

BOARD OF EDUCATION
FAIRFIELD PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FAIRFIELD, CT

Cultural Diversity Task Force Meeting

Wednesday, May 12, 2010
7:00 p.m.

Board of Education Conference Room
501 Kings Highway East
Fairfield, CT

MINUTES

1. Committee members in attendance: Jennifer Maxon-Kennelly, Steve O'Connell, Cristin McCarthy Vahey, Trudi Durrell, Heather Dean, Mimi Maniscalco, Ken Seltzer, Dale Bernardoni and Anna Cutaia-Leonard.
2. The meeting was called to order at 7:04 p.m.
3. Anna Cutaia-Leonard shared the opt-out options for McKinley students for the 2010-2011 school year. Students will be given the option to attend the following schools in the following grades:
 - Burr Elementary School (grades K, 1, 3, 4)
 - Dwight Elementary School (grades 3, 4, 5)
 - Jennings Elementary School (grades 1, 2, 3, 4); and
 - North Stratfield Elementary School (grades K, 3).

Additionally, the number of students who were requesting to opt-in to McKinley was shared.

4. The Racial Imbalance statistics received on April 23, 2010 from the Connecticut State Department of Education were shared. McKinley has been identified as racially out of balance by an absolute balance of 28.7.
5. The committee spoke about the recommendations they'd like to consider to move forward to the Board of Education to revise the Plan to Address Racial Imbalance which needs to be submitted to the Connecticut State Department of Education by August 2010. The committee discussed the following options:
 - Magnet programming (International Baccalaureate, Dual Language, Higher Order of Thinking-HOT school)
 - Conduct focus groups to identify what parents would like in a magnet school
 - Consider making McKinley a charter school
 - Re-administer the parent survey

- Make a presentation to PTA Council with options and to receive feedback
- Conduct a Community Conversation on diversity
- Recommend sister schools (K-2 and 3-5)
- Recommend reconstituting two schools into one

The committee also discussed being sensitive to the realities of the economic climate. An overarching theme of the Task Force, that we were reminded of, is how to come together as people who are different in the same town. The Task Force would like to start focusing on this as much as the problem of racial imbalance.

6. During Open Discussion, the Task Force finalized the decision to send a letter to the Board of Education requesting that a liaison of the BOE be assigned to the Cultural Diversity Task Force. Steve O'Connell will send the letter.
7. The Task Force hopes to bring their recommendations to the Board of Education on June 22, 2010.
8. The next meeting will be held on June 2 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Education Conference Room.
9. The meeting adjourned at 9:06 p.m.