



# Parent / Community Involvement Task Force (PCITF)

## Meeting Minutes

### McFatter Technical College

**April 11, 2016 / 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM**

Members: Mary Fertig (Chair), Debbie Aleman, Natalie Beasley, Ana Corujo, Sheri Johnson, Colleen LaPlant, Esther Mizell, Gloria Moschella, Lew Naylor, Andre Ponder, Cathie Starkey

Guests: Nadia Clarke

- [Call to Order](#)

Ms. Fertig called the meeting to order.

- [Welcome and Introductions](#)

The members were greeted.

- [Recommendations](#)

Ms. Fertig indicated a status report on the recommendations, originally planned for tonight, will occur next meeting, as Ms. Rich Levinson is out of town tonight.

- [Approval of March 14, 2016 Minutes](#)

The minutes were unanimously approved, with no requested changes.

- [Task Force - Goals for the Future](#)

Ms. Fertig indicated the PCITF was established to revitalize community involvement. All members were asked to comment on what they would like the focus to be, moving forward.

Ms. Corujo would like the District to inform the community of the District's /school's needs, and how volunteers can be involved.

Ms. Mizell requests more parents to be involved at the Conference and more promotion/notice to parents from principals.

Ms. LaPlant wants schools to be made more aware of services non-profits can offer. She felt there was more non-profit involvement at the 2015 conference. Free resources are not being utilized.

Ms. Moschella recommended the non-profit fair be held in summer, so more principals can be involved.

Mr. Ponder said non-profit fair attendance should be mandatory; then it would increase.

Ms. Johnson stated the role of the Task Force is to inform and influence schools and the District on best practices for schools and communities to work together. We should build partnerships on what schools and communities need to be successful. Look to District-level models (including management of funds).

Ms. Clarke indicated her Parent Engagement program will train schools to identify their needs, and to provide "whole child" services. In addition, she will present packages of support to the zones.

Ms. Beasley asked if the database of resources is still in the works. Ms. Clarke stated she met with 2-1-1 (First Call for Help), and the database is being updated – to include current vendors and have data integrity. Schools will need training, too, to accurately identify needs.

Mr. Naylor stated school social workers are trained to be in tune with student needs. We want a repository of the resources.

Ms. Moschella would like the database to go beyond 2-1-1 resources. She would like to see academic resources, too (transportation to field trips, tutoring services, help for students with physical disabilities, etc.) and to utilize local resources.

Mr. Naylor stated upper-level staff should be involved in the process to engage parents. He indicated the District's online Friday Focus would be an ideal place to notify parents of District developments.

Ms. Moschella shared her view that positive change is coming from the District; movement is in a positive direction.

Ms. Aleman said communication is vital – including dates on calendars, and invitations to conference – in a timely manner.

Ms. Fertig offered a recap of key points members made:

1. Importance of communication – provide opportunities to talk (forums & public hearings); provide information on the Conferences

2. Not enough parent involvement – but we have more than we think we do (we may not always see the involvement)
3. Not-for-profits – We identified many resources not being utilized and how we can provide opportunities for them to be utilized. We have made great progress – but more is needed. Maybe changing the time of the event would be helpful. We hope to have an interactive, online resource guide soon. She does not think such a database exists at this time, the way we want it. It is not up to the Task Force to create, but it is up to us to make sure it happens.
4. Principals – how they impact parent engagement. It is important for principals to welcome parent involvement.

Ms. Beasley indicated some principals greet students outside. Ms. Mizell liked the past system of area zones: north, central and south -- and principals being involved in zone meetings. Ms. Fertig sees the Task Force working with the current system to foster engagement.

Mr. Ponder suggested giving the schools more press. Have BECON visit the schools and showcase them. This helps build competition, which the principals like.

Ms. Beasley suggested presenting a quarterly award to principals for their service. Post the pictures and podcast videos, District wide.

Mr. Naylor advised on using contacts from the Media Forum (preparation) to publicize positive stories from District. Many local newspapers are looking for content.

Mr. Ponder suggested displaying a banner to communicate positive stories, including the principal of the quarter. Ms. Fertig recommended a contest for students to design the banner.

Ms. Johnson suggested finding ways to get “buy-in” from principals rather than making participation mandatory.

Ms. Clarke stated the School Improvement plan (S.I.P.) is a good mechanism to monitor parent/community engagement. This summer, the framework is being built to evaluate success. Cross communication with schools and families is vital. Cadre Directors will be co-authors for expectations of principals. The Parent Engagement Office will hold information gathering sessions to increase principal buy-in.

Ms. Corujo added, the District should provide support & resources. Make the resources easy for principals to access (such as the database).

Ms. Fertig reviewed Task Force goals based on tonight’s conversation:

1. Facilitate communication
2. Promote best practices
3. Build relationships
4. Recognize excellence
5. Share resources
6. Offer opportunities to be heard

- [Fall Conference and Forum Dates](#)

Dates will be chosen in our upcoming meetings.

Ms. Fertig suggested workshops on college readiness and building relationships. The fall conference would look different than the one in spring. Combine the Middle and High school forums, or focus on an innovation zone. Implement the ideas we recommended. For example, the Stranahan zone is a growing community that may benefit from a forum. It is about building relationships. Make sure the high school drama club performance has students from the elementary school in the audience.

The forums are a great opportunity for people to share and be heard.

Mr. Naylor requested a breakdown of the Conference attendance (number of parents, number of administrators). He offered to summarize the data.

Ms. Moschella suggested presenting information to show our achievements. However, she believes parents in certain locations (such as Parkland) may not understand how the information applies to schools and parents in other zones. We should narrow our audience each time.

- [Future Meeting Dates](#)

May 9, 2016 & June 6, 2016 – both at McFatter (Bistro), 6:00 p.m.

For the May 9th meeting: 1 hour update on the recommendations (from 2012 and recent forums), then break up into Forum and Conference subcommittees.

- [Adjournment](#)

Ms. Fertig adjourned the meeting.