

City and County of San Francisco



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Theresa Sparks
Executive Director

Equity Advisory Committee ("EAC") Minutes of the September 9, 2009 Meeting

Committee members present: Commissioner Dajani, Commissioner Lee, Joel Brown, Pamela Duszynski, Daisy Hung, Sara Jackson, Todd Mavis, Nura Maznavi, Azalia Merrell, Carnelius Quinn (5:40pm), and Jennifer Salerno
Committee members absent: Commissioner Turman, Priscilla Padilla, Eric Quezada, Mollie Ring, Beth Stokes
Staff present: Lupe Arreola, Linda Janourova
Guests present: Milton Chen, Jorge Portillo and Matthias Mormino

Call to order, roll call, and approval of minutes:

Commissioner Lee called the meeting to order at approximately 5:35 pm and Ms. Janourova called roll. A quorum of the EAC was present at the meeting. Commissioner Lee asked if there were any changes to the August minutes and Mr. Mavis noted a correction to his last name and Ms. Duszynski also noted that she was, in fact, at the August meeting, but that she came approximately 5 minutes late. Commissioner Lee moved to approve the August minutes with those two changes and Mr. Brown seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Public comment for items not on the agenda:

None

Commissioners' and Staff Report:

Commissioner Lee welcomed Commissioner Dajani to the EAC. Commissioner Dajani shared a little about his background, in particular his past work on the IRC, as well as his current work on the HRC's Sanctuary City Working Group.

Presentation by Milton Chen:

Ms. Salerno introduced Mr. Chen. Mr. Chen, the Executive Director of the George Lucas Educational Foundation and a member of the Board of the San Francisco School Alliance, began by explaining that he believes that education is a fundamental human right and that this nation must do more to protect that right. He observed that although so many things in the City are already world-class, that the City must also ensure that it is providing a world-class education to its students.

Mr. Chen explained that the District, School Alliance and San Francisco Education Fund are working together collaboratively to define the Community Schools Movement (which is also referred to as, "A New Day for Learning") by trying to recreate the sense of the school going out into community and vice versa. He stressed that the current educational model has isolated learning from real life and that the Movement is trying to bring that back. In other words, the goal is to try to make what happens in the classroom more authentic so that students always know the answer to the question "why do I need to learn this?" Mr. Chen then showed a video that exemplified this – professionals, artists, etc. coming into schools. He observed that the biggest challenge that the Movement has faced is changing people's thinking and understanding of their roles in their children's education. He explained that this includes changing the thinking of parents, and individuals at City Hall (who control a lot of the resources that children need), as well as communities that may not be used to the idea of coming to/being involved with schools. When asked about business professionals coming to teach at schools, Mr. Chen noted that that was the essence of the Movement, adults coming back - mid-career, after retirement, career-switchers, etc. - to teach. He mentioned that for



25 Van Ness Avenue
Suite 800
San Francisco
California 94102-6033



TEL (415) 252-2500
FAX (415) 431-5764
TDD (415) 252-2550
www.sfgov.org/sfhumanrights



people who want to volunteer to teach at schools, they should contact either the Education Fund, San Francisco School Volunteers or the School Alliance. Finally, when asked about what the EAC can do to educate itself further about the Movement and what else we can do to get involved, Mr. Chen said that he would provide us with publications and videos and recommended that we speak to individuals at the District and City (since both are towards the Movement's model), along with individuals at the School Alliance and Hydra Mendoza.

Presentation by Matthias Mormino and Jorge Portillo

Matthias Mormino (from Families and SROs Collaborative) and Jorge Portillo (from the Mission SRO Collaborative) came to the EAC to describe the Rapid Rehousing Program and to ask the EAC to support the proposed legislation that was recently introduced surrounding this Program. The legislation was introduced by Supervisor Avalos and is being co-sponsored by Supervisors Chui, Daly, Mar and Campos.

Mr. Mormino described that the Rapid Rehousing Program has been in existence since 2007 and that it is administered by HSA. Under the Program, a housing subsidy is given to families seeking to move out of their SROs and into more adequate housing. The Program subsidizes up to \$500 more for rent than the family is currently paying to move into the more adequate housing. Requirements for being on the Program include that: the family must provide a plan (which includes details such as what the family will do to increase their income to afford to stop using the subsidy in a certain amount of time; along with other benchmarks such as getting an education (taking English classes), for example). Under the Program, the family is required to increase its income by \$6000 in 2 years. Mr. Mormino observed that this is extremely difficult for a lot of families to do.

Mr. Mormino then explained that the proposed legislation seeks more realistic parameters consisting of either a need-based subsidy (a subsidy as long as a family needs it to get themselves out of their situation) or a 5 year-long subsidy. He added that currently, of the families that have successfully transitioned off the program, 41 families have been off the subsidy for 6 months, but that 14 are not housed any more. He noted that he believed that part of the problem is that the current Program is not involving the families in how the Program is run. He added that he believes that another problem is that there are currently only 162 families participating in the Program, but that there are funds for 113 more families to participate. Mr. Mormino and Mr. Portillo suggested sitting back around the table with families that have gone through/are going through the Program and asking them how to make it work better. Mr. Mormino cited a survey that was conducted in which 2/3 of families surveyed who hadn't applied for the Program stated that they were too afraid the program wouldn't work for them and were reluctant to apply for the Program to begin with.

EAC members then proceeded to ask a series of questions, including, how the drafters of the legislation came up with the new 5 year time frame? Mr. Mormino said that although one solution does not fit all families, their sense, after talking to community groups and families over the course of the last 2 years, was that 5 years is adequate. With respect to graduates of the Program, Mr. Mormino stated that: after 6 months, 41 families were off the subsidy for at least 6 months; and 27 remained housed; after 1 year, 12 families were off the subsidy for at least 12 months; and 7 remained housed; and after 2 years, 51 families did not either meet their plan's goals or the Program's requirements. When asked whether in attempting to change the Program to 5 years the intent was to subsidize families for all 5 years or to slowly wean them off of the Program, they answered that the families would transition off at any point that they would reach a stable increase in income. Mr. Mormino and Portillo then added that part of the legislation seeks to have monitoring built into the Program. Finally, when asked whether increasing the timeline to 5 years would end up serving fewer people (since more money would be required to keep families on the subsidy for a longer period of time), they stated that currently 1/3 of the slots for families are still available anyway, because so many families are scared of applying because they won't meet the eligibility requirements or will not fulfill the Programs requirements.

The EAC expressed the following concerns after the presentation: that the documented/undocumented status of families may/may not allow families to access these funds; that the actual success rate of the program was still unclear to them; that the needs of families that have substance-abuse/language-acquisition issues were not being addressed; whether information about the Program is getting out to the right people; whether if the time is extended to 5 years, additional money be needed since families will be on the Program longer; and how the current economy is impacting the Program. EAC members also expressed an interest in seeing the survey of families that was conducted.

Because this was not agendized as an action item, the EAC could not take a vote and opted to have a special meeting in order to vote whether or not to support the proposed legislation.

Public Assertions and Recommendations

Ms. Arreola presented a draft of the report – which currently consists of public assertions and recommendations – and asked the group to look at the report and to give us feedback of the report at our next regular meeting.

Final Announcement

An announcement was made regarding the next EAC meeting, which will be taking place on October 14th. The meeting was adjourned at about 7:40 pm.