

**HUMAN RELATIONS ADVISORY COMMITTEE
MEETING MINUTES
May 20, 2009**

Members Present:

Judy Baldwin; Charlie Dane; Judy Farabaugh; Abe Jeffers; Barbara Laster; Steve Rorls; Kathy Rugh; Jennifer Van Pernis; Leslie Vandivere; and Sylvia Washington

Staff Present:

Sherry Brathwaite, director, OEC, Alice O'Neill, specialist, OEC; and Erik Skinner, specialist, OEC

Materials Distributed:

Meeting Agenda
HRAC Meeting Minutes – April 15, 2009
Staff Response to Last Year's Report
HRAC Annual Report 2008-09
Handout related to the proposed charge

Meeting:

Judy Farabaugh convened the meeting at 7:05 p.m. The April 2009 meeting minutes were tabled.

Advisory Committee Briefings:

Leslie Vandivere reported on the Advanced Academic Programs Advisory Committee (AAPAC) May 5, 2009, meeting in which assistant superintendent Peter Noonan reported the following:

- The School Board will reschedule its discussion of the future of advanced academic programs to mid July when they can take a half day for consideration
- Budget reductions will eliminate transportation to elementary gifted and talented centers when level IV services are provided at the base school
- Included in the budget adjustment is an increase of \$230K for additional AP/IB testing
- The vote on the FY 2010 approved budget will be May 21

As required by the Virginia Code, AAPAC reviewed the local plan for the education of gifted students and the extent to which the plan had been implemented. The current plan was submitted in 2006 and is in effect until 2011. The local plan is posted on the FCPS website at <http://www.fcps.edu/DIS/gt>. A slide presentation by Carol Horn, Advanced Academic Programs coordinator, reviewed the plan and the status of the program. Members of the AAPAC reviewed and signed the final version of its annual report.

Sylvia Washington reported on the Minority Student Achievement Oversight Committee (MSAOC) May meeting. The MSAOC will present its report to the FCPS School Board on Monday, June 1. The committee is still concerned about the effect of the recent budget cuts on its ability to continue to be as effective as in previous years. The 2008-09 charge was to determine what other area school districts have been effective in closing the achievement gap, by including parent involvement as an integral ingredient, and using "best practices." The committee noted that FCPS (by comparison) has a wealth of resources, and therefore, gathered data for the current year report card by observing and interviewing successful schools within FCPS, and sharing their practices in said report. (The committee awarded the successful schools (and those schools deserving mention) in a ceremony in December 2008.)

Additionally, it was noted that FCPS assistant superintendent, Patrick Murphy, will be leaving FCPS at the end of the school year, to begin his tenure as superintendent of Alexandria, Virginia schools.

Jennifer Van Pernis reported on the April and May Superintendent's Business and Community Advisory Council (BCAC) meeting. The April meeting topic was Parent Engagement. Information was presented on the proposed National PTA goals, about FCPS Family and School Partnerships, and on successes at Graham Road Elementary School and Baileys Crossroads Elementary School. Handouts have been and will be sent to HRAC committee members.

The May meeting topic was Business and Community Partnerships, including an update on the CTE-Career and Technical Education of FCPS.

Jay Garant, FCPS Coordinator of Business and Community Partnerships, spoke on the positives and negatives of obtaining appropriate partnerships for FCPS schools and of the new sites on the FCPS web with donation guidelines for small and large businesses.

Mentor works was discussed. A successful partnership was presented by Glen Forest Elementary with their new library, the results of partnership with Capitol One and the Hearts of America Program. CTE and Mr. Garant were pleased to announce a large contribution to FCPS by Volkswagen on June 4, 2009, of 13 diesel cars and additional monetary support to each of the Auto Technology Departments in FCPS High Schools. Handouts will be sent to HRAC committee members.

Old Business:

Staff response to the annual report was discussed. The staff engaged in discussion with the committee chairs regarding response to the annual report.

New Business:

Discussion of HRAC Charge for School Year (SY) 2009-2010

- One member expressed concern about the practice of families taking vacation, up to two weeks, during the school year. This interrupts instruction and makes it difficult for the teacher, especially in regard to testing, and following curriculum. The families that go on vacation during instructional time are not advocating the students studying or keeping up with class lessons while away. The member shared that the families that do this can least afford to be out of school for an extended period of time
- One member shared they felt that there should be emphasis on helping minority parents to be active at their schools. In addition, they added that there should be more parents on the local school human relations committees
- One member shared she felt that the committee should focus on a few family groups in particular, families with same-sex parents. She also wanted to increase outreach to minority and marginalized families
- One member shared that she felt there was a strong pushback to increasing staff workload and that the other existing committees such as PBS and Responsive Classroom should be enough to fulfill the regulation regarding the HRCs by shifting the parameters of committee makeup
- A staff member added that the committee should consider defining the term “human relations” and develop standards by which to assess it in the schools
- A general consensus of increasing the viability of the HRCs was the outcome of the discussion for next year’s charge. The members present expressed approval for the second and last paragraph in the handout. It reads:

Also recognize that the 3rd recommendation in this year’s report stated: The OEC in consultation with HRAC should develop recommendations on the expectations that Board has for the school-based HRCs and the composition of the HRCs. This includes giving consideration to expanding present policy or regulations, representation from the business community and other community groups
- Finally, we should continue to be concerned that some groups in the community are not adequately informed about school services and programs. Thus, to address one of our earlier recommendations to hear the voices that have been silent, we recommend extensive outreach to organizations and community groups that are homeless, economically challenged, or social marginalized. HRAC could consider undertaking this outreach as part of a 2009-10 charge

Review of this year’s process

Both chairs expressed their thanks to the team leaders and committee members who worked tirelessly during the visits to school HRCs. The committee agreed that the schools were appreciative of their outreach to them this year.

The election of 2009-10 chair for the committee was not held due to there not being a quorum present. The election will be held via email.

On Thursday, May 28 at 7 p.m. in conference room 1600, HRAC will present the Annual Report to the School Board. There will not be a meeting in June or July. An informal get-together may be held in August, with a reminder sent out in July for that date.

The meeting adjourned at 9:08 p.m.

NOTE: If FCPS schools are closed all day or close early in the afternoon because of inclement weather or some other reason, the HRAC meeting is automatically cancelled.