

# ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Business Meeting  
March 26, 2015

**Attendance:** President White, Vice President Elliott and Adams, Campos, Cruz, Evans, and Powell; Student Representative Unique Fair-Smith; Superintendent Dr. Bolgen Vargas; Board Clerk Shanai Lee.

President White convened the meeting at 6:50 p.m.

- I. President White selected a student from the audience to lead the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.
- II. **Motion to accept minutes** of the February 26<sup>th</sup> Business Meeting, March 3<sup>rd</sup> Special Meeting, March 12<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting, and March 23<sup>rd</sup> Special Meeting made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Evans absent.
- III. **Student Recognition:** The Board recognized our Early Childhood School of Rochester, No. 57 for their recent accomplishments around increasing attendance. Principal Roshon Bradley and his staff proudly tout the school's realized gains in attendance. For the month of February, the school had an overall 90% attendance rate, which was 2% higher than the District's average. Also, in the first week of March the school's attendance rate was at 94% and during the second week of March the school had a 93% overall attendance rate. The school was ranked #1 from all of the 13 schools that were targeted for improved attendance rates. The school has a number of initiatives in place such as weekly pizza parties and bike and helmet giveaways to students with perfect attendance.
- IV. **Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item:** Staff member Elizabeth Grimes spoke about the need to keep Charlotte High School open, noting the strength of the school community and the academic progress her son has made since attending the school.
- V. **Speakers on other that Agenda Items:** Staff member Principal Mary Andrecolich-Diaz recognized a teacher from her school, Julie Zelazny, who was named Middle School Teacher of the Year by the Central Western Zone. She noted that Ms. Jelazny has served in the District for 26 years as a Physical Education teacher and is very passionate about her profession and has made significant contributions to the department particularly in the area of curriculum. Staff member Chris Widmaier presented the Board with a resolution on behalf of the Rochester Teachers Association to declare the Association's opposition to the use of state- or federal-mandated standardized tests for the purposes of making grade promotion, graduation or other high stakes decisions regarding students or teachers. Staff member Kathleen Foster spoke in opposition to the proposed elimination of the Director of Assessment and Related Services position noting the contributions of the Director in meeting the needs of students and families.
- VI. **Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Vargas requested that Dr. Christiana Otuwa deliver a presentation on the District's efforts to address student behavior and discipline issues. Dr. Otuwa spoke about the need to formalize best practices to ensure that they are applied consistently and cohesively throughout

the District. She also discussed the efforts of the community partners that have been engaged on the Community Task Force on School Climate to help the District support and reinforce positive student behavior. In the presentation she highlighted the work of the Discipline Subcommittee in convening focus groups of parents, students, and community members. Dr. Otuwa outlined how the District is using data in the suspension monitoring process. She also stated that a Student Behavior Resource Manual has been developed to provide guidelines, requirements and resources that support student conduct and learning. Dr. Otuwa concluded her presentation in noting that the District will improve implementation of standards for student behavior and conduct, address the “whole child” socially and academically, collaborate with the Community Task Force on School Climate, and conduct an online behavior referral pilot.

## VII. Board Reports

***Student Leadership Congress, Board Representative Unique Fair-Smith:*** The Council met on Wednesday, March 25<sup>th</sup> to discuss the development of forums calling for student input on issues related to student safety, particularly at the RGRTA Transit Center; teen pregnancy prevention; and the need for textbooks and other resources for students. Representative Fair-Smith also acknowledged recipients of the Board’s Susan B. Anthony award.

***Audit Committee, Chair Mary Adams:*** The Audit Committee met on March 3<sup>rd</sup> for an update on the work performed by the Office of Auditor General. The Auditor General provided an update on management’s actions performed in response to the Student Behavior and Suspension audit report. The Committee expressed the urgency for the District to work diligently to address the various recommendations in the Student Behavior and Suspension Report and not wait on the Community Task Force to complete their work. This will be formalized in writing from the Committee to the Superintendent. The Committee approved the meeting dates for the 2015 calendar year. The Auditor General and the Committee discussed the External Education Follow Up Review, the Charter School Tuition Audit, the Charlotte Student Activity Funds Audit and the Special Education Audit. The reports will be in Board Docs for the April business meeting for Board Member review. The Board will be asked to accept the reports for posting during the April Business Meeting.

***Finance Committee, Chair Jose Cruz:*** The Finance Committee met on Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> to consider Resolution Nos. 2014-15: 543 through 561. Members of the Finance Committee recommend approval of the February 2015 Financial Report. Commissioner Cruz made a motion to accept the February 2015 Financial Report, seconded by Commissioner Evans. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent. The following resolutions were reviewed by the Finance Committee, and are advanced to the Board with recommendation: Resolution 543 for Non-Resident Tuition Rates; Resolutions 544 through 547 for Procurement; Resolutions 548 through 559 for Educational Facilities; and Resolutions 560 and 561 for Other. The next regular Finance Committee meeting will be held on Thursday, April 16th at 5:30 p.m.

The 1<sup>st</sup> Budget Deliberation Session will be held on Tuesday, April 7<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m. and the 1<sup>st</sup> Public Budget Hearing will be held on Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m.

***Excellence in Student Achievement Committee, Chair Malik Evans:*** The Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, March 17, 2015. The Committee received presentations from the Youth Council on Instructional Improvement (YCI), Making a Connection

(MAC) program, Update on Graduation Rate/Trend for class of 2016, and Rochester Early Childhood Assessment Partnership (RECAP). The next ESAC meeting will be on Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee, Chair Cynthia Elliott:** The Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup>, and focused on a number of issues and initiatives:

- An update on the status of federal legislation related to education - Katie Condello, Community Services Liaison to Congresswoman Slaughter, discussed a number of important bills currently in Congress:
  1. The “All Children Are Equal” Act, sponsored by Congresswoman Slaughter, would change the Title I formula to give priority for funding school districts with a high percentage of students in poverty. It is estimated that RCSD would receive an additional \$10M over the next three years, if this Act is approved.

Unfortunately, the current outlook for approval of the “All Children Are Equal” Act is not good. But the members of the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee plan to craft a letter of support for this bill to send to local members of Congress.

- 2. Re-authorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) - Ms. Condello reported that there are quite a few bills in Congress to re-authorize ESEA, but they are stalled because of political gridlock. She stated that the most likely scenario would be for Congress to simply extend ESEA sometime later this year.

The Committee also received an update on the status of initiatives to improve safety downtown, particularly at the Transit Center. A number of actions have been taken:

- Students have been given lanyards to display their bus passes visibly, and RTS bus drivers are asking students to do so.
- RCSD staff in the Transportation Department have been collaborating with RTS security personnel to identify students who have been causing trouble, and RCSD Safety & Security staff have been present at the Transit Center on a regular basis as a deterrent – particularly during the critical morning and after-school hours.
- RCSD Transportation staff have also been working with RTS to re-route more students away from the downtown corridor.

Additional efforts need to be made to ensure that School Safety Officers (SSOs) are stationed downtown once or twice per month on an ongoing basis. This was recommended by Rochester Police Chief Ciminelli in the February CIGR meeting as crucial in assisting police officers and RTS security personnel in “puncturing anonymity” so that students would be much less inclined to become involved in disturbances.

There was also discussion of conducting an assessment at the end of this school year to determine the effectiveness of enhanced security measures, particularly in having SSOs partner with RPD and RTS.

Lastly, the members of the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee presented a number of suggestions for goals for this year. One of the goals that has been identified is to develop a communications plan to provide a mechanism for the Board to discuss issues with the community.

Along these lines, it was also suggested that the Board make greater use of social media and RCTV to reach more parents. Committee members will continue to consider goals for 2015 in upcoming meetings. The next CIGR meeting is Tuesday, April 14<sup>th</sup>, at 6:00 p.m.

**Policy Committee, Chair Willa Powell:** On Tuesday, March 17<sup>th</sup> the Policy Committee met and received presentations on deliverables and reviewed policy changes and updates.

Policy deliverables for Policy 4314.3 Service Learning and Policy 4325 Compensatory Education were received from the Administration. The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup>.

**Board Governance Committee, Chair Melisza Campos:** The Board Governance Committee met on March 19<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Board's governing Bylaws Policy. The existing bylaws, Board Bylaws Policy No. 2300, were amended in July 28, 2011 pursuant to Resolution No. 2011-12: 102. The Board expressed an interest in revisiting this policy in effort to better align our governance structure and strategies. At the February meeting, the Committee reviewed and discussed the current Bylaws Policy in comparison to those of school boards throughout New York to identify areas of opportunity. At this month's meeting, the Committee continued discussion of the Bylaws, and reviewed a proposed revision of the policy. Though the organizational structure and workings of the Board have not changed, the proposed revision to the policy clearly defines the responsibilities, work and expectations of the Board. The full Board received the draft policy revision. The Committee is asking that the Board carefully review the draft and submit suggested edits to Commissioner Campos by Friday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. The Committee will continue discussion of the policy at our April meeting, in hopes of proposing revisions to the Policy Committee (or full Board) in May.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday, April 16<sup>th</sup> following the Finance and Policy Committee meetings.

## **Resolutions**

**2014-15: 516:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**2014-15: 517-518:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**2014-15: 520:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**2014-15: 523-528:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**2014-15: 530:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**The following resolutions were withdrawn: Resolution No. 2014-15: 519, 521, 522, 529, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, and 560.**

**2014-15: 538-542:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Adams. Adopted 5-1 with Commissioner Powell absent and Vice President Elliott dissenting.

**2014-15: 543:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**2014-15: 544-559:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**2014-15: 561:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**2014-15: 562:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Adams. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 4-0 with Commissioner Powell absent, Vice President Elliott abstaining due to professional relationship, and Commissioner Campos abstaining due to familial relationship.

**2014-15: 563-565:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Adams. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**Motion to amend Resolution No. 2014-15: 566 to remove a recess day, September 4, 2015, from the Rochester City School District's 2015-16 School Calendar made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Adams. Motion fails 1-5 with Commissioner Powell absent and President White, Commissioner Adams, Commissioner Campos, Commissioner Cruz, and Commissioner Evans dissenting.**

**2014-15: 566-569:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Adams. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**VIII. Unfinished Business:** None.

**IX. New Business:** In Commissioner Powell's absence, President White presented the Student Records and Privacy Policy, No. 5500 and District Policy Prohibiting Discrimination or Harassment of Students of Employees, No. 0100 to the full Board as discussion items.

**X. Motion to enter into executive session** to discuss matters related to the employment of a specific individual made by Commissioner Cruz at 9:00 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

Motion to enter into open session made by Commissioner Evans at 9:10 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Cruz. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.

**XI. Motion to adjourn** was made by Commissioner Campos, seconded by Commissioner Adams at 9:10 p.m. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Powell absent.