

Speaker Comments
April 14, 2022

Date Received	Name	Affiliation	Topic	Comments
		Student		No Comments
		Parent		No Comments
4/12/22	Mike Coniff	Community		<p>Dear School Board members,</p> <p>This is a final appeal on behalf of the New Americans coming into our country, hoping for a better life. I as well as many others have already expressed to you all the challenges that these families face. RIA as a K-12 has been nationally recognized. The increasing numbers of new families arriving need the support that RIA offers for all of their children. THIS IS NOT A BUDGET BACKBREAKER! It means shifting resources that are already in place, and using them to their best advantage. The District can build off of this two year program to create an International School that will have area wide impact.</p> <p>On behalf of the 16 organizations that have supported this initiative and the 500 petition signatures requesting this restoration please amend the school budget to make this correction.</p>
4/12/22	John Bliss	Staff		<p>Dear Commissioners</p> <p>I do not know anything about the proposed budget other than I heard a rumor that "Building level" substitutes were being eliminated. I am writing to tell you that eliminating these will end up costing much more than any savings. Two main reasons.</p> <p>Kids are better behaved and more learning will occur if the sub is known by them. Having building level subs allows the students to be with someone they are more likely to respect and who respects them. This is critical.</p>

Speaker Comments
April 14, 2022

				<p>Secondly, and more importantly, without building level subs, there will no doubt be major instructional disruptions because special subject teachers will likely be pulled to substitute or worse than this, classes without a sub will be broken up, putting handfuls of kids in other classes. I can tell you from experience that this ruins everyone's day.</p> <p>I firmly believe that having consistent, in school substitutes provides the principals with more flexibility and in the end, it is much more effective than relying on last-minute changes.</p> <p>John Bliss Fifth-grade teacher</p>
4/14/22	Gavin Jenkins	Staff	Teacher Morale & relationship with the Board of Education	<p>Dear Board of Education & Superintendent,</p> <p>My name is Gavin Jenkins and I am a third year teacher in the Rochester City School District. I teach chemistry at East High School and am extremely passionate and professional about what I do in the classroom, outside of the classroom, in my neighborhood, and in my community. Over my first three years of teaching I have been through so much including being laid off and rehired and the tumultuous environment and ever-changing landscape of education in the midst of COVID. I have adapted and responded to these changes to support our scholars and families academically, socially, and emotionally. I feel extremely blessed to have been incredibly supported by my first year CIT teacher mentor Leigh Trifeletti, my administrators Akua Kankam and Marlene Blocker, and my teacher leader Mary Courtney, among many other colleagues. Their support, encouragement, and challenge has allowed me to thrive in our district. I was honored with the First Year Teacher award among a few of my colleagues throughout RCSD, featured in an article in the Democrat and Chronicle, developed a summer STEM research program for RCSD students with University of</p>

Speaker Comments
April 14, 2022

				<p>Rochester Lab for Laser Energetics, and have created partnerships between a community based organization in Beechwood and East.</p> <p>I say all of this not to brag as there are many areas I still am actively seeking to grow and have through feedback from my admin and TL and through professional development. But I say this to state how committed I have been to our district, our scholars, our families, and our colleagues – and how much I am committed to going above and beyond my responsibilities to truly be a part of justice and reform minded education. Unfortunately, I will be leaving RCSD and K-12 education at the end of this school year. I have no intention on shifting blame to any individuals or to the Board. But I hope that this letter serves as a way to begin to think about how we can change systems to retain good teachers especially in the context of the state of education and the state of our district right now. I am not leaving because I am not “cut out for” urban education, because I am not effective, or because I don’t love and care deeply about our scholars and families. I will continue to live in the Beechwood neighborhood and commit myself to our city and urban education. But I want you all to be explicitly aware of how much this system fails students, families, and educators. I do not have a specific problem to call out or a specific solution at this time, however I am open to any type of exit interview if you care to learn and listen.</p> <p>This system has drained me in many ways personally and professionally. I have felt highly supported at the building level by my amazing leaders and colleagues, but I have felt disconnected and gaslighted by RCSD and the Board as a whole/in general. Part of this responsibility falls on me in not adequately connecting more meaningfully with other aspects of the district and for not advocating through all of the channels that I could. However I want the Board and the district to also take responsibility for their part in this. I have watched amazing educators feel deeply hurt by the lack of support in our district</p>
--	--	--	--	--

Speaker Comments
April 14, 2022

				<p>which then directly has a negative impact on teaching and learning, and our scholars and families.</p> <p>As for the Board of Education and Superintendent I do have a request as a city resident and a passionate and a proven highly effective educator (with tons of room for growth). I am making this request because these actions/inactions have hurt me and my colleagues deeply who care so much about scholars and families. This is just one example, of many, that reflect why I have felt unsupported as an educator in our district. I am specifically requesting a public apology made for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">A. The comments made by Board President Cynthia Elliot about “piss poor teachers”.B. The lack of response from the Superintendent and other Board members in response to that claim (thank you to those that did respond). <p>AND/OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">C. Supporting this claim about piss poor teachers with <u>specific evidence</u> and proposing an <u>actionable solution</u> <p>In fact, this responsibility largely falls on the BOE and the district who is directly responsible for the hiring, firing, etc. of staff and the systems and structures that lead to the hiring, retention, and firing of staff. So the comment is truly a reflection of the current systems that you have and may want to consider changing. It may be worthwhile to evaluate those systems as I too am for the removal of ineffective teachers and any teacher who is not beneficial to our students and families. And I do agree that we should take seriously the history of and current presence of harmful teachers in our district. However, I want to challenge the language we use and the way we talk about issues within our district – children, families, and your staff are watching and this does not help</p>
--	--	--	--	--

Speaker Comments
April 14, 2022

				<p>build trust or community within our schools. This language impacts highly effective and passionate educators who dedicate their lives to children and families in our district. I want to encourage you to thoughtfully work on restoring a broken relationship between the Board, Central Office, and educators. I truly wish that I had the capacity to stick around to be a part of that change, but I cannot fathom a sustainable future let alone any future personally or professionally in this district. I will continue to be an advocate and encourager for our city and our schools now and far into the future, and I hope that we can all work together to improve our district for the sake of students and families. I truly believe that reconciliation and restoration of trust is possible and I believe it is vital for any success moving forward for RCSD. I fear that this division will lead to further loss of excellent educators and harm our students and families in the long run.</p> <p>I know that you are busy but I welcome any e-mails, phone calls, or in person meetings to discuss this further. I am one situation in our district but perhaps this can help the district in recruitment and retention of “good” teachers.</p>
4/14/22	Mary Andrecolich-Montesano	Staff	Budget	<p>Dear RCSD Board of Education President Elliott, Vice-President LeBron and Commissioners,</p> <p>On behalf of the grassroots group that organized to support the restoration of RIA to a K-12 - two year program, I submit the letter below for this evening’s budget hearing:</p> <p>This is a final appeal on behalf of the New Americans coming into our country, hoping for a better life. Many have spoken at the board meetings and expressed to all of you the challenges that these families face. In fact at the last board meeting, Vice-President LeBron stated all</p>

Speaker Comments
April 14, 2022

				<p>of the reasons why RIA needs to be restored to a K – 12 , two year program. The increasing numbers of new families arriving need the support that RIA offers for all of their children and families. THIS IS NOT A BUDGET BACKBREAKER! It means shifting resources that are already in place, and using them to their best advantage. It is time that this district undo the harm that was done when it decided to remove grades K through 6 from RIA. Please restore the K-12 – 2 year program at RIA. The District can then build off of this two year program to create an International School that will have area wide impact.</p> <p>On behalf of the 16 organizations that have supported this initiative and the over 500 petition signatures requesting this restoration, please amend the current school budget to make RIA whole again so families can keep their children together during their first two years in their new country, city and school district.</p> <p>Thank you!!</p>
--	--	--	--	---