

Multicultural Education Concerns Advisory Committee
June 17, 2010

MINUTES

Members Present

Ellsworth James
Polly Miller
Dan Loring
Lori Pickett
Mading Bol
Sophie Pinder

Members Absent

Lamin Jobarteh
Jonathan Larson
Atisa Logo

Others Present

John Steiner, School Board President
Ed Graff, Assistant Superintendent, Instruction
Marsha Haas, Executive Secretary, Instruction

Meeting was called to order with a quorum present at 4:35.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Mr. Loring moved to approve the agenda for the May 27 meeting. Ms. Pickett seconded the motion. Mr. Loring asked to add the Candidate Forum under new business. The agenda was approved with the addition.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. Loring moved to approve the minutes of the April 15 meeting. Ms. Pickett seconded the motion. Mr. Loring asked that his name be removed from the Outreach subcommittee report. The motion to approve the minutes as corrected passed unanimously.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Pickett reported about a group at Turnagain Elementary School called All Pro Dads. She said they are doing a great job of engaging fathers in their children's activities at the school. Tommy Kibler started the program at Turnagain, based on a model started by professional athletes in the lower 48.

Mr. Steiner said the school board may do things differently this year. Rather than assign someone to be the liaison to the MECAC, they may rotate board members. They haven't decided for sure, yet.

Mr. Loring mentioned that a former MECAC chair, Dawnyale Bolds had received a Qu yana from a foster parent for Dawnyale's work with her foster son.

Mr. Loring also wanted to thank board member Pat Higgins for his comments at the March MECAC meeting about vocational education and a career path for students who don't plan to go to college.

SUB-COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Graff explained the process for the Parent Outreach that was going to take place at four elementary schools in the fall. Carrie Rose, from Sacramento will be doing training on August 10 for staff from Susitna, Scenic Park, Willow Crest, and Lake Hood elementary schools. It will be a train the trainers module and will involve staff from Title Vii (Indian Education) and the English Language Learners Program. They will work with the primary grades first because of the successful outreach with pre-school parents. The parent visits don't have to be at the home, they can meet personally outside the home setting. MECAC has been very supportive of the project.

OLD BUSINESS

Ms. Pinder and Ms. Miller will work on getting school assignments for the committee members.

REPORTS FROM SCHOOLS/COMMUNITY

Ms. Pinder attended the talent show at Northwood. There were lots of parents there.

Ms. Miller attended the Teacher Appreciation event at Mirror Lake Middle School.

All of the committee members had been busy attending End-of-the-Year activities at the schools.

Mr. James shared a thank-you from West for MECAC's support of their stage.

Mr. Loring announced that Service High School Principal Lou Pondolfino was named Principal of the Year by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, for his Freshman Academy.

Ms. Pickett told the group about the large influx of refugees that are coming to Anchorage from Somalia. Because the ritual cutting of young females' genitalia is part of their culture, she was concerned to know if the District was doing anything to prepare nurses and other involved staff for the effects they might see in the schools. Mr. Graff will follow-up with Nancy Edtl, Director of Nursing, and Christine Garbe, supervisor of the English Language Learners Program.

NEW BUSINESS

Teambuilding

Mr. Loring suggested that the committee wait until after their team-building workshop to elect officers rather than doing it at the June meeting. The workshop would also be the place to define their 2001-2011 goals.

After much discussion the group decided that instead of a team-building workshop, they would like to have more of a work session with a facilitator to help guide them.

Mr. Loring will contact Mr. Larson about the time for a work session.

The Role of MECAC

Ms. Pickett asked Mr. Steiner if he would tell the group what role the School Board would like to see MECAC play.

Mr. Steiner said the board would like three things from MECAC

- 1) comments on a regular basis on the action items on the school board agenda
- 2) response to special requests from the board, i.e. vocational education
- 3) reports to the board from the community, what the members are hearing from their groups

Ms. Pickett asked if there could be a user-friendly link to the school board agendas.

Candidate Forum

Mr. Loring wanted to be sure that the minutes reflected the fact that in the beginning, the school board seemed very supportive of the idea of MECAC having a candidate forum and encouraged them to proceed. A year later, after much legwork was done by Mr. Larson, the board told the group that it would be a conflict of interest and MECAC could not be a sponsor of the forum.

Mr. Steiner explained that the board wanted MECAC to solicit other sponsors to hold the form and MECAC could submit questions to be asked by a neutral entity.

Attendance

Ms. Pickett made a motion to remove Mr. Jobarteh from the committee because he only attended one meeting and one work session this school year. Ms. Miller

seconded the motion. After discussion among the committee members, Ms. Picket made a friendly amendment to withdraw her motion. The committee agreed that Ms. Haas should send Mr. Jobarteh a letter asking him if he intends to remain on the committee and actively participate. If he is unable to do so, he should give up his seat so that one of the applicants who is waiting to be appointed to the committee can join the group.

COMMENTS

Mr. Ellsworth was asked to attend a meeting with Alaska Commissioner of Education Larry LeDoux to discuss the statistics regarding African-American males. Mr. LeDoux is concerned and wants to do something to close the achievement gap. One of the things discussed was a magnet school for excellence. He would like to hear from parents and community members. Mr. James is meeting with other leaders in the community to discuss this.

Meeting adjourned at 6:30.