

Rochester Board of Education
Monthly Business Meeting Minutes
May 22, 2008

Attendance:

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

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

- I) Commissioner Brennan led the Pledge of Allegiance and Act of Reverence.
- II) Commissioner Powell moved approval of Meeting Minutes of 4/21 hearing, 4/21 special, 4/23, 4/24 special, 4/24 Business, 5/1 and 5/8. Second by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.
- III) The Board recognized 'Urban Steel' of John Marshall High School, a steel drum band that performed two selections.
- IV) Speakers Addressing Agenda Items: Student Chiara Clemente discussed gang activity and bullying at School of the Arts. President Evans noted that it takes strong leadership skills to speak before a large group and thanked Miss Clemente for taking a stand. He said Superintendent Brizard will investigate the matter and update the Board on how it is addressed. Charles Richardson then stood from the audience and protested that he should be listed under Speakers Addressing Agenda Items. President Evans said Mr. Richardson could address the Board as a Speaker Addressing Non-Agenda Items because there were no budget amendment resolutions.
- V) Superintendent Brizard recognized the pending retirement of Chief of Human Resources Joanne Giuffrida for her years of service to the District as an administrator and a Commissioner of Schools. He presented an art piece to Volunteers of America representatives Dianne Newhouse and Lynn Tavernese as a thank you for their winter 2008 coat drive for RCSD students. He also recognized the following High Performing/Gap Closing Schools for 2006-2007: Virgil I. Grissom School No. 7; Francis Parker School No. 23; and World of Inquiry School No. 58. He recognized the following as Rapidly Improving Schools for 2006-2007: Martin B. Anderson School No. 1; Clara Barton School No. 2; Nathaniel Rochester Community School No. 3; George Mather Forbes School No. 4; John Williams School No. 5; Roberto Clemente School No. 8; James P.B. Duffy School No. 12; Enrico Fermi School No. 17; Dr. Charles T. Lunsford School No. 19; Nathaniel Hawthorne School No. 25; Adlai E. Stevenson School No. 29; General Elwell S. Otis School No. 30; Dr. Louis A. Cerulli School No. 34; Theodore Roosevelt School No. 43; Lincoln Park School No. 44; Helen Barrett Montgomery School No. 50; Frank Fowler Dow School No. 52; and Franklin Montessori School. High Performing/Gap Closing schools are those that met all State standards for English and math in 2006-2007 and also made adequate yearly progress in those subjects for two consecutive years. Rapidly Improving schools are those that were performing below State standards in one or more subjects but showed improvement and made adequate yearly progress in 2004-2005, 2005-2006, and 2006-07. He provided the Board with a draft of his organizational chart, noting that assumptions should not be made about offices not listed.

VI) Board Reports

President's Report

President Evans noted that it was the first Board Student Recognition event this evening, and he would like to thank the students and staff of 'Urban Steel' for starting the Board off on such a rousing note. There are so many positive aspects of the District; they tend to get overlooked in the flurry of negativity. I believe I speak for the full Board when I say that we are optimistic that the District is on the right path to becoming a national model of academic achievement and reform. Speaking of academic achievement, our Student Representative, Miss Rosetta Washington, is the valedictorian of Charlotte High School and is not with us because she is attending her Senior Prom.

Student Representative

President Evans read the report provided by Miss Washington. I would like to apologize to the board and the public for my absence tonight. Tonight is my senior prom at R.I.T. The Student Leadership Congress gathered with their number twenty two school students on May 14, 2008. The students were given a tour of our "Students First" television station, and watched a segment be taped live. Yesterday, the Student Leadership Congress held its regular meeting to discuss our farewell project to the students. Members of SLC will continue to keep in contact through the summer however; we want to celebrate the end of the school year with them. Currently, we are in progress of planning to attend number twenty two school's first field day and school annual school carnival. Both younger students and SLC members are thrilled about both events. Briefly, we discussed the code of Conduct with the students. Those who were unfamiliar with the documentation were well informed about its purpose. We also gave out the Students version of the Code of Conduct, so students can educate themselves on their own time. SLC members from the previous year agreed that information is well advertised in school and easy to access if ever necessary. The cover of the Code of Conduct has changed for the best, it now eye-catching and a little less wordy. That concludes my report for this evening.

Audit

Chairman Allen Williams said the Audit Committee did not meet in the month of May. The next Audit Committee meeting is scheduled on Wednesday, June 4th at 12 noon. During the meeting the Committee expects to meet with the new Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR) Auditors Freed, Maxick and Battaglia. Also, the Committee is still receiving recommendations for a financial expert to join the Audit Committee. The financial expert is a non-salaried position to the Board to provide additional financial expertise to the Audit Committee.

Finance

Chairwoman Willa Powell reported to the Board that she had traveled to Albany as a member of the Commissioner's School Board Advisory Council. Until that meeting, Commissioner Mills said he was unaware of the need for him to advance forms for the Big 4 cities to certify their compliance with the 2007 Article 7 MOE and that he would have his legal team address it. Chairwoman Powell also stated that some committee chairs have instituted relaxed rules regarding public participation at committee meetings. Finance has not done that; the committee has a tremendous amount of work to get through at each meeting. She noted that the meetings are held in public but are not public hearings. She has asked for a parent representative to be assigned from a district-wide parent organization and repeated her request to the Superintendent. The Finance Committee met on Thursday, May 15th to review the April 2008 Financial Reports and resolutions 688-693, 695-721 and 739. It recommends approval of those resolutions. Chairwoman Powell then moved approval of the April 2008 financial reports. Second by Commissioner Elliott. Adopted 7-0. The June Finance Committee meeting will be held on June 15th at

DRAFT: Not approved by Board

5:30 p.m. Commissioner Elliott, a committee member, noted that there was extensive discussion regarding Chartwells at the May meeting; there are issues on both sides that the committee will be looking to resolve in the future that will satisfy the District, students, parents, teachers and other personnel.

Quality Assurance

Chairman Van Henri White noted the report from his Grove Place Foundation regarding drop-outs; he has provided copies to all Commissioners and extras are available by calling his office. He urged the Board and audience to listen to this population's concerns, pointing out that there is one transitional worker for every 2,700 kids re-entering the system following a longterm suspension or absence because of incarceration. The Quality Assurance Committee met on Tuesday, May 6th to discuss: the Instruction Management System: The Curriculum Developer; the August Leadership Institute; and Read 180. Chairman White pointed out that Ms. Leech made a wonderful presentation to the QA Committee regarding Read 180, but the committee did not vote on whether to recommend Read 180. All of the Board members did receive an "executive summary" on Read 180, which included an overview of the program, measures, results of platinum performers and a list of additional studies on the program from. The programs cost \$714,620 and funding for this program is coming from a State Education Department District in Corrective Action ED grant. Chairman White said he intends to vote in favor of resolution #732. He said the Quality Assurance Committee is recommending that the Board approve resolution #729 for the National Education Resources to implement the Curriculum Developer and Benchmark Assessment in the City School District that is being submitted for consideration. The next Quality Assurance Committee will be on Thursday, June 12th @ 5:30 p.m. Commissioner Williams said that he had a different perspective on whether/how Read 180 was voted on did come out of committee

Board Governance

Chairwoman Cynthia Elliott said the Board Governance Committee did not meet on May 19th due to lack of a quorum. The Committee will be meeting again on Monday, June 23rd @ 6:00 p.m. to discuss: Executive Session, Board Consultant, and Board Retreat. The Board Governance Committee plans on having a Board retreat in June to discuss the following: Board Goals, Board Staff Salaries, Superintendent's Goals, and Superintendent's Evaluation. The committee also plans on completing the New Board members' orientation by meeting with ASAR and BENTE union representatives. President Evans said he would reach out to the Board next week to schedule an executive session regarding the Superintendent's Evaluation.

Community and Intergovernmental Relations

Chairwoman Melisza Campos said Community and Intergovernmental Relations will meet June 2. We will have an update on the Facilities Modernization Program; we anticipate an update on the apprenticeship program at Edison School of Applied Technology with Unicon; and will work on brainstorming ideas for District improvements. The Committee also plans to discuss scheduling a co-session with City Council.

Policy

Chairman Thomas Brennan noted that the committee conducted two public hearings; his appreciates all of the public participation. He acknowledged frustration on both sides because the public hearing format does not allow for an interchange and because conversations do at times stray from the central purpose of the hearing. Public hearings are hardly the only vehicle for community input to the Board; he urged residents to put their thoughts in writing regarding specific ideas for improvement. Policy will meet in early June to discuss next steps.

VII) Resolutions

Commissioner Elliott stated that she would be voting ‘no’ on several resolutions because actions within them have already taken place without Board approval; why are they necessary? This is an issue of ethics, integrity, and the Board completing its due diligence. Superintendent Brizard acknowledged that the Board does receive some resolutions after the fact but that there are explanations for this, and going forward he will provide the explanations prior to the study sessions scheduled for resolution review.

2007-08: 660-687 moved by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner White

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Williams	Yes to All
Commissioner Powell	Yes to All
Commissioner White	Yes to All
Commissioner Elliott	Yes to All but 661, 662, 663, 666, 668, 669, 671, 674, 677, 678, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686.
Commissioner Campos	Yes to All
Commissioner Brennan	Yes to All
President Evans	Yes to All

Resolutions adopted

2007-08: 688-719 moved by Commissioner Elliott. Second by Commissioner White.

Discussion: Commissioner White said he was encouraged by the number of minority contractors.

Commissioner Campos protested the built-in 30 percent contingency amount for 692 and said it pointed to project management issues.

Adopted 7-0 except for 692, adopted 6-1 with Commissioner Campos dissenting.

2007-08: 720

Moved by Commissioner Elliott. Second by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

2007-08: 721

Moved by Commissioner Elliott. Second by Commissioner Campos. Adopted 7-0.

2007-08: 722-741

Moved by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner White.

Discussion: Commissioner Powell noted the extensive number of gifts provided to the District and formally accepted by the Board. Citing 741, Commissioner Elliott commented that all schools should be high-performing, choice schools with a niche market. Citing 731, Commissioner Williams asked why commissioners had unanimously supported a reduction in December 2007. President Evans said it was recommended by administration; he had heard afterward that the reduction was coerced but could not confirm it. Commissioner White said he couldn’t recall a resolution from December and why he voted a certain way. He stated that the question was unfair and should be asked earlier for an informed answer. Commissioner Brennan said he had given the interim Superintendent the benefit of the doubt based on his recommendation that the reduction would allow for adequate funding. He said it is a little sobering that other considerations besides merit enter into decisions. Commissioner Powell said she wasn’t inclined to support the vendor after the first report because she found it refutable and so was happy to vote for the reduction in December. In this case, the Board does need to trust the judgment of the Superintendent. Commissioner Elliott said if she voted against a reduction it must have been an error and in-house Research, Evaluation and Testing should be used. She will vote against the increase in the

DRAFT: Not approved by Board

interest of efficiency. Superintendent Brizard said the District has the best Pre-K program in the nation, largely because of the work done by the vendor with Community-Based Organizations and in the District. He added that the name “Research, Evaluation and Testing” does not fit the office and that it will change to Office of Accountability. Commissioner Williams said he would vote against 732, as he does not believe there is data to support the expense and it appears that the District is chasing grant dollars, which is why there is a helter-skelter of reading programs. Superintendent Brizard said he has not seen data on the program as used in this District but that it has been highly successful in other districts, with marked improvement. The program is not a curriculum; it is an intervention. Commissioner White said the topic was discussed extensively in Quality Assurance; the resolution did not advance from QA because only two members were present. The resolution was recommended by the district’s instructional leaders and at a certain point the Board has to trust those leaders. Commissioner Williams said he would vote against 733, 736 and 738 as he cannot get a true picture of what is going on. Commissioner Elliott said she would vote not if the resolutions have not gone through QA.

Roll Call Vote

Commissioner Williams	Yes to all but 731, 732, 733, 736 and 738
Commissioner Powell	Yes to all
Commissioner White	Yes to all
Commissioner Elliott	Yes to all but 728, 731, 736 and 737.
Commissioner Campos	Yes to all
Commissioner Brennan	Yes to all but 741
President Evans	Yes to all

Resolutions adopted

IX) New Business

Commissioner Campos asked about the placement center moving; the new location does not have access to the bus line. Superintendent Brizard said he will look into it and get back to the Board.

X) Speakers on Other than Agenda Items

Donna James said the District creates drop-outs. The issue is teaching. Other solutions are needed besides suspensions, such as community service and mentors. Two hours of tutoring is absurd. The District has zero tolerance for children when it needs to love and embrace children. It is easier to build a child than reconstruct a man. Charles Richardson said people will be coming to meetings shortly, as the public is just finding out that Commissioners are paid and employees of the people. He also cited \$43 million in the budget for transportation and blamed the school choice program as a waste of money. Mr. Richardson continued in this vein beyond the three-minute limit for speakers. President Evans asked him to conclude his statement in deference to the other speakers. Mr. Richardson declined. President Evans adjourned the meeting and reconvened it two minutes later when Mr. Richardson was escorted from the podium. Chojoy Schroeder discussed English Language Learners, who she said are being retrograded in terms of their education as programs are dismantled. Moving the placement center and removing the intake center are tearing at the social fabric of the programs.

Commissioner Powell asked for a Point of Personal Privilege and stated that the Transportation budget has always been very large; in 2000, before Parent Preference/Managed Choice, the budget was \$29 million.

XI) Motion to adjourn by Commissioner White. Second by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0 at 8:25 p.m.