

Rochester Board of Education  
Special Meeting  
August 23, 2006

Strategic Planning Session  
Minutes

**Attendance:** President Garcia, Vice President Evans, Commissioners Elliott, Henley, and Thompson.

President Garcia convened the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

Chief Planning Officer Jana Carlisle introduced Marilyn Patterson-Grant and Robert Ulliman.

There are specific areas Dr. Rivera wants input on from focus groups, including the Board of Education, regarding the update of the Strategic Plan. (Presentation attached.)

**Commissioner Comments:**

President Garcia said goals need to be supplemented with information on how they will be achieved, and in very quantifiable terms, with dates and percentages etc. Goals and objectives should identify all who are responsible for achieving them, and who is ultimately accountable. Also need to identify who is responsible for distribution of the resources and materials required to meet the goals.

Commissioner Elliott discussed personnel and that the district needs to look at its customers. How do we keep those kids in our schools? What about the 30 percent who do not graduate? What services will retain those students? The answers need to be discussed at the strategic level. The District can't always go to the state for more money. (portions inaudible)

Commissioner Evans said the graduation rate is important but also that quality has to be high for all. Students need to graduate with a skill set, and what does that look like? Graduates have to be able to compete. What types of behaviors will drive the results? Will every child be connected with an agency to help ensure success?

Commissioner Thompson agreed with the 100 percent graduation comment and that quality has to be discussed, perhaps even moving quality above rate in the goal. There are different players and variables that affect movement toward goals. The engagement of the community and families must be pursued. There have not been conversations in the community about sharing accountability -- long-term accountability.

Commissioner Elliott -- funding -- portions inaudible. It is important to the community that there is a 100 percent graduation rate. Good first teaching is important. Students need to be aware of environment; that career changes are necessary.

Commissioner Evans agreed that the goal should be 100 percent.

Commissioner Elliott -- inaudible.

President Garcia told Commissioner Elliott that her comments were not being recorded because she was sitting too far from the microphones. Commissioner Elliott thanked him.

Commissioner Evans discussed the global economy; should our students learn Chinese?

President Garcia reiterated that if we are expecting staff to achieve goals, we must commit to providing them with the necessary tools and resources. Morale also must be maintained so they can do their work without hindrance.

Commissioner Thompson said people need to be able to provide feedback, especially regarding obstacles in the way of their achievement.

Commissioner Henley asked if the “Seven Essential Standards” are part of the strategic levers. He said the “Seven Essential Standards” are the backbone of the whole idea. Teachers and administrators need to be held accountable for meeting these standards and they could be part of the evaluation process or end-of-year portfolio.

Commissioner Evans discussed family and community engagement. He noted that often, a parent’s experience with school was negative and that negativity must be overcome for the child.

Commissioner Henley -- When we evaluate teachers and principals, they should be evaluated on same seven items because it assists in team-building in a school.

Commissioner Thompson brought up cultural relevance in reference to Commissioner Elliott’s comments. Diversity, cultural needs and cultural sensitivity must be addressed.

Commissioner Evans asked about resource management. Does that mean dollars?

President Garcia said specific rules have to be established so everyone knows what the rules are, even regarding parent involvement; meetings with teachers have to be scheduled in advance, for example. As another example, he has seen teachers making copies; this is a very inefficient way to run a school. Creative solutions could include paying a student, but at any rate some system should be in place.

Commissioner Evans concurred and added that schools have to have good principals because it all comes down to leadership. Leadership will make or break any organization.

Commissioner Henley added that principals are both coach and cheerleader.

Commissioner Elliott -- (inaudible) Have to have an aggressive superintendent to change paradigm. Culturally competent. Teachers have to be available to parents at all hours because of parents’ work schedules. Have to change the way we do business.

Commissioner Henley said after pilot year of “Seven Essential Standards,” Central Office has to listen to principals about what they need. In his experience as a teacher, it often happens that central offices do not listen to buildings. He reiterated his concerns about evaluations and agreed that the Superintendent should be out in the schools and very visible.

Commissioner Evans said citizenship is essential and that students need to understand the importance of community service and of voting.

Commissioner Elliott -- Innovation (inaudible)

Commissioner Evans said innovation leads to entrepreneurship.

Commissioner Thompson noted that one of the strategic levers discusses entrepreneurship.

Commissioner Elliott -- inaudible -- Dr. Kunjufu -- racism, sexism ...

Commissioner Thompson referred to the wording of Slide 22, our students will meet and exceed.

Commissioner Henley asked why new don't just use exceed?

Commissioner Evans agreed.

Commissioner Henley said he supports innovation/critical thinking skills.

Commissioners discussed format of the mission statement. They like brevity and punch. Short but powerful.

President Garcia urged caution when it comes to Hispanic students, particularly those who come into the system having to learn a whole new language.

Commissioner Evans asked about the GED program and said those students are a prime audience to discuss reasons for dropping out.

Commissioner Henley raised the topic of middle schools. He said the trend is to move away from middle schools. He wants to see the District work to retain elementary enthusiasm for learning into the middle school years.

Commissioner Evans discussed the success of Teen Court and said a similar model could be used in place of suspensions. It would help students in their ability to grow, learn about community service, and provide a community service. He noted the suspension/dropout correlations for Black/Latino males.

President Garcia asked about etiquette courses.

Commissioner Henley said we have to find ways to connect elementary, middle, and high school students, perhaps through a mentor/mentee program with students as role models.

Commissioner Thompson said retention data is important in discussions regarding the dropout rate. Also, the achievement data needs to be disaggregated to be relevant.

Commissioner Garcia adjourned the meeting at 7:35 p.m. Jana Carlisle announced that there are three project team meetings in September and she would come back to the Board with an update that incorporates their comments.