



STATE OF WASHINGTON
COMMISSION ON HISPANIC AFFAIRS
COMISIÓN DE ASUNTOS HISPANOS

South Park
Study Session Minutes
October 21, 2006

I. Call to Order. Meeting was called to order at 9:21 AM by Vice-Chair Portugal

II. Roll Call. Commissioners present: Rubén Baca, Víctor Chacón, Félix L. Negrón, Rosalba D. Pitkin, Lourdes Portillo Salazar, Gabriel Portugal, Rebecca Villareal, and Yvonne Lopez Morton.

Staff Present: Uriel Iñiguez, Alicia Luna, and Mike Britt

Commissioner Pitkin was welcomed by the Commission and asked to share some comments. Commissioner Pitkin stated that she is very happy to join the Commission and that Education is a priority in her agenda. She is very much interested on learning how she can better serve her community in areas other than education. She believes that it is very important that we all unite, inform, and educate our people.

Rosalba added that she will be giving a presentation to Clark Community College regarding the Commission and wanted input regarding its history and mission.

Commissioner Portugal informed Commissioner Pitkin that Director Iñiguez had put together a Power Point presentation that was appropriate for her presentation. He added that staff could also provide handouts that could be given at the presentation.

Action Item: Executive Assistant Luna will send PDF files that Director uses as handouts for CHA presentations to all Commissioners.

III. Evaluation of Public Meeting

The following observations were voiced by Commissioners and staff

- Need to formulate a precise and informative document regarding immigration that we can have as a handout i.e. a pamphlet, card, information sheet, etc.
- Be a sounding board for the community
- Solicit advice from the Governor to see if we can invite Senators Cantwell and Murray to our meetings and have them speak on immigration
- Schedule Legislators on an ongoing basis to our public meetings
- Resource table sponsors should join the audience when the meeting commences
- Children were a distraction, therefore, we should look into finding a local childcare provider to partner with us and provide the necessary care for the kids
- Advise School Superintendent for South Park that there is a great need for a Parent Advisory Group

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- Include (in our Annual Report) Penny Lara's comments regarding her recommendation to increase the "income level" that is used for eligibility so that more kids and families can qualify for medical health coverage
- Need to have a letter of thanks to the community of South Park acknowledging all those that partnered to help and sent to media

Action Items

1. CHA Staff will formulate the immigration document using the Governor's letter and the CHA shared drive question and answer sheet
2. Director will contact the Governor's staff to learn whether we can invite Senators Cantwell and Murray to our public meetings
3. CHA Staff will add "Provide Childcare" to the 60 day CHA meeting planner for future meeting planning
4. Commissioner Chacón will draft the letter to the South Park Superintendent regarding the creation of a Parent Advisory council and a copy of the final letter will be sent to OSPI
5. Commissioner Portillo Salazar and Commissioner Negrón will draft a generic letter for the media
6. CHA Staff will add Penny Lara's comments to our 2006 Annual Report

IV. Guests

Stella Ortega, Associate Director of El Centro de la Raza

Ms. Ortega shared with the Commission that she had been a CHA Commissioner in the 1980s during Director Jerry Martinez's term. She gave an overview of El Centro de la Raza's history. Their journey began in October of 1972 when Latino Staff, students, and families peacefully occupied the abandoned Beacon Hill Elementary School near downtown Seattle. The occupation of the abandoned school was widely supported by Native Americans, African Americans, Asians, and Caucasians. Negotiations with the City of Seattle and the Seattle Public Schools led to the eventual approval by the city council and the Mayor of a five year lease of the building for one dollar.

Today, 34 years later, El Centro owns the building. It receives and welcomes individuals and families of all races and battles to make a better and more just world for everyone. It provides services that range from Child and Youth services, Education and Skill Building programs, Community Building Development, etc.

Ms. Ortega's purpose for attending the meeting was to request that the Commission write a letter of support for roof replacement of their building. The building which was constructed in 1909-11 currently has a roof that is performing passably, however, the roofing on both steep and low slope roof areas are past their expected service lives and should be replaced. She shared a summary of the feasibility study that was completed on the roof along with the estimated replacement cost.

She shared that over the years several improvements have been done to the building including replacement of the boiler and the upcoming replacement of all windows. Other projects are in the works which they hope to launch next year on their 35th anniversary.

Action Item

- The Commission needs to decide on the requested letter

Neal Kirby, Centralia Principal

Mr. Kirby, current Principal of Edison Elementary and former state representative who has worked on legislative issues over the past 20 years under the banner of the Committee for Levy Equalization gave the Commission a presentation on levy equalization and regional salary funding.

Levy Equalization which passed in 1987 has provided over 1.5 billion to poor school districts. An amendment attached to a bill that guarantees full funding of the current levy equalization law until 2011 is a plus particularly since it was not funded for numerous years. Mr. Kirby stated that levy equalization benefits school districts with a poor property tax base when compared to the state average by providing a state match for local levy efforts. The pattern is that the poorer the district, the greater the benefit. According to Mr. Kirby, currently, only the first-half of the levies are equalized. Equalizing the full levy would double a district's equalization. He added that levy differences disproportionately hurt poor students and Hispanic students and that the most property poor areas of the state are labor intensive agriculture and timber dependent areas. Schools in these areas have far higher percentages of poor and Hispanic students and far lower per student levy funds. Because of the levy system, the overall state education funding system leads to institutional discrimination against the rural poor and Hispanics.

Mr. Kirby said that WA Learns chose to not analyze the educational differences caused by levy differences despite their empowering legislation requiring that they do so. They made no definitive recommendations to change the levy system except to end grandfathering of the highest levies, but did not say how.

Mr. Kirby believes that equalizing the full levy would provide far greater equalization in the delivery of educational services since this would provide students in the poorer districts a far better chance of success and would go a long ways toward closing the equity gap. He stated that he is looking for a Legislator that will lobby for equalization and if possible a Democrat.

In regards to Regional Salary Funding, Mr. Kirby asked the Commission to consider opposing this measure. Per Mr. Kirby, extensive state and national research shows the poorest areas of the state have the highest teacher turnover rates due to work load issues. Teachers tend to move to areas of the state with higher levies and more support to assist them in their classrooms. They seek better chances of professional success without regard for the price of housing or cost of living. The poorer areas of the state tend to have lower levies, larger classes, less local salary supplements, more kids in poverty, higher minority counts, and fewer specialists, counselors, administrator, educational assistants, etc to support the teachers in the classroom. He added that teacher attrition is going to increase if they restructure regional salary funding.

Per Mr. Kirby, the key component for schools is quality teachers and all districts should have a comparable chance at attracting and retaining quality teachers.

Dr. Ed Davila, Fred Hutchison Board Member

Dr. Davila stopped by to visit with the Commission and offer his support. He told the Commission to stay the course and stressed the importance of having a Legislative report available to our constituents.

Dr. Alfonso Anaya, Director of Migrant Bilingual Education

Dr. Anaya has been Director of Migrant Bilingual Education for only six months and in those few months he has established that Washington State has not done a good job in regards to bilingual education. He did acknowledge that some elementary schools are doing a good job but not necessarily as an education system. The universities unfortunately are not being involved and it is his intent to engage them in order to identify best practices. He believes that all education systems need to be connected i.e. teacher scale, administrative scale, early education, parent involvement, etc.

He said that there are 150,000 Hispanic students and 87,000 English learners in the state of Washington. Of the 87,000 English learners sixty to seventy percent are Hispanic and eighty-nine percent are in remedial programs. Teachers in the remedial program unfortunately are non-credentialed teachers and or paraprofessionals versus highly competent/highly paid teachers. He also said that the migrant population is settling in western Washington more so than in eastern Washington.

According to Dr. Anaya, the first eight years of school should be consistent. He added that the current elementary school reading instruction model is not working, consequently we need to look at concepts in which kids can learn. In addition, direct instruction is not working so we need to look at practices that do work. He added that cultural competency is very important, however, it is not the solution. What is needed is highly educated and highly paid teachers that can motivate students.

Sunnyside and Tukwila school districts have been selected to trial a new model which will involve the school board, the Superintendent and Principal, the teachers, etc. from the very beginning. The University of Washington and Washington State University will also participate by doing research during this model trial.

Commissioner Baca asked if alternative schools were being looked at also.

Dr. Anaya said that not at this time.

Commissioner Portillo Salazar asked Dr. Anaya if CONEVIV or Plaza Comunitaria were of any benefit.

Dr. Anaya said that unfortunately these programs were very difficult, not comprehensive, and not at a learning level for kids. He added that core curriculum is what needs to be looked at not alternative programs.

Commissioner Portugal asked Dr. Anaya if dual language programs would affect the allocation of resources to bilingual ESL students.

Dr. Anaya said that all kids have a right to get the basic education whether they are legal or not. He added that transitional bilingual programs only focus on language proficiency and are not to be confused with regular classroom curriculum that is presented in dual languages for the benefit of both English and non-English speakers.

Dr. Anaya's final comments were that bilingual education is doable in the state of Washington due to its size.

V. Director's Report

- DIS will at last hand over the CHA website to us early next week
- Commissioners please send any research on Hispanics so that we can post on the website
- Need Commissioner Bio's for the website
- We received additional funds from the Small Agency Technology pool to enhance our database
- Met with Fred Olson to discuss CHA's Strategic Plan and he has approved it
- Fred unfortunately is retiring
- GMAP folks will be working with CHA staff to design a Logic Model from our Strategic Plan and in addition will be participating in a GMAP training session on November 16th
- Will be meeting with Ways and Means Committee in November
- DIS is willing to support us on our decision package request to add staff and will be meeting with Linda Jo to look at additional funding for our website
- Will be meeting with Senator Margarita Prentiss on November 14th to discuss our Legislative Agenda
- We have a new OJT, Lisa Flores
- We will be sending you a contact list template that will facilitate the upload of our database
- Talking to Pullman students in regards to volunteering/interns to work on research projects for CHA
- Will be asking college/university Professors to write articles for our Newsletter with the understanding that the Executive Committee will approve all articles before they are published
- WSU out of Pullman is very much interested in having CHA hold a public meeting at their University
- Commissioner Villareal is actively seeking funds for printing of our Annual Report

Action Item: Executive Assistant Luna will send the contact list template to the Commissioners

VI. CHA Public Meetings for 2007

- February Olympia
- April Pullman
- June Othello
- August Pasco
- October Walla Walla
- December Vancouver

VII. December Public Meeting and Commissioner Retreat

- Public Meeting will be held on December 8th from 1PM to 6PM
- Dr. Terry Bergeson has asked to speak at our meeting- she will present at 3PM
- Need to formulate agenda for the Retreat which will be held on Saturday, December 9th in Bellevue, WA 9AM to 5PM (with a working lunch)

VII. Executive Assistant Report

- Reminder to please send in your articles for the Winter Newsletter by December 1st
- Handout on Scan Card down times was given to Commissioners
- Went over OJT duties

Final Comments

- Commissioner Villareal requested 3 months sabbatical
- Executive Committee will address personnel issues in respect to new Commissioner's duties and expectations
- An informal vote was taken regarding the El Centro de la Raza's requested letter of support for the roof replacement

Commissioner Villareal made a motion to adjourn the study session. Commissioner Lopez-Morton seconded the motion. The vote resulted in all yays.

Meeting adjourned at 3:10 PM