

SPECIAL EDUCATION ADVISORY COUNCIL
AGENDA MINUTES
JULY 10, 2008

Members Present: Katy Poole; Elise Kalika; Patti Parsons; Kevin Fleming; Reba Johnson; Leisa Pickering; Dylan Paul; Cathy Evans; Kathy Dykes; Sherri Williams

- I. Call to Order Meeting called to order at 5:35 p.m.
- II. Introductions: Wendy Wheeler-Mullins and Karen Sheets attended from the community. Introductions from Parent Advisory Council were made.
- III. Approval of Agenda: Agenda approved to include *with superintendent* under section V item b.
- IV. Approval of Consent Items
 - a. Review minutes—minutes approved with change to show the word minutes in the title. Mr. Paul motioned, Ms. Parsons seconded. Minutes of March 6 meeting will be amended to include Katy Poole as attending.
- V. Old Business (45 minutes)
 - a. Update on Ad-hoc committee –Committees Developed/shared mission statements with group. Communications committee will share with group at the next meeting. Groups will review reports with detail for the next Advisory Council Meeting. Ms. Parsons suggested we have detailed information and/or recommendations available. Mr. Paul asked if the group wanted something in writing. Ms. Dykes suggested that if the groups could get the information to her by August 22, she could share with the group after the last week of August. Ms. Dykes will have the committee's on the agenda for updates each meeting.
 - b. Discuss a process of how Ad-hoc committee recommendations are shared with superintendent: Ms. Kalika discussed how the concerns brought up by each committee will be addressed. The question is who does the information go to here in Fayette County, and who will respond to the recommendations. Ms. Evans asked what would be the process to go forward. Ms. Kalika asked what the district was foreseeing when the Parent Advisory Council was developed. Ms. Dykes suggested a form be developed to follow the process. Ms. Dykes reviewed a sample of how that may work. Ms. Kalika asked if there would be a process to show what has happened. Ms. Forsythe discussed that there was a procedure for the Equity Council to follow up on issues, and reviewed that process. Mr. Paul suggested this would provide the committees an opportunity to show follow up on issues. Ms. Forsythe will provide the form to Ms. Dykes. Ms. Pickering asked how parents know we meet. Ms. Dykes stated the District website is undergoing change, and will have information on the Parent Advisory council. Ms. Pickering suggested we have a list of Ad Hoc

committees and who would be contacted with questions/suggestions from the public. Mr. Paul asked if the newspaper had been contacted when the committee was organized. They were not, and Ms. Dykes will notify the newspaper with information about the meetings. Ms. Forsythe suggested we have procedures for parents who need to contact the council. Ms. Parsons stated that we need procedures in place to address all concerns. Ms. Kalika suggested we review the form used by the Equity Council, and have this be a “work in progress”. Council suggested that they need feedback from Ms. Dykes and her staff regarding issues. Council discussed reports from each committee, and if that information can be sent to Ms Dykes one week prior to the Council meeting, she will provide that information.

VI. New Business (15 minutes)

- a. Share recommended Special Ed. Procedures: Ms. Dykes reviewed the information regarding the procedures, and the process followed leading up to presentation to the Board of Education. Ms. Dykes reviewed any changes that may have been made. Ms. Dykes provided a summary that was given to the Superintendents Cabinet regarding any changes made. Ms. Forsythe asked about public comments were asked for when FCPS developed the procedures. These will be posted on the FCPS website. The document will go before the Board of Education for approval. Ms Parsons asked when the board would review the information. This will go before the BOE July 28. Ms. Dykes will provide council a summary of acronyms via email. Ms. Dykes reviewed that some information has been in regulation for some time, but the transition between Federal to state to local is lengthy.
- b. Discuss which subcommittee will be part of the Placement committee from the Equity Council: Ms. Forsythe discussed procedures for whether a child goes on alternate assessment or stays within the general curriculum already exist. She reviewed the concerns the committee had. Ms. Forsythe stated this is an Equity issue and we should have reasons according to the law. Ms. Dykes reviewed that part of the information is regulation. Ms. Forsythe stated there should be a procedure in place to guide the parents and ARC. Council discussed which committee would be most appropriate. Ms. Johnson stated this seemed best suited to the Education Committee. Ms. Parsons asked what the Placement Committee’s purpose is regarding placement. Ms. Forsythe stated concerns regarding when the decision should be made regarding age and/or grade level. Ms. Dykes suggested Dawn Stinson and Becky Farmer should be on the committee. Ms. Forsythe suggested that she supported more people involved with knowledge on the topic. Ms. Johnson suggested the committee consider Ms. Stinson and Ms. Farmer for the committee. Ms. Parsons stated she would also like representation from the Advisory Council. Representatives from Placement and Education will participate in the committee to review this issue.

- c. Discuss next round of applications: Ms. Dykes discussed the need to get applications out to the community for Parent Advisory council. Ms. Parsons discussed how the terms of office came about. Ms. Dykes will review the by-laws to determine how the application process needs to proceed. Council discussed the make-up of the members of the council. Ms. Dykes reviewed by-laws for the council. Ms. Dykes will review the applications. Ms. Parsons suggested contacting by mail, all those who applied for the first term. Ms. Poole asked about the terms currently served, and how that would work with staggering terms. Ms. Parsons stated the committee follow the by-laws.
- d. Discuss concern of school personnel taking the minutes for the group: Ms. Dykes reviewed a concern regarding having a staff person take minutes may skew the discussions regarding parents. Council discussed that since the minutes are projected during the meetings, and copies are provided to the council prior to next meeting, the use of a staff member taking minutes is appropriate.
- e. Other Comments: Mr. Fleming discussed a “Youth Employment Transition Fair” for potential users of Social Security – to assist these individuals in finding work and not becoming users of social security. Mr. Fleming described the plan for the Fair. Council discussed transition fairs, and Jefferson County Schools. Ms. Pickering will share information if the event comes to FCPS. Council discussed sending FCPS staff members to observe the event. The event is scheduled for November 14th, 2008. Ms. Dykes suggested the High School Special Education Administrator.

VII. Open Chair (15 minutes)

- a. Public comments: Wendy Wheeler-Mullins, parent, discussed going to the Equity council to discuss Alternate Assessment. She stated that there was an article in the newspaper, which offended her regarding attitudes people had toward students with disabilities. Ms Wheeler-Mullins stated there was a heavy handed approach extended to her during the spring ARC meeting for her child. She stated other parents had expressed concerns to her as well. She stated she is concerned that there is an unwritten practice regarding placing students on the alternate assessment, and parents do not know they can say no to this. Ms. Wheeler-Mullins stated the 2nd grade, the idea was approached, and during the 5th grade year, it was asked that her child go on the alternate assessment. She stated she does not feel parents know that the student will not receive a diploma, but a certificate of completion, and the lifelong impact this presents. She shared research she has studied. Although you say it is an individual decision, the school – whether they are aware or not – may place students on alternate assessment because it is easier if the student has to learn a lowered amount, which makes it easier for the school. Ms. Wheeler-Mullins stated her concerns are for parents who do not know the rules, and who are afraid to ask questions, or seek things for their child. Ms. Wheeler-Mullins reviewed an oped letter she had written expressing a

need for training for administrators and teachers for sensitivity. Ms. Dykes reviewed FCPS numbers regarding alternate assessment. Ms. Poole asked if the parents were given anything regarding Alternate Assessment, and they received the Q & A information from KDE's website. Ms Wheeler-Mullins expressed concerns that we were asking parents to make decisions at an early age, and that is not appropriate. Mr. Paul asked if Ms. Wheeler-Mullins has been invited to be part of the procedure to address the concerns. She stated that she is concerned about how Alternate Assessment is approached and is it being discussed in a consistent manner at the meeting. Ms Forsythe stated the Equity council is setting up time to speak with parents. Wendy would like to see the district aspire to see how many students they can get a high school diploma. Ms. Kalika discussed similar experiences with her child. Ms. Sheets discussed being told that her child would not be on Alternate Assessment through a team meeting during the 3rd grade. She suggested the web page have the procedures for Alternate Assessment outlined for parents and staff. Ms. Sheets asked that the regulations be placed on the website in parent friendly language, not legalese. Wendy reiterated that she feels staff/teachers/administrators have poor attitudes regarding student achievement. She asked how we can advocate for training for individuals biased against individuals with disabilities.

- b. Individual comments from council: Ms. Parsons discussed curriculum, ESY, peer mentoring. Ms Parsons stated the pendulum has swung too far with regard to testing, making the curriculum too rigorous, and all students going to college. The most evident subject with curriculum is math, and the requirements for math in high school which now include 4 years of math. She reviewed her sons struggle with math over his years in public school. Other recommendations from Ms. Parsons were to increase knowledge about the Parent Advisory Council were development of website, contacting newspapers, press release, Stu's News. On ESY, she questioned why couldn't ESY be used more broadly. Why couldn't ESY be used to teach new skills, enrichment. Could we have inclusive programming outside ESY.? She reviewed Middle School programs that had been described on the FCPS website. She reviewed the current methods of determination of ESY. Peer mentoring and peer tutoring were also discussed. Ms. Parsons will summarize her discussion, and send it to council members, and it will be attached to the minutes.

VIII. Adjournment of meeting: Meeting adjourned 7:54