

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting
November 10, 2016

Attending: Malik Evans (Chair); Commissioners Hallmark and Elliott (arrived at 6:44PM).

Parent Representative: Toyin Anderson (arrived at 6:35PM)

District Staff: Keith Babuczszak, Executive Director of Career & Technical Education; Michele Alberti, Executive Director of the Office of School Innovation; Amy Schiavi, Chief of Secondary Schools; Dr. Ray Giamartino, Chief of School Transformation; and Beverly Burrell-Moore, Chief of Elementary Schools (arrived at 6:45PM due to attending the Executive School-Based Planning Team meeting).

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Commissioner Evans called the meeting to order at 6:21PM.

I. Review Minutes of the October 20, 2016 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Hallmark to approve the minutes of the October 20, 2016 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting. Seconded by Commissioner White. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of Parent Representative.**

II. Career & Technical Education Programs

Keith Babuczszak provided an overview of the District's Career & Technical Education programs, noting that two new programs are being proposed: Computer-Assisted Design & Drafting (CADD) and Digital Video Production. He explained that Board approval is required for these new programs, prior to submitting the plans to the NYS Education Department for approval. Mr. Babuczszak stated that the plans include an employability profile, program outline, and the written performance assessment tools. Both of the new CTE programs will be offered at Edison High School, which will also be initiating a new digital music and audio production program and interactive media program. Consideration is also being given to offering an art, technology, and engineering program at the school.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired whether Edison High School currently has a music program to support/supplement the digital music production program. Mr. Babuczszak replied that the music program began this year and will be coordinated with digital music production, with plans to involve community partners in radio (e.g. WDKX).

Commissioner Evans discussed his own experience in video production in high school and pointed out that this type of program integrates a number of key academic skills, such as writing, planning/sequencing, and problem-solving. He noted that digital video production is a promising career path for students to pursue. Mr. Babuczszak reported that the digital video production program has a full television studio, and several audio booths will be available for digital music and audio

production.

Commissioner Evans suggested visiting the studio in the Brighton School District, which has a full complement of digital equipment for students to use.

Commissioner Hallmark asked whether the CTE programs offer dual enrollment to enable students to earn college credits. Mr. Babuczszak reported that all of the District's CTE programs offer dual enrollment through partnerships with Bryant & Stratton, Alfred State University, or Monroe Community College. He added that the five existing CTE programs in the District do not require Board approval, but must be submitted to the NYS Education Department every five years for re-approval. These programs are: Advertising Design, Carpentry, Masonry, Electrical, and Automotive Technology. Mr. Babuczszak stated that he wanted to review all of the CTE programs with the members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee.

Commissioner Hallmark questioned why the Manufacturing program has not been included in these plans. Mr. Babuczszak clarified that the Manufacturing program is on a different cycle, and not required to be reapproved at this time.

Motion by Commissioner Hallmark to approve the two new proposed CTE programs (Computer-Assisted Design & Drafting and Digital Video Production), as stated in Resolution No. 2016-17: 358. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of the Parent Representative.**

III. Review of School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEP) for Eight RCSD Schools

Commissioner Hallmark asked whether the eight schools with proposed SCEP plans are all newly identified as priority schools in the District. Michele Alberti confirmed that these schools have just been identified in priority status as of the 2016-17 school year. She explained that each of these schools applied for a School Improvement Grant (SIG 7), which was denied. Consequently, each school is required to submit a SCEP plan to specify actions to be taken to substantially improve student achievement. Ms. Alberti stated that school staff typically collaborate with School Chiefs and Instructional Directors to develop SCEP plans from March through May, which are usually presented to the members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee in July. Work on the SCEP plans for these eight schools was resumed after the grant applications had been denied.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired whether the District can simply use the information from the SIG grant applications to incorporate into each school's SCEP plan. Ms. Alberti replied that work had begun to develop a SCEP plan for each of these schools, which formed the basis for the SIG grant applications when these grants were announced in June. She pointed out that the improvement strategies have fundamentally remained the same for each school, and focus on instruction and social/emotional supports and restorative practices. After the SIG applications were denied, work resumed to finalize the SCEP plans.

Commissioner Hallmark asked about the deadline for submitting the SCEP plans for these eight schools to the NYS Education Department for approval. Ms. Alberti responded that the deadline at this point is rather flexible because the SIG applications are currently serving as each school's improvement plan.

Amy Schiavi discussed the key elements of the SCEP plans for the three RCSD secondary schools: Edison High School, Leadership Academy for Young Men, and Vanguard Collegiate High School. She explained that the common themes in the plans for these schools are: raising graduation rates; focusing on CTE and multiple pathways to graduation; providing social/emotional supports to students; and considering alternatives to the NYS Global History Regents exam, such as an Employability Skills assessment. Mr. Babuczszak reported that the District is currently exploring ways to align the Employability Skills assessment with business courses and to assist students who have not done well on the Global History or U.S. History Regents exam.

Commissioner Hallmark noted that the Global History exam is offered in 10th grade, which would enable students to change paths, if necessary. She inquired about the timeframe for providing an alternative Employability Skills assessment for students. Mr. Babuczszak noted that the District is currently developing this assessment in collaboration with business teachers and external partners, who will also offer workshops to RCSD students (e.g. Wegmans, Hillside, Chamber of Commerce).

Commissioner Hallmark pointed out that the selection of school liaisons to the external business community is critical in creating meaningful career paths and in ensuring alignment with the curriculum and assessment. She asked about the process for choosing these liaisons. Mr. Babuczszak replied that he has been collaborating with Nydia Padilla-Rodriguez and her team, who coordinate school efforts with external business partners. He also noted that strengthening business and community partnerships is one of the key components of the Superintendent's 100-Day plan, and a survey has been conducted with partners to obtain feedback regarding necessary improvements.

Commissioner Hallmark discussed her experience with a two-year project with Rochester Institute of Technology and Charlotte High School, which had many business and community partners identified. She stated that there was no coordination or communication among the various partners, which resulted in a great deal of duplication of effort, inefficiency, and wasted resources. Mr. Babuczszak acknowledged that the feedback that has been received from the survey reflects these concerns, which the District is working to address.

Ms. Schiavi reported that a scan was taken of students enrolled in career and financial management courses to examine ways that these credits can accelerate pathways toward graduation. She stated that this information was disseminated as soon as possible to ensure that students are taking the correct courses to lead toward graduation.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired whether career and financial management courses offer dual credits, so that students can earn college credits while in high school. Mr. Babuczszak reported that the Business & Entrepreneurship program at Rochester Early College High School has an agreement to allow dual enrollment, but the other business classes do not have this type of agreement.

Ms. Schiavi emphasized that the focus of her work with schools is on on-time graduation; social/emotional supports; and instruction in the classroom. She noted the importance of formative assessments, instructional practices, lesson planning, and monitoring SCEP plans with school leadership every five weeks. Ms. Schiavi stated that the review of student data includes the grades given by teachers, Regents exam results, and student interventions.

Commissioner Hallmark requested additional information about the trauma-informed retreat offered at

the Leadership Academy for Young Men this past summer. Ms. Schiavi responded that a two-day intensive training was conducted by Partners in Restorative Initiatives (PiRi) for all school staff to examine major incidents on campus, use the crisis model as an opportunity, understand the types of trauma that students may bring to school, and identify ways to respond to trauma. Ms. Alberti clarified that the District contracts with Partners in Restorative Initiatives (PiRi) or the MK Gandhi Center for Non-Violence to provide training in restorative practices for all schools.

Action Item: School Chief Amy Schiavi will provide additional information to members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee about the training conducted by Partners in Restorative Initiatives at the Leadership Academy for Young Men this past summer.

Commissioner Hallmark observed a significant increase in parent engagement reported at Vanguard High School this year, and inquired about the specific efforts that led to this positive result. Ms. Schiavi replied that school staff have made a concerted effort to reach out to families when a student has not been attending school, meeting with family members in their homes or in the community. She reported that over 150 home visits have been conducted so far this year as part of a collective effort among school staff, including Home School Assistants, Counselors, Administrators and Teachers. Ms. Schiavi added that the staff at Vanguard High School have also been vigilant about documenting “attend actions” when students have missed five or more days of school. Ms. Alberti elaborated that “attend actions” are documented in a database in PowerSchool, enabling school staff to record phone calls, home visits, and other efforts to contact families. She noted that there is considerable variation among schools, particularly in the level of detail provided in this documentation.

Beverly Burrell-Moore discussed the key elements of the SCEP plans for the five elementary schools: School Nos. 16, 35, 46, 50, and Wilson Foundation Academy. She reported that School No. 16 has a new leadership team, which has instituted comprehensive classroom observations to provide meaningful feedback to teachers regarding instruction. She stated that the school plans to add reading/literacy and math teachers because student performance results indicate that these supports are badly needed.

Ms. Burrell-Moore stated that School No. 46 is hoping to have the elementary school counselor provide additional social and emotional learning support and partner with SUNY Brockport. She noted that the school is hoping to add elementary school counselors as part of the expanded learning program in developing the 2017-18 budget. Ms. Burrell-Moore announced that an extensive tracking system has been created to provide flexible grouping of students, support and intervention as an expanded learning program.

Ms. Burrell-Moore reported that the principal at School No. 35 has a degree in bilingual education, and the school community has been advocating for bilingual programming. The Diagnostic Tool for School and District Effectiveness (DTSDE) review was just completed today, which yielded some good preliminary feedback and the school was found to be in good standing in terms of some of their practices. Ms. Burrell-Moore stated that the School-Based Planning Team is very collaborative, and the school has established comprehensive classroom visits with follow-up action items, including more deliberate lesson planning and differentiation of instruction.

Ms. Burrell-Moore discussed some of the challenges at School No. 50 as resulting from late leadership assignment, which did not create a clear path for improvement. She reported that many systems have

been put in place this year, including lesson planning that is checked regularly and greater focus on instructional practices. She discussed the collaboration between the School-Based Planning Team and school leaders, improved lesson planning, and accelerated math and science courses for 8th grade students. Ms. Burrell-Moore commented that there is a need for reading and math specialists at School No. 50.

Commissioner Hallmark remarked that the DTSDE report for School No. 50 revealed poor lesson planning, preparation, and quality of materials provided to students, which reflects on the school leadership. Ms. Burrell-Moore reported that the previous Principal and Assistant Principal were replaced mid-year, which led to significant improvements in collaborating with the School-Based Planning Team and providing clearer direction for the school. She pointed out that the NYS Education Department does not include the assessment scores of any of these students in evaluating school performance because students are not required to take 8th grade math or science exams. Ms. Burrell-Moore reported that a substantial number of students have been performing well, and the school plans to add reading and math specialists. She clarified that if tenured teachers are not available in these areas, the District plans to recruit retired teachers to fill these positions at School Nos. 16 and 50.

Commissioner Hallmark asked who prepares the DTSDE reports, noting that the report for School No. 50 is quite extensive. Ms. Alberti explained that an outside evaluator performs each annual DTSDE review, and any recommendation related to a negative finding must be addressed in the school's improvement plan. She stated that the evidence section is based on the outside evaluator's report and the improvement plan is developed by the School-Based Planning Team, which includes two to three parents.

Ms. Burrell-Moore added that the current school leaders have a strong background in elementary education. She explained that the DTSDE report for School No. 50 was a continuation from a lackluster year, which may account for the level of detail provided.

Commissioner Evans pointed out that the finest improvement plans may be developed, but the outcome depends on execution and practice. He stated that while results cannot be attributed to one person, a great deal depends on leadership.

Commissioner Hallmark agreed, noting that principals have to be instructional leaders who are skilled in vertical teaming, providing planning time, sharing best practices, and targeted teacher development time. She inquired about the ability of these eight schools to carry out their SCEP plans, since none of them will be given additional funding under receivership or school improvement grants. Ms. Burrell-Moore explained that the District is placing teachers in schools with the largest percentages of students who have scored at the lowest levels (i.e. Level 1 and 2) on NYS assessments, and additional instruction will be offered on Saturdays and after school. She stated that comprehensive toolkits have been prepared for principals to model in their schools, such as the use of data for flexible grouping of students.

Commissioner Evans asked whether the Superintendent has the authority to remove principals at any time. He reiterated that he does not want to blame any one individual, but the overall tone of the school is set at the top. Ms. Burrell-Moore replied that a principal can only be removed for one year under the collective bargaining agreement. She stated that if the principal is not successful or is

under-performing, other steps must be followed, including reassignment or strong encouragement to find opportunities in other districts.

Motion by Commissioner Hallmark to approve the SCEP plans for School Nos. 16, 35, 46, 50, Wilson Foundation Academy, Edison High School, Leadership Academy for Young Men, and Vanguard Collegiate High School per Resolution No. 2016-17: 357. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of Parent Representative.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:57PM.