

**A collaborative effort between
Miami-Dade County Public Schools and The Education Fund:
Improving students' choices for a better tomorrow
Citi Post-Secondary Program (CPSP)
College Access Partner's Meeting
October 26, 2009
1:00p.m. - 3:30 p.m.**

Notes

The meeting was opened The Education Fund's Corey Yugler at approximately 1:47.

The first order of business was an invitation by Ms. Yugler to the assembled to each give a brief introduction, which was done in a clockwise fashion from the speaker.

When the invitations were complete, Ms. Yugler opened the floor for "good of the order" comments. However, prior to that, Karen Guy representing College Summit inquired whether the assembled would be formally adopted by the school district as a committee and/or if there was a movement afoot to do so. It was noted this would be something the group would look into, whether it would be a sub-group of student services or a task force.

Corey gave new attendees some background on the group and the work to date. Since our last meeting on April 16, there have been many new people at all of the represented organizations. For this reason we are taking a ½ step back to see what course we would like to take. The Education Fund's Theory of change, created by the group, was passed out as was a work to date sheet.

The Education Fund printed a section of its IMPACT II catalog with partner's information. The 'blurbs' in the catalog (pg. 32-35) had been approved by partners last summer. Partner CBOs and postsecondary institutions can also have a table at The Education Fund's IMPACT II Teacher's EXPO on Saturday November 21st. The purpose is to get the word out of their services or organization to hundreds of teachers and possible principals as some do attend. A flyer was included with the catalog.

"Good of the order" comments were:

- Corey Yugler mentioned that although Alice Horn of NFTE could not be present, she wanted all to know about the November 18th screening of Ten9Eight, a documentary about the achievements of students through the NFTE program. Find more information at ww.ten9eight.com.
- Linda Lecht from The Education Fund mentioned there that is an upcoming luncheon sponsored by the Greater Miami Chamber of Commerce featuring, among others, school superintendent Alberto Carvalho. Although partners would have to pay, Linda felt it might be of value for partners to attend. Information at

http://www.greatermiami.com/events_programs/calendar_events.asp . It's on Monday November 2 and is \$40 for non-chamber members.

- Lidia Tuttle, associate dean from FIU, spoke on behalf of Enlace and its KnowHow2Go initiative. Several partners in the meeting were familiar with the initiative. Representatives from knowhow2go Florida were in the city last week and held two open houses. (knowhow2go.com)
- Edith Pearson, of the United Negro College Fund, mentioned the Gate's Millennium Scholarship.
- Big Brothers/Big Sisters secured \$1 million in scholarship funding through Big Brothers/Big Sisters for college, vocational and educational training.
- Linda Lecht mentioned that in a recent CEO Cities meeting, attendees set as a goal a commitment to increase college graduation rates by 1%.
- Erica French, of Educate Tomorrow, said her organization recently obtained a charter for a school and intends to open next August. This school will better meet needs of the foster population. No location has been found yet.
- Several partners spoke with reference to College Goal Sunday, which is Jan. 31. Ms. Tuttle mentioned that Enlace would be hosting a site at Hialeah High school, which would involve, among other things, a FAFSA completion workshop.
- Sylvia Nzeakor-Williams from Nova Southeastern said they would be at Northwestern and North Miami High. As these were just three of many sites to host workshops on that day, the question was raised from the floor as to how and when site information would be disseminated. It was determined that Enlace usually releases promotional information for the event approximately one month prior.
- Ms. Nzeakor-Williams also mentioned NSU is involved in a mentoring program at both Northwestern SHS and North Miami SHS>
- Ms. Lecht mentioned that all schools still have their CAP advisors.
- There is an upcoming parent information session scheduled for Nov. 6 at the Miami Science Museum. This was mentioned as an example of an outreach effort.
- Corey Yugler mentioned that the City of Miami held a Drop-out Prevention Summit.
- The National College Fair in Broward is November 5th and 6th at the Broward Convention Center. In Miami it is February 21st.
- Karen Guy from College Summit discussed the PTA's leadership training seminar.

Subsequent to the body of the "good of the order" discussion, the FAFSA conversation continued. Some of the comments from the floor included examples of how difficult it is to get students in Miami-Dade County to complete their FAFSA's. Ms. Austin mentioned it was her experience that students, especially those not from the US, are guardianshiped by a relative yet not officially claimed as a dependent. Ms. Lecht inquired about an automated device which would allow a parent to automatically download their tax form into the FAFSA form. Rene Garcia, from Miami-Dade College said there is movement afoot to accomplish this; however he felt it would be more of a deterrent than a facilitating tool as many parents are loathes publicizing their tax forms. Jodie Knofsky, CPSP consultant to The Education Fund explained that it is not technically necessary to have one's tax form prepared prior to filling out the FAFSA. This volume of discussion

moved the floor to consider this aspect warrants further discussion, with a possible next step the formation of a subcommittee.

From there, the meeting moved to the next agenda item which was to advance the work of the group. The question was posed to the group whether the most effective master plan was to pursue a group-wide strategic plan or to divide into sub-groups and grapple with issues on a thematic level. To that, Ms. Pearson asked an overarching question – just who or whom is the group acting on behalf of? Ms. Lecht responded that the purpose of the group was to build consensus and work together so that each individual partner's goals can ultimately be supported. Ms. French inquired as to how communication can be improved among the partners. Sonia Mucarsel of College Summit proposed the creation of a clearinghouse to remedy this issue. Ms. Lecht suggested a gap analysis, to better assess where each stakeholder currently operates with respect to the overall dynamic. It was also suggested to construct an asset map to illustrate the linkages and disconnects.

The discussion then segued into a dialogue about student services. Mr. Garcia mentioned that approximately 45% of graduating students in Miami-Dade County do not enroll in a postsecondary institution. With most of the focus thus far on K-12 student services, Ms. Pearson raised the issue of addressing student retention rates while in college or postsecondary study. She pointed out that most college students drop out during their sophomore year with finances and not academics as the primary reason. It was agreed this needed to be part of the ongoing dialogue as well.

Eva Regueira from AVID mentioned she felt municipalities need to be brought into the coalition. Ms. Yugler responded this is part of the overall plan; however the formative stages are not the optimal time to do so. Her reasoning was 1) the coalition still needs to develop its identity and 2) it needs to do so free from the temptation of elected officials who could use the coalition to advance their political agendas. Ms. Knofsky said that faith based organizations should be brought in as well. All agreed these constituencies should be included in time.

Ms. Tuttle raised the idea of advancing the statewide adaptation of a college going curriculum as a base curriculum which students would have to opt-out of. Jai Ingraham, representing 5000 Role Models of Excellence, added he felt middle schools needed to be considered as well. Finally, Angelica Yanez from M-DCPS mentioned that this year, the school assessment tool is radically changing. Schools will be assessed along five different measurements this year, of which the FCAT will be just one. One of the new assessment measurements is indeed college readiness.

It was determined the primary themes gleaned from the conversation were: communications, finance, data and advocacy.

After these salient points were raised and discussed, Ms. Yugler called on the partners to determine the next action step. Ms. Guy suggested before an action plan was formulated, it would be valuable to have a copy of the goals set forth by the district with which to align. It was agreed this was a good idea and Barbara Mallard, representing M-DCPS student services said this would be provided. Ms. Knofsky further suggested it might be wise to inquire with student services as to what gaps exist and what the

coalition can do to help the district meet its goals. Ms. Guy also suggested the coalition create a resource guide. Ms. French proposed the group consider ways to increase direct services to students. Ms. Lecht suggested the coalition consider forming subcommittees in order to address issues and set goals.

The action plan was summarized by Ms. Yugler thusly:

- 1). The coalition would obtain a copy of the district's goals.
- 2). The partners would form subcommittees along five themes (partnership, communication, data, financial aid and advocacy)
- 3). The group would reconvene on Dec. 16.

Before closing, the partners were treated to an appearance by Superintendent Carvalho, who happened to be passing through. Mr. Carvalho was generous enough to deliver an impromptu address to the partners.

When told about the purpose of the gathering, the superintendent said the topic of improving college access and success was one of the most important challenges the district faces at this time. His reasoning was two-fold:

- 1) No longer does a high-school diploma guarantee its holder a job in the workforce of today - and into the future.
- 2) No longer is school performance measured strictly by FCAT scores (echoing the information relayed earlier).

Mr. Carvalho said that in order to advance this issue, a comprehensive and community-wide investment in programs is required. This action needs to start as early as possible in the academic lives of the students. As an example, Mr. Carvalho shared with the group the fact that one of the statistics urban planners and administrators use to determine future prison capacity required is current third-grade test scores.

Mr. Carvalho wished the partners luck, stating he believed the work of the coalition is "the closest thing to God's work on earth." He then went on to relay to the group an anecdote from his visit to Ferguson HS from earlier in the day. While at the school, he told of a conversation he had with an 11th-grade student. When this student was queried as to the greatest concern he had about his high school educational experience, his answer was his ability to get a job upon graduation (superseding other hot-button issues such as student safety).

Mr. Carvalho also offered some positive information, noting that most all school performance indicators are trending up despite the current financial hardships of the district.

In closing, Mr. Carvalho asked the partners to "help him reinvent" our schools. He said the challenge for administrators is to be able to meet and engage students at the point where *they* are. He likened the current system as one which funnels students of all kinds through the same length and width of pipeline with the same starting point and end point for all students. He said that administrators and instructors need to think of time and place with respect to the education process as a "variable."

As an example, Mr. Carvalho discussed his plans to implement an “I-School” where students can use the technology which they are familiar with in order to learn. In this scenario, engaged students will use technology to self teach and teachers will serve more as facilitators, rather than instructors. Mr. Carvalho felt the current system, where teachers control the content, delivery and presentation of learning materials, is disconnected from the needs and abilities of today’s student.

Partners were interested in having a contact list of attendees. Corey Yugler asked if anyone was opposed to having their name and contact list published to the group. No one objected. This list will be sent out with the notes from the meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:38.

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