

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee Meeting**

**June 18, 2018**

**MINUTES**

**Attending:**

Commissioners – Commissioner Cynthia Elliott (Chair), President White, Vice President Powell, Commissioners Hallmark (6:09pm), and Funchess

District Staff – Karl Kristoff (General Counsel), Adrian Neil (Associate Counsel), Rahimah Wynn (Community Liaison Specialist- Dept. Parent Engagement), Michael Schmidt (Chief of Operations)

Parent Representative – Not in attendance

Board Staff – Kallia Wade

Commissioner Elliott called the meeting to order at 6:03PM.

**I. Review of Minutes of the May 22, 2018 CIGR Meeting**

There were two typographical amendments highlighted in regards to the May 22, 2018 minutes. Once rectified, the minutes were deemed appropriate for acceptance.

**Motion** by Commissioner Elliott to approve and accept the Minutes of the October 23, 2017 and November 11, 2017 CIGR Committee Meetings. Seconded by Commissioners Powell and Funchess. **Adopted 4-0.**

**II. Review and the Board Communications Plan (last updated June 14, 2018)**

The committee meeting began with conversation on the Board Communications Plan. Commissioner Elliott indicated that the next step of the process was to invite Chief of Communications, Carlos Garcia, to the next CIGR meeting. She also indicated that she would be meeting with Chief Garcia separately to explain the communications plan and requested that a copy of the document be sent to him in preparation. It is intended that the Plan will be reviewed and accepted in the next CIGR Committee meeting and then forwarded to the full Board for approval.

Following this, Rahimah Wynn, Community Liaison Specialist for the Department of Parent engagement was invited to the table. Ms. Wynn discussed her ideas for collaboration with the District on the Communications Plan and its implementation. She highlighted the following suggestions:

- Utilize the District’s means of mass communications through the following:
  - Social media
  - Email list-serves
  - Parent University
- Communicate with families of all other languages and not just Spanish and English via:
  - Robo-calls
  - Ms. Wynn noted that the District does fine with communicating in the aforementioned two languages, but is currently attempting to recruit interpreters for other spoken languages, in order to more accurately target the District’s families
  - Flyers and other print-media distribution

Commissioner Funchess posed a question asking if there was any functionality to applying a “press button” approach over robocall so that parents listening could hear what translations were available at the beginning of the message. Ms. Wynn was not certain, but noted that the District is looking into various solutions.

Vice President Powell questioned whether the District has pursued alternative technical solutions, like utilizing multiple list-serves that would target specific language-speakers. She also questioned whether Google translate would work to assist with provision of services. Ms. Wynn responded by indicating that the District does utilize a separate list serve for Spanish speakers, but noted that it was not as easy to establish for others, given the wide array of languages represented in the school community. Additionally, she pointed out that Google did not always provide a perfect translation and so it isn’t always feasible to use this as a viable service for dissemination of information.

Associate Counsel, Adrian Neil, responded to questions regarding the contract for language services, indicating that the District mostly contracts for Spanish. This, he said, is because there are currently not many providers in Rochester to represent the diversity of the District’s language speakers.

Commissioner Elliott noted that she had some criticism for the office of Parent Engagement, indicating that the department doesn’t seem to be present in the community—this prevents personal connection. She then asked whether there has been any effort to do more outreach community work in the future, to spread information and engage parents. Ms. Wynn responded noting that there has been efforts made through the PTO/PTA, but indicated that given the spotty parent attendance it may not be the best means to engage with that audience. She noted that “moms and muffins”, “dads and donuts”, talent shows, and other such events were better opportunities. She further noted that it could be beneficial if the Commissioners were to attend these types of events.

Commissioner Hallmark indicated that some collaboration is needed between the PTO/PTA affiliation groups and questioned whether the Board could encourage networking. Ms. Wynn noted that the Parent Engagement Department is updating rosters and working on a collaborative email list so that PTO and PTA members can communicate directly to the

District. Commissioner Powell suggested hosting an event for just PTO/PTA leaders and members to network. Ms. Wynn responded noting that there is a dinner held in the spring between the parent engagement groups to strengthen collaboration. Commissioner Elliott indicated interest for Board members to attend—Ms. Wynn indicated that she would organize this. Commissioner Funchess indicated that there is a culture in the District regarding the belief that everyone is not getting information, but she noted that this may be because of mistrust and a lack of relationships.

Rahimah Wynn continued the discussion by moving on to the social media piece and noted that the Parent Engagement Department has been using this means even more to communicate. This communication has been made easier through the linking of pages to enable duplicate posting and cross-posting functionality (where one post is posted to several pages at once). Suggestions noted during this discussion on social media usage included:

- Conducting a social media 101 lesson between the different parent groups so that parent leaders know how to utilize these tools
- Utilize YouTube and Facebook live tools
- Utilize social media to create more interactive town halls
- Have persons interact via social media during board meetings
- Do text message updates

Commissioner Hallmark noted the need to ensure that schools update their calendars so that the parent app is accurately reflecting events in an up-to-date manner. Ms. Wynn responded to this and noted that every school has a different person who manages their calendars and social media, which may cause bottleneck. She also noted that sometimes parents don't use the parent app or other tools because of poor functionality or updating and so there may be resulting frustration. General Counsel Kristoff indicated that these discussion items should also be expressed in principal and admin meetings so that they can be addressed at the school level.

In response to Commissioner Funchess' point that some parent liaisons may not be able to fulfill the social media role of their position, VP Powell suggested using students to assist. Ms. Wynn closed the conversation by speaking about the background of the interaction between the parent engagement office and the public.

### **III. Review and Discuss Resolution No. 2017-18:964**

**City of Rochester – contract agreement for the Rochester Police Department to provide sworn police personnel to be assigned to schools and to operate as truancy enforcement officers, administer the School Resource Officer program and assist District personnel with emergency management and planning and risk mitigation, with the goal of promoting a safe learning environment – Resolution No. 2017-18: 964**

The SRO contract and resolution was presented by Associate Counsel, Adrian Neil. He started the conversation by noting that the central elements of the agreement have not

changed. Changes reflected were those pertaining to payment. Essentially, the contract used to reflect a daily rate and will now reflect a flat fee.

Commissioner Powell noted that the Board's Finance Committee had previously considered the contract in their June meeting from a financial standpoint, and had subsequently approved the resolution. She further indicated that the current discussion of the resolution should be discussed from a fundamental standpoint in the CIGR meeting.

Commissioner Elliott posed a question: "how do we [the District] reduce our need for SROs and get metal detectors out of schools?" She further noted her personal opinion that these things (SROs and metal detectors) contribute to the school-to-prison pipeline and indicated that these mechanisms have been put in place to protect staff rather than students. Commissioner Funchess responded to this by adding that the situation required a philosophical approach. She posed the question "how do we make a shift from an oppressive to a restorative and equity-based approach?" Additionally Commissioner Funchess indicated that the Board needs to go into a conversation to establish this approach. Commissioner Elliott agreed, noting that if the Resolution No. 2017-18: 964 is to be put into effect on July 1<sup>st</sup>, then the Committee needs to consider this fact. Commissioner Hallmark also agreed, and noted her support for a reduction of SROs in schools. Vice President Powell suggested that the Administration present a framework for this before any moves are made toward implementation. Commissioner Funchess indicated that she would reach out to persons who had previously discussed potential models with her, re the reduction of SROs in schools.

General Counsel, Kristoff responded to this discussion by noting that the Administration has applied several means to address this topic. He identified the School Climate Advisory Committee (which is currently working recommendations), the School Based Planning Team (SBPT), and the work of Chief of Equity, Idonia Owens.

Commissioner Funchess suggested speaking with SROs, counselors and restorative practice coaches prior to implementing anything. She noted that that the District cannot take away a coping mechanism and not put something in place. She also suggested maximizing the resources the District already has. Lastly, Commissioner Funchess expressed that the Board needs to establish a consensus on how and what to do and that there needed to be a shift in the discussions and perceptions on safety, discipline and wellness.

General Counsel Kristoff noted that he would bring this discussion to the table at the next cabinet meeting.

**Motion by Commissioner Elliott to address and approve Resolution No. 2017-18: 964. Seconded by President White and Commissioners Hallmark and Funchess. Adopted 4-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 7:12PM.

**Next Meeting: July 12, 2018**