

# ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

## Business Meeting

October 22, 2015

**Attendance:** President White and Vice President Elliott, Commissioners Adams, Campos, Cruz, Evans and Powell; Superintendent Bolgen Vargas; EPO Representatives Lorna Washington and Patrick Irving; Board Clerk Shanai Lee.

President White convened the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

- I. The Pledge of Allegiance to the flag was led by a young audience member.
- II. **Acceptance of Minutes:** Motion to accept the minutes of the September 24<sup>th</sup> Business Meeting, September 29<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting, October 6<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting and October 13<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting was made by Commissioner Cruz and seconded by Commissioner Adams. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Evans absent.
- III. **Recognition:** None. The Rochester Board of Education celebrated Hispanic Heritage Month prior to the start of the Business Meeting by honoring outstanding Hispanic students in the District who have maintained a GPA of 4.0 or higher over the last year. Awards were also given also for academic excellence, leadership, volunteer, and community service.
- IV. **Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item:** No speakers were present.
- V. **Speakers Not Addressing an Agenda Item:** Parent Shannon Brooks spoke about issues related to the use of portables for classroom instruction. Parents Jessenia Aponte, Rita Veltre, and Latia Walker spoke about the learning environment and conditions of special education classrooms at Virgil I. Grissom, School No. 7. Parent Heather Fiore spoke about the physical condition of the building and need for capital improvements for Dr. Walter Cooper Academy, School No. 10. Staff member Brady Ferguson spoke about the use of energy throughout the District's facilities and the need to employ sustainable energy solutions. Community member Deborah T. Smith spoke about the behaviors and learning environment of Virgil I. Grissom, School No. 7. Community member Cuevas Walker spoke about the need for more resources to address school safety and student violence throughout the District. Staff members Mary Dupont, Roberta Gammons, Jayne Morgan, Laura Hart, Linda Berky, Maria Padula, and Allison Petrone spoke about the learning environment and conditions of special education classrooms at Virgil I. Grissom, School No. 7. Staff member Gloria Johnson-Hovey spoke about the need for safe learning environments for all students throughout the District. Staff member Jennifer Bauch spoke about issues of safety and security in the girls' locker room at the Edison High School campus. Staff member Chris Valenti spoke about school climate issues at Roberto Clemente, School No. 8. Staff

member Josh Mack spoke about the need for enhanced bilingual education services. Staff member Marci Marx spoke about learning environment of the Edison High School campus.

**VI. Superintendent's Report (East High School EPO):** Lorna Washington and Patrick Irving of the East High School EPO provided an overview of school climate issues and student athletics. In discussing school climate issues, Lorna Washington presented year over year comparison data on student behaviors and disciplinary actions for Upper School (Grades 9-12) and Lower School (Grades 6-8) students. Ms. Washington noted through the school has realized a significant decrease in disciplinary incidents and referrals, the Administration is working diligently to address the overall climate of the school's campus. She stated that the school's leadership team's focus on academics is strengthened in small group formats where students are engaged to enhance academic confidence and address the socioemotional development of students. The school has created a class for selected 8<sup>th</sup> graders that have exhibited continued difficulty and engaged the Center for Youth to provide socioemotional supports.

Patrick Irving spoke about East's athletic programming. Mr. Irving mentioned that East currently has 276 scholar-athletes this fall. He also noted that the school now offers 45 different teams for students, including boys modified volleyball and junior varsity lacrosse. Mr. Irving highlighted the community service projects of student-athletes which involves students serving as guest speakers at District elementary schools and participating neighborhood clean-up efforts. He concluded the presentation with discussion of the academic supports offered to student-athletes to ensure overall success.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Vargas provided the Board with an update of activities and occurrences related to the school receivership reform. He provided deadlines for upcoming accountability reports due to the New York State Education Department and basic facts about the new reform noting that the NYSED dictates that "persistently struggling" schools must show improvement in one year or face being taken over by an outside receiver and "struggling" schools have two years to show improvement before outside receivership is applied. Dr. Vargas also mentioned the District's progress in improving attendance for targeted schools. Dr. Vargas noted that elementary chronic absences were reduced by 1,105 students. He concluded the presentation by recognizing the community-wide efforts in place to reduce chronic absenteeism throughout the District.

Commissioner Evans arrived at 8:28 p.m.

**VII. Board Reports:  
Audit Committee**

**Chair Mary Adams:** The Audit Committee met on Tuesday October 6<sup>th</sup>. The Committee discussed high level concerns regarding the Board's responsibility for receivership schools and how that may impact the Board's oversight in those buildings. The Auditor General provided a status update on the various projects being performed by the Office of Auditor General, including East High School support, a new Preschool Special Education Audit by Monroe County, Cash Management at schools and programs and a Student Placement Audit. The Committee also discussed the key areas of concern identified in the Office of Parent Engagement Report and requested that the Office of Auditor General obtain regular updates, quarterly, if feasible to ensure that improvements are made to facilitate effective parent engagement. The Committee also briefly reviewed the Procurement Card Follow up Audit.

Commissioner Adams made a motion to accept the Office of Parent Engagement Report & Procurement Card Follow-up Report, the motion was seconded by Commissioner Evans. The report was accepted 7-0, and will be posted on the District's website.

### **Finance Committee**

**Chair Jose Cruz:** The Finance Committee met on Thursday, October 15<sup>th</sup> to consider Resolution Nos. 2015-16: 297 through 300. Members of the Finance Committee recommend approval of the September 2015 Financial Report, 2014-15 Annual Student Activity Funds Report, and July through September 2015 Quarterly Change Order Report. The following resolutions were reviewed by the Finance Committee, and are advanced to the Board with recommendation: Resolutions 297 through 299 for Procurement & Supply; and Resolution 300 for Educational Facilities.

An additional resolution was presented in the Finance Committee meeting to extend the contract with Excelsior Advocates, LLC to represent the District's interests to the New York State legislature from January 1, 2016 through June 30, 2016. This resolution is also advanced in this evening's meeting with recommendation. Motion to accept the monthly reports made by Commissioner Cruz and seconded by Commissioner Powell. Motion carries 7-0. The next Finance Committee meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> following the Board Governance and Policy Committee meetings.

### **Excellence in Student Achievement Committee**

**Chair Malik Evans:** This month's Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting was held on Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup>, and included several presentations. Keith Babuszczyk provided an overview of the CTE application for Rochester Early College High School to establish an Entrepreneurship Studies program. This program will enable students to be dually enrolled at MCC and obtain enough college credits to be halfway toward earning an Associates' degree by the time they graduate from high school. In addition, students completing the Entrepreneurship Studies program would obtain a diploma with technical endorsement and advanced standing, the highest level issued by New York State.

However, ESA Committee members had some concerns about the number and percentage of students at Rochester Early College High School enrolled in this CTE program. The concerns center on the clarity of the school's mission as an early college high school rather than a technical school, and the large number/percentage of students in this school enrolled in a CTE pathway. Additional data was requested to review CTE enrollment trends at Rochester Early College High School to verify students' selection of the Entrepreneurship Studies program and pathway. For this reason, the resolution regarding the CTE application for Rochester Early College High School (Resolution No. 2015-16: 302) has been advanced for your consideration this evening without objection by members of the ESA Committee.

Board staff liaison to the ESA Committee, Debra Flanagan, gave a presentation regarding the targets that must be met by each RCSD priority school to make annual progress and to be removed from priority status. Ms. Flanagan noted that the current 7-12 structure of many of our secondary schools makes it much more difficult to attain annual progress or to be removed from priority status because these schools are required to meet targets at the elementary and secondary levels. In addition, 7-12

schools have to meet minimum standards on a greater number of progress indicators to avoid external receivership than do traditional 9-12 high schools.

Based on Ms. Flanagan's analysis, several RCSD schools appear to have the potential to be removed from priority status: School No. 34 and School No. 44. This cannot be determined for certain until the additional 2014-15 data has been released by the State. In general, RCSD priority schools have had the greatest challenge in meeting the targets set for NYS standardized ELA and Math assessments.

Dr. Otuwa provided a presentation regarding the improvements planned over the next year to assist each RCSD priority school to reach their specific targets. ESA Committee members did not have sufficient time to review this presentation in advance of the meeting, so I have requested that the review be conducted and questions be submitted before the next meeting. The responses will be discussed in the next ESA Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee (CIGR)**

**Chair Cynthia Elliott:** The Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee met on Tuesday, October 13<sup>th</sup> to discuss the new Code of Conduct and transforming school climate work. Ms. Rosemary Rivera, a member of the Community Task Force and Organizing Director of the Citizen Action of New York, presented on the work, accomplishments and challenges of the Community Task Force in regards to the school climate work. The Community Task Force is currently involved in the engagement process with the unions gaining feedback on the supports needed to transform school climate. Dr. Christiana Otuwa, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, highlighted the current work occurring prior to the new Code of Conduct including the 15 schools utilizing restorative practices and a decrease in the number of suspensions compared to last year. Ms. Adele Bovard, Deputy Superintendent of Administration, describe the Safety Summit among RPD, school safety officers, and administration, and the need for more professional development and training for the safety team. The Board is still encouraged to think and provide items for the upcoming legislative agenda. On Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup>, there will be a Receivership Forum hosted by me to inform parents, families, community members, local officials, and district staff.

### **Policy Committee**

**Chair Willa Powell:** The Policy Committee met on October 15<sup>th</sup>. The Administration submitted and delivered presentations on the following policy deliverables:

- Policy 4314.2 School-to-Work Transition Initiative Policy— Keith Babuszcak, Chief of School Innovation for Career Pathways and Integrated Learning, described the goals and vision of Career and Technical Education in the District as tying rigorous academics to real work pathways. He described how he is in the schools with Adele Bovard, Deputy Superintendent of

Administration, working alongside partners, teachers, and principals, and seeking to expand career pathways into other schools. One area of the policy he suggested for changes are the metrics in order to create a shared understanding among the district, community, parents, students, and postsecondary and industry partners.

- Policy 5404 Wellness Policy – Carlos Cotto, Executive Director of Health, Physical Education & Athletics, highlighted what is occurring now in the District in regards to health and wellness: currently conducting walkthroughs, high focus on elementary health and recess, working with schools on action plans, working with principals on common planning, and professional development for principals and teachers. He also described the breakfast in classroom initiative at Schools #7 and #33, and the Policy Committee requested knowing more about why this has not become a District-wide initiative.

The Policy Committee has received a status report from Dr. Donna Harris, the Consultant Research Analyst for Latino Affairs and Bilingual Education. She will be presenting at the November Policy Committee meeting.

The Policy Committee also requested data on student enrollment and placement. Next meeting, Barbara Goldammer will present on the data and how it will inform the School Choice Booklets. Our meeting date may change and occur on Thursday, November 5<sup>th</sup>, a week earlier than our originally scheduled meeting, in order for the committee to review the draft of the School Choice Booklets before its final print date. The date and time will be confirmed soon.

### **Board Governance Committee**

**Chair Melisza Campos:** The Board Governance Committee met on October 15<sup>th</sup> to discuss the Board's governing by-laws, Policy No. 2300, and development activities for the coming year. In discussing the Policy, the Committee recommended changes to the policy to include an additional section that addresses professional development and training, titled "Standards for Development and Informed Decision Making." The Committee recommends that the proposed change be forwarded to the Policy Committee for further vetting. The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Thursday, November 12<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 p.m., at this meeting the Committee will begin to discuss the orientation and on-boarding of newly elected Board members.

### **Parent Advisory Council**

**Parent Representatives Makita Saloane and Ericka Simmons:** Makita Saloane introduced Ericka Simmons as the new president of the District's Parent Advisory Council. The representatives spoke about current initiatives and future endeavors of the Council. They noted that PAC has been busy over the past several months. Since June The Chair and the Vice-Chair have been very involved in grant writing for Title I, as well as overview and signing of Title I, II & III. PAC has also worked very closely with several members of the district in regards to the NYS Receivership. Ms. Saloane noted that the Council's leadership team attended almost every Receivership public hearings, which parents as well as staff informed us that their school did not have a functioning parent group or parents on the School

Based Planning Team. This information was confirmed in separate conversations with school staff. This fueled PAC's desire to work with the Receivership schools to assure each Community Engagement Team (CET) included parents is a requirement. In addition to receivership, the representatives discussed a recent partnering with the Bilingual Council and expressed some of the on-going concerns of parents throughout the District.

## **VIII. Resolutions**

**2015-16: 256:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

No resolutions submitted for Resolution Nos. 2015-16: 257, 258, 260, 261, 266, 268, 269, and 186.

**2015-16: 259:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 262-265:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 267:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 270:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 271-275:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 277:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting.

**2015-16: 278-282:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 289-290:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

No resolutions submitted for Resolution Nos. 2015-16: 273, 274, 276, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, and 291.

**2015-16: 292-295:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting.

**2015-16: 296:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5-1 with Commissioner Evans abstaining due to familial relationship and Vice President Elliott dissenting.

**2015-16: 297-299:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 300:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 301:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Evans abstaining due to professional relationship.

**2015-16: 302:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

Motion to postpone the consideration of **Resolution No. 2015-16: 303** and refer the resolution to the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee for further review made by Commissioner Evans, seconded by Commissioner Adams. Motion carries 7-0.

**2015-16: 304-305:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Adams dissenting.

**2015-16: 306:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

Motion to postpone the consideration of **Resolution No. 2015-16: 307** and refer the resolution to the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee for further review made by Commissioner Adams, seconded by Commissioner Powell. Motion carries 7-0.

Motion to postpone the consideration of **Resolution No. 2015-16: 308** and refer the resolution to the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee for further review made by Commissioner Adams, seconded by Commissioner Powell. Motion carries 7-0.

Motion to postpone the consideration of **Resolution No. 2015-16: 309** and refer the resolution to the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee for further review made by Commissioner Campos, seconded by Vice President Elliott. Motion carries 7-0.

**2015-16: 310:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Cruz. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

**2015-16: 200b:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting.

**IX. Unfinished Business:** None.

**X. New Business:** None.

**Motion to enter into executive session to discuss matters related to the employment of specific individuals** made by Vice President Elliott at 9:53 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Cruz. Motion carries 7-0.

**Motion to enter into open session** made by Commissioner Powell at 11:00 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Motion carries 7-0.

**Motion to adjourn** was made by Commissioner Evans, seconded by Commissioner Powell at 11:00 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Motion carries 7-0.