

Speaker Comments

Board Meeting May 7, 2020

Name	Affiliation	Topic	Comments
Keiara Wall	Student	School No. 57	My name is Keiara. I've been attending School #57 since I was in Kindergarten. It would be sad to close School #57 because I have attended there since I was 4 years old! I'm 7 years old now and have a baby brother who is 1 years old. Me and my mom want Michael, which is my baby brother, to go to School #57. So please do not close School #57. You can give both the school and the teachers and the students a chance, like me. Sincerely, Keiara
Shamika B.	Parent	School No. 3	To whom this may concern: I am a mother of a student who attends Nathaniel Rochester Community School #3 and it recently came to my attention that starting September 2020 the school will possibly only be for 7-8th graders. I am completely saddened to hear this news and I wanted to speak up on behalf of the parents and the students. I recently transferred my son to #3 school last year September 2019 due to Mrs. Deborah Washington leaving school #10 as a vice principal to come to #3 to become a principal. Truth be told I came to #3 school because of Mrs. Washington because I loved how she is very proactive with her students & staff. I like that she has a very good work ethic and her focus is education, discipline and growth. Nathaniel Rochester Community School is about being a family/community and that is what my son has established being here at #3 and he would be devastated if he had to go to another school. Nathaniel Rochester Community School animal is a eagle..A eagle that soars..My son is just that an "soaring eagle". Since attending #3 he has been soaring and jumping to new heights since being at this school. My son has made phenomenal progress and has completed so many milestones and it's all because of NRCS. Having NRCS become a 7-8th grade will devastate my son & myself because #3 is now our family. My son has created a bond/relationship with the staff/students and he is now where he belongs. Please reconsider making NRCS a 7-8 only school because parents, staff and students are emotionally attached to the school including my child. Not only are the students being effected by this decision but so are the staff. We(NRCS staff, students & parents) are united and we are

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			<p>standing together to try to prevent this decision from becoming a reality. Please leave Nathaniel Rochester Community School a Elementary school..Here is a suggestion could you possibly turn Marshall into a 7-8th grade school since #2 will possibly be leaving an going back to their school this up and coming school year???? Can we some how find a way to make that possible? Maybe even have #10 school possibly take the 7-8th graders since there still at Marshall High School and have the space there at least until their school gets finished being remodeled. Please really reconsider changing the school to 7-8 grade & think of the pro"s and con"s...As the old school slogan states "Don't fix it if it's not broken" from what I can see nothing is broken so why cause a disturbance/chaos if you don't have to. I hope that my thoughts & concerns are heartfelt and that you take my thoughts and ideas into consideration. Thank you. Sincerely, A Soaring Eagle Mom, Shamika B.</p>
Deloris Smith	Parent	School No. 57	<p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>My name is Deloris Smith. I reside in the city of Rochester. I have four grandchildren that attend the Rochester City School District. My grandchildren ages are 15, 8, 3, and 4 months. My eight year old granddaughter, Journee attended Rochester Prep School, she's in the third grade. I was informed that Journee scored in the top percentile for math and reading compared to other third grader state wide. We are very proud of her achievements. I believe because of the strong foundation that was built at school 57 she was able to achieve her academic abilities. Please do not close school 57. Early Childhood School #57 is currently one of the 5 schools in RCSD that is in good standing. It does not make sense to close a successful learning institution when we have so many that are not in good standing. It will cost more to close down school 57 than to change into a Pre-k center. It has ten times the green space than other buildings slated for Pre-k. If the board were making decisions in the best interest of the children and families of our district, they would not close a school in good standing. Let us keep our learning community in tact to best serve the population of RCSD. Thank You,</p> <p>Deloris Smith</p>

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Kelly C. Snyder	Parent	School No. 3	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>I am writing you today regarding potential changes to #3 school. My son is in 3rd grade, and has attended this school since Kindergarten. #3 school is a wonderful school and community, with outstanding staff on every level. The environment is warm, welcoming, safe and happy. I understand the district is facing difficulty, and that changes will happen. It has come to my attention that there is the possibility of changing #3 school from a K through 8 school, to only 7th and 8th grade. While this may seem like a nice little fix to the board, I'd like you to think about the children involved. These children have faced a lot this year. First, many lost their beloved teachers halfway through the year. Just as they ate adjusting and getting comfortable again, they went home one day with no idea when, or if, they'd come back. To the younger students, that alone is terrifying. Changing teachers was hard for all students involved, regardless of age. Now, in the midst of fear, uncertainty, and the new knowledge that school is over for this year, you want to add on forcing them to now change schools as well? I have a question. As a group of people who are supposed to be concerned with the children's best interest, why aren't you?</p> <p>Changing this, doing this to them, is setting them up for failures, insecurity, learning delays due to many factors, and can certainly negatively impact their mental wellbeing. Let's be completely honest and also remember that for too many children, those walls are the ONLY safe ones they know. That is where they are safe, cared about, fed and respected. Have you even considered that fallout? Or is it that you are willing to sacrifice them? You shouldn't be willing to sacrifice any of them. These children are supposed to be your top priority. However, as usual, it appears the money is talking.</p> <p>It is time to listen to parents and students. My oldest child was an RCSD student almost 20 years ago. This is not new to me. The dismissive attitude as if the students don't matter, though, that has gotten increasingly worse. I watch you, and listen to you and it becomes increasingly clear that many of the voices I hear are NOT working for our students. Isn't that why we have you all? To better their education? To help create productive members of society?</p>
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			<p>Then why tear down their foundation? This move will crumble children who are just grasping personal growth and strength. It will leave some vulnerable. It will take the child working up the courage to speak out to a teacher about their home life back to being too afraid to. It will make kids who are finally making progress fall back again.</p> <p>This decision is only going to hurt students.</p> <p>I implore you to consider options that don't involve putting these children through more emotional upheaval. They have been through so much. They are only children, and are not at all equipped to handle this much. I thank you for your time. If anyone should need to contact me, my information is included below.</p> <p>Respectfully, Kelly C. Snyder</p>
Erin Francisco-Opalich	Parent	School No. 57	<p>My name is Erin Francisco-Opalich and I am a parent of a School 57 student. Our experiences at School 57 over the past three years have been nothing but positive and in fact had widely redeemed our view of the RCSD. School 57's teachers and staff improve the lives of their students and students' families in ways both measurable and immeasurable. I have witnessed firsthand the superior attention, support, and care that the School 57 community provides to its students, support that is absolutely vital in the earliest years of a child's development. This school serves a high population of special needs students and due to its small size and community-oriented approach, is able to support those students better than most schools in the district, especially in a time when necessary services to special needs students are rapidly diminishing nation-wide to damaging consequences.</p> <p>I understand that the district's financial hardships are making for difficult decisions on the part of its leaders, but I assure you that the proposed closure of School 57 is a grave mistake that will do nothing to mend a much larger structural, political, and financial problem. I would ask the Board to consider</p>

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			<p>who and what you protect in making the choice to close School 57. Are the children, families, teachers, and staff that comprise our school community prioritized and protected? Does the Board embrace or reject the neoliberal practices that continue to harm our students and our communities? Does the Board fight for educational and social justice for students and the Rochester community at large? I believe the Board does the opposite if you accept the proposal to close School 57.</p> <p>I believe the members of the Board agree that the issues we face when it comes to public education not only in our own city but in our country are issues that originate from and are sustained by systemic racism and economic inequality, and I acknowledge that the RCSD cannot be reasonably expected to combat these problems and their extensive reach alone. However, I believe the Board can and should take a stand to fight on the side of the students and the community you have been elected to serve, and rejecting the proposal to close School 57 would demonstrate the Board's commitment to students and the Rochester community at large. Were the Board to publicly lead the charge for funding equity in our state and in our nation, the Rochester community and countless others would rally behind you. The best course of action is not to continually enact destructive solutions within an unsustainable system. Instead, I hope that the Board would choose to champion the schools and people you are charged with serving, and turn your sights to combating the larger injustices and political inadequacies that have brought us to and continue to keep us in this dire place. Choosing to close School 57, one of the highest performing schools in the district, will not save the district from its financial woes in either the immediate or distant future. The only thing gained by closing this remarkable school will be to rob its current and future students, families, teachers, staff -- and the district -- of an exemplary educational community.</p> <p>I would appreciate if the Board could please acknowledge receipt of my comments, and I thank you for your attention and consideration of this important matter. I am happy to speak with the Board further about my experiences at</p>
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			School 57 or about broader actions the Board might take in defending our schools.
Lamaine & Le'Tara Henry	Parent	School No. 43	<p>I am a parent of a student that attends number 43 School. I'm very disappointed with the news on finding out that #43 school as well as #20 School are being voted to be closed. It's even more frustrating as not only did us as parents and students have to find out through the news and social media about the teachers did as well. There was no formal communications to them at all before them learning it through other sources. That is very sad and not very professional. I don't want to take too much of your time but I do want to express my feelings towards this. This is not the right time to Close any of our schools down. We are in the middle of a pandemic which due to it has caused our schools to abruptly close. Not only that we are now suddenly without a superintendent. If I say so myself that is a lot all in itself to take on. With so much going on how can you guys even have time to fathom the idea of closing down these schools? There has already been a sudden change that our children must all of a sudden become adapted to which is not easy for them. A lot of our kids have a bond with their teacher. I do acknowledge the fact that this is due to a budget crisis however this is sudden and should AT LEAST be push back until a later time. It not only affects the children but it also affects the parents, teachers and other staff tremendously. This is not the right time and you really should reconsider and act with compassion and empathy to many that this will affect. Everyday I listen to my child talk amongst her peers and her teacher with such concern about her school closing. The other day I even heard her say to her art teacher "we haven't even finished our projects yet and I was looking forward to it what is going to happen with my projects? " Other of her peers has even expressed concern such as not being able to see their teachers nor their friends again. No one has a answer for them. Do you? Would you like to sit these children down to explain why? How sad it that?</p> <p>This was just announced on April 15th and here we are on May 7th not even a month later , not even 30 business days later and you guys have decided to act rational and vote. How fair is that?</p>

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			<p>You closing the schools opens up a whole bigger can of worms. For instance now us as parents have to sit around and try to pick up your broken pieces by finding other schools for our children to attend which isn't the easiest thing to do when you have a parents like us that has a preference on the type of school that our child attends. If any parent is like us we don't want our kids to go to just any school or have them thrown into the closest neighborhood school just because they have no choice. If you're going to go ahead and close these two schools down at least have the common courtesy and have the heart to do so at a later time frame. Do we want the schools to shut down? Absolutely not! However if you're going to do so anyway putting it off to a later date is better than just shutting them down suddenly. At least it would be communicated in a formal manner and then the teachers, other staff along with us parents and children could gain a better grip and become open to accepting the up-and-coming change that will happen in the near future. This will at least give us as parents a chance to look at other sources on where to have our children attend school. It will lighten the pain that our children are sure to obtain from this decision. It will also give our teachers and staff a chance to figure out what they want to do as well. Let's be honest closing the schools right now only hurts the children, teacher, and staff along with the parents which just isn't fair and quite cruel. We should not have to suffer due to the Rochester City School district negligence amongst themselves internally. You have bigger fish to fry amongst yourselves internally. If you are really for the community and the children like you say you are you will do the right thing and the right thing is to NOT close the school's.</p> <p>Sincerely,</p> <p>Already CONCERNED parents Lamaine & Le'Tara Henry</p>
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Jenieya Peterson	Community	School No. 57	<p>To whom it may concern,</p> <p>My name is Jenieya Peterson and I am currently entering my senior year at the Lemoyne-Owen college. I am a social work major with a psychology minor. I also serve as a reproductive justice advocate with In Our Own Voice, a national agenda for reproductive justice. It is my hope to enter the field of reproductive and sexual health education once I graduate. I am also a 2014 Joseph C. Wilson Magnet High School Graduate and a former student of the Early Childhood School of Rochester – School #57. I can genuinely say that while attending school #57 from pre- school through second grade I was surrounded by faculty and staff that were committed to helping students delve into their full potential. While attending this school I was taught some of the most imperative life skills academically and socially. To this day I remember and still advocate for a reading initiative I learned at school #57 “B.E.A.R “. The acronym stood for “Be Excelerate About Reading”. The importance of English language arts in today’s society is self-explanatory. I can vividly remember my 2nd grade teacher Mr. Finch tailoring word problems in math to my interests to help me better grasp the concept. I also remember my art teachers taking extra time to look at projects I created at home and gave pointers on how to perfect my crafts. I also was told on a regular basis how outgoing and special I was and that one day I will be very successful. These words meant and still mean so much to me because their actions showed they meant it. These acts of genuine concern and kindness have definitely impacted the woman I am today. The dedication to teaching students the importance of learning while learning and how to treat others and how to allow others to treat you is something, I believe the district lacks. If school #57 is closed a foundation for many students who got their confidence to excel will be diminished. School #57 is truly a family to the students and families of those students. For 3 generations, members of my family have attended the school and developed close relationships with faculty and staff. School #57 produces some of best academic performers, in order to aid the district as a whole we must keep the schools actually benefiting our children open. With deep concern, Jenieya Peterson</p>
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<p>Katherine O'Hara, LMSW</p>	<p>Community</p>	<p>Social Workers</p>	<p>Dear President White and Members of the Board of Education, After watching the budget deliberations on 5/5/2020, I was left with concerns regarding the budget and the upcoming vote. This budget was originally outlined by a Superintendent who will not be with the District to see its implementation. This is a unique opportunity to make further changes to the proposal, and it is my genuine understanding that Deputy Superintendent Quick and her team are attentive and responsive to desired changes. Now is not a time to settle. Social Workers do not have to be an item on a “wish list”.</p> <p>As it stands, 19 Social Work positions are slated to be cut. All while positions are being shuffled from Directors to Executive Director, which of course includes pay raises. How will our Board justify allowing individuals to be given a raise at this time? This is being done on the backs of our Students who will lose valuable relationships and time with, and services from their Social Workers.</p> <p>When looking at the 4/30/2020 deliberation slides presented by Deputy Superintendent Quick, the 7.5 grant funded positions should not counted in the new “actual ratio” of 26:1 students to Social Workers because they cannot provide the mandated services that a district funded Social Worker can. The saved positions are a victory, but they do not contribute to that ratio. We need more district funded Social Workers.</p> <p>I am also concerned about the partnership with Catholic Family Services Social Workers. The scope of practice of a school Social Worker is very different than that of a Bachelor’s level preventative worker at CFS. School Social Workers have a higher level of education, training, state certification, and licensure. They have a different role in a school and cannot be replaced by CFS Social Workers. What will this partnership actually look like this upcoming school year? I believe it will be a band aid over an injury left by cutting 19 of our Social Work positions. Returning back after the building closings due to COVID-19 will be a challenge for all. Already, trends in substance use and addictions, from domestic</p>
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			<p>violence, adverse childhood experiences, and the effects of poverty are visible in our community. Social Workers will be needed in schools more than ever. Now is not the time to make this cut.</p> <p>As a member of the RCSD community, I urge you to fight for our Social Workers. Our students and families are counting on you to do so. Thank you</p>
Alison Schmitt	Staff	Budget Cuts to Arts Department	<p>The cuts to visual and performing arts programs are unwise. Fragmenting positions in buildings below 1.0 is not only a loss of programming, it is a loss to the school community. When teachers drop below full time in a building, they are unable to provide the kind of continuous presence that builds the type of long-term relationships with children and families that we are all desperate to build districtwide. Our allies local and statewide are standing ready to help sustain our programs through these times. Letters came in from all over the state...nearly 100 submissions to the board on the arts alone. These folks represent parents, students, staff, community partners and state/national content leaders who support our work with and for students on a regular basis</p> <p>The biggest, but less visible loss to the Arts Department is the Director of Arts and Secretary. These cuts represent a massive increase to inequity. National and state education consensus that the arts are a core subject per state/national standards. Knowing that, all of the other Big Five in NY have not one, but TWO or more directors to handle the load. None of these districts are wealthy but still recognize the volume of work and need for highly qualified content specialist. NYSSMA and NYSATA, state music and visual art education organizations, significantly support programming and access to arts opportunities. Consequences of inequity go further than just student opportunities, however. The NYSSMA Winter conference is still held in Rochester because they feel that the Rochester has consistently demonstrated a commitment to the arts, which brings opportunities for city students to perform with and for their statewide peers as well as millions of dollars in much-needed revenue to the city.</p>

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			<p>The last time there were significant and repeated cuts to the arts, organizations were hesitant to show support to a city that did not seem to value their arts programs.</p> <p>There are also director-level responsibilities that will not be able to be sustained</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Access to field learning experiences, all of which were organized for K-12 each year by this director• Hiring, supporting and retaining teachers in best-fit positions at historically high levels• Administering large-scale festivals and performances and millions of dollars in grant funding to give programs supplies they need to reach equity without depleting A funds <p>This is why we received the NAMM best communities for Music Education award for the last two years as well as had an administrator who received SAANYS's regional District admin of the year award</p> <p>These cuts, netting us only \$200k for an admin and a clerk IV position, demonstrate to the public that we do not value the arts, whether this is our true intent or not. If the goal is an equitable educational experience, removing essential programs and their directors takes us further away from equity. Having minimal or no support or seat at the table at the district, community and state level will likely have the net result of eroding all the public growth we've enjoyed as a community over the past 6-7 years where students have reaped the benefits. Fewer programs mean fewer children in poverty and children of color (historically underrepresented) entering the arts on any sort of level playing field with their suburban peers due to access issues. Once the damage to programs is done, walking back the reduction next year or the year after when times are better will still leave us as a loss: the longer we wait, the greater the impact to students and programs long-term. For such a small savings, we cannot afford the risk. Alison Schmitt</p>
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Adam Martinez	Staff	School No. 43	My school has literally and figuratively been a home to five generations of children and teachers learning together. I have spent the last 25 years of my life at 43. Please do not rush to close my home because it saves 4.3 million dollars. Fill the building up, don't tear it down. Build the staff, kids, and teachers up! 30 kids in a classroom was 25 years ago, it was a huge mistake then, and it will only be worse this time. Please do not repeat history. Thank you for your consideration. Adam Martinez. Classroom teacher #43
Martha White	Staff	TESOL Teachers	Dear School Board, I can't imagine how huge of a task it must be to balance the school budget and make the difficult decisions it take to correct the deficit. However, I'm asking that you reconsider TESOL teachers. I've been a teacher with RCSD for the last 15 years and recently (October 2019) changed my tenure over to TESOL with the understanding that TESOL teachers were needed. The need is still posted on RCSD's site. I went back to school (took out a loan) in 2018 to become a TESOL because of the need. I was told that there was such a need that it would not be a consideration in cuts. I'm not going to pretend that I want to keep my job only to support my students. Of course I know that with the influx of ESOL students within our community and a shortage of TESOL teachers it would have a negative impact on our district's test scores. It's obvious that TESOLs are needed and beneficial for our students and cutting TESOL teachers would impact their success. However, I also want to keep my job because I have a responsibility to support my own children and pay bills. I know that you are fully committed to seeing the budget reduced/balanced while keeping the students in mind. Please consider how reducing TESOL teachers would impact our district and our community overall. Thank you, Martha White
Ms. Markajani	Staff	School No. 3	Good Evening, I am a special Education Teacher in the Rochester City School District. I currently teach a autism class 6:1:2 Class. I have given up on asking the board to reconsider closing the elementary part of Nathaniel Rochester. Just show us numbers on how it will save the district money. My mother who still resides in the city as a tax payer deserves to know. Also my class in part of a whole ASD

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			<p>program at Nathaniel Rochester. Just tell us so we can tell the parents where will all these kids go. Demand they tell you! Dont let them just say they will dissolved into other programs, because last I checked we had no room for our ASD students. We were short special eduction teachers to teach other classes too!.. Where are all these students going to fit with all theses closings going on? I have 3 ELL students 2 right from PR after the last hurricane. One of them is devastated about having to leave a place that has built a community around her and her whole family. . Her family heavily relies on us to interpret things for them as they dont understand a lot of what is going on around them. Please insist on the Deputy Superintendent telling you exactly where these 24 students in the ASD program will end up. Thats not to much to ask of them. I was truly impressed tonight wth some of the board member stating that they were not deeply connected to a budget that was not their buget. I was encoraged to think maybe the majority would see that taking out the elementary students this year when the actual change is not for two years this does not make sense. With what is gong on in the world right now, you cannot believe that making all these teacher pack up and move is unthinkable. It is so wrong on so many levels. My student from PR has high anxiety. She is autistic, a ELL student and has high anxiety. She is so afraid. Please reconsider the Superintendents budget. Do not take out the elementary students out of Nathaniel Rochester. Also, something worth mentioning. The only time Nathaniel has been mentioned during the budget meetings the deputy superintendent stated with a proud smug look on her face Nathaniel's name will also be renamed Nathaniel Rochester Middle School. WRONG! The community, parents, students and teacher are trying to change the name of the school to anything but that. They all belive that the name Nathaniel Rochester in of itself needs to go. Little history. Nathaniel Rochester owned slaves. They want the name totally changed. Thats how in-tuned the Deputy Superintendent is to the people they are affecting the most. Please please reconsider.</p> <p>Sincerely, Ms. Markajani</p>
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Katherine Manser	Staff	School No 57	<p>To the Rochester City School District Board of Education Members:</p> <p>I am writing to you today to implore you to reconsider the recommended closure of Early Childhood School of Rochester, No 57.</p> <p>As a community-based Early Intervention and Preschool-aged Speech-Language Therapy service provider for over 16 years, I spent numerous years pushed into several of our CBO's. In my time spent working alongside these teams, I came to recognize while the system worked for a very select few, they CBO's were failing in one key area-Cohesiveness in service provision. I witnessed countless children go on waiting lists for over 6 months or more and many children simply unable to receive access to special education supports due to the inability to provide contractually necessary special education services because of a county wide shortage of providers. Given my passion for teaching children in their most formative years, the preschool years, I chose to make a switch from a highly reputable and financially stable private agency to RCSD because I felt then, and continue to feel now, that gathering the necessary supports together under one roof, "in house" allows for the greatest possible collaborative efforts in planning and implementing therapeutic treatment with strong efficacy. In addition to my vast professional experiences, I also possess a strong knowledgebase in the provision of augmented communication supports and given this level of professional experience, I was chosen to assist in supporting the districts newly established, preschool self-contained 8:1:3 special class at School 57. The 16 children on my caseload, who have affectionately come to know me as "Ms. Kate" are largely non-verbal, most of whom lack basic communication skills and have gone thus far without access to Assistive Technology services due to therapy provider shortages and lack of appropriate educational placements for their high level of need. Working in cohesion with the Special Education Teacher, Rifkie Abrahamson the 3 paraprofessionals who have more than 25 years in the district each with many of those years spent in the preschool environment, Patricia Roberson, Antonette Arroyo and Felicia Singletary, the Occupational Therapists, Heather McPherson and Donna Muchler, and Physical Therapist Tina Murphy, we have created an environment that the kids feel welcomed in, that routinely meets their vast sensory needs (i.e.</p>
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			<p>crash-pad, in-room cuddle and platform swing, light machine, oral motor sensory stimulation devices) as well as their cognitive and communicative needs (i.e. PECS boards and icons mounted throughout the classroom, iPads with communication device apps). This team of professionals meets regularly to brainstorm on areas of need on each student and has even gone as far as to visit the Golisano Autism Center, to better learn how to serve our students and their families. In addition, I have collaborated with the other SLP's and Preschool teachers at school 57 on methods to provide assistive technology supports and DIR Floortime model supports for children needing more than the typical level of care would dictate. As you can see, this team goes above and beyond to meet our kids' needs and we are continuing to do so even in the worst of times, with good attendance and participation with 15 of 16 children indicating that they want access to educational and therapy supports while being homeschooled. These parents, some of whom are working more than 2 jobs right now, are going without sleep in order to assist their child in attending our Zoom calls because they value the time, energy and professional resources that we have compiled to assist their children in meeting their needs while away from school.</p> <p>Given what I have shared with you as a "mile in our shoes", I beseech you to think long and hard before you consider making the decision to close School No. 57. Many of these children we have spent countless hours developing trusting relationships with will go back on waiting lists for services that they need so desperately if they are to go back into the CBO environment again and considering the massive proposed cuts to the speech department made in the most recent amendment to the budget, the staff needed to work with these children to be sure they are able to complete the most basic need in life- making their wants and needs known- will not be available to help them when the time comes. I write this letter fully knowing that my career with RCSD may be coming to a close soon, but I ask you to think of these kids, when you consider your final decision.</p>
Vicki Meek	Staff	Social Workers	Dear Members of the Rochester City School District Board of Education:

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			<p>I feel compelled to convey appreciation for the reinstatement of some of the proposed 34 School Social Worker budget cuts. It appears RCSD will now be able to meet the IEP Counseling mandates with the current budgeted staffing allotment.</p> <p>As a practicing Social Worker for 36 years (20+ in RCSD), I remain concerned that this budget revision is not sufficient to address the projected safety and mental health needs in our District. I'm wondering who is going to fill the gap left to address the safety/crisis needs of our students (2,225 documented contacts from Sept. - mid-March), not to mention Response to Interventions (9,318), School/Community contacts (47,968), and 66,288 documented encounters between general education students and School Social Workers during that same time frame?</p> <p>These critical services are/were essential to ensure safety, security, and timely interventions for our students, families, schools and community.</p> <p>The revised proposed budget is a Catch-22. The remaining School Social Worker workforce is enough to cover mandated service delivery (70,315 documented contacts Sept.- mid-March) and all the IEP compliance requirements, but if they are diverted to address any of the aforementioned critical safety/crisis needs, etc., then they risk being out of compliance and the revenue anticipated from IEP counseling service delivery will be significantly reduced.</p> <p>Our current pandemic and anticipated school closures/relocations are areas of additional concern for which we should have a plan. There is currently a reported increase in domestic violence and substance abuse. We can anticipate an escalation in housing and food insecurity, especially given unprecedented unemployment and when the eviction process is reinstated.</p> <p>Immediate clinical interventions must be provided to address the magnitude of anticipated social-emotional, adjustment, and mental health needs (safety, trauma, stress, anxiety, grief/loss) in order for our students/schools to feel safe and able to engage in learning.</p> <p>Given the needs in the Rochester area at this time in history, I am advocating that additional School Social Worker positions should be added to our budget.</p>
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			<p>The proposed inclusion of a few community service providers and grant funded School Social Work positions will be not be sufficient to fill the gap of service provision left from the elimination of approximately 20% of the School Social Work Department to meet these overwhelming needs.</p> <p>I trust you will continue your diligent efforts to find creative solutions to develop a balanced budget that is in the best interests of our Rochester community.</p> <p>Thank you for all you do. Sincerely, Vicki J. Meek, LMSW</p>
Stacy Embrey	Staff	Public Safety	<p>Good evening! I am writing to you about the proposed school closures that are to be voted on May 7th. While, I understand we are in a budget crisis and it's time to look closely at ways to cut and save money, what I don't understand is why you are closing schools, especially during a pandemic. All you have to do is listen to the news or Cuomo's daily briefings to know that he and the CDC recommends that we will need to continue to social distance for at least the next 12-18 months or until a vaccine is developed. They have specifically said that school's need to provide proof that appropriate social distancing is occurring In schools before they can open. In these recommendations it states that classrooms need to have less students in them, with desks placed six feet apart. My question to the BOE is, "why are you going to vote yes to school closures when this goes against everything we are being told has to be done to keep everyone safe and prevent another spike in new cases and outbreaks?" Closing the four schools proposed will only INCREASE the number of students inside a classroom, not decrease, thus making social distancing almost impossible. This not only seems irresponsible and reckless during a pandemic that has claimed so many lives and continues to be a threat through the Fall and Winter, but it will also put our student's and staff's health and safety at great risk. This will end up costing the district more money in the long run, as you will need to pay substitutes and possibly have to close schools again due to the greater risk of new COVID cases and illnesses due to creating larger classrooms to accommodate all the students from the closed schools.</p>

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			<p>Please rethink the proposal of closing schools and vote NO. It would be unsafe and negligent, on the district's and BOE's part, to ignore and go against all the guidelines, safety precautions and recommendations made by the CDC and our Governor, Andrew Cuomo. These are being put into place to avoid another spike in cases and prevent another shut down. These closures would also put our students and staff at great risk. Now is the time for social distancing and smaller classrooms to allow for students to be placed six feet apart, not increase class sizes. This is not safe or putting our students health and safety first. I am sure there are other places to cut instead of school closures. Thank you for your attention to this and I hope you will chose to do the right thing on May 7, keep our students and staff safe! Thank you. Stacy Embrey</p>
Jennifer Schuman	Staff	School No. 43	<p>Dear Members of the Board of the Education for the Rochester City School District;</p> <p>After watching the most recent budget deliberation meeting on Thursday night, I have some questions and comments that I would like to put forth to you before you vote this week. I have been a special education teacher in the Rochester City School District for the past 25 years and have seen many difficulties in that time. This is by far the most difficult time I have ever experienced in my time with the district.</p> <p>My first question is in regards to the directors and executive directors. I guess I do not understand the difference between a director and an executive director. Why do some departments need both and some only need one? Do we really need both positions? Since we are looking at the best use of resources and meeting the needs of students, do we need both of these positions? Maybe these positions could be explained better, as they are central office positions, away from students, but they may be necessary to meet the needs of students.</p> <p>My second point has to do with a comment that the budget takes into consideration the needs of the students. I cannot recall the exact wording that</p>

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			<p>was in the presentation, but Commissioner LeBron stated that she disagreed with that statement. I, too, disagree. We are closing schools, relocating students, and cutting social workers just to name a few of the direct impacts that will affect our students. We are in a desperate situation, but we need to remember we are here for the students.</p> <p>My last comment has to do with closing School #43. Our new principal, Wakili Moore, is building our Grizzly Family. Most of the staff have been there for many years. He has come in and added new teams so that we can do more to help our students succeed. With our very high special education population, our students tend to be very vulnerable with many unique needs. These students cannot just be absorbed into other buildings. It takes time to build relationships with these students, as they are usually coming from other buildings after having many academic or behavioral difficulties so they can get special education services. Our entire staff works together to meet these needs. We work together to build relationships so that students celebrate each other. We are lucky enough that many of our students are with us from kindergarten through sixth grade. We also have generations of families, for those of us who have been there a while! Our school works together to make sure our students are cared for, in and out of the classroom.</p> <p>Please reconsider the proposal to close School #43. We would love to continue our work with our Grizzly Family and these students who need us, especially at this difficult time. Thank you for your time and consideration. Jennifer Schuman</p>
Tracy Bodyk	Staff	Budget Cuts to the Arts Department	<p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>Consistency, Communication and Collaboration. Any relationship NEEDS these key factors to succeed. As an art teacher in the district, I spent my first three years building relationships with students and families only having to tell them I was leaving them at the end of the school year. This is unacceptable. An</p>

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			<p>elementary art teacher is one of the few teachers in the building who has the opportunity to teach every student from every family every year of their elementary education. I am in my fifth year at Dr. Louis A. Cerulli School No. 34 and have seen drastic progress in relationships with students and families. I have developed much needed PARTNERSHIPS with parents. Students are achieving their potential and families are supporting our Visual Art program, and myself as an educator. They are excited to know that their child's teacher is familiar and invested in their school community. In an uncertain world, our kids NEED CONSISTENCY and NEED RELATIONSHIPS they can count on EVERY YEAR. Can we count on you to stop the drastic visual art cuts and allow these passionate art educators to build relationships with OUR students and families?</p> <p>Sincerely, Tracy Bodyk, staff member</p>
Michaela Wall	Staff	School No. 57	<p>My name is Michaela Wall and I am a proud parent of a 2nd grader at School #57, the proud PTCA president of this school, and a former student of school #57 myself.</p> <p>Sadness does not describe my feelings around the proposal to completely close this building. I feel like you will be doing a travesty to the community as a whole by doing so. Statistics wise I cannot see the justification in closing a school that is in good standing especially when just at the April 28th Board Meeting it was stated there are currently 14 schools in Receivership in the RCSD. How do you justify closing a school that is efficiently educating their students and have the data to show it? On top of the educational value, School #57 is truly a family. This is a school that supports their students and the parents in and outside of the classroom. When I was pregnant with my son, I was overwhelmed by the love and support that was given and at that point my daughter was just in her 1st year at the building. My son is now 1 ½ and when we attend events and meetings he is warmly greeted by all school staff. My husband and I looked forward to our son being able to attend #57 beginning the 22-23 school year. When my mother passed away this past summer, the school family showed an outpour of love and condolences and several members of the</p>

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			<p>school staff also attended my mother's services. They continue to extend their love and support for my grieving to this day. The time and care the school staff have shown to my daughter with helping her grieve and deal with the loss of her grandmother is insurmountable. Anytime I have ever had a concern, I was always able to reach any member of the school staff with ease and my concern was immediately addressed and/or my questions were immediately answered. I have always appreciated and valued the open lines of communication that I have had with every teacher my daughter has ever had in the building (Gym teacher, Art teacher, Music teacher, and Librarian included). Even teachers whom my daughter did not have always greeted us with friendliness and warmth when we enter the building. I could go on and on. Our RCSD families deserve and need this type of nurturing environment for the success of our children. My daughter is an extremely high performing student. She has held an Honor Roll/High Honor Roll title since her entering School #57 as a kindergartner and to this day as a 2nd grader. She is currently a Standard Bearer. On her Winter NWEA test she placed at a 4th grade math performance level and a 6th grade reading level (again she is a 2nd grader). One of the many things I've been thankful for in regards to my daughter's education is the School Staff that all work together and continue to nurture her and challenge her in all capacities of her learning. Since my daughter entered Kindergarten, I have defended and stood by my choice of keeping her enrolled in the RCSD. Honestly, I am now reconsidering continuing her enrollment in this District. The fact that a building with so much love and academic strength could be slotted for closure and the fact that the school family and constituents were not even notified makes me weary of her receiving the quality education and care in this District. I know hard decisions have to be made but it should not be at the sake of our Smallest and most vulnerable ones in the District. Please revive my faith in this district by doing what is best for our children now and in the future. Please Vote No to the closure of the Early Childhood School of Rochester - School #57.</p>
Michaela Wall	Staff	Bell Time Changes	<p>My name is Michaela Wall and I am the proud parent of a 2nd grade scholar at the Early Childhood School of Rochester - School #57.</p>

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			<p>I am reaching out regarding the discussion at the April 28th Board Meeting regarding Bell Time Changes. My daughter is in her last year at her school and hearing of the possible changes in start and dismissal times for the 20-21 school year are quite concerning. As a full time working parent, my husband being a full time working parent, and being the parents to a 7 year old and 1 ½ year old; a large part of our school selection for our daughter was based off of start and dismissal times. It was also disheartening to hear of this change because as a RCSD parent, I feel all RCSD parents are entitled to a say in changes that affect our children. Also, to expect this change to take place this upcoming school year just seems unreasonable and inconsiderate to parents. Again, many parents' select schools based off of timing that works with their schedules</p> <p>In surrounding Districts, when bell times were changing parents not only had an input but had 1 to 2 school years to get prepared for the change. Why shouldn't RCSD parents have the same courtesy?</p> <p>I ask on behalf of all RCSD parents, if you are considering in moving forward with the changes to bell times that you have an open forum with parents to retrieve valuable feedback from your stakeholders and not make any changes until the 21-22 school year to give parents a chance to get their affairs in order.</p> <p>Thank you, Michaela Wall</p>
Michaela Wall	Staff	Budget Cuts to the Arts Department	<p>My name is Michaela Wall and I am the parent of a 2nd grade little girl who is a lover of the music and the arts.</p> <p>I think it would be a huge travesty to our students to make cuts to the arts and music program. Having a Director of Humanities that covers Social Studies, Arts, and Music seems like it will be an impossible role to efficiently fill. Social Studies is a core subject that requires much attention and time. The Director of Humanities would be tasked with the huge job of creating and/or implementing programs and curriculum for all grades, Regents' exams, etc. How will the proper support and programs be able to be rolled out for our Arts and Music program with the burden of supporting a core subject as well?</p> <p>Our district is unique in the fact that we have a school dedicated to the arts. How will the Director of Humanities be able to support the arts and music programs not only at SOTA but at all of the RCSD schools with having to support a core</p>

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			<p>subject as well? Not all of our students are athletes. My daughter is one of them. At her school she is a member of Chorus, Art Club, and the Bucket Drumming ensemble. Secularly, she attends dance lessons where she has been dancing at her studio since she was 1 years old. She also takes drumming lessons secularly, which it was Mrs. Bennet, her school's music teacher, who informed me of my daughter's natural talent with drumming which prompted me to sign her up for lessons. With these cuts, how will the music and arts teachers be able to put in the time to recognize and flourish natural talent with running from school to school? The RCSDs arts and music program is one of the main reasons my Husband and I choose to keep our daughter in the RCSD. Since Kindergarten our daughter has spoken of and dreamed of attending SOTA. She is in her last year at her current school and a big determining factor in the school we choose for her for 3rd grade was based off of the music and arts program they have. Please reconsider spreading a program that is so important to so many of our students so thin. Please reconsider your cuts to the music and arts program. Thank you, Michaela Wall</p>
Rachael Feltman	Staff	Budget Cuts to the Arts Department	<p>Dear Board,</p> <p>I do not agree with the cuts that are being made in your 2020-2021 budget, particularly in the Arts Department. As a Second Grade Teacher of Clara Barton School #2, 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>Our Art teacher Megan Deuel serves our entire population of students. She ties her projects directly into the content and concepts that we teach, solidifying and repeating the learning targets for each particular grade level. On top of this, she gives Art Integration lessons which enrich and dive deeper into areas students are weaker in, filling in gaps and strengthening the grade level as a whole. In addition, Ms. Deuel participates in several committees and evening opportunities for parents. She has been a leader in online learning during the COVID pandemic, giving Office Hours, online lessons, daily activities, and more. I know she has personally provided supplies and projects to many families in need. She is the technology support for our school and the consistent support during school</p>

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			wide and small group staff meetings. I CAN NOT IMAGINE our school without its' Art Program and amazing Art Teacher. PLEASE do not consider this cut, as it would HUGELY impact our school family in a negative way!!! Sincerely, Rachael Feltman
Candace Latimer	Staff	Budget Cuts to the Arts Department	<p>Dear Board,</p> <p>I do not agree with the cuts that are being made in your 2020-2021 budget, particularly in the Arts Department. As a <u>(Teacher)</u> of <u>(Clara Barton #2 _____)</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. We are losing more than ART. We are losing creative edge in our curriculum. We are told to differentiate. This person, these people, are the cornerstone for differentiating curriculum. Don't take that away.</p> <p>Sincerely, Candace Latimer</p>
Megan A. Deuel	Staff	Budget Cuts to Arts Department	<p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>I do not agree with the cuts proposed in your 2020-2021 budget, particularly in the Arts Department. As the visual art teacher of Clara Barton School 2, I have seen the impact the arts have made on Rochester City School District Students and Families, and I believe that it would be a costly mistake in the lives of our students. Please reconsider your proposed 2020-2021 budget to make cuts to the Arts Department. Art is not just about the development of fine artists. Visual art helps students to express themselves, learn the planning process and the creation process, learn from failures, and develop 21st-century skills needed in the current job markets. Cutting teachers in our department jeopardizes the evolution of our district and our students. By moving from full-time teachers in a building to part-time, you are breaking relationships. In my two years at Clara Barton, I have developed meaningful and restorative relationships with my students and other staff members. I am one of the first teachers who greets every student in the building when they arrive in the morning. I can</p>

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			<p>support them from the moment they walk in until the moment they leave. My students know they can come to me and my classroom to learn about art. But they know they also have my support in the restorative process, in other subject areas where their learning needs can be met through the use of art to help explain, and just have an adult who understands not every day is excellent and that is okay. My students know I will be with them in their struggles and their triumphs! As we sit at home, socially distancing ourselves, consider the books you read, the shows you watch, the music you listen to, and the puzzles you assemble. All of these wonderful activities would not be possible artists. From the cover designs of books to the advertisements reminding to social distance, artists are in every step. To create a better future for our children, families, and community, please consider the possibilities that come from the development and growth of RCSD's art department.</p> <p>Sincerely, Megan A. Deuel</p>
Michael Henretta	Staff	Young Mothers	<p>Good morning President Van White and members of the Board. My name is Michael Henretta and I am an English teacher at Young Mothers/Interim Health Academy. My cell phone number is 585-208-8059. This is my 33rd year teaching in the RCSD. I am the most senior English teacher in the district. I have never emailed the Board before, but I feel the need to now. I waited until today so that what I say may be in your minds tomorrow. I almost didn't write because what I say may not matter, but I want to at least try. I don't give up easily. I have been in this for the long run, not less than a year. I can't even tell you how many superintendents I have seen come and go!</p> <p>Well, enough about me. I am asking you to please reconsider closing the Young Mothers/Interim Health Academy, a proposal of Superintendent Dade who is now gone. When I occasionally hear Board a Board member mention it, it seems often to be just Young Mothers. Do you know that the Interim Health Academy is actually the larger part of the two? I have several male students. In the Interim Health Academy are some of the district's most vulnerable students. They are students with anxiety, depression, suicidal tendencies, and other mental health</p>

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			<p>issues. We’ve had students that were in the process of transgendering. We have students that just weren’t going to their home schools because there are too many students in the classroom, halls, and cafeteria. There is too much bullying and too many fights. Some are school phobic. When students come to us, they are in a safe environment and can prosper. Commissioner Powell, I didn’t have your daughter in class but I believe she was in our program for a while. Board members, do you recall getting the email from one of our students, Adam, and him saying how he was at Edison and suicidal, but then came to our program and is doing well? I have been at YM/IHA for eight years now. I have been able to do more teaching in these eight years and have seen more learning than the previous 25 years when I was at Josh Lofton, East, Wilson, Edison, Jefferson Middle School, Charlotte Middle School, and Marshall High School. Instead of closing our program, I think it could be utilized more. We can handle more students with mental health challenges. I’m sure there are more at the other schools even before this pandemic and will be even more after. These students will do better in our program.</p> <p>I know it is easy to say not to close the Young Mothers/Interim Health Academy. I know the budget needs cuts, but don’t let them be at the expense of some of the district’s most vulnerable students. I believe our program is somewhere around \$1.7 million. I know the Board wants to have money in its reserves for the future, which it can still do, but maybe a little less like \$6.3 million vs. \$8 million. In this way the program, which has been around since I think 1969 can remain open. Closing this program now to have money in reserves to me seems like not feeding people that are hungry now because we need to have money to feed hungry people next year. How does that help the hungry people now?</p> <p>I watched the Board meeting last night and it seemed the district doesn’t know how much money it will have saved the last 3 ½ months of this school year. Just saving on substitute teachers I bet is a lot! But also, sports-related costs, utilities, etc. It’s been a cold spring. The district didn’t heat empty schools as normal did</p>
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			<p>they? Also, no gas for buses and fewer students I'm sure have picked up meals than would have eaten in the cafeteria. I think before the Board decides to close YM/IHA and vote on the budget it should have an estimate of what the district is saving during this pandemic. What the district saves could be enough to save YM/IHA.</p> <p>Well, I hope that each of you stays safe and healthy and I hope what I have said helps you to keep the Young Mothers/Interim Health Academy open. Thank you for listening to me on behalf of our students, many of whom are voiceless.</p>
Jessamine Perez	Staff	ELLS	<p>Dear Board members, first thank you for all you have been doing to support our community and I appreciate your commitment.</p> <p>I am a proud graduate and teacher from the RCSD, but I am also a daughter who has witnessed her father impact students her entire life. Abel Perez Pherett has been serving the RCSD community for over 30 years and the vast majority of them, he has spent teaching. I have watched him pour his heart into teaching students and inspiring countless lives. He personally knows the educators and students in our community and also knows what they require to be successful--that is what we need at the top.</p> <p>In addition, what many people do not know is that he was once SIFE. He came to this country from Colombia during civil unrest, as an ELL with interrupted formal education, by himself ... 17 years old, with only 15 dollars in his pocket. He knows what it is to have to be resilient through adversity and that is what many of our ELLs have experienced in the past and still face today. He is a direct representation of the RCSD multilingual community and that is why he needs to be in the cabinet. If you cut him from that position, you are silencing the voices of those who need to be heard especially during the district's corrective plan.</p>

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			<p>His presence and hard work, at central office, has brought numerous changes and rapid growth for Bilingual, English language, and Foreign language learners. Let him finish. Please don't silence a powerful voice for our community of students and teachers. This is the district I grew up in and now serve, my heart is grieved. Thank you so much for your time, Be Blessed! Jessamine Perez</p>
Catherine Buskey	Staff	Social Workers	<p>Dear Members of the Rochester City School District Board of Education: As a Social Worker and educator in the Rochester City School District, I would like to respectfully request that you reconsider the elimination of any School Social Workers from next year's budget, especially in light of this devastating pandemic. School Social Workers serve a unique and vital role in our schools that cannot be eliminated or replaced. Our extensive knowledge of education, school dynamics, the communities and cultures we serve as well as training in addressing issues involving complex trauma, abuse, grief/loss, mental health, lethality, food and housing insecurity are inherent to our unique skills. Within our schools, we support teachers by performing social, emotional and environmental assessments on students in need; consulting with teachers and administrators on the most effective strategies and participating in the creation of interventions utilizing research-based practices to directly impact student's academic performance and the classroom as a whole. We develop and implement school wide curriculum and programs that align with our NASW Standards and support student's social-emotional development. Thus ensuring we proactively build a healthy and safe school climate for ALL children. In addition, when the district is faced with a crisis, the School Social Worker's unique training, expertise and licensure as a mental health provider and community practitioner allows us to provide counseling, crisis intervention, suicide risk assessments, classroom strategies, and teacher support ensuring timely and successful outcomes. School Social Workers have their greatest impact on those we have the most difficulty reaching. More of</p>

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			<p>our children than we would like to admit come to school each day hungry, tired, disengaged, angry, scared, and even abused; this is all before they even set foot in our doors. There are many, who, as a result of these environmental stressors don't come to school at all. We can anticipate a tremendous escalation of need resulting from this pandemic, especially in regards to transition and anxiety issues when school is reopened. Not only was this a huge change in routine and expectations for children that is resulting in 6 months of not physically being in school and immense stress and anxiety within and among all family members, the current pandemic and extended time home could potentially lead to increased child abuse and domestic violence in the home. This also means 6 months away from a safe place; 6 months away from the adults that often see and report child abuse. Social workers will be more crucial in the upcoming year, and many years after that, than ever before to help students and families heal. Our teachers work hard every day to educate children to their greatest potential, but many students in RCSD cannot achieve that potential because of these barriers, ultimately, affecting the entire student body and school community. It is our School Social Workers who are uniquely prepared to identify the needs of at-risk youth, provide services to address such needs and act as the connective tissue to community resources. Based upon our relationships with the students, parents and community providers, we have a great deal of insight into effective interventions. We advocate through red tape to put supports in place outside of school and follow through. We create trust in a parent who may be fearful of the system due to prior negative experiences. We meet parents where they are emotionally and engage them in the process. We get consent forms signed, parents to come to conferences, a child a pair of glasses, an overwhelmed community caseworker to focus on a child, a parent to take the difficult step of hospitalizing a child for mental illness, a gang-recruited child into an after school or summer program, a disenfranchised teenager to come back to school. We follow-up and follow through, so that community resources work effectively and school resources are not wasted.</p>
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			<p>School Social Workers perform, inside and outside of the school day, all of the “small steps” that build student strengths and help them to meet the Standards. These small steps result in big impacts on the health of our students and schools. This is a unique service that cannot be lost or compensated for by other means, especially in a district of our need and current level of crisis. The New York State Chapter of National Association of School Social Workers (NASW) published a NYS School Social Worker Survival Kit. On Page 18, “School Social Work services should be provided at a ratio of one social worker to each building serving up to 250 general education students, or a ratio of 1:250 students. When a school social worker is providing services to students with intensive needs, a lower ratio, such as 1:50, is suggested.” Based on last year's enrollment of 29,984 students, the suggested rate of 1:250 would suggest 120 School Social Workers at a minimum in our district and with a ratio of 1:50 the suggestion would be 600 School Social Workers. As of right now, we have 121 School Social Workers in our district and a few that are slated to retire at the end of this year. While it is my belief that we need more School Social Workers in order to truly meet the needs of our almost 30,000 students, I know that this is not a possibility as we are faced with closing such a tremendous budget gap. However, I do plead with you to keep ALL of the School Social Workers we currently have so that we can continue to provide services to all students, teachers, schools, families, and the community. Superintendent Dade’s original recommendation to eliminate 32 School Social Workers (26% of our Department) will not allow our District to comply with the provision of mandated IEP counseling services. There are not enough hours in a school day for the remaining work force to adhere to the compliance requirements. This recommendation will also virtually eliminate School Social Worker’s ability to provide a continuum of interventions for general education students, their families, and the school. I am so thankful for the School Social Work jobs that have already been reinstated in the amended budget proposal but I truly think that it is vital to eliminate any cuts to the staff that promote the social and emotional health of our students. Without this vital support, many of</p>
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			<p>our students are unable to engage in academic learning. Please support the reinstatement of School Social Workers to our budget.</p> <p>Thank you for all you do for our RCSD students and their families.</p> <p>Respectfully,</p>
Katherine Paradis	Staff		<p>Dear Board Members,</p> <p>School 57 is one of the 5 schools in RCSD that is in good standing. Most of our staff are senior staff and have also been with the school for over 25 years. Our school is successful because it is a small and tightly knit “Community of Learners.”</p> <p>Last Friday we had a Zoom meeting with Mr. Van White. The participants of this meeting included multi-generational families that have attended School 57! We also had student attendees that are current students, and our former families and students also came to support us. Some of those students attended School 57 25 years ago! Most of our wonderful senior staff at School 57 have contact with students we have taught in the past. These former students have grown up to be fine men and women. Some are engineers, teachers, and other wonderful professionals. They are proud and value the solid foundation that our Early Childhood School has provided for them. One of my former students has substitute taught in our school and in my classroom! Just year I attended a high school commencement where one of my former Pre-K students gave the commencement speech as his high school's valedictorian! This wonderfully talented young man is now attending Boston University on full scholarship! We as teachers and staff are so proud of our students current and former! We have attended their birthday parties, quinceanera's, graduations, sports events, and weddings. We are proud of each and every one of those students! We love our families and community want to continue our legacy of love at School 57!</p> <p>Mr. Van White has repeatedly stated that closing School 57 is a compromise. How is that so when the majority of the cuts that have been made are elementary</p>

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			<p>staff and schools? We feel that this is not a viable solution nor one that makes any sense! Why would our district close a school with such a legacy to the Rochester Community? One that is in good standing and one that can be grant funded and not a drain on the precious resources in our district?</p> <p>Where would you send your youngster in the fall, if not to a thriving, nurturing, successful community school like School 57?</p>
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