

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION

Special Meeting

May 1, 2006

Minutes

Attendance:

Commissioners Brennan, Evans, Henley, Powell and Thompson; Superintendent Dr. Rivera

Absent: President Garcia (out of town), Commissioner Elliott

Vice President convened the meeting at 6:42 p.m. and called for a motion on the textbook adoption.

Resolution 2005-06: 745

Motion by Commissioner Brennan to approve a new Social Studies textbook series for Grades 3, 4 and 5. Second by Commissioner Thompson.

Discussion:

Vice President Evans asked Commissioner Thompson, Chair of Quality Assurance, to begin the discussion.

Commissioner Thompson noted that QA reviewed the textbook series and voted to advance it to the full Board of Education with some reservations. QA members questioned what message is delivered to a mostly Black and Latino student population when a color photo shows Colonial Williamsburg with smiling slaves. QA is aware that pictures such as that represent a teaching opportunity but want to be sure that administration relays the importance of this to teachers. QA will elaborate on this issue at the May 18 Business Meeting in its monthly report.

Commissioner Powell pointed out the anachronism of the photo, which is a representation of a recreation, and noted that textbook publishers are no more perfect than any other institution.

Commissioner Thompson said Rochester and other urban districts need to work together to spur textbook publishers to be accurate and realistic.

Commissioner Henley said he learned that the Director of Colonial Williamsburg was surprised the issue was raised because the facility strives for historical accuracy. Commissioner Henley looked into the possibility of removing the pages in question, either through the printing process or manually, but said this raised other issues of censorship, precedent-setting, and potential cost increases to have pages removed. The textbook publisher had said it could remove the pages manually but not change the printing process.

Commissioners Thompson and Henley agreed that it is preferable to trust that the administration will address the issue with teachers rather than to have the pages removed manually. Vice President Evans said he believes district teachers will follow through and point out that the photos depict colonial era re-enactors and will drive a discussion from that point. Commissioner Powell registered her dismay that the commissioner originally raising the issue did not attend the discussion.

Dr. Rivera said the series is of high quality and one he supports.

Resolution No 2005-06: 745 approved 5-0 with Commissioners Garcia and Elliott absent.

Other: Special Meeting on 2006-07 Budget

The Board discussed moving its May 11 Special Meeting for Budget Adoption to 5:30 p.m. May 10 because of a conflict. Commissioners agreed that the Special Meeting will precede the Audit Committee meeting at 6 p.m., which will be followed by the monthly Finance Committee meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Thompson to change meeting schedule; second by Commissioner Brennan. Approved 5-0 with Commissioners Garcia and Elliott absent.

Adjournment:

Vice President Evans called for a motion to adjourn the Special Meeting. Motion by Commissioner Powell, second by Commissioner Brennan. Adopted 5-0 with Commissioners Garcia and Elliott absent at 7:10 p.m.

BY BOARD OF EDUCATION
NOT APPROVED
DRAFT