



Parent / Community Involvement Task Force (PCITF)

Meeting Minutes

McFatter Technical College (Chef Table Room)

May 8, 2017 / 6:00 PM – 8:30 PM

Members: Mary Fertig (Chair), Debbie Aleman, Janet Bravo, Sheri Johnson, Gloria Moschella, Lew Naylor, Laurie Rich Levinson, Cathie Starkey, Andrea Cavanagh, Esther Mizell

Guests: None

- **Call to Order**

Ms. Fertig called the meeting to order.

- **Welcome and Introductions**

All members were welcomed.

- **Approval of April 3, 2017 Minutes**

Lew Naylor moved to approve the Minutes and Janet Bravo seconded the Motion. After a vote, the minutes were unanimously approved.

- **Innovation Zone Support Update**

Mary Fertig spoke of reform movement – how schools can be more successful. In an effort to reform, a former School Board Member created Innovation Zones. It was a collective conversation regarding K-12 education. Meetings became more focused, but over the years it became more about utility, i.e., Principal's meeting to discuss internal issues. Mary indicated that one of the advantages of meeting in different schools is getting to know your feeder schools.

Lew Naylor indicated that in the mid-90's he started seeing a change in attendance and parent participation in the IZone meetings. He feels it was caused in part by a lack of openness from schools. Initially, Zone discussions were very good, with lots of suggestions from parents. His zone started losing kids to other schools.

Mary Fertig's Zone was fortunate, they had incentive and principals committed to seeing things turn around. She agrees there has been a decline in parent involvement.

Debra Aleman and Andrea Cavanagh shared that the West Broward Zone was very successful years ago, especially when Dan Traeger and Joe Balchunas were principals in that Zone. They encouraged parent participation and attendance by staff/representatives from their schools. Lew Naylor agreed.

Gloria Moschella inquired if School Choice had any impact on IZones. Mary doesn't believe so. She thinks it became inconvenient to have the conversation, when they don't want answers.

Esther Mizell shared that she was involved until the district "areas" moved. Prior to the move they had high involvement; she had the chance to see "the real deal."

Janet Bravo likes the Zone concept but feels that it didn't impact her involvement or her kids' education. Her kids were not in a "clean feeder pattern," therefore she had to insist for years that her Principals communicate with the schools outside the feeder pattern. She felt lost and not included.

Laurie Rich Levinson indicated that the Deerfield Beach Zone is a clean feeder pattern. She is hopeful that parents can go back to the schools and get Zones involved.

Lew Naylor feels we need to focus on developing best practices for clean zones.

Mary Fertig shared that when Virginia Shuman Young (VSY) opened, for example, many left to go to Sunrise; a lot of kids went elsewhere. There will always be this issue. Components of a good Zone start with a lot of conversation about programs.

Lew said the Zone focus should start in the middle schools. Laurie Rich Levinson disagreed. She feels that we need to focus on elementary and get them on Board with the middle schools, rather than start the focus on middle.

Janet Bravo said that you make your school the best you can!

Mary Fertig shared that you make people feel a part of a community while you are there. There is a lot to be said for that. Planning community events is a good idea.

Cathie Starkey shared that, via the hospital where she works, she sets up community events at Hallandale High School.

Sheri Johnson asked, “What are the outputs from these Zones?” Anything you can do to build community partnerships to strengthen families is needed. She suggests that we have technical schools or parent university available to parents for improvement.

Mary Fertig agreed, saying that Zone programs were the answer on how you build community. This was done at Ft. Lauderdale High School, which was an F school. Now, people see that success and want their kids to get in there. It’s a sense of community – to belong – part of a working community to provide great education for your kids.

Janet Bravo agreed and asked what this might look like. She gave the example of Mr. LaPace from MacArthur High School who positively promotes the school in the community and trains his staff and parents to do the same. He always says three positive things about the school when having conversations with anyone concerning the school. It has completely turned around the public perception of that school.

Mary Fertig suggested breaking down into discussion groups at the IZone Facilitation Meeting in order to gather information on what we can do to build community and ask parents and community leaders what they want to see.

Laurie Rich Levinson proposed that first we must build from within, then have resources. There is a second step -- if parents are not involved initially, it won’t be successful. Outcomes and how we make that happen is the main focus.

Mary Fertig feels that we need to provide suggestions, maybe what Cathie Starkey and Sheri Johnson suggested previously (community fairs and technical schools/parent university). Every parent can talk about what they want for their kids. It starts there.

Janet Bravo thinks that everyone can change the perception of schools in the community if everyone talks about all of the positive things going on in a school.

Lew Naylor will email Scott Jarvis and Nadia Clarke regarding notifications for the May 18th meeting.

Mary Fertig inquired if parents and business partners will be invited. A group discussion ensued on whether we want parents/business partners present at first meeting. Mary felt it was important not to waste more time. Debra Aleman texted Joe Balchunas, who was unable to be present, to inquire if notifications were sent out and he said they were not. He was under the impression we were waiting until a Zone Rep was named. He felt that only coordinators and not parents should be present at first framework meeting. Mary Fertig agreed that it was never finalized. All agreed

that Zone leaders should there to set the culture before including parents/community partners in the mix and that they should be involved at the roll out beginning of new school year.

Laurie Rich Levinson intimated that a plan of action must first be created.

Mary Fertig and Laurie Rich Levinson will speak with Dr. Wanza for input on her vision of how to proceed.

- **Spring Conference Report**

Gloria Moschella requested a breakdown on the numbers for attendance at the Conference.

Mary Fertig reported that the Sign-In Sheets from the Conference were scanned and sent to Nadia Clarke to breakdown numbers.

Lew Naylor relayed to the group that, in his session with School Board Member Heather Brinkworth, a parent commented that most in attendance were staff. We need to see what percent of actual attendees, not registrants, were parents.

All agreed that we need an analysis on attendance.

Mary Fertig and Laurie Rich Levinson congratulated the Co-Chairs and thanked the group for a wonderful and successful Conference.

- **Future Meetings Dates**

Monday, June 12, 2017* is the next regular PCITF meeting date. The meeting will take place at McFatter Technical College (Chef Table Room). The **May 18, 2017** meeting at OSPA for IZone Facilitating may be canceled. That will be determined after Mary Fertig and Laurie Rich Levinson speak with Dr. Wanza. Mary Fertig will email the group. An additional June meeting was scheduled for **Monday, June 19, 2017***. If the May 18th meeting is in fact canceled, we may use one of the June meeting dates for that purpose.

*McFatter, Chef Table Room, 6:00 p.m.

- **Adjournment**

Sheri Johnson moved to adjourn and Janet Bravo seconded the Motion. Ms. Fertig adjourned the meeting.