

Coalition of Minorities Advisory Committee MEETING – Thursday, September 24, 2015

A regular meeting of the Coalition of Minorities Advisory Committee was held September 24, 2015 at the Utah State Office of Education, 250 East 500 South, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Chair Freddie Cooper conducted. Chair Cooper called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m.

CMAC Members Present:

Chair Freddie Cooper
Chair-elect Roderic Land
Past Chair Ike Spencer
Member Hiram Alba
Member Anais Carattini Ruiz

Member Jeanie Groves
Member Charlene Lui
Member Edie Park
Member Jo Ann Wong

CMAC Members Excused:

Member Clayton Long
Member Jean Tokuda Irwin

Member Ze Min Xiao
Member Nephi Prime

State Board Members Present:

None

Staff Present:

Richard Gomez, Ed. Equity Coordinator
Dawn Stevenson, Dropout Prevention and Career Awareness
Financial Literacy

Amanda Charlesworth, Ed. Equity Program Specialist
Roxana Orellana, Social Media Specialist

Others Present:

Alexx Goeller, Utah Refugee Services Office
Jessica Kallin, Catholic Community Services
Nycole Tylka, Department of Workforce Services
Chuck Curtin, Department of Workforce Services

Natalie Craven, International Rescue Committee
Jenny Hor, Utah Multicultural Commission
Ram Jayakumar, Utah PTA
Ingrid Andromidas, Alpine School District

September 24, 2015 Agenda

Item #1: Approval of August 27, 2015 Meeting Minutes—Freddie Cooper

MOTION: Member Alba made a motion to approve the August 27, 2015 Meeting Minutes. Member Park seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Item #2: Utah Futures Website Updates

Ms. Stevenson demonstrated how to create an account at Utahfutures.org. The Utahfutures.org website is a collaboration between the Utah State Office of Education (USOE), Utah Higher Education Assistance Authority (UHEAA), Department of Workforce Services (DWS), and other community partners. A new Utahfutures.org trainer was recently hired by the USOE. This trainer has helped over 400 Utah students create accounts on Utahfutures.org. The student feedback indicates that Utahfutures.org gives them hope for the future and helps them see their possibilities. Ms. Stevenson challenged the CMAC members to go back and ask whether the Utahfutures.org website is being used in their schools.

Ms. Stevenson then explained the financial literacy tools that are built into Utahfutures.org. As the students create their file they make selections, such as living arrangements, vehicle selection, family size, etc. As the students make selections, a budget is populated. This helps students to see what level of income will be required to fulfill those life choices. Ms. Stevenson feels this is a great opportunity for counselors to help students understand long-term financial planning and the benefits saving early in life. She also explained the “career road map,” which shows the requirements

to get a student's career of choice, including colleges that offer the desired program and current jobs that are open with DWS.

Ms. Stevenson invited the CMAC members to review the draft of the "parent wire frame," which is the framework of the parent portion of the website, and provide her with feedback.

Volunteers:

Member Park

Member Alba

Richard Gomez

Member Wong asked whether there are other ways to access the site besides the counselor. She wondered whether the counselors work with each student to set up a profile. Ms. Stevenson felt that would be the ideal, but due to the number of students assigned to each counselor, it is not practical. Utahfutures.org is designed to allow anyone with a Utah address and zip code to create an account.

Member Lui referred to the 2011 Equity in Action conference, and the training opportunity that conference provided for parents in Utah. Parents worked with volunteers in computer labs to create Utahfutures.org accounts at the conference. Member Lui wonders whether another large training initiative will be launched.

Member Ruiz talked about the high school requirement of financial literacy classes. She wondered whether Utahfutures.org will be embedded into those classes. Ms. Stevenson explained that the program is being designed at this time to start offering classes in the high schools and set up a statewide learning community. She added that the libraries are set up to help with the Utahfutures.org website, and the librarians are eager to work with our students.

Ms. Stevenson reviewed the "General Financial Literacy (GFL): Big Ideas for Curriculum Mapping" handout. The GFL will help students better understand value and economic goals. Ms. Stevenson spoke about the efforts taken to update the GFL, the passion the teachers have, and how they help students with the GFL course.

Mr. Gomez wondered whether CMAC could make recommendations to the Board to support Utahfutures.org. Ms. Stevenson suggested that CMAC could recommend the following:

1. That the State Board of Education (Board) recognize Utahfutures.org as the official career advising tool of Utah.
2. That the Board work with the USOE to train **all** counselors on why it is so important to use Utahfutures.org, and how to incorporate the tool into their daily work.
3. That the Board also ensure the provision of concerted efforts at the school level to ensure all Utah students have fair access to the website and information.

Other possible recommendations:

1. That Utahfutures.org be part of a broader district career plan.
2. That Utahfutures.org training offered in other languages (translation of training materials and the online system).

Ms. Stevenson feels this would be a great opportunity for CMAC to become involved in the parent training plans and/or making recommendations to the Board.

Item #3: Refugee Family Concerns RE: Limited Diploma Options and Graduation Issues for Refugee Students in Utah

Ms. Goeller explained that today's presentation was to be an overview, and was intended to open dialogue to find data points to help with a solution to this issue, but it is not meant to be an overarching overview of all requirements. She then shared a brief overview of the newly formed Utah Youth Refugee Committee (YRC) and reviewed a PowerPoint of the purpose, vision and focus of the committee. Ms. Goeller and the YRC feel that the main barrier is the ageing out requirement. The refugee population, due to age upon arrival, does not have sufficient time to meet all the requirements to graduate before they age out of the system.

Ms. Kallin detailed the numbers of refugees coming to Utah. Last year there were 119 refugee youth, ages 15-19, who came in and tried to graduate in the limited time they had. The majority of the refugee population has had no formal education, which further limits refugees' being able to graduate in time. Ms. Kallin referred to adult education options for those who age out of high school. However, the issue is that some of the adult education options do not meet developmental needs, are cost prohibitive, and vary in quality from LEA to LEA. While adult education is a great opportunity, it does not work for everyone, and the YRC wants an option for those who don't fit into traditional adult education.

Ms. Tylka further explained that one-third to one-fourth of the refugee population is designated as refugee youth. She spoke of how one more year at a high school would be enough for some refugee students to finish. Also, that there need to be supports in place to help the adult education partners ensure access for refugee youth, as well as checks and balances to make sure they are actually completing the adult education program. Ms. Tylka feels that there is not just one solution, but that multiple strategies will be needed to meet these students' needs. She, too, would like CMAC to make recommendations to support the program, such as how to transition the refugee students to adult education when needed, and how to keep the refugee students in the K-12 schools longer to complete their high school diploma.

Mr. Curtin added that another issue is developmental skills vs. chronological age. Putting refugee students into a high school environment without the necessary skills causes a problem. He feels that if refugee students were put in schools at their development age vs. chronological age, it would provide for more opportunities, and he feels this is an area where the YRC needs CMAC's help.

Member Lui feels that a full-year program, including summer, school is needed. She also suggested that the YRC needs to work more closely with the adult education staff at the USOE. Ms. Goeller explained that the problem with adult education classes is that they are limited to English language learning. The refugees need English in content classes to become college and career ready. Member Lui suggested other information the YRC should be aware of. The USOE already has a committee looking at the graduation requirements; she suggested that the YRC meet with the graduation requirements committee.

Ms. Goeller added that another issue is the weighted pupil unit (WPU), which is not funded for students over the maximum compulsory age. However, other states are now changing the formula in order to fund students to have a "super senior year," and it's working. She agrees the YRC needs to better partner with adult education, and work toward keeping the students in the schools longer in order to get needed support from peers and a sense of community.

Member Ruiz feels that there are layers to this issue. One will be the extra year, and the other layer is the resources that are out there to come together and streamline the resources to make them more accessible. Canyons School District has added summer school programs that are "tag along programs" to other programs, such as the Boys and Girls club, etc.

Chair Cooper thanked the group for their presentations. CMAC will share back any recommendations made.

Item #4: CMAC Subcommittee Reports

Member Alba reviewed the work being done to get the CMAC members and STEM and MESA staff together. Ms. Honey is still trying to coordinate a meeting date for the group.

Member Ruiz briefly discussed the conference call that has taken place, and indicated that Ms. Brock would like to meet with the CMAC subcommittee first and then hold a second meeting with the STEM group.

Member Ruiz gave a brief report on the PAC meeting that took place this morning. She will send the "opt out" DRAFT information to all of the CMAC members. The DRAFT includes the WIDA assessment as one of the assessments students can opt out of taking. CMAC members have already expressed concern that it will affect funding and student services if so many students opt out that test results cannot be used.

Member Park asked whether the form is something the LEAs will provide at registration. Member Ruiz explained that it has not been defined how that information will be shared.

Member Alba attended the committee meeting when the DRAFT was disseminated. He explained that parents can bring that form in anytime, throughout the year.

Member Spencer detailed that his instructions as a principal are to have copies available at the schools to fill out, and that these forms will be posted on the LEA website and the USOE website. It will not be a blanket news blitz.

Chair-elect Land wonders, if parents opt out of these tests and each LEA is responsible for showing improvement, how are LEAs legally held accountable. Several members echoed this concern.

Member Lui talked about how teachers' salaries will also be tied into the test results.

MOTION: Member Alba made a motion to update and send the "opt out" letter from CMAC to the Board. Member Lui seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

Member Lui, Member Ruiz and Member Alba will update the letter and submit it for consideration.

Item #5: Chair Report—Freddie Cooper

Mr. Gomez reviewed the proposed CMAC protocol for CMAC Chair-elect elections. He suggested the CMAC members review the DRAFT handout and make recommendations. Mr. Gomez then reviewed the CMAC Call for Nominees, specifically detailing the participation expectation; CMAC meetings, subcommittee meetings, Board Committee meetings etc. He suggested that CMAC members keep those participation expectations in mind when making recommendations for CMAC nominees.

Chair Cooper discussed that there may be a need for a CMAC Treasurer and CMAC Secretary be added to the Bylaws. The CMAC Executive Committee will review these items and then bring it back to the body.

Member Wong discussed her monitoring of the Board's Agenda for both the committee meetings and the regular Board meeting. While attending the subcommittee meetings, she saw opportunities for CMAC to merge its goals and issues with the Board. Member Wong also participated in the full 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Board Meeting on Friday, September 18, 2015. Member Wong explained the Board and the USOE were already setting 2017 budget priorities, and that she would like to see CMAC engage in this process and review the information more closely, especially drilling down to show accountability for at-risk enhancement. Member Lui added that it could be a trend to use the funds for counselors, specific programs, etc. CMAC just wants to know how each of the LEAs spends the at-risk enhancement money.

Member Wong then talked about Superintendent Smith's equity and excellence in education plan. She feels this is a natural fit for CMAC to help embed equity into all USOE functions, by maintaining a fulltime equity officer, and by continuing to recruit and retain a diverse staff.

Motion to close the meeting at 2:09 p.m.