

Speaker Comment

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Name	Affiliation	Topic	Comments
William Delgado Jr	Student	JROTC Program	Hello my name is William Delgado Jr attending P-Tech High School here in Rochester. I'm a 2nd Lieutenant in the Early College International High school Army Rotc. I strongly agree that Jrotc should not be shut down, just because it is being held up by the problems of the "budget", matter of fact JROTC is a place were students come together and not only have fun, but also get to get to know and interact with other cadets in the program weather the cadets are new or experienced. My experience with Jrotc has been a good thing for me, it still has a good impact on me and on my cadets in the program. The program shows a cadet discipline, responsibility, and most of all on how to be respectful and to and from to civilians and how to treat yourself in a mannered way in front of others and the cadres of the program. Please do not shut down the program it's really important to show what motives we have as cadets to do, and it also gives us a sense of what other career opportunities we could have with all the branches of the military and all civilian jobs. In final words JROTC is a big part of my life and JROTC is a big role in the rest of the programs life including the Leadership Academy For Young Men's JROTC as well. Thank you for listening to my comment, and understanding that this program is my life.
Mpenzi Yohana	Student	RIA	I heard that Superintendent Dade wants to cut K-5 at Rochester International Academy.I am writing to you because it would be very helpful if you vote No to cut K-5 at RIA.I want you to know that I, including my brothers and sisters, need RIA,because RIA has a lifestyle that anyone new in the country needs. RIA is not only a school of learning English but RIA is

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			<p>also a school of learning about the community surrounding us. I want my little brother and sister to grow up with the same lifestyle as I have right now because kids at RIA are not only being taught how to learn English but they're also taught how to respect others; meanwhile, in different schools that have Pre-k and k-5, kids are learning different behaviors. They speak differently with one another. My 5 year old brother's behavior changed since he started pre-K in different schools. The idea of having my brothers and sisters in different schools hurts me because having one of us away makes me worry,because if something happens to him, the only person they can reach out first is me because my parents are not English speakers. This will affect me when I am still in class and receiving a call about an incident may lead me to leave school, and it may force my parents to leave work. Having my brothers and sisters at the same school will make our life easy as their big brother because everything will be right in the same building and that will give us less heartbreaking worries. I hope you will understand that RIA without K-5 would feel like living in a house alone with no kids to play around with.I hope you see now that it is important to keep grades K-12 at RIA, because RIA is one big family and it stands as a tree.The beauty and happiness of a family is having children.K-5 at RIA are the children in the family because without them our house will be a disaster and there will not be happiness because seeing the little ones smiling is our priority at RIA. Taking K-5 from RIA,our social worker, and our counselor away from all the district will make our tree fall apart because we need our tree to continue growing. Please vote NO on May 7th!</p>
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Natasha Hagan	Parent	School No. 43	<p>I am the parent of a student who attends school in the Rochester city school district. School number 43 to be exact. Today was the first day I heard that my child's school would be closing for the upcoming year. For reasons not known nor explained. Which in return inspired me to send this email. I have a child who has an IEP in addition to my daughter who attends school 43 . So I have visited and seen majority of the schools in the district. School 43 should be the last school on the list to close. If not for academics alone. Most schools don't have the patience and will to make sure the kids are learning. Classrooms are cramped and oversized. Kids get lost. Most of the parents do not exhaust the energy into helping the kids succeed as well which leaves teachers burnt out. However at school 43 the teachers are awesome, they care and it presses upon the children . They go above and beyond to make sure success is attainable by all children. The kids in return want to learn and read and do for themselves. They want to do better and improve because the teacher also cares. I am really saddened by learning this information.</p> <p>I actually pulled my child from Rochester preparatory school just to enroll my daughter into Theodore Roosevelt school number 43. My son initially who has an IEP transferred to Theodore some years ago. Because of his needs there was no hesitation in recommending a more appropriate setting for him. Till this day the teachers from years ago still remember my son, and its because of their help my son is in proper placement and excelling and moving forward in life.</p> <p>Outside from school 43, I would not send my child to any other school in Rochester city school district and I live in the city. Academics and ratings are low, far lower than school 43. Graduation rates are if not non existent. Not to pick on the other children but a lot of children aside from 43 if not a charter or prep school the children are not even proficient in math or basic English. There is no</p>

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			<p>diversity or willingness to assist and or relate to children with different backgrounds. I'm confused as to how this discussion even began? With the current climate we are already facing? As a parent why wasn't I properly notified or asked to join this process?</p> <p>My child's success and life are at stake. To close a school during a already tragic time. Imagine dealing with not being able to end school properly. Say goodbye to your teachers, have a fair well graduation. Living during a pandemic. Can not go outside, can't visit friends, family time is reduced. To deal with that trauma already. Only to then be met with more trauma well school is closing indefinitely. You will never see your teachers and classmates again. We don't know why school is closing but it is. That's not fair to me as a parent. That's not fair to my child whom is only 11 and who has worked so hard to build a bond with her art teacher, music teacher, main teacher. This formularity encourages her and motivates her every day despite classes being online. My child calls her teacher and she sits with her on the phone as long as it takes helping her do her math. The art teacher brings supplies to the house. These are qualities you don't get from every teacher at every school. It would truly be an injustice not to just my child, but the over 400 students whom attend Theodore Roosevelt to close this school. I would hope you would reconsider or allow parents the option to be properly notified to express disdain. Thank you for reading.</p>
Russell Nordquist	Parent	RCSD	<p>These are unique and trying times for the world and the RCSD. Our students and educators have been doing school at home for more than 40 days. The district faces a budget shortfall that is still growing. And now we don't have a superintendent. Again. Members of the board - unprecedented hardships require unprecedented actions by the board. Put your own agenda's aside, unify, and lead us out of this. Reflect on what you can do to stop us form moving from crises to crises again</p>

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			and again. A business can go bankrupt, but the education of our youth cannot.
Antonia Wynter	Community	Graduation	I would like to propose implementation of a Safe Graduation process for our seniors of the RCSD. Thank you.
Maya Luna Pleninger	Community	2020-21 Budget	<p>I do not agree with the cuts that are being made in your 2020-2021 budget, particularly in the Arts Department. As an Alumni of <u>School of the Arts</u>, I have seen the impacts that the arts have made on Rochester City School District Students and I believe that it would be a costly mistake in the lives of our students. Please reconsider your proposed 2020-2021 budget.</p> <p>I attended School of the Arts as a Dance Major from 2008 - 2014. After graduating, I attended Manhattanville College as a Dance and Theater Major from 2014 - 2018. SOTA gave me the confidence to push my career forward in the arts. I was taught how to be dedicated to my craft, I was opened up to diversity in both dance and friendships, and I also had opportunities that most high school students at other schools did not get. The dance faculty at the time were 4 incredibly strong women who taught me how to continue to grow as a dancer and as a person. I find it amazing that I am still in touch with them and know that I can rely on them now if I need them! I can not say that many other people I know felt that way after leaving their high school. The freedom was always there to express ourselves - I still think back to lessons we learned and apply those lessons to my personal life today. I am now a Fitness Instructor, Dancer, and Aerialist living and working in NYC. I have so much to be thankful for because of School of the Arts. That is truly where I broke out of my shell and began to</p>

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			<p>understand who I am as a person. Many tend to think that the arts are not needed - I completely disagree. The arts are what bring people life, they allow us to explore our thoughts and feelings that we are sometimes not strong enough to express any other way. Art is what keeps people sane and gives young students a different outlet to show their emotions rather than turning to violence. If you take the arts out of SOTA, you are taking the heart out of the community. Rochester needs art - art is what makes Rochester feel like home.</p>
Dr. Donahue	Community	School No. 20	<p>As the director of Community-Engaged Learning at St. John Fisher College, I'm writing to inform you of an impactful partnership between RCSD #20, St. John Fisher College, and Valley Manor that could not have been possible without the strong leadership and teaching from this school. St. John Fisher students partnered with Ruth Johnstone and James Lonadier's 4th grade classes and seniors from Valley manor and ran a resiliency program, Day on Campus, and health care career Assembly. Two articles about these partnerships are below. Please consider voting to keep RCSD #20 open. Thank you.</p>
Dr. Patricia Tweet	Community	School No. 20	<p>Dear Members of the Board of Education, Rochester City School District,</p> <p>I am writing to urge you to reconsider Superintendent Dade's proposal to close School #20 in response to the budget deficit. I believe that School #20 is an anchor institution for the North Clinton Avenue neighborhood. It serves RCSD students extremely well, and is an asset to the community. Generations of students have thrived at School</p>

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			<p>#20, and its staff, administration, and devoted volunteers are dedicated to serving generations to come.</p> <p>For the past five years, students in my Sociology course, The Helping Professions in Action, in partnership with the residents of Valley Manor Senior Living, have been providing support services to fourth graders at School #20. This spring, twelve Fisher students traveled to the classrooms of Mr. Lonadier and Ms. Johnstone once a week to spend an hour with the students on social-emotional learning. My students prepared extensively for these lessons, and upon their return, described their experiences to the other fifteen students in the class. Seven members of this class also brought the entire fourth grade, 30 students, to Fisher for a day on campus, on March 11th (see link below to the news story). Another eight members of the class developed a Health Care Careers Assembly for the fourth grade, which would have taken place at School #20 on the 15th of this month.</p> <p>During my five years working with Valley Manor on these projects, I have visited the school numerous times, and have been in email contact with teachers, administrators, and the Parent Liasion at the school. I have always been very impressed with their expert skills and knowledge, and with their absolute dedication to their students.</p> <p>As an urban sociologist, I am very aware that School #20 is located in an extremely disadvantaged neighborhood in the city of Rochester. School #20 is an oasis of order, calm, and achievement. The children who attend the school come from</p>
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Roslyn M. Phillips	Community	Budget Cuts	<p>There is no way to accomplish this goal if leaders are not able to work together efficiently and effectively, without a collective vision, encompassing the most important and vulnerable members in our local society.</p> <p>Being a highly involved caregiver, like so many in this community, I am begging you to please be more mindful of how you are operating and seriously work fervently to bridge the gaps with this looming budget deficit, but also find resourceful ways to implement modifications in some way to offset the losses this community of children are about to experience. Consider actions of gaining more support from the community membership to engage in areas to help our children to continue to grow. While also finding ways to increase the momentum of engagement in the next Superintendent hiring process. For the sake of time, I will end</p>

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			here praying someone will have an open heart and mind to consider the children above all else. Thank you for your time. Have a wonderful day.
Stacy Embrey	Staff	School No. 43	<p>My name is Stacy Embrey and I have been a speech language pathologist, in RCSD and School 43 for 24 years. Last week, it was announced, unbeknown to our staff, that School #43 was going to be recommended for closure at the end of June. It incredibility heartbreaking and almost, cruel to have found this out through the media. The School #43 staff, students, parents and community deserved more than that. Tonight I am asking you, even though I know, it will probably fall on deaf ears, to reconsider what seems to be another attack on the most vulnerable...our districts students and their schools. I understand the decision to close our building was based on three points of a triangle. It was stated that School #43 was underutilized, old (condition) and low scores. I would like to address these three points and bring to your attention these inaccuracies. The first point that we are underutilized is not accurate. Yes, our enrollment has dropped to 440 students. However, did you even consider the fact that this is because we are disproportionally heavy with special education students and self -contained classrooms (12:1+1 and 15:1). These classrooms cannot have more than 12 or 15 students in them by law. Over the past few years the district has given us more and more of these classrooms. To date we have 5 (12:+1 classrooms) and 2 (15:1 classrooms). These self-contained classroom have a total of 90 available spots for students instead of 175 spots for non-self-contained classrooms. If we had more equitable distribution of general</p>

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Amanda Hicks	Staff	2020-21 Budget	<p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>I am writing to you as a concerned stakeholder of the City of Rochester. I am a city resident, a teacher in the Rochester City School District, and a parent. I, like so many others, have many concerns with the current situation that the district finds themselves in.</p>

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			<p>During this unprecedented time that our society is in, the disparities and inequities in our educational system have become even more glaring than before. I ask that you work to keep our teachers in our classrooms. The children of Rochester deserve better than what you are doing for them. Thank you for taking the time to read my concerns.</p>
Kristen Baskewicz	Staff	Cuts to the Arts Department	<p>I'd like to share a post that I recently saw on Facebook written by a second-grade teacher named Jenni Hanson:</p> <p>Dear Specialist Teachers, Yes, you. The PE teachers and creative writing teachers and art teachers and music teachers and drama teachers. From a general classroom teacher to you. I am sorry. As I'm sitting here on my couch. In my comfy clothes. Non-washed hair. Laptop on my lap trying to do this online learning thing. I had a serious moment of clarity and reflection. I started thinking to myself: What have I turned to most during this time of need? When I've been stuck in isolation, what has most helped my body, mind & spirit? What's kept me uplifted? For myself and for so many of us: It's the music we're listening to while we're "working from home" or the serenity of our yoga practice. It's the paintings we're creating or strength we're finding in home workout videos. It's the books we're reading and the music we're making with friends via Zoom. It's the poems we're writing or the TikTok dances we're learning to stay "hip" with our kiddos.</p>

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			<p>So what does all this mean? ARTS matter. SPECIALIST TEACHERS matter. YOU matter. As a non-specialist teacher, I’m shouting this to everyone: If the arts are what we’re turning to when nothing else seems right, then not valuing (& not funding) them as such is wrong. It’s what helps keep us happy and whole. So to all my specialist teachers out there, to my musician friends and my writing friends. To my photography friends and drama friends: WE APPRECIATE YOU. Your work is what keeps us going. We, general classroom teachers, are sometimes entitled, thinking our subjects outweigh yours. That our jobs are “harder” or “more work.” That we are more important because we teach the “core” subjects. But what I’m learning is that YOU are what’s important to our innermost self. You are the “core.” We need you & we love you. You hold us together. I’m sorry for not always showing it 💕 Jenni, an apologetic 2nd grade teacher</p> <p>The Arts are an important part of our society and therefore must be supported in schools. When I first began teaching music in this district in 2006, the Arts Department was, frankly, a hot mess. However since Dominic Pickard became our department head, the Arts Department has become a force to be reckoned with. He has done countless things to improve not only the teachers' abilities to do our jobs but also the education that our students are receiving. He has gotten us a huge grant for instruments and other supplies, he got us a great online curriculum, he has spearheaded fundraising efforts, he helped to start our marching band, and he has</p>
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			<p>organized All-City concerts for our students as well as arts learning experience field trips for all K-6 students- and that's not even the half of it. Attending holiday/spring concerts, setting up sound systems, performing- anything that is asked of him. Not to mention the herculean task of scheduling our many itinerant teachers every September. Dominic has made the RCSD Arts Department on par with any other Arts Department in the Rochester area, and better than most. He is the most competent and driven department head we have ever had and losing him and his position will be a near-fatal blow to all of the work that he and all of the RCSDs Arts teachers have done in the past years to exponentially improve our students' education experiences. Our students deserve to have the Arts in their schools just as much as kids in the suburban districts do but without a competent leader, that just isn't possible for a district of this size. We've had poor leadership before and that was bad enough but NO leadership? Everything that we have done to grow our department in the last ten years or so will not be possible to maintain without Dom as our head. Please do not let such a vital part of our district go.</p>
Victoria Tilbe	Staff	2020-21 Budget	<p>I am writing to share my disappointment over recent events. Mr. Dade's deceptions to the Rochester community professing his "commitment and care" to staff and district children was false, evident by his departure to a wealthy, primarily White district. This behavior serves only to further traumatize our community and worst of all our YOUTH. What a cruel message this behavior sends. It is time for a change! We need to stop looking outside our community and look in-house at qualified</p>

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			<p>candidates that have ties to our community and have proven their dedication to our Youth! Our children, staff and community deserve better!</p> <p>I also implore the Board to take a closer look at the proposed cuts by Mr. Dade. In his first proposal he decreased mental health services to the bare bones, leaving only enough Social Work staff to meet the needs of IEP students (No crisis or general Ed. Support). Despite the aforementioned, he turned around and recommended additional social work cuts in his second proposal. He also suggested program cuts to some of our most vulnerable students. Rather than cutting away from the classroom as promised, he proposed cuts as- close as- possible. Especially now, with the additional trauma of the pandemic, doubled with poverty rates and preexisting challenges, cutting mental health staff is injurious to all! He proposed very few cuts to departments at CO that are away from the classroom. It appears to me that proposed cuts are disproportionate and focused on specific departments! Given the high mental health needs of our community, I wonder why?</p> <p>Please also consider reinstating Chief positions for key, dedicated district players; specifically Ruth Turner. Ruth has been with the district several years and has proven that her focus is our YOUTH! She understands the social – emotional needs of our students and families, is a restorative champion and has proven her dedication to the district and community at large. We are stronger as a district with her as a central voice and advocate for our youth!</p>
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Veronica M. Garcia Zeda	Staff	Social Worker	<p>My name is Veronica M. Garcia Zeda. I am a bilingual social worker at the Bilingual Language and Literacy Academy. I came to Rochester after Hurricane Maria and hired by RCSD on January 2018. Like many of my students, I left my family, friends and everything I ever knew for an opportunity at a better life. After arriving in the United States, I have noticed all the obstacles our Puerto Rican families face day by day from social, economic and political issues.</p> <p>Most of my students had severe trauma either from hurricane Maria, the recent earthquakes or adapting to Rochester. Since my first day of work, I have been assisting many families to incorporate in Rochester by connecting with essential services and providing my students with social and emotional support. Our children deserve equal opportunity and access to a high quality of education. I understand that RCSD is in a financial deficit, but our bilingual children should not pay the consequences.</p> <p>A Social Worker's job does not end when we go home, our Laptops never turns off.</p> <p>The following are some of my job description:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Helping my IEP mandatory students -Doing Social History and Social Work Order -Doing crisis intervention -CPS referral -Community referrals -Mediation between students -Peace Circles -Restorative Practice -Classroom Lesson -Attendance and Home visits with the HomeSchool Assistant
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			<p>-Teacher and Clinical's meetings -Meeting with parents The list keeps going.</p> <p>We should continue to work on behalf of our children every day and ensure that we are enabling them to function and learn in the school environment. We need to help our beloved children to increase their social and emotional skills. School Social Workers serve a critical role in our educational system. Please do not cut any social worker positions. Thank you,</p>
Lauren Piampiano	Staff	Social Workers	<p>I am writing as a member of the 19th Ward community and as a school social worker for RCSD. I am appalled that Superintendent Dade proposed deep cuts to student support services, shortly before announcing he would be leaving to work for an affluent school district. Superintendent Dade will not remain in his position long enough to see the consequences of these cuts, if his budget passes. Consequences that would include inadequate staffing to assess suicidality risk, (a daily occurrence in many schools), elimination of restorative programming, unavailability to provide support for general education students who lose a family member to violence or illness. There will not be enough social workers to provide essential case management– i.e. coordinating food, medical care, assistance navigating DSS, housing, mental health services and so on. Moreover, social workers often act in an administrative capacity in partnership with principals and AP's when addressing some of the most</p>

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			<p>difficult situations in schools, such as fights, death, mental health emergencies and so on. Social workers are mandatory for our schools to function.</p> <p>I have faith in the school board that this atrocity will not come to fruition. This would be an incredible disservice to our students and school climate as a whole. The research that Superintendent Dade references in his budget from the NASW is contrary to his proposal. Superintendent Dade's incorrect interpretation of that data, that only IEP students require our services, demonstrates a severe misunderstanding of our students and the socioeconomic/systemic barriers that they navigate on a daily basis. Furthermore, the article he includes states that "school social workers should be provided at a ratio of one school social worker to each school building serving up to 250 general education students." Reducing our staffing to 88 would be far below the recommendations in the research he utilized, based on our student population both numerically and based on the needs of our community as a whole.</p> <p>Superintendent Dade also removed our director, Ruth Turner, from her position as chief, another attempt to target our department. Ruth is one of the most dedicated and skilled leaders I have ever had the opportunity to work for. She is a fierce advocate for her staff and more importantly for students and their families. Please do not vote to cut social workers and please re-instate Ruth Turner as a chief in our district.</p> <p>Leadership needs social work representation in order to provide the best possible experience for our students in this district. Thank you for your time.</p>
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Sherrie Tanner Hammonds	Staff	Removal of Chief of position	<p>I am a social worker in the district and recently learned of Mr. Dade's recommendation to remove Mrs. Turner as Chief of our department. This is not the best decision for our district, Mrs. Turner has supported our community partners, teachers, swk department and school administrators with her reliable knowledge whenever a crisis has happened and needed immediate answers or emotional support. Every department needs a person in a district or agency that is willing to have or be a voice of the population she serves. The number of things she has done for the RCSD is evident and continually shows her dedication, passion, and advocacy as a necessary strength. From my experience, she has always put herself front in center to stand for her department, parents, and the students throughout her tenured years in the district. I am requesting that you Please Return Chief Ruth Turner to her position immediately. Thank You,</p>
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