

# ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Business Meeting Minutes February 28, 2019

**Board Members in Attendance:** President Van Henri White, Vice President Cynthia Elliott, Commissioner Judith Davis, Commissioner Elizabeth Hallmark, Commissioner Beatriz LeBron, Commissioner Willa Powell, and Commissioner Natalie Sheppard.

**Administration and Board Officers in Attendance:** Interim Superintendent Lowengard and Acting Clerk Francine Scott.

President White convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

**I.** The Pledge of Allegiance was led by a young audience member.

**II. Acceptance of Minutes:**

January 22<sup>nd</sup> Special Meeting Minutes and January 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Meeting Minutes Motion to Adopt Commissioner Hallmark Seconded by Commissioner Powell 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

January 24<sup>th</sup> Business Meeting Minutes, January 31<sup>st</sup> Special Meeting Minutes, February 6<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting Minutes, and February 12<sup>th</sup> Business Meeting Minutes. Motion to Adopt Commissioner Hallmark Seconded by Commissioner Powell 7-0.

**III. Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item**

Students, Jaquez Cochran and Joe Brown, spoke about the significance of positive school culture. Student, Joshua Lowe communicated how ROC Restorative has helped him in a positive way. Student, Asher Philips, spoke about the importance of sexual health. Student, Yasir Phipps, spoke about the culture change and its influence in schools. Students, Destiny Ford, and Amariy Woods, spoke about having a positive school climate and the importance of funding for ROC Restorative Practices. Student, Kasmir Dixon, expressed the need for schools to communicate better with students and parents. Student, Travis Rutley, spoke about how important culture change is in building positive relationships. Employee, Kenneth Sayers, spoke about his personnel matter.

**IV. Speakers NOT Addressing an Agenda Item**

Parent, Cynthia Clay, spoke about her son being mistreated by his teacher and that there is racial bias happening at her son's school. Community member, Barbara Vankerhove, spoke the great progress the District is making to reduce student suspension. Clay Harris and Laddy Goodwen spoke about their support for OACES and discouraged making budget cuts to the program. Community member, Jennifer Quick, shared the importance of student healthcare. Community member, Davis Sanchez, spoke about the good work ROC Restorative Practices is doing and the financial support that is needed to continue the progress. Staff member, E'Shantee Manley, spoke in support of Kenneth Sayers.

## **V. Advisory Council Reports:**

### ***Student Leadership Congress – Malik***

Student representative, Malik reported that Student Leadership Congress met on February 27, 2019. They had a few guest from the budget department to discuss the 2019-20 budget. Gemma Humphries, Director of School Food Services, also met with Student Leadership Congress and spoke about student food service regulations. Malik stated Student Leadership Congress had great discussions with the Budget Department and School Food Services and a lot of insightful information was shared.

### ***Parent Advisory Council – No Report***

### ***Bilingual Education Council – Myrna Gonzalez***

Ms. Gonzalez reported that the District leadership and the board should recognize and appreciate that parent groups are volunteers, and they spend a lot of time at District meetings. Ms. Gonzalez also stated they are requesting that the District compensate parent leaders from the BEC, PAC, and CPAC, with gas card, and funding for childcare. This may encourage other parents to get involved. The attendance for the February meeting was very low due to the snowstorm, and rescheduling the meeting was difficult because of the vacation break and the Gantt Center was not available. Ms. Gonzalez indicated one of their major concerns, is the breakdown in communication with the District staff and frustration with who would facilitate meetings, the Bilingual Education Council or the District. She also mentioned that the Bilingual Education Council is scheduled to be on PODER 97.1 FM to talk about the Council. Ms. Gonzalez said The Bilingual Education Council is interested in helping advocate in Albany to help bring more resources to students. Ms. Gonzalez also reported that there will be an election in May for the Bilingual Education Council leadership positions and has encouraged parents to run for office and to participate in the voting process. Ms. Gonzalez stated that the next Bilingual Education Council meeting is Tuesday, March 12, at 5:00 p.m. at the Gantt Center, 700 North Street where they will be sharing information about the summer jobs and summer school, and welcomed all to attend.

Vice President Elliott asked for a point of privilege to make it known that the District and the Board has done the work to reduce student suspensions and no one else should take the credit for the work that the District and Board has done.

## **VI. Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent Lowengard stated the projected budget would be presented in the next couple of weeks. Superintendent Lowengard says they have begun to move forward with the Distinguished Educator's report; task have been assigned. He asked the Commissioners to provide feedback on the Protocol for Communication between the Board, Superintendent and Staff. He said the document is a few years old and the committees are still incorporated in the document, although the committees are not meeting for six months. Commissioner Hallmark asked other Commissioners what they thought were broad based request, as there is no process in place. She also mentioned that it important to work with administration on setting the agenda and prioritizing the work. President White explained the process to request from Administration and stated that Administration has never

informed him that a request would take longer than expected to respond, but welcomed Administration to inform him if that were the case and he would inform the full Board. In addition, he would share questions with administration during Board Officers' meetings. Vice President Elliott expressed that the request for information should be more efficient so Administration would have more time to respond. Superintendent Lowengard said that Administration would address request for information, and would report to the Board if it takes longer to address a question. Vice President Elliott mentioned that while the committees have collapsed, and Human Resources committee has been restored, the lead is with the full Board. President White stated that although there are no committees, topics maybe facilitated by Commissioners who previously chaired committee or any Commissioner that would like to address the topic. Commissioner Hallmark stated she would like to see leadership distributed by Commissioners, and the Commissioner addressing the topic of discussion should meet with Administration in advance to the board meetings. Commissioner LeBron stated the Protocols for Communications should be updated without the committee structure, as it is not clear since committees are not currently meeting. Superintendent Lowengard says they will revise the Superintendent Lowengard Communication Protocol.

Superintendent Lowengard indicated Community Schools are collaborating with Foodlink and have an emergency food pantry in each school; they have also expanded to clothing. He also shared Northeast High School is partnering with AT&T and RIT major move in STEM and getting young women involved. Superintendent Lowengard announced the District was awarded the Principal Preparation Grant for \$870,000 over a two-period, and thanked Chief of School Leadership, Amy Schiavi and Chief of Schools, Dr. Idonia Owens for taking the lead. The Principals Preparation grant is an effort to encourage teachers that want to become building level administrators. Superintendent Lowengard also mentioned the 4-year graduation rate is just below 60 percent highest in a decade. The winter graduation celebrated 96 students, which is second largest winter graduation. Receivership Schools held public meetings and hearings and are taking the next steps. Superintendent Lowengard praised Chief Financial Officer, Everton Sewell for his Budget Testimony presentation in Albany. Superintendent Lowengard also spoke about students and Safer Internet Day, stating students did a great job and know how to be safe on internet. He also talked about Black Lives Matter and Black History Month that students have various talents and we have to continue to tap into students strengths.

Commissioner Powell requested for a link from the Budget Testimony. Commissioner Davis asked for current demographics for teacher leaders by race and gender. Superintendent Lowengard responded that teachers of color are 15 percent, in the past year it was 25 percent and the District is still ahead of the Big 5, administration has a higher percentage, and the data would be provided. Vice President Elliott inquired if Annemarie could find out what other unsafe sites that could be shared with the community. Superintendent Lowengard says ask Annemarie do a report.

Commissioner Sheppard inquired how many teachers would be able to participate in the program for Principal Preparation Grant. Ms. Cimusz replied that there would be between 8 and 15 teachers that would take part in the program. Ms. Schiavi stated the Aspiring Principals Program was a previous program offered to building level administrators that

already held their school building certification and eight graduated from the program. The Principal Preparation grant is for aspiring teachers who do not hold their School Building Leader Certificate and would like to become a principal or any leadership role.

Commissioner Sheppard stated she received complaints that principals and administrators that have gone through the previous program have not moved into a principal position. She further stated she would like to see what the Principal Preparation program would look like after teachers have gone through the program. Commissioner LeBron asked what was the objective of Aspiring Principals. Ms. Schiavi said the ultimate goal was to prepare the participants for principal positions and provide opportunities and mentorship so that the participants could be given experiences and could move into principalship. Commissioner LeBron says we should not have subs if we have individuals who are ready to lead. Ms. Shaivi stated some schools need an experienced principal. Commissioner LeBron requested to see a plan that support teachers and principals after they complete the Principal Preparation and the Aspiring Principals programs. Superintendent Lowengard commented we have look internal, so participants know there are job openings. Dr. Aquino said he attended a meeting where the partners, NYS Leadership Academy and Bank Street were discussing how they could support teachers and building level administrators. Vice President Elliott asked how many people of color have gone through the Aspiring Principals programs, and how many will participate in the Principals Preparation program. She further asked, what is in place to protect District dollars if participants in program accept principal positions at other Districts. Superintendent Lowengard said he would provide a presentation.

***President's Report:***

President White stated when Dr. Lee returns he would resume his President's letter; however, the content of the President's letter would focus on his weekly activities, as Board meetings are happening more frequently.

**VII. *Board Reports***

***Financial Reports***

Commissioner Powell stated there was an overview of the January monthly reports at the last meeting and made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Vice President Elliott, adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting. President White explained that you could only abstain when you do not have a financial interest. Commissioner Davis requested that President White provide her with a copy of the rule. Commissioner Powell stated the Elementary Student Activity Report was also presented at the last meeting, and made a motion to accept the report, seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Motion carries 7-0. Commissioner LeBron requested to have the picture with students skiing at Bristol Mountain on the Student Activity Report removed, as she felt the picture of the shirtless students was inappropriate. Commissioner Powell reassured that the picture and the report was the same report presented at the last meeting.

***Audit Report:***

Commissioner LeBron stated that the Audit Committee meeting has been rescheduled to Thursday, March 21 at 5:30 p.m. and there will an update report from the Auditor General Anissa Henry-Wheeler. Commissioner LeBron made a correction from her last report, stating the Elementary Activity Reports from School No. 29, No. 35, Edison High School

and School of The Arts were outstanding; however, they were not, and made a motion to accept the Audit reports, seconded by Vice President Elliott Motion carries, 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

Commissioner LeBron also asked for a point of personal privilege. She congratulated the Bilingual Academy and staff at Hart Street for their presentation of Black History Month. She also shared that the students at OACES have a partnership with Palmer Foods; the students run a café where they cook and prepare all the food at Hart Street. In addition, she had a chance to eat lunch with the students, and said lunch is served from 11:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m. Commissioner LeBron requested an update and presentation on the Special Education Consent Decree and the plan moving forward. She also mentioned that in October she requested a presentation from the African American Studies Director, Jason Willis, on the curriculum and the roll plan to schools and would like a sample of that curriculum.

President White requested to the other Commissioners that if they have any concerns about staff members and the work being done, to bring those concerns directly to Superintendent Lowengard. President White praised the good work that Administration is doing, and specifically the Executive Director of School Innovation, Michele Alberti and Deputy Superintendent Beth Mascitti-Miller for their work on Receivership Schools. President White thanked Superintendent Lowengard and Ms. Cimusz for their work as well.

Vice President Elliott reminded the other Commissioners to send her their topic suggestions they would like to make part of the Communication Plan. She said she would like start with the budget.

***Board Governance:***

Commissioner Hallmark stated that there is a scheduled Board Retreat, Monday, March 18, and the Board Retreats should align with Dr. Aquino's quarterly report to New York State Commissioner of Education, MaryEllen Elia. The agenda for the Board Retreat could be set based on Dr. Aquino's report. Commissioner Hallmark asked Dr. Aquino when he would submit his report to Commissioner Elia. Dr. Aquino said the Board would receive the report after Commissioner Elia has reviewed the report. Commissioner Elia would review the report to give Dr. Aquino feedback. He indicated that his reports would be submitted to Commissioner Elia, early March, June and, the last report would be July as his work with the District ends in June. Commissioner Hallmark stated the Board Retreat dates should be scheduled, March, June August.

Commissioner Lebron praised to Ruth Turner, Social Workers and the ROC Restorative Justice team for their work on helping reduce suspensions. Commissioner Sheppard requested that a link for the Superintendent vacancy be made available on the District's website, as local people may want to apply for the position. She also requested an Audit Report from BOCES K-2 Supplemental Curriculum. Commissioner LeBron thanked RTS, Mike Schmidt, and Wakili for working together to move bus stops closer to Leadership Academy for Young Men for student drop off and pick up.

Commissioner Powell asked how much longer the District would have to wait to hear from NYS Commissioner Elia

President White said he would wait to reach out to Commissioner Elia about the Distinguished Educator's Report.

#### Resolutions

**2018-19: 645:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Davis Adopted 7-0.

**2018-19: 647:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 650:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 651:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 655:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 656:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 657:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 7-0.

**2018-19: 658:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**Motion to separate Resolution No. 2018-19:659 into Resolution No. 2018-19: 659a and Resolution No. 2018-19: 659b made by Commissioner Sheppard. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Motion carries 7-0.**

**2018-19: 659a:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5-2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 659b:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Davis. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Sheppard dissenting.

**2018-19: 660:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 7-0.

**2018-19: 662:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by

Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 7-0.

**2018-19: 669:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5 -2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 670:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5 -2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 671:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5 -2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 672:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5 -2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 673:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5 -2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 674:** Motion to adopt was made by the Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 675:** Motion to adopt was made by the Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 676:** Motion to adopt was made by the Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 677:** Motion to adopt was made by the Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 678:** Motion to adopt was made by the Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 679:** Motion to adopt was made by the Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 680:** Motion to adopt was made by the Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 681:** Motion to adopt was made by the Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 682:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by

Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 683:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5-2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 684:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 685:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5-2 Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Sheppard dissenting.

**2018-19: 685:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5-2 Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Sheppard dissenting.

**2018-19: 686:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5-2 Commissioner LeBron and Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 687:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 688:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 689:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 690:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**2018-19: 691:** Motion to adopt was made by the Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 Commissioner Davis dissenting.

**Motion to enter into to executive session** made by Vice President Elliott and Seconded by Commissioner LeBron.

**Motion to reconvene into open session** made by Commissioner Hallmark and seconded by Commissioner Davis 12:05 p.m. Motion carries 7-0.

**VIII. Motion to adjourn made by** made by Commissioner Hallmark and seconded by Commissioner Davis 12:05 p.m. Motion carries 7-0