

Rochester Board of Education
Business Meeting
October 18, 2007

Minutes

The Board celebrated its annual Hispanic Heritage Observance prior to the Business Meeting.

Attendance: President Garcia, Vice President Evans, Commissioners Brennan, Elliott, Powell, Thompson and White; Student Representative R. Washington, Interim Superintendent Dr. Cala, Board Clerk L. Dunsmoor.

President Garcia convened the meeting at 6:32 p.m. and asked for a moment of silence in honor of district employee Arlene Paige and Greece teacher Ryan Harris.

President Garcia introduced Student Representative Rosetta Washington, who he noted is a senior at Charlotte High School, where she has a 4.0 grade point average. She is also captain of the Girls Varsity Track Team, President of the National Honor Society, and President of the Student Government Association. She plans to attend the University of New Haven in Connecticut to study Juvenile Family Justice.

- I) Commissioner Elliott led the Act of Reverence and Pledge of Allegiance.
- II) Motion to approve minutes of September 25, 2007 by Commissioner White. Second by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0.
- III) Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item: None
- IV) Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cala discussed the summer graduation event held at SOTA for 122 students who earned diplomas. He attended a meeting with Police Chief Moore to discuss violence in the City and how the City and District can work together to protect all schools, and especially School #8. The Step Inside Rochester Schools public information campaign has begun and featured School Without Walls this week. The Edison Schools will be highlighted in December or January. There was a Senate hearing conducted recently to discuss the issues of dropouts and violence. Dr. Cala provided testimony. He echoed President Garcia's comments regarding Arlene Paige. Dr. Cala introduced Chief of Human Resources Joanne Giuffrida, who discussed the 2007-08 hiring and minority recruiting process. President Garcia said he was disappointed at the low number of persons of color who have been recruited and said a stronger effort must be made. Commissioner Powell noted that at 1 percent per year, it will be 100 years before there is a complete turnover of staff. She asked whether turnover is attributable more to attrition or staff downsizing to reflect decreased student population. Ms. Giuffrida said that and other information is to be provided to QA next month as follow-up. She also said the workforce is relatively stable. Commissioner Elliott said the presentation should have been put on the screen for the audience to view. She asked if it could be put on the website and Dr. Cala said yes. She asked about the percentage of African-American turnover to white turnover regarding issues of fairness in retention. Commissioner Thompson noted that the information was requested by QA and will be shared with entire Board. Commissioner Elliott asked about the types of jobs that are in RAP, BENTE and ASAR civil service. Ms. Giuffrida said ASAR civil service jobs are technical and accounting

positions typically requiring bachelors degrees. BENTE runs the gamut from food service to information technology. RAP positions represent staff working in schools with children under the direction of a teacher. Commissioner Elliott said that regarding parity in salaries, it appears that clerical staff is predominantly white females paid \$13, 14, \$23 an hour. Para-professional positions, with a predominantly black female population, pay \$9.33 cents an hour. Sentries, who are predominantly black males, are also low-paid positions. She questioned the parity of paying people who are on the line less than clerical staff and wants the issue investigated. Ms. Giuffrida said she would be talking to the Board, as the District is negotiating with RAP. Commissioner White expressed his appreciation to Commissioner Thompson for having the report first vetted at Quality Assurance on October 15. Commissioner Evans asked about success in recruiting African American male elementary teachers. Ms. Giuffrida said she would capture the data over the past two years and send the information to QA. Commissioner Elliott said the hiring of persons of color is not about window dressing but about having sensitivity to the pressures children in an urban environment face.

V) Board Standing Committee Reports

Finance: Chair Willa Powell noted that the Finance Committee met on Monday, October 15 to review the September 2007 Financial Reports and resolutions 254 through 280. The committee recommends approval. Motion to accept the financial reports by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0. The next Finance meeting is Tuesday, November 20 at 5:30pm.

Governance: Chair Cynthia Elliott said the Board Governance Committee met on October 10th to discuss Board Staff Evaluations. It will meet on Monday, October 22 to discuss: Evaluation of Board Staff, Board Work Session, Board Self-Evaluations, New Board Members Orientation, Board Retreat, Board Committee Reconfiguration, and the Superintendent Evaluation Process.

Policy: Chair Thomas Brennan said the Policy Committee met on Thursday, October 11 and discussed the possibility of increasing the legal dropout age from 16 to 17 years of age. The committee would like feedback from the Superintendent regarding increasing the dropout age. The committee would like the Parent Involvement and School Based Planning Policies to be reviewed A.S.A.P. All policies should be reviewed on an annual basis. The Committee would like the Administration to submit a timeline for the reviewing of all policies. The Policy Committee would like to amend the current Attendance policy to reduce the number of absences before a parent is contacted, to include excessive tardiness, to apply to all students in Grades 1-12 and to provide a make-up opportunity for students.

Community and Intergovernmental Relations: Chair Malik Evans said it is time to determine items for the Board's 2008 Legislative agenda. He will be asking commissioners to suggest ideas and items to be put forward through the agenda. He also discussed the Superintendent Forums scheduled for Oct. 29-Nov. 1 and urged people to attend.

Audit Committee: Chair Van Henri White said Audit met October 17 to review the relationship of the Claims Audit function to the Board. The Auditor General and Claims Audit staff will provide recommendations to the committee regarding protocols around this new direct reporting structure.

Quality Assurance: Chair Shirley Thompson said Quality Assurance met Monday, October 15 to preview the hiring report provided tonight by Ms. Giuffrida. She was asked to provide numbers as well as percentages in order to have a better picture of staffing. Upon review, QA members made it clear -- and Ms. Giuffrida agreed -- that the district needs to do a better job at recruiting minority staff members of color. The committee also believes this to be the will of the Board. The agenda on Monday had a

dozen reports on it. The information was provided Friday in a three-inch binder, and the committee agreed that, given the timing, the volume of the information was simply not comprehensible over one weekend. Although the committee members looked at the reports, and a variety of questions were provided to the administration on them, committee members did not believe they could intelligently discuss all of the reports that evening. They will be discussed further at a later date. The committee is working on is developing, with the administration, a list of items and reports that need to be reviewed by QA for a recommendation to the full Board. We are also working together to determine what type of information we want, and how it should be presented, and beyond that, how the entire Board might be kept abreast of non-actionable information received at the QA table. For some time I have shared with my colleagues and Drs. Rivera and Cala that the amount of material and the manner in which QA and the full Board receives it needs a careful review and major adjustment. I am awaiting recommendations from Dr. Cala and his Cabinet, and my QA colleagues and I are also discussing this issue. We did briefly review the District In Corrective Action Audit final report and Three-Year Action Plan, which was submitted to the State in June, 2006. It had been reported previously that QA would discuss these documents and that the Action Plan would be subject to Board approval prior to submission. Upon investigation, we learned that New York State does *not* require Board approval of these documents. Roberto Reyes of the State Education Department did comment that Districts would likely want Board endorsement in light of the large amount of local dollars required by the Action Plans. A 'draft' ELA Action Plan is in place; QA will continue to discuss this issue. QA's next meeting is Monday, November 19. Our agenda includes a review of Grades 3-8 test scores and the End of Year Accountability report for 2006-07. As always, everyone is welcome to join us at 6 p.m. in 3A.

VI) Consideration of Resolutions

2007-08: 234-253 -- Motion to approve by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Brennan. Commissioner White asked if the position in resolution 234 would be responsible for identifying best practices. Dr. Cala said that would be part of the job. Adopted 7-0 except for 234, 245 and 247, which were adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Elliott dissenting.

2007-08: 254-269 -- Motion to approve by Commissioner Thompson. Second by Commissioner Powell. Commissioner Elliott raised the issue of putting maximum amounts for contracts in resolutions. Adopted 7-0.

2007-08: 270-278 -- Motion to approve by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Elliott. Commissioner White asked that the Superintendent arrange a meeting or presentation regarding what the District is doing to increase the number of minority contractors and how a better job can be done. President Garcia said he would go a step further because this has been a topic of discussion year after year. The Board should establish a committee to review the hiring of minority contractors and contractors located in the City because tax money is being paid to people outside of the District. Commissioner Elliott concurred and specifically mentioned snowplowing discussed in the Finance Committee meeting. She wants to see more people of color participating. Commissioner Powell noted that Business Services specifically hired an individual to work on this effort and she is hopeful it will bear fruit. President Garcia said the board needs to understand the process and then put policies into place to guide it. Resolutions Adopted 7-0.

2007-08: 279a -- Motion by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Powell. Commissioners Elliott and White objected to the money being spent in the resolution. President Garcia said the funding is subject to reimbursement from NYS, but an evaluation is needed to ensure that the systems are properly installed and managed. Commissioner Powell pointed out the funding will allow an upgrade to

provide a hard monthly closing of the financial books and is a tremendous asset to Finance Committee. She did not defend PeopleSoft but said the District is tethered to it and it would cost millions more to get out of it. A stable platform must be achieved. Commissioner Evans said the intention originally was to bring the District into the 21st century and eliminate waste; it will eventually save money in the long run. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Elliott dissenting.

2007-08: 280-297 -- Motion by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Powell. Commissioner Thompson asked about the dollar amount required to terminate the lease for the loan being waived in Resolution 296. Director of Facilities Thomas Keysa said the figure is approximately \$880,000. Adopted 7-0 except for resolutions 280 and 297. Resolution 2007-08: 280 adopted 6-0 with Commissioner Elliott abstaining for professional reasons. Resolution 2007-08: 297 adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Elliott dissenting.

2007-08: 298 and 299A: Motion to adopt by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

2007-08: 300 -- Motion to adopt by Commissioner Brennan. Second by Commissioner Evans. Commissioner Powell asked why the resolution missed the deadline for the packet close-out and why the dollar amount is as high as it is. Dr. Cala said he could not answer why the resolution missed the deadline for inclusion in the original packet. Regarding Encompass, he said year one funding is \$900,000 and year two funding is \$900,000. Chief of Staff Kim Dyce-Faucette said the delay was caused by time needed to address concerns from the RTA regarding the program. Dr. Cala noted the program is offered through the Norman Howard School, which has had tremendous success in working with students with particular learning disabilities. Commissioner Elliott asked how many students are involved and why is it funded through the Department of Diversity and Leadership Development. Dr. Dyce-Faucette said the funding source was dictated by the organizational structure. Commissioner White said the resolution should have been vetted through QA. Dr. Cala said a process needs to be put in place for how resolutions are reviewed; he knows Commissioner Thompson is interested in this as well, but the process needs to be manageable. Commissioner Elliott said Board Governance is discussing having Board work sessions to supplement the monthly Business Meetings and is looking at re-configuring all of the Board committees. Adopted 5-2 with Commissioners Elliott and White dissenting.

VII) Unfinished Business

Commissioners discussed a proposed letter to BENTE regarding an improper practice suit. By consensus, the Board agreed to have President Garcia sign the letter.

VIII) New Business

Evaluation of the Superintendent -- Commissioner Elliott said Board Governance needs to begin looking at the instrument and process. President Garcia moved the item to Governance. Commissioner Powell asked for guidance regarding her vote at the NYSSBA conference. By consensus the Board agreed to have Commissioner Powell use her best judgment representing the Board.

IX) Speakers on other than Agenda Items: Ron Ring suggested the more curriculum focus on the study of world peace. Barbara Brody and Baraka Osmon discussed the importance of English as a Second Language, particularly for refugee students.

- X) Adjournment: Motion for executive session to discuss a personnel matter relating to a specific individual by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0 at 8:15 p.m. Motion to adjourn Executive Session by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner White. Adopted 7-0 at 8:46 p.m. Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner White. Adopted 7-0 at 8:47 p.m.