

COBB COUNTY DIVERSITY ACTION PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

RESULTS FROM BREAKOUT GROUPS

Charged with building leadership in the Cobb community, we examined the Possible Action Plan as outlined in Recommendation 1. Our thoughts are posted below.

- We reviewed the current Community Leadership Development Program offered by The Center for Family Resources.
- We reviewed the pros and cons of the program for the Latino community
 - ✓ Pros - the current program is what the Latino community needs, basic skills based, curriculum is being translated into Spanish by the Fanning Institute which should be ready by July-August. The Fanning Institute is seeking and training bi-lingual facilitators
 - ✓ Cons – recruitment will be a challenge, we may need to recruit for each class regionally (NW Cobb, SE Cobb, etc.) rather than limiting to neighborhood-based classes, documented vs undocumented participants, English- vs Spanish-speaking classes.
- We discussed transitioning graduates into other types of leadership programs like Leadership Cobb, discussed the cost of Leadership Cobb and offering scholarships to graduates.
- Next steps would include the establishment of a steering committee and CFR's hiring of a bi-lingual employee

This effort is tasked to **The Center for Family Resources**.

RESULTS FROM RECOMMENDATION 2 BREAKOUT GROUP

To emphasize The Cobb Way as the county's approach to dealing with important actions and decisions in an effort to make and keep Cobb as the best community in the state in which to live and work, we recognized that Action Steps must be considered. This group made the following findings:

- The Cobb Way must be defined clearly
- Guiding principles should be developed to help facilitate implementation of The Cobb Way each time it is used, i.e. decisions benefit the greater community, not any one special interest group.
- The Cobb Way must become known to all. We need to publicize it and publish it and make it pervasive to help keep us all accountable to implementing it.
- Citizens at the grassroots level are not always included in the decision-making process. Is representation by the leaders enough?
- How can the success be measured? We suggest a community snapshot/survey to measure viewpoints with respect to the use of The Cobb Way in decision-making processes, perhaps on a five- to ten-year basis.

This effort is tasked to the **CEO of the Cobb Chamber.**

RESULTS FROM RECOMMENDATION 3 BREAKOUT GROUP

Working with the idea of the establishment of an *International Welcome Center* led our group to the below-listed thoughts and ideas for development.

- First, efforts must be geared to those already here as well as newcomers.
- What we have in place is working well, but needs to expand
- Integration and assessment, i.e. intake and placement, must be monitored and controlled.
- We must bring the International Welcome Center of Cobb schools in for review and expansion.
- An alliance should be formed with Cobb County Schools and government.
- We need to address and develop an International welcoming (acceptance) concept
- Alternate names for other organizations should be considered, e.g. Global Welcome Center
- Substitute the word *International* for *Latino*.
- Differentiate recommendation based on cultural/ethnic group
- Educate and facilitate discussions/dialogue between cultures.
- What do we really want to create or accomplish with such a center/
- Create 2 elements, i.e. education and community.
- Educate those already in Cobb about the different cultures and create dialogue.
- Celebrate the different cultures here in Cobb.
- Education in Georgia needs held and we must fix the problem
- People will not call the police so it raises the problem to another level
- Enhanced education of police officers and law enforcement.
- Must have a large “extended family” concept in the center.
- Teach skill in order to have dialogue.
- Use a strategic planning approach with strategies, goals and tactics.
- Substitute the word “humane” with “the right thing to do.”
- Higher education to evaluate what’s already being done and help develop a strategic plan.

This effort is tasked to the **Cobb Education Consortium**.

RESULTS FROM RECOMMENDATION 4 BREAKOUT GROUP

Recognizing the importance and benefits of the strengthening the cultural arts, recreational and entertainment venues and activities, this group sets forth the following suggestions. The suggestion was also made to look to your area of influence – that will bring in more diverse offering.

- Cultural Affairs must be separated from Parks and Recreation.
- Any cultural center should be centrally located.
- There should be a better communication of existing programs.
- Stronger leadership of diversity of boards (under 30) is recommended.

This effort is tasked to **Cultural Affairs Long Range Planning Committee**

RESULTS FROM RECOMMENDATION 5 BREAKOUT GROUP

To enhance the education system within Cobb County, two areas of concentration were proposed. These two areas with supporting ideas are noted below.

- Strengthen competencies of principals, recognizing that some are not people persons.
 - To better utilize the Leadership Academy presently used by the school systems.
 - Study best practices as a component of training for teachers' leadership ability
 - Look at what the difference universities are doing to train their teachers (Kennesaw State)
 - Look at the leadership – why does one school do better than others?
 - Require/emphasize more community outreach/involvement of school personnel under the leadership of the principal

- Communication
 - Better articulation/collaboration between k-12/local government/social service agencies. Factual vs. perceptual
 - Must build trust in order for people to listen and believe your message. Example: at one time Cobb County was inviting Spanish-speaking people to functions only to question their legal status, thus creating a lack of trust within the Latin community. Define the plan and foster trust.
 - Cross-communication
 - Services and support
 - Realtors
 - Utilizing resources, i.e. radio latino
 - Build culture of trust
 - Interpretation of devices at school and/or community functions; town hall meetings with commissioners (cross concepts)
 - Involve our spiritual community
 - Develop a communication plan for all stakeholders

This effort is tasked to the **Cobb Education Consortium.**

RESULTS FROM RECOMMENDATION 6 BREAKOUT GROUP

The recommendation under examination here was that of setting up a Cobb County Diversity Project for 2006/2007. We delineated our priorities and established them as outlined below.

- Our Priority Focus is based on action #2 of Recommendation 6, i.e. to **sponsor dialogue sessions to share viewpoints about diversity topics among Cobb citizens**
 - Build on existing leadership training programs in which Cobb citizens participate as leaders/facilitators for the dialogues across the county
 - Cobb citizens participate in a variety of programs, both inside and outside of county and we can draw from all of them, including those sponsored by changers, The Center for Family Resources, AFC/Regional Leadership Institute, and others.
 - Bring together graduates of the various programs for immersion/training on diversity issues in Cobb/why it is important, what's going on in the community, roles and how one might assist
 - Leadership program graduates would provide leadership in dialogues across the county
 - Convene county-wide after completion of smaller dialogue sessions to share findings/lessons learned/next steps
 - Special attention should be placed on ensuring that participants include leaders and everyday citizens as well; must be diverse, both from a socio-economic perspective as well as race and ethnicity

- The Underpinning focus is based on action #1, i.e. to **complete a comprehensive study of diversity within Cobb County**
 - Information available and easily collected while dialogues are taking place
 - Responsibility for gathering information from county government, municipal governments, and the school districts will be determined
 - Additional institutions to include must also be identified, if any
 - Utilize students and faculty from KSU, Southern Poly, Chattahoochee Tech, North Metro Tech and Life University – some of research can be done as student projects

This effort is tasked to the **Cobb Education Consortium**. Steve Dougherty will convene the next meeting.