

# ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Business Meeting

August 23, 2018

**Board Members in Attendance:** President Van Henri White, Vice President Willa Powell, Commissioner Melanie Funchess, Commissioner Elizabeth Hallmark, Commissioner Beatriz LeBron, and Commissioner Natalie Sheppard.

**Board Members Excused:** Commissioner Cynthia Elliott

**Administration and Board Officers in Attendance:** Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams, EPO Superintendent Shaun Nelms, Distinguished Educator Jaime Aquino, and District Clerk Shanai Lee.

President White convened the meeting at 6:35 p.m.

- I. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by a young audience member.
- II. **Acceptance of Minutes:**  
Motion to accept the minutes of the July 26<sup>th</sup> Business Meeting, August 2<sup>nd</sup> Special Meeting and August 9<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting made by Commissioner Hallmark, seconded by Vice President Powell. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.
- III. **Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item:** Parent Howard Eagle spoke about the use of District resources. Parent Christine Gervais, Parent Andrea McLean, Community Member Beth Sieber, Community Member Sandra Faison, Community Member Sandra Anderson and Community Member Lorraine Whitehouse spoke in support of the cooperative agreement between the Rochester City School District and Connected Communities. Community Member Dorothy Purham spoke about the proximity of Henry Hudson School No. 28 versus John James Audobon School No. 33 and urged the Board to allow both schools to partner with Connected Communities in revitalizing the EMMA and Beechwood neighborhoods.
- IV. **Speakers Not Addressing an Agenda Item:** Community Member Peter Burkin spoke about anti-bullying efforts. Community Member David Walling and Community Member David Walling spoke in opposition to the appointment of a Distinguished Educator.  
  
Distinguished Educator Jaime Aquino introduced himself and provided a personal account of his background, experiences, and spoke about the role he will play in the District. Dr. Aquino noted that he will work collaboratively to assist the Superintendent and members of the Board of Education to provide all students with the ability to succeed.
- V. **Superintendents Reports:** Dr. Nelms delivered a presentation detailing the graduation rates of the East Upper School, an update of the Facilities Modernization Program, and highlights of the opening of schools. Dr. Nelms presented a projected August graduation rate of 59.1%. President White recognized the efforts of the East High School staff in their effort to dramatically increase the graduation rate in recent years; increasing from 19% in 2015/16 to 59.1% in 2017/18.

In the presentation, it was noted that the FMP efforts are underway. Dr. Nelms stated that the building's modernization would include a collaboratorium (remodeled Forum Room) and significant updates to

classrooms, corridors, offices and bathrooms. Additionally, the campus will be remodeled to incorporate more community use spaces including health and wellness classes and a dental and barber suite to service the entire neighborhood.

Dr. Nelms concluded the presentation with discussion of highlights of the opening of schools efforts including orientations for Spanish-speaking families, work on curriculum writing and lesson plans, school beautification, home visits to new lower and upper school families, and homecoming events and activities.

Commissioner Funchess spoke about her experiences as a parent undergoing the necessary shifts and moves associated with the facility's modernization, and thanked Dr. Nelms for making the decision to keep all of the students in the building. She added that the decision should help maintain the school's culture and climate.

In her presentation, Superintendent Deane-Williams discussed the Leadership Summit, participation in the Community School Summit, the Just Law initiative, the hosting of the NYS ESSA Financial Reporting training, the new Immunization Office, pop-up registration events, and this year's new teacher orientation. In concluding the presentation, Ms. Deane-Williams spoke about the process of renaming School No. 41 and the upcoming ribbon-cutting ceremonies for the District's several modernized facilities. Ms. Deane-Williams also recognized the efforts of Commissioner Beatriz LeBron for her work to coordinate and host the Bilingual Parent Summit.

Deputy Superintendent Elizabeth Mascitt-Miller delivered a presentation on the partnership and collaborative efforts between John James Audubon School No. 33 and the East Lower School. She provided an overview of school demographics of School No. 33 and enrollment patterns between the school and East Lower School and other District schools.

Executive Director of Connected Communities Lashunda Leslie-Smith, LMSW delivered a presentation to the Board including the mission of Connected Communities and the Purpose Built Model along with a detailed overview of the intent and progression of the initiative in the EMMA and Beechwood neighborhoods of Rochester.

## **VI. Board Reports:**

### **Audit Committee**

**Chair Beatriz LeBron:** No report submitted.

### **Finance Committee**

**Chair Willa Powell:** The Finance Committee convened on August 19, 2018 to review and discuss resolutions. The Committee considered and advances to the full Board with recommendation Resolution Nos. 2018-19: 163 and 165, 197 through 201, 203 through 205, 207, 209, and 213 through 216. Of notable mention, is Resolution No. 2018-19: 203, which details the agreement with various suburban districts for the provision of required health services. As shown in the District expenditure and revenue reports, in the 2017-18 year, the District paid approximately \$1.3M to provide these services to District students attending charter, parochial and private schools in other school districts. On the other hand, the District received approximately \$936K to provide health services to suburban students attending District schools. East EPO Resolution No. 2018-19: 164, a late submission, was verbally presented to the committee. This Resolution details an agreement with North East Area Development, Inc. (NEAD) to provide the UR East Freedom off-site option for approximately 30 over-age and under credited students who have failed to pass

at least twice, including vocational and family assessments, and the development of individualized family plans with each student using smart goals to develop very specific educational goals. While this resolution was considered for review, the committee was not able to advance this resolution to the Board with recommendation because of missing supporting documentation at the time of the meeting. This documentation has subsequently been provided. Lastly, East EPO Resolution No. 2018-19: 163 was reviewed and approved by the Finance Committee, but has subsequently been withdrawn. The EPO Administration has advised that they will not be moving forward with the Hillside contract this year for the HOMES program.

Motion to accept the July 2018 financial report made by Commissioner Hallmark, seconded by Commissioner Funchess. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent. Vice President Powell introduced a support letter to the Governor regarding Supplemental Charter School Tuition Reimbursement Legislation. This legislation would reimburse school districts outside of New York City for supplemental charter school tuition payments in the same school year in which they are paid. In particular, this measure would assist RCSD with its current financial obligation of approximately \$6.12M to support charter school pupils for the 2018-19 fiscal year. Motion to approve the letter for submission to the Governor was made by Vice President Powell and seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent. The next Finance Committee Meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2018.

### **Excellence in Student Achievement Committee**

**Chair Natalie Sheppard:** The Excellence in Student Achievement Committee met on Tuesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>, to:

- Receive a presentation about the Care Portal and the Life Support program;
- Discuss efforts to raise August graduation rates;
- Receive an update about the District's diversity recruitment and hiring initiative; and
- Review and discuss the proposed High School to Higher Education Institutions Policy.

Morris Moore and Ashley Cross gave a presentation about the Care Portal, which enables staff in organizations serving children and families to report specific needs to participating churches. The needs range from books and smart phones to transportation to mentoring and support. In this way, a network of assistance can be provided to children and families in crisis.

The Life Support program involves assisting youth in developing a clear and comprehensive career plan, with defined steps toward attaining their goals. With a clear path forward and plan with manageable steps, students become much more engaged in school and motivated to graduate. The career planning process through the Life Support program consists of three main phases:

- Assessment of a student's interests;
- Definition of goals and education about different careers;
- Graduation, tutoring, mentoring, and teaching life skills

The Life Support program will be serving approximately 150 youth in City Recreation Centers beginning in September.

Members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee engaged in extensive discussions with the School Chiefs about the percentage of students expected to graduate in August, and the efforts being made to provide individualized academic supports to students in summer school. The majority of students need assistance in passing Regents exams. The School Chiefs reported a number of efforts that have been made over the summer to help students progress, including:

- Early registration for summer school for students in the 2014 cohort to ensure seat availability

- Assigning school counselors to specific schools to improve communication between summer programs and home schools
- Hand delivery of the Regents exam schedule to the home of every student in the 2014 cohort
- Weekly review of every student in the cohort by a team consisting of the assistant principal, school counselor, social worker, OCR teacher, and home school assistant

ESA Committee members emphasized the importance of predictive analytics to develop accurate projections of student outcomes. These tools are not only critical in providing estimates of graduation rates, but also in identifying the specific interventions with the greatest impact in advancing student achievement and in making decisions about resource allocation.

An update was provided in the August ESA Committee meeting about efforts to increase diversity in the District's workforce. Mr. Kennedy reported a number of recruitment events and job fairs planned in the fall with the Urban League and Action for A Better Community. The United Negro College Fund (UNCF) invited the District to participate in their recruitment event in July, and extended the invitation to the District to attend their next event. The District has also reached out to organizations serving individuals who may be interested in a second career in teaching, and opportunities are offered to encourage Teaching Assistants and Paraprofessionals to pursue a teaching career.

A new proposed High School to Higher Education Institutions Policy was also discussed in the Committee meeting, and a number of suggestions were made for revisions. The draft policy was revised to incorporate this feedback and the revised version was presented in the August 21st Policy Committee meeting. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for September 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee (CIGR)**

**Chair Cynthia Elliott:** On Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup> the members of the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee met to review and accept the Board Communications Plan and continue planning for the fall community forum. Communications Chief Garcia joined the August Committee meeting and indicated the District's plans to increase conversation between the Board and the community. Mr. Garcia expressed his agreement with the Board Communications plan as a cohesive tool, and his intent to assist with implementation so that this is a coordinated effort. Following this, the Committee made final edits to the plan, including the addition of parent communication initiatives with the Parent Advisory Council (PAC) and the Bilingual Education Council. The Communications Plan intends to increase public awareness of the Board of Education by educating key stakeholders on ways Board oversight and decision-making improve performance and student achievement in the District.

The CIGR Committee, has advanced the Communications Plan with recommendation to the Board for full consideration. Motion to accept the Communications Plan was made by Commissioner Hallmark, and seconded by Commissioner Funchess. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

The CIGR Committee continued planning for the fall 2018 community forum. This event is now scheduled to be held at 11:00am-3:00pm on Saturday, October 20<sup>th</sup>. The fall forum is intended to be a 2-3 hour event, where parents, students, and community members will be able to engage with the Board and District staff. Forum topics will include the Code of Conduct and Attendance, with focus on "Get in, Stay in", and the event will encourage conversation on the Board's role and responsibilities and the appropriate means of communicating with the District. The CIGR Committee will be working closely with the Offices of Parent Engagement, Communications and Counseling to ensure a comprehensively planned event. Several schools are being considered to host the fall forum, and food and childcare will be provided.

The next CIGR Meeting will be meeting of the Whole on September 13<sup>th</sup>.

### **Policy Committee**

**Chair Melanie Funchess:** The Policy Committee met on Tuesday, August 21st, to develop plans for obtaining school principals' input on proposed changes to the Visitors to Schools Policy (1240). The next Principals' Cabinet meeting will be held on Monday, September 10<sup>th</sup>, and the Superintendent and School Chiefs noted that this would be a good venue for discussing the proposed policy.

Members of the Policy Committee also considered reporting requirements to include in the proposed Alternative and Homebound Instruction Policy (4327). Feedback from the Superintendent will be sought to identify data elements and metrics that can be reported with current staffing levels. This policy proposal will be discussed further in the September meeting.

Feedback was provided from the School Climate Advisory Committee regarding cyberbullying provisions contained in the new proposed Student Harassment and Bullying Prevention and Intervention Policy (0115). Most of the School Climate Advisory Committee's recommendations will be incorporated into the proposed policy, which will be presented for consideration in the September meeting.

Revisions have also been proposed to the Parent & Family Engagement Policy (1900), which has been reviewed by the Bilingual Council, Parent Advisory Council, and Director of the Office of Parent Engagement. Most of this feedback will also be incorporated into the proposed policy, and the revised policy will be presented to parents in a community forum.

Members of the Policy Committee also reviewed several sample policies from the NYS School Boards Association (NYSSBA) regarding admission of non-resident and foreign students and payment of tuition. General Counsel Karl Kristoff will draft a policy for consideration in the September meeting.

Mr. Kristoff also presented a new proposed Teaching of Controversial Issues Policy and regulation. There was quite a bit of discussion in the Committee meeting about providing guidance to school administrators and teachers in addressing controversial issues, ensuring that a fair and balanced perspective is presented, and that students are not exposed to offensive materials. The Committee will continue to work to develop this policy in the September meeting.

In addition, Mr. Kristoff discussed a new Threat Assessment regulation, which also engendered considerable discussion about responsibility for making these assessments and the point at which law enforcement should become involved. This will also be taken up in the September Policy Committee meeting.

Commissioner Sheppard introduced a proposed High School to Higher Education Policy, which has been reviewed in the last two Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meetings and feedback has been sought from Board members, the Superintendent and her team. Revisions were made based on the feedback received, and the Policy Committee approved the proposed policy. The High School to Postsecondary Education Policy is presented this evening as an Information Item.

Committee members also considered a proposed revision to the Board Bylaws (2300) to reinstate the Human Resources Committee. The Policy Committee also advances this policy proposal as an

Information Item this evening.

Members of the Policy Committee discussed the need for revisions to the Responsible Bidder Policy (6725). Mr. Kristoff pointed out that the existing policy conforms to General Municipal Law and does not need to be changed, but does need to be enforced. He stated that he will discuss this further with the Board in an upcoming meeting.

The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for September 20<sup>th</sup>.

#### **Board Governance Committee**

*Chair Elizabeth Hallmark:* No report submitted.

#### **President's Report**

*Board President Van Henri White:* No report submitted.

### **VII. Resolutions**

**2018-19: 150-165:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Funchess. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

**2018-19: 167-178:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner LeBron. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

**2018-19: 179:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Funchess. Seconded by Vice President Powell. Adopted 5-1 Commissioner Sheppard dissenting and Commissioner Elliott absent

**2018-19: 181-182:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Funchess. Seconded by Vice President Powell. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

**2018-19: 189-197:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Vice President Powell. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

**2018-19: 198-205:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Funchess. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

**2018-19: 206-207:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Funchess. Adopted 5-0 with Commissioner Hallmark abstaining due to familial relationship and Commissioner Elliott absent.

**2018-19: 208-231:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Funchess. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

### **VIII. Unfinished Business:** None.

### **IX. New Business:**

The following policies were presented as Information Items for presentation to the full Board: High School to Higher Education Institutions Policy and the Alternative Instruction Policy.

The following policies were presented as Discussion Items for presentation to the full Board: the Alternative Instruction Policy, the Student Health Services Policy, a revision to the Gifts to District Officers or Employees Policy, the Wandering and Elopement Policy, and a proposed Indemnification Policy.

**Motion to enter into executive session** to discuss matters related to the employment of particular persons, pending litigation and other matters with the General Counsel was made by Commissioner Funchess and seconded by Commissioner Hallmark at 10:30 p.m. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

**Motion to reconvene into open session** made by Commissioner LeBron and seconded by Commissioner Funchess at 12:00 a.m. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.

- X. Motion to adjourn** made by Commissioner Funchess at 12:00 a.m. Seconded by Vice President Powell. Motion carries 7-0.