

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Business Meeting December 15, 2016

Attendance: President White, Vice President Elliott, and Commissioners Adams, Cruz, Evans, Hallmark, and Powell; Superintendent Barbara Deane-Williams; EPO Superintendent Shaun Nelms; Student Representative Ja'quez Cochran; and Board 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.

Commissioner Cruz arrived at 6:37 p.m.

- II. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Motion to accept the minutes of the November 17th Business Meeting was made by Vice President Elliott and seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 7-0.
- III. **Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item:** Community Member Howard Eagle spoke about the professional obligations of President White.
- IV. **Speakers Not Addressing an Agenda Item:** Parents Michael Lopez and Chairman Emme and Community Member Frederick Douglass spoke about the professional obligations of President White. Community Members Jack Spula, Marybeth Knowles, and Cathy Castania spoke about the proposed military academy and urged the Board to consider other programming options.
- V. **Superintendents Reports:** Dr. Nelms, Superintendent of the East High School EPO delivered a presentation highlighting school climate, first quarter academic results, progress towards meeting demonstrable improvement indicators jointly selected by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) and the EPO, and recent recruitment efforts.

It was noted that the number of behavior referrals has decreased significantly in comparison to last year as a result of the school's focus on restorative practices. In discussing first quarter academic results, Dr. Nelms stated that the average grade point average increased from that of the 2015/16 school year. He also mentioned that the schools' leadership teams are working to reduce the number of students retained in grade 9. Dr. Nelms presented the demonstrable improvement indicators and the relative progress targets and goals for the 2016/17 school year. In concluding the presentation, Dr. Nelms discussed the schools' recruitment efforts. He highlighted recent collaborations with District schools within 1.5 miles of the East High School campus, including School Nos. 1, 23, 25, 28, 33, 46, and 52 and recruitment events for incoming 6th and 7th graders held on December 8, 2016.

Superintendent Deane-Williams delivered a presentation that highlighted recent programming and initiatives. She spoke about upcoming 100-Day Listening and Learning Plans and explained how she is several focus areas designed to increase accountability for action. These areas are as follows: prioritizing educational equity, building relational capacity, nurturing innovation, and creating coherence. Ms. Deane-Williams mentioned that a public presentation of plans, which were developed with input from more than 1,250 stakeholders and 1,600 survey responses, is scheduled for January 12th. She welcomed new members of the Superintendent's cabinet, Dr. Kendra March who is serving as the

Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning and Yolanda Asamoah-Wade, Esq. who is serving as the Chief Ombudsman and Compliance Officer. Ms. Deane-Williams also spoke about the District's involvement in the New York City Leadership Academy on equity in education. She noted that Rochester is one of only 20 school districts across the country invited to participate and share best practices. In addressing stakeholder engagement, Ms. Deane-Williams introduced RCSD Headlines, an online report of leadership team actions and activities available on the District's website. In concluding her presentation, Ms. Deane-Williams announced that Rochester has received \$1.3 million, the largest award in New York State, during the 2016/17 school year to strengthen efforts to improve the achievement and on-time graduation rate for young men of color.

VI. Board Reports:

Audit Committee

Chair Mary Adams: The Audit Committee met on Tuesday, December 6th with the External Auditor Freed Maxick CPAs, to review the results of the District's financial audit for the year ending June 30, 2016.

All Board Members received a copy of the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) and had an opportunity to ask questions and attend the meeting. The Office of Auditor General reviewed the draft CAFR and all questions have been resolved in this final version, which has been provided.

The Committee is seeking Board approval for Resolution No. 2015-16: 426, to accept the Independent Auditors' Report and Single Audit Reports of Freed Maxick CPAs contained within the Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2016. Upon Board approval the reports and this resolution will be filed with the Commissioner of Education and State Comptroller.

Finance Committee

Chair Jose Cruz: The Finance Committee met on Thursday, December 8th to consider Resolution Nos. 2016-17: 415 through 418. The Finance Committee recommends approval of the November 2016 Financial Report. Motion to accept the November 2016 Financial Report made by Vice President Elliott and seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. The following resolutions were reviewed by the Finance Committee, and are advanced to the Board with recommendation: Resolution Nos. 2016-17: 415 through 417 for Procurement & Supply; and Resolution No. 2016-17: 418 for Educational Facilities. The Committee discussed potential modifications to the Financial Reporting & Resolutions Policy to ensure adequate vetting of substantial purchasing contracts, as well as other transactions with a significant fiscal impact on the District. The Committee was also presented with a draft calendar for review and acceptance of the 2017-2018 fiscal year budget. It is expected that the calendar will be forwarded to the full Board for acceptance in January. The next Finance Committee Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 19th at 5:30 p.m.

Excellence in Student Achievement Committee

Chair Malik Evans: On Thursday, December 8th, the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee met to learn more about the various functions performed by school counselors, and to receive an update regarding student suspension.

School counselors assume a wide range of responsibilities: from academic advising to supporting district-wide implementation of restorative practices to planning services for students with disabilities. In addressing social/emotional needs and developing college and career plans for students, school counselors play a pivotal role in overall student achievement in school and in life. The District is

currently working to shift the paradigm from high-achieving students seeking counselors to each student perceiving that school counselors are available to them. Although 6.0FTE for school counselors were added to the budget this year, caseloads remain quite high: 1:214 on average for elementary schools and 1:201 for secondary schools. The standards of the American School Counseling Association call for a maximum caseload of no more than 250 students per counselor, with a recommended level of 100 per counselor. In light of the many difficulties and sources of trauma confronted by the children in our District, Dr. Kendra March and Ruth Turner recommend a ratio of 1:150. This would require the addition of 26.0FTE for school counselors, which is planned to be included in the 2017-18 RCSD proposed budget.

Dr. March gave a presentation regarding student suspension, which included data to illustrate trends from 2013-14 to 2016-17 to date. A breakdown was provided of the prevalence of specific types of incidents, locations in which incidents occurred, and the percentage of students suspended by race/ethnicity and disability status. Data was also provided of the number of incidents and suspensions for each RCSD school for the 2016-17 school year to date, with detail as to the number of short-term, long-term, in-school, and out of school suspensions. Although more work needs to be done to improve school climate and reduce student suspensions, the District has clearly been making progress on these goals over the last several years. To date, 14 schools have implemented restorative practices and the next cohort includes 13 schools. Committee members discussed concerns regarding:

- Suspending students for lengthy periods of time;
- Reducing disciplinary issues in one area only to increase in another (e.g. reduction in student suspensions and increase in student arrests);
- Ensuring that victims are not disciplined when standing up to bullies;
- Suspending students with disabilities disproportionately, as the percentage of suspensions involving students with disabilities has been growing over the last few years;
- Ensuring the fidelity of suspension data reported by schools;
- Addressing the large number of suspensions in certain RCSD schools, particularly those that also have a high percentage of out of school suspension; and
- Improving the transition of students from entry into the LynCx program and integration back into their home school.

Despite these concerns, Committee members were encouraged about the trajectory that the District is on at this point and hope that sustained efforts will continue to demonstrate progress. The Excellence in Student Achievement Committee plans to obtain updates on the status of student suspension at least twice a year. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, January 19th, following the Finance Committee Meeting.

Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee (CIGR)

Chair Cynthia Elliott: The CIGR Committee has not met since the last Business Meeting. The next meeting of the committee is scheduled for January 17th at 6:00 p.m.

Policy Committee

Chair Willa Powell: The Policy Committee met on Thursday, December 1st, to review revisions to the series 2000 policies based on recommendations from the General Counsel; annual evaluations of a number of policies; and the process for selecting a new Parent Representative for the Committee.

In general, the proposed policy revisions recommended by General Counsel were to reflect legislative or regulatory changes and/or to add greater precision to the language:

1. Code of Ethics (2160): add a provision stipulating that administrators are prohibited from having a romantic or sexual relationship with a teacher or staff member working in the same building. This is to clarify that building-based administrators are responsible for exercising oversight of all staff in the building, even of those not considered directly under their line of supervision. For this reason, these types of relationships are prohibited as they constitute a conflict of interest.

Change the composition of the Conflict of Interest Review Committee by having the Auditor General serve instead of the Deputy Superintendent of Administration.

2. Board Bylaws (2300): clarify that the Board will announce the specific subject to be considered when convening in Executive Session, in compliance with Open Meetings Law.
3. Videoconferencing (2350): change the reference “aka skype/skyping” to “e.g. ‘Skype’, ‘FaceTime’, or any similar two-way video and audio transmission”. This is to include all types of platforms/mechanisms used for videoconferencing – not only Skype.
4. Policy Dissemination (2450): change the provisions requiring printing and distribution of hardcopy binders and allow updating the policy on the website and providing access. For parents and community members who do not have Internet access, a hardcopy Policy Manual will be available in the Board office during business hours.

Committee members also discussed options for documenting that senior administrators throughout the District have acknowledged their familiarity with Board policies and administrative regulations. Implementation of this provision will require further discussion.

5. Membership in School Boards Associations (2530): Committee members decided that the policy should explicitly state that the District will maintain membership in the following organizations:
 - National School Boards Association
 - Council of Urban Boards of Education
 - Conference of the Big Five
 - New York State School Boards Association
 - Council of Great City Schools

Drafts of these proposed policy revisions will be reviewed in the January Committee meeting. In addition, members of the Policy Committee discussed evaluations of the following policies:

- Day Care policy (4324.1): The group that evaluated this policy noted that additional information is needed before changes can be recommended (e.g. current teen birthrate, available funding sources and partners, and current accommodations for young mothers).
- Lead-Safe Schools policy (7010): Committee members discussed the current status of ameliorating lead in the water supply of District schools, and General Counsel reported that the District is compliant with the new thresholds that have been established for lead levels.
- Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy (5153): A meeting has to be scheduled to present the work and recommendations of the Managed Choice Task Force to the Superintendent and Cabinet. The review of this policy did not take into account the work or recommendations of the Task Force.
- Equal Opportunity policy (9110): There was considerable discussion about increasing the diversity of District staff, and more detailed data was requested to indicate the racial/ethnic background of new hires, current active staff members, and of terminations for each type of position (e.g. BENTE, RTA, ASAR). In addition, Committee members recommended that

- HCI staff approach local teaching colleges to discuss a program developed at NYU to promote development of current staff members.
- Incidental Teaching policy (9460) Finally, an update was provided regarding selection of a new Parent Representative. The Parent Advisory Council will review the applicants and provide a recommendation to the Committee. This recommendation will hopefully be provided in time for the January Policy Committee meeting.

The next Committee meeting is scheduled for January 12th at 5:30 p.m.

Board Governance Committee

Chair Elizabeth Hallmark: The Board Governance Committee has not met since the last Business Meeting. The Committee will host a work session with Superintendent Deane-Williams to discuss aligning work and priorities on Saturday, December 17th at 12:30 p.m. No report submitted.

VII. Resolutions

2016-17: 388: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Adopted 6-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting.

2016-17: 389: Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0.

2016-17: 390-396: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0.

Motion to separate Resolution No. 2016-17: 397 into Resolution No. 2016-17: 397a and Resolution No. 2016-17: 397b made by Vice President Elliott, seconded by Commissioner Evans. Motion carries 7-0.

2016-17: 397a: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

2016-17: 397b: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 6-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting.

2016-17: 398-407: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0.

2016-17: 411-414: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting.

2016-17: 415-417: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

2016-17: 418: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Adopted 7-0.

2016-17: 419-426: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Hallmark. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0.

Motion to amend Resolution No. 2016-17: 427 to read as follows: “Resolved, that the Board of Education requests a current assessment of district-wide facilities capacity and elementary zone capacity, comprehensive educational needs related to building capacities and a summary of anticipated impacts, and any recommended changes, on each District school and free standing alternative school program; and be it further” made by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Evans. Motion carries 7-0.

2016-17: 427: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Hallmark. Adopted 7-0.

2016-17: 428-429: Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Adopted 7-0.

No requests submitted for Resolution No. 376-387, 392, 393, 395, 403, 405, and 408-410.

VIII. Unfinished Business: None.

IX. New Business: None.

X. Motion to enter into executive session to discuss matters related to the employment of a specific individual made by Vice President Elliott at 8:13 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Motion carries 7-0.

XI. Motion to enter into open session made by Commissioner Powell at 8:30 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Adams. Motion carries 7-0.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Adams, seconded by Commissioner Powell at 8:30 p.m. Motion carries 7-0.