discussion of the term "culture" including Caucasian and sub-cultures of Europe. The group agreed they need to be certain of their mission statement, be confident in their goals, and work positively together.
- Ms. Gardner suggested the sub-committee wordsmith the document, get feedback from the board and bring back to the committee as reports during the time it takes to complete.

There was discussion of subcommittee possibilities.

Meeting adjourned at 6:51.