



PARENT / COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TASK FORCE (PCITF)

McFatter Technical College (Bistro)

December 12, 2016 / 6:00 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Present: Mary Fertig (Chair), Debbie Aleman, Natalie Beasley, Janet Bravo, Andrea Cavanagh, Ana Corujo, Melanie Hemphill, Esther Mizell, Gloria Moschella, Lew Naylor, Laurie Rich Levinson

Guests: Andrea Blackwood, Nadia Clarke, Colleen LaPlant

- **Call To Order**

Ms. Fertig called the meeting to order.

- **Welcome and Introductions**

Members and guests introduced themselves and shared their holiday plans and other current events in their lives.

We thanked Ms. LaPlant for all her efforts – tonight was her last night as a member. She said she will join us at future events.

- **Update On Parent / Community Engagement**

Ms. Clarke said all School Advisory Committee (SAC) chairs and schools were trained on customer service. An updated calendar with resources based on schools' needs will be posted at each school. "Reaching out to families proactively" is one of several strategies being implemented.

Ms. Bravo added that one person's view of customer service may be different than another's. She recommended benchmarks to help define good customer service so everyone is on the same page.

Ms. Corujo inquired about charter schools' efforts to attract parents. Ms. Clarke stated making parents feel welcome is key.

Mr. Naylor recommended a weekly online column for the District to report success stories.

Ms. Clarke announced the “catch them being good” effort to capture school success stories.

Ms. Fertig requested these strategies in writing. Ms. Clarke stated she would email them to the members.

Ms. Beasley recommended having more community people as SAC chairs. Ms. Blackwood replied that SAC chairs often have to focus on and comply with school responsibilities.

Ms. Bravo indicated good customer service should be a given – it should not take years to be trained on being nice.

Ms. Moschella added that charter schools offer various cultures a smaller setting and a family-friendly atmosphere that is very appealing.

Ms. Corujo feels the Task Force goal, “offer opportunities to be heard,” should be at the top of the list of goals.

Ms. Fertig indicated the missing element is “involving parents in the schools.” When you are a part of something, you want it to succeed.

Ms. Rich Levinson gave an example of a teacher she recently observed who engaged his students and exemplified a very positive attitude.

Ms. Hemphill stated public school leaders’ mindsets may vary, whereas corporations like Publix have an alignment across stores.

Ms. Rich Levinson informed the group Principal Joseph Balchunas has agreed to be the Principal Representative on the Task Force.

Ms. Clarke indicated we, as a county (beyond the school district), have to better address mental health needs. She cited a participant at the Conference who shared that she was depressed.

Ms. Fertig stated charter schools make parent participation mandatory.

- **Fall Conference Report**

Ms. Rich Levinson stated this was one of the best conferences we ever had in terms of the content. However, the number of attendees was relatively low.

Some members agreed the time of year played a factor in attendance.

Ms. Mizell stated the concerns and issues (raised by parents who spoke) were wonderful.

Ms. Rich Levinson stated hard copies of fliers are a preferred communication tool by elementary school parents, and may increase awareness.

Ms. Bravo shared comments she heard from her workshop that principal turn-out at the event was low.

Ms. Bravo also indicated a more exciting “draw” -- a noteworthy headliner -- for the Conference would have helped attract attendees.

Ms. Fertig suggested next time asking each principal to designate staff to attend.

The Spring Conference was discussed. Ft. Lauderdale High was well-liked and will be considered. Several members indicated they would like to see non-profit vendors participate (as they did with a previous Conference).

- **Approval of November 7, 2016 Minutes**

The minutes were unanimously approved with no changes.

- **Innovation Zone Support Discussion**

Ms. Fertig stated that, instead of forums next year, we could have the innovation project. She reported Mr. Naylor and her have been to all four recent zone project meetings. If we take this on, it will be a tremendous time commitment. Boyd Anderson zone was impressive. All members were upbeat when they left. The zone members were also able to articulate their needs. However, they have low numbers coming to the meetings. Mr. Naylor added they do not have SAF chairs at many schools. Ms. Fertig stated the parents often do not feel needed by the schools. The zone needs help in leadership development and encouraging people to participate. One zone can mentor another.

Ms. Beasley inquired about the Task Force’s role. Ms. Fertig replied parents feel the meetings are too complicated (the use of many acronyms, for example). Ms. Fertig said it is an 18-month project, and a core of Task Force members will be needed for this project.

Mr. Naylor felt the Deerfield zone had principals who understood the zone concept.

Ms. Beasley recommended “Coffee & Conversation” meetings for this effort.

Ms. Fertig stated the goal is to find strategies in one zone to replicate in other zones.

Mr. Naylor said some zones isolate into silos. He suggested having combined zone meetings.

Ms. Clarke indicated we should look at what we need to do to recruit families for SAC and SAF...and to make families feel welcome.

Ms. Cavanagh recommended pairing zones with well-established groups, such as the PTA, as a springboard.

Ms. Fertig stated the basic idea of this effort is the person-to-person mentoring. Parents need help with getting to the next level. It is true volunteerism – not hiring someone to do it.

Ms. Rich Levinson suggested thinking about how we want to approach this project and discuss further at the January 23, 2017 meeting.

- **Future Meeting Dates**

All three of the following meetings will be held at McFatter (Bistro), 6:00 p.m.:

- Monday, January 23, 2017 – Regular meeting, plus Conference subcommittee meeting
- Monday, February 13, 2017 – Regular meeting
- Monday, March 13, 2017 – Regular meeting

- **Adjournment**

Ms. Fertig adjourned the meeting.