

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Business Meeting**  
**November 19, 2015**

**Attendance:** President White and Vice President Elliott, Commissioners Adams, Campos, Evans, and Powell; Superintendent Bolgen Vargas; EPO Superintendent Shaun Nelms; 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 October 22<sup>nd</sup> Business Meeting and October 27<sup>th</sup> Special Meeting. Adopted 5-0 with Commissioner Cruz and Commissioner Evans absent.
- III. **Recognition:** The Rochester Board of Education recognized sixth grade student Donald Smith with the “I Believe” award for his outstanding scholarship, leadership, and service to fellow students at Theodore Roosevelt School No. 43. Donald has attended Theodore Roosevelt School No. 43 since he began kindergarten. He has served as a role model and mentor for his peers and for younger students over the years. Donald enjoys playing the trumpet and is an active musician at the Eastman School of Music, with five solo performances to his credit. He believes that practice, technique, dedication and discipline are necessary to excel in music and in school. Donald plans to attend the Rochester Institute of Technology and then pursue a masters’ degree in music at the Eastman School. He aspires to play with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra or the Boston Symphony one day.

Donald described his fourth-grade teacher, Mrs. Michele Johnstone, as being an inspiration to him, by making learning fun while also pushing him to do better. Mrs. Johnstone encouraged him to read at a more advanced level and to perform high-level work. For her role in affirming Donald’s abilities and fostering his love of learning, Mrs. Johnstone will also be presented with the “I Believe” award.

- IV. **Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item:** No speakers were present.
- V. **Speakers Not Addressing an Agenda Item:** Student Joshua Wood spoke about the learning environment of the Edison High School campus. Students Thomas Aponte and Jessalyn Aponte spoke about the value that Administrator Robyn Roberts brought to the learning environment and school community of School No. 7. Parents Keli Edwards and Jessenia Aponte spoke about the value that Administrator Robyn Roberts brought to the learning environment and school community of School No. 7. Community members Elizabeth Maltese, Michael Herman, and Iasha Grant spoke about the value that Administrator Robyn Roberts brought to the learning environment and school community of School No. 7. Staff members Jeff Feinberg, Lianne Dupree, Margaret Sergent, Paula Linza, Ruth Card, Josh Mack, Cassuandra Walsh and Nicole Fraser expressed concerns about the administration of Special Education programming throughout the District noting that some students are being denied proper

supports and services. Staff members Tamalyn Pritchard, Gail Rizzo, Rick Amico, Michael Tobin, Cannon Doyle, Amiee Rinerre, Emma Walker, Emily Crowley, Deborah Hamza, Richard Corke, and Andrea Ebner spoke about safety and security concerns on the Edison High School campus. Staff members Tina Diaz, Roberta Gammons, Maria Hambas, and Maria Padula spoke about the value that Administrator Robyn Roberts brought to the learning environment and school community of School No. 7.

**VI. Superintendent's Report (East High School EPO):** EPO Superintendent Shaun Nelms provided an overview of the recruitment efforts underway to promote the enhanced programming and offerings of East High School. In discussing the efforts he noted that the school's leadership team has met with principals of feeder schools and conducted parent information sessions to begin recruitment efforts. In celebrating recent accomplishments of the school, Dr. Nelms mentioned that five of the school's students have been recognized by RGRTA with the Good Behavior Reward for exemplifying commendable behavior. Additionally, it was stated that 57 more student athletes qualified for winter sports than the previous year. Dr. Nelms noted that in addition to the accolades that the school has received he and the leadership team are working to promote post-high school opportunities for students of East. He indicated that the school has currently implemented a College Prep Center that is designed to assist students with college application processes, engaged the Center for Youth to assist with securing employment options, and utilized the University of Rochester Transition Center to provide college and career counseling and community service options for Students with Disabilities. Dr. Nelms mentioned that an event was recently had to celebrate the top scholars of the Class of 2016, five of which are expected to graduate early. He concluded the presentation with an update of the school's attendance and student behavior data.

**Superintendent's Report:** Dr. Vargas provided the Board with a recap of the 2015 Summer Learning opportunities offered throughout the District. He stated that more than 40 District and partner-run programs provided learning opportunities to 12,500 students during July and August. Dr. Vargas provided program highlights related to attendance, achievement and the ability to serve the Districts Special Education and English Language Learner student populations. As a result of the efforts, the District received the national 2015 New York Life Excellence in Summer Learning Award for the Rochester Summer Scholars program.

Commissioner Evans arrived at 8:27 p.m.

**VII. Board Reports:**

**Audit Committee**

*Chair Mary Adams:* No report.

**Finance Committee**

*Chair Jose Cruz:* No report submitted in Commissioner Cruz absence.

## **Excellence in Student Achievement Committee**

**Chair Malik Evans:** The Excellence in Student Achievement Committee conducted a Meeting of the Whole on Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup>, to discuss plans for improving priority schools, obtain an update regarding the Rochester Preschool Parent program, and review a number of resolutions. In terms of improvements to priority schools, Committee members emphasized the importance of addressing school climate issues to provide an environment conducive to learning. Concerns were raised about a lack of control and management in some schools, which compromises the sense of safety and structure that students and staff need as a foundation for education.

Executive Director of Early Childhood Education, Robin Hooper, provided an update regarding the Rochester Preschool Parent program, noting that the number of parent contacts recorded this year is far below that of last year. Committee members expressed concern about this trend indicating a potential decline in the level of parent engagement in the program, and data for prior years was requested to obtain a more comprehensive perspective. Ms. Hooper described preparations that have been made to integrate the Rochester Preschool Parent Program into the school structure, particularly in providing professional development to school principals and staff (e.g. evaluating and supervising RPPP teachers). Committee members also discussed attendance standards at the PreK level and the importance of striking a balance between establishing expectations early in the child's school experience, and respecting family needs and decisions regarding their young children. The Committee plans to revisit this issue, and has requested that Ms. Hooper develop recommendations for PreK attendance standards to present in an upcoming meeting. The Committee also reviewed a resolution for proposed agreements with community-based providers to expand the PreK program to three-year-old children (Resolution No. 2015-16: 357). Ms. Hooper explained that the grant supporting this program expansion is targeted for three year-old children who are eligible for free or reduced-price lunch, English-Language learners, or qualify for Special Education. She estimates that approximately 85-90% of three-year-old children in the City of Rochester will meet these eligibility requirements. Placement will be based on parent preference among schools and providers, and a lottery will be conducted if there are more applicants than seats available.

Committee members raised several concerns about the PreK program expansion:

- Geographically, the majority of young children in the District live in different areas than the school sites housing the PreK program. This is problematic because the District is not providing transportation and PreK students at the school are given preference for entry at the kindergarten level.
- The Student Placement Office must clarify the placement process for parents, and ensure that a clear distinction is made between a “guarantee” and a “preference” for placement. Children residing within 0.5 miles of a school are *guaranteed* placement in that school, while children enrolled in the PreK program are given *preference* (not a guarantee) for placement in the school at the kindergarten level.

Despite these concerns, the Committee members recognize and support PreK expansion to younger children due to the critical impact of early childhood education on future learning and achievement. This resolution (Resolution No. 2015-16: 357) has been advanced to the Board with recommendation. In the October 2015 Business meeting, the Board referred four resolutions to the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee for further review:

1. Agreement with McKay Consulting, LLC – provide targeted training for all building level leaders on the essential skills and understanding needed to improve the quality of teaching and learning across the District using the Framework for Teaching – Resolution No. 2015-16: 303
2. Agreement with PLC Associates, Inc. – provide *The School Performance Scan* and *The Student Voice* (electronic surveys) to students and staff in each school to establish baselines, SMART goals, monitor progress and create data dashboards – Resolution No. 2015-16: 307
3. Agreement with Daniel Roller (dba “Acris Consulting, LLC”) – provide support and assistance to the community and District to draft a new Code of Conduct – Resolution No. 2015-16: 308
4. Agreement with Janice Barclay (dba “BKL & Associates, LLC”) – provide professional coaching for School Chiefs, Principals, and Administrative leaders to develop common expectations for supervision and evaluation of principals – Resolution No. 2015-16: 309

Review of these resolutions engendered a great deal of discussion, and concerns were raised regarding the value of the proposed contracts for professional development. Committee members pointed out that the District has expended a great deal on outside consultants to provide professional development, with no apparent results. The other major concern centers on the capacity to provide training internally, rather than relying on outside consultants. For these reasons, Committee members have advanced these resolutions to the Board without recommendation.

Initially, the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee was to review a resolution for a proposed agreement with the City of Rochester for School Resource Officers (SROs) on behalf of the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee, which did not meet this month. However, the City was still in the process of vetting the contract, so this resolution has been withdrawn from the packet and is scheduled to be reviewed in the December CIGR Committee meeting.

The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled for Tuesday, December 8<sup>th</sup>, following the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee Meeting.

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

**Chair Cynthia Elliott:** The Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee hosted a community forum on Receivership on Saturday, November 14<sup>th</sup> at the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School No. 9. Parents, community members, community partners, board members, and RCSD employees were in attendance. Jennifer Pyle, Deputy Director of the Big 5 Districts Conference, provided an overview of the receivership legislation and regulation. The panelists – Commissioner Mary Adams, Deputy

Superintendent Dr. Christiana Otuwa, School No. 34 Instructional Coach Kelly Lampman, EPO Project Director Stephen Uebbing, Community Member Valarie Johnson, Parent Advisory Council President Ericka Simmons, School No. 9 Principal Sharon Jackson, and Monroe High School Principal Dr. Vicky Ramos – described their role in relationship to receivership and answered questions and concerns from the audience. Executive Director of School Innovation Michele Alberti presented on Community Engagement Teams and provided parents with ways to get involved with the Community Engagement Teams. This Forum was a success and provided the Board with a platform to inform parents and the community about changes occurring in the District.

Next month, the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee will be discussing school climate and the presence of the police officers in schools. We will also be discussing the upcoming legislative agenda and the Board is still encouraged to think and provide items for the upcoming legislative agenda. The next CIGR Meeting is scheduled for December 1<sup>st</sup> at 6:45 p.m. following the Audit Committee Meeting.

### **Policy Committee**

*Chair Willa Powell:* The Policy Committee met on October 5<sup>th</sup> and received a presentation on the school selection booklet and data from Barbara Goldammer, Executive Director of Student Equity and Placement. She described the process of constructing the school selection booklet including the use of a consistent format for each school building and parent input and feedback.

In addition, the Policy Committee provided suggestions for the school selection booklets including showing the probability for selection in Wilson’s International Baccalaureate Program and the World of Inquiry, School No. 58, clearly outlining the admission system of School of the Arts, adding how many families were successful in getting into their neighborhood school, and providing families with assessment data so they can make an informed decision.

During the December Policy Committee Meeting, we will receive reports on policy deliverables, a presentation from Dr. Donna Harris on the Latino Initiative, and discuss the by-laws.

### **Board Governance Committee**

*Chair Meliza Campos:* The Board Governance Committee met on November 12<sup>th</sup> to discuss the orientation and on-boarding of newly elected Board members. In discussing the process for on-boarding new commissioners, some of the steps that the Committee recommended to orient new board members to the District are as follows:

- Introduction of Cabinet members to receive a presentation of key initiatives and organizational chart
- Introduction to the Board’s advocacy organizations, such as New York State School Board Association, Monroe County School Boards Association, and the Conference of Big 5
- Review of School Liaison Assignments and Schedule School Visits
- Introduction of Board staff members and staff liaison for committees
- Review of pertinent policies

In lieu of the regularly scheduled December meeting, the Committee will host a Committee of the Whole meeting to discuss the Superintendent Search Process, this meeting is tentatively scheduled for Thursday, December 4<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m.

### **Parent Advisory Council**

*Parent Representatives Makita Saloane and Ericka Simmons:* No report.

### **President's Report**

*President Van Henri White:* President White spoke about the school climate and learning environment of Edison High School. He mentioned that the school was recently revamped to revive Career and Technical Education program offerings for the District's students. In addressing the safety and security concerns expressed by staff members, he stated that the District has taken the following steps to address the safety and security concerns on the Edison Campus:

- Assigned 3 additional SSO officers to the school's campus
- Assigned an additional administrator to help the leadership team focus on safety and security strategies
- The Superintendent's Leadership Team has met with CTE teachers to work on the plan for Career and Technical Education going forward with representatives from both State and National CTE centers on Monday during the day.
- Approximately 49 current Edison students have been offered dual enrollment in the District's Alternative Education Program.

President White added that the District is committed to restoring Edison to the school it once was, and with community partners and the school community the District is working to provide the rigorous academics and work-based learning that will prepare our students for success in college and career opportunities.

President White announced that students from School without Walls were selected to participate in a White House Summit on Next Generation High Schools last week. These students are part of a digital

Civil Rights class that is being held with Hillsborough County, Florida (Tampa). Students shared their vision through a video that was shown at the Summit. He noted that the Summit was attended by policy makers, at the request of the President, to begin to formulate a plan for high schools of tomorrow.

President White congratulated Vice President Elliott, on behalf of the Board, for her work in hosting a well-attended and informative community forum on school receivership at Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. School No. 9. The Receivership Forum served as a platform for members of the Administration and the Board to inform and educate the community on the new receivership legislation and regulation in the context of the Rochester City School District. The primary goal of the Receivership Forum was to engage parents and community stakeholders in discussion on the school receivership legislation and regulation, and the transformation plans for the RCSD's "persistently struggling" and "struggling"

schools. He stated that he looks forward to more opportunities to engage our community in discussions on issues that impact student learning.

President White mentioned that on Monday, November 16<sup>th</sup> and several Board members, met with the Parent Advisory Council to discuss and respond to some of the issues and concerns that impact our students and families. He noted that the conversation was informative and he looks forward to other opportunities to discuss opportunities and concerns with the District's parents.

President White congratulated City Councilman Adam McFadden and members of the District's staff for their efforts in organizing the recent UNCF Empower Me Tour visit in Rochester where nearly 1,000 students were provided with access to HBCUs from around the country. He added that this event is the type of community-wide support that the District needs to propel our students to academic success.

## **VIII. Resolutions**

**2015-16: 312:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 5-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting and Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 322-323:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 5-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting and Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 324:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 325:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 328:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 330:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

Motion to separate Resolution No. 2015-16: 331 into Resolution No. 2015-16: 331 and Resolution No. 2015-16: 331A made by Commissioner Adams, seconded by Commissioner Powell. Motion carries 6-0.

**2015-16: 331:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 331A:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 4-2 with Commissioner Adams and Commissioner Powell dissenting Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 332-336:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 338:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 344-345:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 346-350:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 5-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting and Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 351:** Motion to adopt was made by Vice President Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 352-353:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Powell. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 354-356:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 357:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Adopted 5-0 with Vice President Elliott abstaining due to professional relationship and Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 358-359:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 361:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 362:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Vice President Elliott. Adopted 4-2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Adams dissenting and Commissioner Cruz absent.

Motion to postpone Resolution No. 2015-16: 364 made by Commissioner Evans, seconded by Commissioner Powell. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.



**2015-16: 365-374:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 303:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 4-2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Adams dissenting and Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 307:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 5-1 with Vice President Elliott dissenting and Commissioner Cruz absent.

**2015-16: 308-309:** Motion to adopt was made by Commissioner Evans. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 4-2 with Vice President Elliott and Commissioner Adams dissenting and Commissioner Cruz absent.

**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 10:15 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**Motion to enter into open session** made by Commissioner Powell at 11:05 p.m. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.

**Motion to adjourn** was made by Commissioner Evans, seconded by Commissioner Powell at 11:10 p.m. Motion carries 6-0 with Commissioner Cruz absent.