

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee Meeting

May 22, 2018

MINUTES

Attending:

Commissioners – Commissioner Cynthia Elliott (Chair), President White, Vice President Powell, Commissioners Hallmark, Funchess and Sheppard

District Staff – Karl Kristoff (General Counsel)

Parent Representative – Not in attendance

Board Staff – Kallia Wade

Vice President Elliott called the meeting to order at 6:01PM.

I. Review of Minutes of October 23, 2017 and November 11, 2017 CIGR Meeting

A discussion as held regarding whether Legislator John Lightfoot's Local Diploma Proposal should be continued. Commissioner Funchess indicated that the proposal should include more rigor and offer more options to students who seek different routes. Commissioner Elliot indicated that Commissioner Funchess' suggestion should be forwarded to Legislator Lightfoot to be considered for inclusion in the proposal. President White suggested that we invite select Regents (Wade Norwood and/or Chancellor T. Andrew Brown) to CIGR to contribute to the conversation as legislators will listen to the Regent.

Action Item: Board Staff Kallia to invite Wade Norwood and/or T. Andrew Brown to an upcoming CIGR Meeting to discuss the Local Diploma Proposal

Motion by Commissioner Funchess to approve and accept the Minutes of the October 23, 2017 and November 11, 2017 CIGR Committee Meetings. Seconded by Commissioners Powell and Funchess. **Adopted 3-0.**

II. Review and Discussion of the 2018-19 Legislative Breakfast and Possible Resulting Action Items

The committee engaged in conversation re the legislative agenda. The recommendation was made to keep the Legislative Agenda at the forefront of legislators' minds via:

- Sending out letters to remind legislators (at the federal, state and local level) re the Agenda now that the Breakfast has passed and/or asking for pertinent support
- Make visits to local offices here in Rochester

- Commissioners speaking at County legislative meetings and Rochester City Council meetings—VP Powell noted that sometimes these meetings conflict with Board commitments and so we need to plan carefully to make sure that this is a possible suggestion
- Board Staff Kallia to remain a watchdog on “what’s moving” legislation wise in the pipeline
- In reference to the “Local” Agenda item: Speak to legislative bodies, not just for K-8, but for teens (youth employment and development). This was supported by Commissioner Funchess, who noted that we need to find a way to get youth to know how things are done (e.g. required parent signature), EOP (employment) type opportunities open to ALL kids, culturally responsive mental health treatments and supports. The group suggested inviting the Monroe County Anti-Poverty Initiative “Participatory Budgeting Work Group” and representatives from United Way to help discuss opportunities
- VP Powell suggested that the Legislative Agenda be aligned to NYSBBA asks, aka streamlined, and informed by partners (i.e. NYSBBA, Big 5). Commissioner Sheppard suggested that the Committee keep the Legislative Agenda unique to highlight the things that sets Rochester apart from other districts (population, needs etc.)

Action Item: Board Staff Kallia to provide pertinent legislative updates to the Committee

III. Final Review and Discussion of the Communications Plan (last updated 2/1/18)

To start the conversation, Commissioner Elliott noted that the Board holds important information but needs to develop a good relationship with families by finding a good way to communicate these things. This was supported by Commissioner Hallmark, who indicated the need to put a coordinated effort behind getting information out to parents and the community, especially regarding the use of Title I Funds. Commissioner Elliot responded by advising that the focus for the meeting was really to get persons to weigh in on the framework before selecting topics etc. Also there is a need to get the new Chief of Communications, Carlos Garcia involved. Commissioner Funchess noted the need to coordinate with community agencies like Roc the Future, which has a Parent Engagement Community Action Network (CAN). Their Ready Rosie App is a useful tool to get info to parents and community members. Commissioner Hallmark suggests that staff puts together a list of events to publicize. Commissioner Funchess noted that Jessica Lewis at the Children’s Agenda (works alongside Jackie Campbell) should have a list like this and be able to provide this information

President White indicated that social media should be a more prominent part of the Communications plan and is to be implemented as part of the system. This point was supported by the Committee and the use of social media is included as part of the Communications Plan. A request was made for social media log-in information to be sent out to all the Commissioners, so that they will be able to access for themselves. President White went on to indicate that the Board may be getting District phones soon to assist with social media involvement.

A query was made by Commissioner Sheppard regarding the time commitment segments of the document. These times seemed to be set in stone and so the suggestion was made to pull this. Commissioner Elliott noted that these may be flexible but will be reviewing the Communications plan to update any time commitments where needed.

Commissioner Hallmark suggested that the Communications Plan be discussed at the Superintendent's retreat and that each Commissioner be given the space to say what is being done at their schools. This was supported by Commissioner Funchess, who noted that it would be good to know how everyone engages with their schools.

Commissioner Elliott asked whether the app was a suitable means to advocate and promote events. She also suggested going on radio and the use of the District's Commissioners' page. Commissioner Hallmark noted that this page needs to be more engaging for parents and community members.

Question posed: Is the framework sound and good enough for the Committee to send it to the Board for approval?

VP Powell expressed concern re the hosting of town halls (p.6 of the Communications plan). Town halls work best when specific topics are given or else it turns into a complaining event. Commissioner Funchess responded and agreed that the plan for the town halls works as a planning tactic at this level and that she can see where the Committee will make a more concrete plan in the fall. Commissioner Elliott suggested the development of a strategy by which the Committee goes to PTO/PTA meetings and be deliberate to let parents know the Board is represented and there

Commissioner Funchess suggested scheduling an event called "A Night with a Commissioner". This type of event would create an opportunity for all parents to be included and involved (and not just the types of parents who attend PTO/PTA meetings). Commissioner Funchess suggested topics for the Commissioners' Night like "lunch sucks"

Adding to this, Commissioner Hallmark suggested hosting a work meeting for Board members before the start of the new academic year. During this meeting a work plan can be constructed for the new academic year.

Action Item: Commissioner Elliott to review the Communications plan timing commitments and provide updates where needed. Board Staff Wade to forward the social media log-in information to the Board.

IV. Public Forums

Commissioner Elliott started the conversation by noting the desire to have a fall 2018 forum and a spring 2019 forum and that these need to be on the radar to begin planning. She suggested the topics of graduation rates and then opened the floor up for other possibilities. VP Powell

questioned whether releasing and discussing the graduation rates would affect the District's embargo. Responding to this, President White noted that the Committee should be able to publicize the District's data with confidence as it would have been provided by the Superintendent at that point.

Commissioner Funchess questioned whether there has ever been a public forum on the Code of Conduct. General Counsel Kristoff suggested hosting a public hearing tied to the School Climate Committee recommendations on the Code. Commissioner Elliott recalled that she had made the suggestion for a Code of Conduct public forum but was told to wait because of upcoming changes to the Code. Commissioner Funchess noted the need to inform people about what is in the Code and what the rules are. VP Powell noted that it is taxing to the system if we inform but the Principals and teachers are not following the guidelines and so this needs to be put in place first. Commissioner Elliott questioned whether there has been PD offered on the Code of Conduct—this was confirmed by Counsel Kristoff, who advised that this is an ongoing task being completed by Chief Idonia Owens

VP Powell suggested hosting a role play at the public forums—this was supported by Commissioner Elliott who also suggested example videos of step-by-step on how to use the Code

The Committee agreed re the suggestion to hold a forum on the topic “Code of Conduct” for fall of 2018.

On the other hand, President White noted that while the Code is a good topic, it is more important to have a town hall/public forum on attendance. Commissioner Elliott noted that her interest is not so much on attendance, but the issues that result from absenteeism (ie. Grades tied to absenteeism, lowering of scores). Additionally there are reasons why students aren't in school/in class. VP Powell responded, indicating that the topic should really center on a “Get in and Stay In” approach. She also clarified that attendance is not tied to state aid anymore, but more so on enrollment numbers. Karl concurred adding that the number of school days the district is open is also taken into consideration. President White noted that if the Committee addressed attendance then it would kill two birds with one stone. Commissioner Funchess suggested addressing the “Attendance” topic, alongside the “Code of Conduct” at a public forum, essentially tying the “juicy” with the “non-juicy” topics.

VP Powell asked whether the Committee could reach out to kids to find out what topics they're interested in exploring at a public forum. In response, General Counsel Kristoff suggested that the Committee speak with Student Council and the rep Genesis. Commissioner Elliott suggested that the Committee has Genesis do a video noting her experiences before she graduates and also attend a Student Council meeting to get feedback. VP Powell noted that the Committee should wait to be invited based on Student Council protocol. She also agreed to touch base with the Council to convey the message that the Committee would like to be added to a Council meeting agenda.

Action Item: Vice President Powell to touch base with Student Council to alert them to the fact that the CIGR Committee would like to be added to the agenda to discuss potential Public Forum topics.

V. White Paper on Culturally Relevant Education in Rochester

Board Staff Kallia Wade advised the Committee regarding the Conference Call with NYU Metro Center staff Megan Hester and Jahque Bryan Gooden. She indicated that the group will be working with Commissioner Elliot regarding the drafting of a white paper on culturally relevant education in Rochester. Board Staff Wade advised the Committee that the Metro Center Team would be getting back to the Commissioner Elliot with resources and next steps. Counsel Kristoff suggested that the Director of African American Studies would be ideal to be involved with the discussion and the writing of the white paper. A suggestion was also made to include Dr. Goodwin in the discussion. Commissioner Sheppard asked for clarity re “white paper”. This was explained by other members of the Committee, who noted that the white paper creates a platform for the discussion of a pertinent topic, and explains where we have been, where we are and what we have been doing to address it.

Meeting adjourned at 7:41PM.

Next Meeting: June 7, 2018