



**GNV4ALL Meeting Minutes
October 23, 2017**

- I. Welcome and introduction by James Lawrence. James Lawrence noted how unified the community was in outrage at Richard Spencer, and wouldn't it be great if we could mobilize that energy to work on issues related to racial equity.
- II. Upcoming events that GNV4ALL is considering hosting include:
 - a. Gathering for the different community agencies, "silos" working in isolation on similar issues, to facilitate working together.
 - b. Job Fair: Focusing on job opportunities for low income, and unskilled
 - c. Day of Caring: community event, possibly near MLK Birthday in January
- III. James Lawrence encouraged all to:
 - a. Share more on social media about GNV4ALL and our work of our teams.
 - b. Make nominations for community members to be honored for their work by the "Spirit of Gainesville" awards from the Gainesville Sun. To make nominations:
<http://www.gainesville.com/news/20161102/final-days-for-spirit-of-gainesville-awards-nominations-2016>
- IV. Dates: Next meetings are 11/27/17 and 12/18/17. Each team needs to work on recommendations for long term changes for the community. We hope to complete these by February 2018.

**Education Team Meeting: GNV4ALL
October 23, 2017
Led by Juliun Kinsey**

- I. Welcome and introductions. We were asked to mention one issue that is a priority for each of us, and what you would like to see happen. Some issues mentioned included:
 - a. Issues of state funding: how it is compromised by large scale charters and vouchers. Would like to see a position for a liaison between school boards and the legislature.
 - b. Inclusiveness: We need to be careful not leave out stakeholders who do not have access to technology/internet or ability to come to these meetings. Would like to see us go into the community and talk with stakeholders. Would like to see *sustainable solutions*, not just yet another plan or program. There is a need to build trust in the community by creating sustainable programs that have built in accountability.

- c. True embracing of equity: systemic evaluation of data, objective goals, and systemic evaluation of progress. There was much discussion of how although we have an equity office and person, decisions that create increasing disparities have continued to be made such as: eliminating bus routes for at risk children, elimination of before school study time at Lincoln middle school library (while continuing similar programs at other schools that have fewer at risk children), remedial reading classes with unrealistic class sizes.
- d. Racial and economic segregation of schools: Would like to look at re-zoning. Note: Dr. McNeely stated that whenever this is suggested, the SBAC members state that the community voted against this. Discussion was made that that was 30 years ago. It needs to be revisited. There was much discussion of how this would be a major move, and that it will take much community support.
- e. The proposed new tax: if passed must be distributed in a way that creates equity/otherwise the entire county is being forced to pay to maintain the status quo. All schools should be equal, and mirrors of our whole community.
- f. Protect and prioritize programs such as remedial reading that address equity issues. Eastside Remedial Reading teacher gave an example of how at the beginning of this year she had small and very effective class sizes (15 students). One student stated that he had finally been able to ask questions that he had had for two years, but due to class size hadn't been able to ask. Then due to Eastside being under enrolled, these classes were compressed and now this teacher has so many students added that they are now back to their ineffective large size.
- g. Issues of culture clashes: When some behaviors are identified as problems, this may be perceived as (or may be) implicit racism/bias or cultural difference. There was discussion about need to learn more about cultural sensitivity, and about having more teachers of color.

II. Disparities in the Alachua County Schools- presentation (could we put a link to a power point here, to the slides Ann showed?)

Anne Koterba noted that despite the problems with testing, we need the data from testing to demonstrate the disparities. Some of the highlights of her presentation include:

- a. She then presented data from the SBAC, first showing the aggregated data, as compared to the state data, which showed Alachua County exceeding the state scores on most measures. She then showed pie charts which disaggregated the scores of white and black students, and compared it with the aggregated data. This demonstrated that on all measures white students exceeded the state averages and black students trailed below state averages. On many measures 1/4 of white students made failing scores while 3/4 of black students made failing scores. She noted that Alachua County has the greatest achievement gap of any county in Florida on many measures.
- b. She then looked at Algebra 1 data. Algebra 1 is considered remedial math in high school, and is a requirement for graduation, making it a priority. The majority of black students (74%) failed Algebra I in HS, as compared to only 41% failure rate of white students. Only 20% of black students made passing scores on regular math.
- c. She then looked at AP classes: 37% of white students take AP classes (and 65% of them pass) while only 12% of black students have this opportunity (28% pass).

- d. She looked at the rate of students who graduate from Alachua County schools, and compared the percentage of Alachua county white versus black students who are accepted and enroll at University of FL. She compared data over the past several years demonstrating a downward trend in number of black students applying and enrolling at UF. She showed similar trends at SFC.
- e. She ended her presentation with several provocative questions:
 - 1. In Alachua County we brag about our graduation rates, but perhaps it would be more instructive if we focus on post secondary success of our students rather than graduation rates?
 - 2. Are magnet programs beneficial or detrimental to the regular program students? (other than keeping failing mainstream programs from closing...and is that a benefit?)

III. There was discussion following Ann Koterba's presentation. Some issues that were brought up include:

- a. Not all children learn the same way. Different teaching styles need to be offered.
- b. Children who are not prepared for kindergarten need programs to help them catch up, not the same curriculum as children who have had more advantages.
- c. Out of school suspensions guarantee student failure.
- d. A program at Kanapaha was mentioned, where students with frequent behavior issues and the teachers that cite them have lunch time discussion/counseling sessions. This program created a dramatic drop in suspension rates. Programs such as this which are proven to be successful should be implemented county wide.
- e. We are seeing the school to prison pipeline. We spend \$7,000 per year per student, but \$30,000 per year per prisoner. Economic sense to invest more in education.
- f. We need interesting curriculum for students. Remedial students are given dull books. Lack of a skill set is mistaken for lack of intelligence.
- g. To see what the school board values, look at the budget. Where is the money going?
- h. There is a need for more teachers of color.
- i. There is a need to establish respect for authority. This is needed to be successful in life.
- j. We need programs that offer alternatives to college.
- k. We need research based focus- for example put resources in 2nd and 3rd grades since this is a breaking point for many.
- l. There is a need to look at research based solutions.

IV. In close, Dr. McNeely suggested that our meetings be videotaped, because all of our comments were so essential and need to be conveyed to the superintendent. She spoke passionately of the difficulty of getting the school board and the superintendent to hear the voices of the community. She hoped that members of this team would attend the SBAC meeting on 11/14/17 (reorganization the leadership of the SBAC), and all the meetings on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month She hoped members would attend the SBAC retreat on 12/11/17 at Camp Crystal. The SBAC members need to be reminded of their motto, "...committed to the success of **ALL** students."