

**Rochester Board of Education
Monthly Business Meeting Minutes
January, 24, 2008**

Attendance:

President Evans, Vice President White, Commissioners Brennan, Campos, Elliott, Powell and Williams, Student Representative R. Washington. Superintendent Jean-Claude Brizard, Board Clerk Linda Dunsmoor.

President Evans convened the meeting at 6:30 p.m.

I) Act of Reverence

President Evans asked Miss Washington to lead the Pledge of Allegiance and asked for a moment of silence in memory of student Marcus Radford.

The Board of Education honored seven teachers who had recently achieved National Board Certification: Janet Bird, kindergarten, School No. 50; Doug Brown, mathematics, East High School; Stefan Cohen, social studies, School of the Arts; Joan Crosby, first grade, School No. 6; Jennifer Manley, mathematics, Wilson Foundation Academy; Nilza Matos, first grade, Dual Language Program, School No. 33; and Ali Ricci, third grade, World of Inquiry School.

II) Acceptance of Minutes

Motion by Commissioner Elliott to accept minutes of December 20, 2007; January 2, 2008; and January 7, 2008. Second by Vice President White. Referring to the Minutes of December 20, Commissioner Elliott asked that Superintendent Brizard look into scholarship opportunities for RCSD students at universities such as Harvard and the University of Pennsylvania; she also asked that he look into the misdiagnosis of African-American males in special education. Mr. Brizard said he would and said the special education audit to be completed by the end of March would be instructive.
Adopted 7-0.

III) Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item

Teacher Stefan Cohen discussed the rigors and rewards of the National Board Certification process, and thanked the Board, the Superintendent and the RTA.

IV) Superintendent's Report

Superintendent Jean-Claude Brizard reported that work on his entry plan is on track. Funding in the governor's budget is a little less than expected but still more than last year. He is looking into a number of safety situations and will shortly begin safety audits looking from top to bottom. He is also working on radically reducing the number of suspensions. The investigation into the recent incident at Wilson is ongoing and will wrap up soon. Due process must be followed but the district will not tolerate that kind of behavior. He then presented his "Graduation Readiness Status Report." (attached) Student Representative Washington said it sounded like a good plan. Superintendent Brizard clarified the data on slide four at the request of Commissioner Williams. Commissioner Powell noted that the presentation acknowledged that intervention after failure is only half of the solution; data can be used to tease out why students are not passing in the first place. Vice President White said the graduation rate is where important work needs to be done. It is priority one. Commissioner Elliott discussed an incident outside of Charlotte High School; said she was upset about the whole process of students being ticketed for jaywalking, and that she would meet with the Mayor and the Chief of Police herself regarding the police taking the wrong approach with students. There are enough students going through the court system without this. She also asked about the teacher involved in the incident at Wilson; Superintendent

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Brizard said the teacher has been relieved of duty pending the investigation. Commissioner Elliott also said it does not make sense for an individual high school to require more credits for a NYS diploma than the state does. She asked how many students have dropped out because they could not attain 26 or 27.5 credits. Superintendent Brizard said he does not have those numbers. In response to Commissioner Elliott, he also said parents have been notified of the official graduation requirements (22 credits) and that every course needed for graduation is offered in every high school. Commissioner Elliott asked where the unions are regarding school-based budgeting in light of less than \$12 million being spent on instructional supplies. Superintendent Brizard said that so far the unions have been very supportive of the work that needs to be done for students. Commissioner Campos said nothing is more powerful than data and facts; hearing about solutions and action is refreshing. President Evans said he hoped that the students involved in the jaywalking incident could take advantage of Teen Court.

V) Board Standing Reports:

Students: Student Representative Washington said the Student Leadership Congress is working on a forum with the Superintendent for January 31. The group hopes to have a conference with the Mayor in March.

Audit: Commissioner Williams, Chair, said the committee will meet February 12 at 6 p.m.

Finance: Commissioner Powell, Chair, said Finance reviewed and recommends resolutions 460-472. She moved that the December 2007 financial reports be approved. Second by Commissioner Elliott. Adopted 7-0.

Quality Assurance: Vice President White, Chair, said the committee will meet January 31 to discuss its mission/vision, the SURR report, and 2008 goals.

Board Governance: Commissioner Elliott, Chair, said the committee will meet January 28 to discuss Board Goals, Board Self-Evaluation, supervision of Board staff and the role of a Board consultant.

Community and Intergovernmental Relations: Commissioner Campos, Chair, said Community and Intergovernmental Relations met on Tuesday, January 22. Joining the committee were President Evans and Commissioner Elliott. Members discussed a proposed partnership between the local Laborers Union and the School of Applied Technology at Edison. The partnership could be a way to increase graduation rates, bring modern industry standards into the classroom, and provide students with a viable career path after high school. Next steps are to consult with the Superintendent regarding whether this proposal dovetails with his strategic plan; if so, to hear from Edison staff; and perhaps make a visit to Newburgh City Schools, which has a similar program. The committee reviewed this matter in conjunction with Policy 0200 Section 6, which refers to the development of programs and services that encourage cooperative interaction among the community at-large, district staff and students. Members also discussed the Facilities Modernization Program. The immediate next step appears to be creation of the Rochester School Construction Board, which is to have three members appointed by the Superintendent, three by the Mayor, and a seventh that they both agree upon. Commissioner Elliott raised the question of MWBE participation, and upon further research and in collaboration with her colleagues, Chairwoman Campos said she believes the committee will ask the firm hired to write a strategic master plan for achieving maximum MWBE participation to attend a future CIGR meeting to share that plan. The committee reviewed this matter in conjunction with Policy 7000 Section 3, which refers to the Board's responsibility to provide appropriate facilities to support a quality educational program. The committee is working on the final draft of the 2008 Legislative Agenda and plans to forward it for Board approval at the February 28 business meeting. Chair Campos then moved the following proclamation, which she said was particularly important in light of recent events and because it affirms the Board's and the District's commitment to mutual respect.

WHEREAS, from January 21-27, 2008 the Rochester City School District is partnering with the Gay Alliance of Genesee Valley and the Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network in conjunction with Simon & Schuster Children's Publishing to honor the 4th Annual National "No Name Calling Week", And

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WHEREAS, 15 Olweus Bullying Prevention program implementation sites are taking part in a week of educational activities that are aimed at stopping name-calling and verbal bullying of all kinds, And

WHEREAS, the Board of Education recognizes that words hurt and have the power to make students feel unsafe to the point they are no longer able to perform in school or conduct normal lives, And

WHEREAS, success will not occur overnight -- our patience and continued commitment to bullying prevention are imperative; and

WHEREAS, January 21-27, 2008, has been designated as "No Name Calling Week" calling on all Americans to show their support for a bully free school and community;

Now, Therefore Be It

RESOLVED, That, the Rochester Board of Education does hereby proclaim January 21-27, 2008, as **NO NAME CALLING WEEK** in the Rochester City School District and encourages all schools, students, parents, and staff to join the rest of the nation in promoting the end of Name-Calling and Bullying in our schools.

Second by Vice President White. Adopted 7-0.

Policy Committee: Commissioner Brennan, Chair, said Policy will meet January 30 to discuss 5153, 5100, 1900, 4511-R, and early examination of a transparency policy.

President's Report: President Evans said the flag outside Central Office was flown at half-staff last week in recognition of the funeral of Marcus Radford, a student at Franklin Bioscience. Hearts go out to Marcus's family and the students and staff at Franklin during this tremendously difficult time. President Evans visited the Rochester Childfirst Network Program and Rochester Pre-School Parent Program adjacent to School 12 recently and also met with Lori VanAuken of the Children's Institute. Materials from the Institute will be included in the Board's Friday packet; he looks forward to a continued beneficial partnership with these two organizations on behalf of students and families. President Evans also visited Schools 4, 8, and 20, saying it was a day well-spent to see principals and staff members in action. School 4, George Mather Forbes, was recently recognized by the New York State Education Department as one of only two schools in the state to earn a Distinguished School Award this year. School 4, which has an 89 percent student poverty rate, won the award for dramatically increasing student performance in ELA and Math and significantly reducing the gap in performance among subgroups of students. President Evans said Principal Karon Jackson will accept the award on behalf of School No. 4 later this month at a national conference of State Title I Directors in Tennessee.

Commissioner Elliott commented that she had attended a Committee on Special Education meeting recently and it was an extremely negative experience, including the space where the meeting was held. Parents who have concerns about CSE meetings should contact her or the Superintendent.

VI) Resolutions

2007-08: 427-459. Motion to adopt by Commissioner Powell. Second by Vice President White. Discussion: Vice President White commended the appointment of James Sheppard as Director of Security Operations. Commissioner Elliott raised the idea of paying staff to attend professional development; it should be part of their job, perhaps renegotiated, because the district needs to reconsider how it is spending its money because \$12 million is all that is spent on instructional supplies. Commissioner Williams questioned people beginning work before being approved by the Board. Chief Counsel Donrita Cottrell said appointment letters need to be consistent and clear that the appointments are pending Board approval.

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Roll Call Vote:

Commissioner Williams: Yes to all
Commissioner Powell: Yes to all
Vice President White: Yes to all
Commissioner Brennan: Yes to all
Commissioner Elliott: Yes to all but 427-432; 447-452; 454
Commissioner Campos: Yes to all
President Evans: Yes to all

All resolutions adopted.

2007-08: 460: Motion to approve by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Elliott dissenting.

2007-08: 461-466: Motion to approve by Commissioner Campos. Second by Vice President White. Adopted 7-0.

2007-08: 467: Motion to adopt by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Elliott. Adopted 7-0.

2007-08: 468-481: Motion to adopt by Vice President White. Second by Commissioner Elliott. Discussion: Commissioner Elliott asked whether students have graduated from the MCC program. Chief of Staff Kim Dyce Faucette said the program just began, with 44 students in the fall and 44 students in the spring semester. She asked about the staff at the Hillside Children's Center and whether it had demonstrated success working in an urban environment and whether the staff looks like RCSD students. Director of Community Partnerships Nydia Padilla said the diversity level is excellent. Commissioner Elliott also asked whether James Wallace had demonstrated success in the urban environment and culture in order to have a positive impact on students. Kirsten Barclay of Student Support Services said Mr. Wallace has worked in the district for 20 years and his reports are accurate and informative. Commissioner Williams remarked on the lack of data supporting 470 and the excessive cost of 471. Superintendent Brizard said he will get the data on 470 and look at prices of services in 471. Commissioner Powell thanked the many district supporters for their donations. Commissioner Williams asked how the donations are regulated. Superintendent Brizard said he would find out. Adopted 7-0 except for 470 and 471, which were adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Williams dissenting.

VII) Unfinished Business.

None.

VIII) New Business

Vice President White proposed an amendment to Policy 6725 that was referred to the Policy Committee by President Evans. Commissioner Powell suggested that questions raised at the dais that are not related to resolutions or reports be "parking lotted" until the New Business portion of the Order of Business. President Evans said he would consider it but that he does not want to make New Business unduly lengthy.

IX) Speakers on other than Agenda Items

Steve Eckel discussed violence at Franklin and said the Montessori school should be moved or better separated from the secondary school.

Nea Frost discussed gas leaks and the use of mace at Franklin and its impact on the Montessori school.

Howard Eagle called for the immediate resignation of a teacher at Wilson for racial remarks made to a student.

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Doris Morrison discussed the impact the teacher's remarks had on her daughter and her family and asked what would be done.

Wallace Smith discussed institutional racism and the Wilson incident.

Harriet Fisher said Montessori parents want a completely separate facility and to be included in decisions.

Valarie Johnson said she is holding the Board and the Superintendent accountable for behaviors at Wilson, including the climate.

Charlie Richardson said parents have to be educated about opportunities to be involved in school.

Dana Bratcher discussed systemic, institutional, and structural race problems.

Carrie Remis said the district needs to move from the rhetoric of accountability to the practice of it.

Motion to extend meeting beyond 8:30 p.m. by Commissioner Powell. Second by Vice President White. Adopted 7-0 at 8:29 p.m.

Emma Fleming discussed how teaching and learning have changed.

Lori Thomas said that sweeping things under the rug does not help and used a children's book to make her point.

X) Adjournment

Motion to adjourn by Vice President White. Second by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0 at 8:36 p.m.

Attachment:

Graduation Readiness Status Report