

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole
May 4, 2017

Attending: Malik Evans (Chair); Commissioners White, Adams, Hallmark, Powell (arrived at 5:40PM), and Elliott (arrived at 5:55PM)

Parent Representative: Toyin Anderson

District Staff: Keith Babuczszak, Executive Director of Career & Technical Education; Dr. Ray Giamartino, Chief of Accountability; Dr. Kendra March, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching & Learning; Elizabeth Cross, Assistant Principal at School No. 19; Carla Carey, Teacher on Assignment from School No. 19; Dr. Larry Ellison, Principal of School No. 33; Dr. Shaun Nelms, Superintendent of East High School.

Guests: Dr. Anjoo Sika, Dean of Ella Cline Shear School of Education, SUNY Geneseo

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Commissioner Evans called the meeting to order at 5:36PM.

I. Review Minutes of the March 28, 2017 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting

Motion by Commissioner White to approve the minutes of the March 28, 2017 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Adams. **Adopted 3-0.**

II. Review and Discuss Data regarding Career & Technical Education Courses offered by the District

Keith Babuczszak gave an overview of the Career & Technical Education (CTE) courses offered by the District annually in 2014-15, 2015-16, and 2016-17. He explained that students can use the CTE pathway to take a technical assessment in place of one of the Social Studies Regents exams, while another pathway (CDOS) allows students to use work-based learning or an employability skill assessment in place of these exams. Mr. Babuczszak pointed out that 2015-16 was the first year that these options were available for students. Eight students graduated with the CTE pathway and thirty students graduated with the CDOS pathway in 2015-16.

Commissioner White asked whether the District increased the number of CTE courses offered from 2014-15 to 2016-17. Mr. Babuczszak replied that four new programs have been approved by the State within the last couple of years, and more are anticipated in the near future.

III. Discuss Resolution for Proposed Partnership between School No. 33 and East High School EPO

East High School Superintendent Shaun Nelms explained that discussions regarding a possible partnership between East High School and School No. 33 began approximately one and a half years

ago, with the intent of creating a PreK-12 pipeline for students. He reported that meetings were held with Dr. Larry Ellison, Principal of School No. 33, and staff from Connected Communities to explore this idea. Dr. Nelms noted that the proposed partnership addresses the critical need for creating a solid foundation for students and for providing continuity in terms of academic, social, and emotional supports. He stated that the partnership is based on a community schools model and fulfills one of the receivership requirements regarding establishing neighborhood schools.

Dr. Nelms discussed collaborative efforts undertaken to date:

- School No. 33 students' Introduction/Orientation to East High School
- Alignment of teachers at School No. 33 with their counterparts at East High School to facilitate a smooth transition
- Discussion of the proposed partnership with members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee in May 2016

Dr. Nelms emphasized that the intent is to build a sustainable model that will continue to provide stability and continuity for students and families, regardless of changes in District or school leadership. He reported overwhelming support from the community for establishing this partnership, adding that students from other schools will not be restricted from attending East High School. Dr. Nelms acknowledged that some of the details still need to be addressed, specifically for students at School No. 33 who do not want to attend East High School. He focused on the importance of the proposed partnership in responding to the wishes of parents, teachers, and community groups in the area.

Larry Ellison discussed the School No. 33 – East High School feeder pattern concept, pointing out that many children are placed in a school by default because their parents did not participate in the school choice process.

Dr. Ellison described efforts to share information with stakeholders about the proposed partnership through a series of meetings that have been conducted over the last year with:

- The former Interim Superintendent and Board members in spring 2016;
- School No. 33 staff members;
- PTA leadership and parents of 5th and 6th grade students at School No. 33; and
- Leaders of community/neighborhood associations (Beechwood, Marketview Heights, EMMA).

Dr. Ellison emphasized the importance of a sustainable partnership in light of the fact that parents and grandparents of students will remain in the school neighborhood, even after District leaders and staff have moved on.

Dr. Ellison reported that the teachers of both schools have been collaborating on ELA and Math curriculum planning and implementation. He stated that plans for the partnership have been presented to the PTA, School-Based Planning Team, and staff at School No. 33 by representatives from East High School. In addition, East High School staff have distributed recruitment information to parents of students who will be entering 6th and 7th grade next year.

Dr. Ellison reported that Superintendent Deane-Williams has emphasized that all District schools are

governed by the Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy (5153), and that she will follow the Board's decision regarding the proposed partnership. Dr. Ellison declared that while he espouses the principle of school choice, his paramount consideration is to support the wishes of parents and community members for the proposed partnership.

Commissioner Evans expressed appreciation for the efforts that have been made to discuss the partnership with parents and community members, particularly since they have the greatest investment in the plan and the neighborhood. He added that this topic has been discussed for over a year, but the proposal was not spelled out in writing in preparation for the transition to a new administration.

Commissioner Evans requested that Commissioner Powell summarize the changes she has proposed to the resolution.

Commissioner Powell pointed out that the Superintendent has been charged with conducting a comprehensive assessment of existing zone boundaries, student demographic data, and school capacity to provide recommendations regarding the existing Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy. She explained that the proposed resolution includes a waiver to this policy, which would affect student placement and capacity at the two schools before the Superintendent has had an opportunity to conduct the study.

Commissioner Powell provided a hypothetical example, noting that if the study leads the Superintendent to recommend a return to neighborhood schools, students from School Nos. 28, 46, and 52 would not have the same access to seats at East High School as students from School No. 33 because of the established partnership. This is in spite of the fact that students attending these other schools may actually be in greater proximity to East High School than those from School No. 33.

Complicating the situation is the fact that the majority of students attending School No. 33 and East High School do not live in the adjacent neighborhood. Commissioner Powell added that some of the students in the neighborhood surrounding School No. 33 are in closer proximity to the Douglass campus than to East High School.

Commissioner Evans noted that the Board recently approved the addition of a 6th grade to the Leadership Academy for Young Men, and inquired about the implications for the study to be conducted by the Superintendent. Commissioner Adams stated that the addition of a 6th grade at the Leadership Academy will not affect the study.

Commissioner Adams observed that the District is constantly in the process of optimizing capacity because of changes in school accountability systems and designations, the instructional program, or the Facilities Modernization Program. She explained that the many different factors affecting school capacity led to her request for the Superintendent to conduct the study and engage in long-term comprehensive planning. Commissioner Adams cautioned against postponing initiatives until completion of the study because it would not necessarily be in the best interest of students or families. She emphasized that the proposed partnership was developed in response to advocacy efforts by community organizations to establish a neighborhood PreK-12 feeder pattern among schools. Commissioner Adams urged her colleagues to make the wishes of parents and community members the primary priority, rather than avoiding changes for the sake of the school capacity study.

Commissioner Adams expressed concern about the approach to be used with students at School No. 33 who do not wish to attend East High School in 6th grade. She stated that she would support retaining at least one 6th grade class at School No. 33 for students who do not wish to attend East High School at that grade level.

Commissioner Powell disagreed with the characterization that the resolution she has proposed would represent a lack of progress. She pointed to concerns about 6th grade students at School No. 33 who do not want to attend East High School, noting that options for these students would be limited to the availability of seats at other schools.

Commissioner Adams responded that this concern can be addressed by retaining at least one 6th grade class at School No. 33, specifically for students who do not want to attend East High School at that grade level.

Commissioner Powell asserted that this suggestion would not resolve the issue of accessibility and opportunity for students at School No. 33 to choose another school for 6th grade, or for those students in 6th grade at East High School to transfer elsewhere in 7th grade. Dr. Nelms pointed out that the resolution allows 6th grade students to transfer to other schools in 7th grade, if they do not wish to remain at East High School. He emphasized that the proposed partnership does not bind parents to particular school choices, but honors the wishes of parents and community members to establish a PreK-12 pipeline.

Dr. Ellison stated that he does not understand the concerns about limiting parent choice because parents of students entering 6th grade can choose to have their child attend East High School, transfer to another school, or remain at School No. 33 – at least for 2017-18.

Commissioner Powell contended that the premise underlying the proposed partnership seems to be that so few parents participate in school choice that the District will make the choice for them. She recalled that when the Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy was initially proposed, the main argument against the policy was that the District knew best where to place students. Commissioner Powell maintained that parents know which school is best for their child.

Commissioner White observed that approximately 50% of District parents do not participate in the school choice process, and the District is already making these choices for them.

Commissioner Powell asserted that school staff could be actively reaching out to parents about school choice and the placement process, meeting with the school's PTA/PTO and sharing this information.

Commissioner White questioned why students whose parents have not participated in the school choice process couldn't be enrolled at East High School.

Commissioner Powell responded that her proposed resolution would allow this option, but her approach does not presume that the parents of students at School No. 33 are not going to make a choice.

Commissioner Hallmark discussed the idea of encouraging principals to actively engage in the placement process with parents, particularly with those who have not participated. She pointed to data reported in a previous Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting indicating that

only 21% of the students at School No. 33 are from the neighborhood, and only 5% of those attending East High School live in the surrounding neighborhood. Commissioner Hallmark expressed concern that adopting the original resolution may unwittingly lead to undermining the neighborhood school option. Dr. Nelms acknowledged that only 5% of the students attending East High School reside in the neighborhood, pointing out that this is the result of actions by the Placement Office to randomly place students in the school because of its size and capacity.

Commissioner Hallmark expressed concern about the proposed partnership limiting options for restructuring the school choice/placement process before the study has been conducted. For this reason, she suggested implementing the proposed partnership on a temporary basis.

Ray Giamartino reported that historically 50-55% of District parents have not participated in the school choice process. He stated that the Placement Office has made a deliberate effort to conduct personalized outreach to families to promote school choice and parent engagement. Dr. Giamartino noted that staff in the Placement Office contact parents to discuss their preferences among the schools that have remaining capacity.

Commissioner Evans suggested that there may be opportunities to amend the resolution to address the concerns that have been raised in this evening's meeting.

Commissioner Adams proposed a number of revisions to the resolution to address Committee members' concerns:

- Stating that School No. 33 will continue to serve students in K-6 through 2020-21, rather than eliminating 6th grade at the school in 2018-19;
- Stating that students at School No. 33 may attend East High School for 6th grade, rather than stating that they will attend East High School beginning in 6th grade; and
- Stipulating that School No. 33 students who do not want to attend 6th grade at East High School have the option to remain at School No. 33 for 6th grade.

Commissioner Adams stated that the Board could re-evaluate the need for a 6th grade at School No. 33 based on placement and school choice data.

Commissioner Elliott inquired about the timeframe for the proposed partnership. Dr. Nelms replied that the partnership is for the duration of the educational partnership agreement between the University of Rochester and East High School (through the 2020-21 school year). He explained that research will be conducted over a three-year period (2018-19 through 2020-21) regarding students' transition from elementary to secondary school, coordination of services, and social/emotional supports for students. Dr. Nelms noted that the purpose of the research is to provide recommendations for the benefit of all District schools.

Dr. Ellison pointed out that the proposed partnership has engendered a great deal of discussion among staff, parents and students. He stated that the school choice process involves mailing applications to students' homes, and school staff have no information about parent participation or the choices being made. Dr. Ellison reported that past practice involved principals distributing school choice

applications to families, who returned the completed application to the school. He pointed out that these practices made information available to school staff, enabling them to reach out to families who had not participated.

Dr. Nelms discussed the impact of school staff lacking information about the students entering the school, preventing staff from being able to offer the supports necessary to ensure a smooth transition, promote student success, and foster engagement in school. He stated that the proposed partnership seeks to improve students' transition to secondary school by enhancing the ability to address student learning, social and emotional needs.

Commissioner White pointed out that shepherding children through school from PreK to college is in the best interest of the children in the District because of the instructional consistency and internal operational continuity provided throughout their educational experience. He asserted that this partnership would be the first example of offering this type of continuity in the District, short of having a PreK-12 school (e.g. School No. 58).

In terms of the timing of the partnership, Commissioner White estimated that approximately 6-9 months will be needed to conduct research of the model and another 3-5 months for meetings and discussion regarding the results and recommendations. He projected that the study will not be completed until at least 2018-19, and the EPO at East High School will terminate in 2020-21. He emphasized that the District currently has a narrow window of opportunity, and initiatives cannot be postponed until the Superintendent's placement and capacity study has been completed.

Commissioner Hallmark emphasized that her primary concern is not to limit parents' options for school choice. For this reason, she stated that she would not want to have 6th grade eliminated from School No. 33. She noted that there are currently 5 classes at the 6th grade level at School No. 33 and 3 classes at this level at East High School. She suggested switching these numbers to encourage families to select East High School for 6th grade. Commissioner Hallmark remarked that one of the most significant aspects of this discussion has been the revelation that principals and school staff have no information about the school choice and placement process. She suggested that principals' involvement in this process may encourage more parents to participate.

Commissioner Adams described difficulties for students when placed in a school by default, rather than through a deliberate choice on the part of their parents. She gave an example of a student who was placed at School No. 45, anxious and uncertain of where to go in the first few days of the school year. Commissioner Adams noted that these types of difficulties can lead students to feel disoriented and disengaged from school, pointing out that Board members have been pleading for improvements to the student placement process for years. She added that Board members have often personally experienced these difficulties through their own children and/or extended family members.

Commissioner Powell concurred with Commissioner Hallmark's observations about the importance of school staff having school placement information to be able to assist families in this process. She suggested that the placement process be made more accessible to parents by offering online registration at their child's school, thereby also making school choice information available to school staff. Commissioner Powell pointed out that assisting families in the placement process requires school principals to serve as honest brokers of information and to be knowledgeable about programs and services offered in other schools.

Commissioner Powell asserted that the ideal scenario would be to have all opportunities available to every child in the District as they move from elementary to secondary school within their neighborhood. She observed that the reality is that the District has had a system for over 50 years in which high schools draw students from throughout the City. Commissioner Powell noted that the District's secondary schools have become more fractured and specialized over time, requiring students to attend a school based on their interests rather than on geographic location. She maintained that the District cannot offer every child what they need through the use of a feeder pattern. Commissioner Powell agreed with the concept of tracking every student, but stated that establishing a feeder pattern between one pair of schools does not resolve this structural problem.

Commissioner Elliott surmised that the intent of the proposed feeder pattern between School No. 33 and East High School is to avoid the problems associated with the school placement process. She expressed concern about the expense of the EPO agreement at East High School, which may only last for another three years and has not yet definitively demonstrated academic success. Commissioner Elliott pointed out that when an initiative is implemented in a school with a demonstrated history of success (e.g. School No. 58, School of the Arts), there is confidence that an infrastructure and culture are in place to support it.

Dr. Nelms requested that Committee members consider the PreK-5 and 6-12 model for establishing a pipeline from elementary to secondary school. He noted that the entire premise for the model is based on thorough review of research literature regarding the most effective school models. Dr. Nelms acknowledged that the research results are mixed, but the need to build relationships with families from PreK to college is unequivocal. He urged Board members not to lose sight of this point in their discussions.

Dr. Nelms conceded that the effectiveness of the EPO at East High School remains to be seen, but progress has been made. He pointed out that no program has been consistently successful for the population of students at East High School. Dr. Nelms emphasized that the student population at East High School is different from that of the other schools that have been cited as "successful" (i.e. School No. 58, School of the Arts). He asserted that the intent of the partnership model is to benefit the majority of students in the District, who are similar to those attending East High School.

Commissioner Elliott stated that her skepticism arises from the fact that the effectiveness of the East High School educational partnership has not yet been demonstrated, so the research is not yet available for establishing a solid foundation for the proposed partnership with School No. 33. She stated that she does not think the District is ready to implement this initiative for the next school year, expressing concern about rushing into the proposed partnership and not allowing the Superintendent sufficient time to vet the idea to ensure its sustainability in the long term.

Commissioner Powell noted that a sunset provision is needed to enable the Board to revisit the proposed partnership after the East High School educational partnership has ended (i.e. after the 2020-21 school year).

Commissioner White pointed out that the resolution needs to contain a statement to define/explain the meaning of the PreK-12 feeder pattern. Dr. Nelms replied that he will craft a definition to add to the resolution.

Commissioner Adams suggested adding a statement to the amended resolution that the Board is

supportive of the proposed PreK-5 and 6-12 model.

Action Item: Board staff member Ms. Flanagan will incorporate the suggested amendments into the resolution, and circulate the amended resolution to Board members for a straw vote before the May Business Meeting on May 25, 2017.

IV. Discuss Proposed Educational Partnership with SUNY Geneseo for School No. 19

Commissioner White commended the representatives from SUNY Geneseo for their efforts to respond to questions regarding the proposed educational partnership with School No. 19 in preparation for this evening's meeting. He requested a brief summary of the current status of this proposal, noting that approval is required by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Dr. Anjoo Sika replied that representatives from SUNY Geneseo have been meeting with District staff in the Administration and at School No. 19 approximately every two weeks for transition planning and to develop the educational partnership organization (EPO) model. She discussed meeting with School No. 19 teachers and members of the School-Based Planning Team, as well as representatives from the Rochester Teachers' Association. Dr. Sika explained that several options for the EPO model have been debated, and a decision was made to shift from a teacher-powered model to a collaborative model involving all stakeholders.

Dean Sika reported that the EPO proposal has also been submitted to the State University of New York (SUNY), whose officials were concerned about the budget implications because of an ongoing structural deficit. She stated that these concerns have been alleviated after providing information regarding budget neutrality and the way in which it is to be achieved. Dr. Sika reported that she will meet with SUNY staff members, the NYS Education Chancellor, and legal counsel to present the EPO proposal on May 15, 2017. She will be accompanied by Denise Battles, President of SUNY Geneseo, and Dr. Jane Fowler Morse, Professor in the Ella Cline Shear School of Education at SUNY Geneseo. After the May 15th meeting, SUNY staff members will place the EPO proposal on the calendar for consideration by the SUNY Board of Trustees. Dean Sika stated that she is uncertain whether a special meeting will be required before the next scheduled Board of Trustees' meeting on June 25th.

Dr. Sika discussed changes in plans to adhere to the guidelines recently provided in a letter from the Assistant Commissioner of the NYS Education Department, Ira Schwartz. She explained that a two-step process was anticipated for establishing an EPO with School No. 19: 1) Submitting a proposal to the NYS Education Department, following approval by the Rochester Board of Education; 2) Developing an agreement in collaboration with the District after obtaining approval from the State. Dean Sika acknowledged that she had been concerned about accomplishing these tasks by July 1, 2017. She noted that the information required by the NYS Education Department (NYSED) is more extensive than anticipated and the deadline is June 2, 2017. Dean Sika reported that Dr. Jane Morse has been on site at School No. 19 to gather information and develop the EPO agreement, but has recently been called away to a family emergency. She noted that other staff members can begin working to prepare the necessary documentation.

If Board members approve proceeding with the EPO plan, Commissioner White recommended that Dr. Sika consult with Dr. Steve Uebbing at the University of Rochester, which serves as the educational partnership organization for East High School. Although the two EPO models are quite different, Dr. Uebbing has experience in coordinating the documentation required by the State. Commissioner White pointed out that the process of obtaining the materials required by NYSED is not necessarily as daunting as it might appear. Dr. Sika responded that she appreciates the clear guidelines

provided by NYSED because this expedites the process. She added that she has been concerned that she has not had the opportunity to speak with the Board of Education or the SUNY Board of Trustees about addressing the requirements.

Commissioner Adams noted that the NYS Education Department has a tendency to establish tight deadlines that often do not allow much time to develop plans. She pointed out that a considerable amount of information can be taken from the School Improvement Grant (SIG) application that has been approved and from the transition planning meetings that have been held.

Commissioner Evans asked about other critical deadlines and the District's timeline with respect to the EPO proposal.

Commissioner White pointed out that decisions will have to be made regarding summer school and staffing, if SUNY Geneseo does not become the EPO for School No. 19 on July 1, 2017. He reported discussing these issues with the Superintendent, who expressed a willingness to continue collaborating with SUNY Geneseo in these decisions. He asserted that there is some flexibility to continue the collaboration even if the July 1st deadline is not met. Dr. Sika described her conversations with Superintendent Deane-Williams, who has emphasized the importance of the partnership and continued collaboration to ensure that school operations are not disrupted – regardless of when the official EPO designation is granted.

Dr. Sika reflected on the disappointment evidenced by members of the Transition Team when she discussed the possibility that the July 1, 2017 deadline would not be met. She emphasized that these teachers and staff members have been eagerly anticipating the changes proposed under the EPO plan, and have already begun implementing interventions that would typically not be expected until next year. Dean Sika reflected on staff members' passion, engagement and commitment as indicative of the importance of continuing this collaboration, regardless of the timing of the EPO approval.

Commissioner Hallmark asked whether the plan is to implement the EPO model at all grade levels, or by adding two grade levels at a time. Dr. Sika replied that the plan is to use collaborative co-teaching at all grade levels, adding that use of the term "ICOT+ model" has led to the mistaken impression that each grade level must have an ICOT placement.

Carla Carey described the collaborative teaching model under the proposed EPO, in which each combined class will have either: 1) A Special Education teacher and two General Education teachers; or 2) A Special Education teacher, a General Education teacher, and a specialist (Reading or Intervention Teacher). She explained that the purpose of including a Special Education teacher in the classroom is to serve students who have been classified as needing this level of instruction and to offer prevention/early intervention for other students to reduce the overall classification rate. Ms. Carey noted that each combined General Education and ICOT class will have 12 students in Special Education, all of whom will receive services within the classroom. These students could have placements in an ICOT classroom, Resource Room, or with a Consultant Teacher. Ms. Carey reported that some of the students at School No. 19 who would have been placed in a more restrictive setting (e.g. 12:1:1 class) have made progress in the Integrated Co-Teaching classroom because of the flexibility and individual attention provided.

Commissioner Elliott pointed out that the introduction to the SUNY Geneseo EPO Plan states that the proposal is based on experience in School No. 7, but student performance at that school has been poor

in terms of scores on NYS ELA and Math assessments. She questioned whether these results indicate that the model is ineffective. Ms. Carey replied that only a small model program was used at School No. 7, which consisted initially of two 4th grade classes (2003-08) and then expanded to include two 5th grade classes (2005-06). She noted that the program was partially re-implemented at School No. 7 in 2012-13, after New York State had adopted the Common Core curriculum and standards. Ms. Carey reported that the only students who passed the NYS ELA and Math assessments that year were those who had participated in the model program, even though these classes included students with disabilities and English Language learners. She emphasized that a program enabling students to make substantial strides must be sustained for more than one year to realize lasting results.

Commissioner Elliott expressed concern about replicating this program to scale for an entire school. She pointed out that past initiatives and programs in the District have not been implemented with fidelity, thereby limiting opportunities for success.

Commissioner Powell recalled that the SUNY Geneseo program at School No. 7 was discontinued in 2008 because of drastic cutbacks in NYS Aid, even before the financial recession. She emphasized that a lack of sustained resources typically leads experimental programs and initiatives to be cut, thereby losing the ability to maintain gains in student achievement.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired about the ramifications of the EPO proposal not being approved, or being delayed for a year. She asked more specifically about SUNY Geneseo's involvement with School No. 19 in this situation. Dr. Sika responded that SUNY Geneseo staff will continue the work that has begun and their partnership with School No. 19. She reported that a recent poll of teacher candidates indicated very positive growth as prospective teachers from interacting with students at School No. 19. She added that a poll of the RCSD teachers has not yet been conducted to gauge their experience with SUNY Geneseo practicum students. Dean Sika declared that the impetus for the EPO proposal is to implement the collaborative co-teaching model and recognize teacher leadership in the best possible way at School No. 19.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired about anticipated changes in leadership at School No. 19. Dr. Sika replied that she plans to discuss this with the Superintendent in the next few weeks, as a decision has not yet been made. Beverly Burrell-Moore reported that the current principal has been assigned a one-year term as Acting Principal, and the District plans to collaborate with SUNY Geneseo in selecting a school leader under the EPO.

Commissioner Adams questioned the extent to which representatives from SUNY Geneseo will continue to collaborate and consult with District staff after being approved as the EPO for School No. 19. Dr. Sika emphasized the importance of ensuring a smooth transition, providing stability and continuity for students and families of School No. 19. She noted that SUNY Geneseo intends to lead the school within the District, and to remain involved with the school even after the EPO agreement ends.

Commissioner Elliott asked about the reasons for SUNY Geneseo wanting to serve as an EPO for School No. 19. Dean Sika replied that teacher preparation requires partnerships with PreK-12 schools, and early, authentic experience is essential under the guidance of school-based educators and faculty members. She stated that she wants teacher candidates to gain experience and positively benefit children while in the SUNY Geneseo program. Although the program prepares teachers to work in a variety of settings, Dr. Sika reported that research shows that the majority obtain their first job in an

urban setting. She noted that currently there are student interns at School No. 19 and two graduate students are interested in working in the Rochester City School District. Dr. Sika also discussed the State University's responsibility to the surrounding community, asserting that it cannot be an outstanding teacher preparation school while surrounding public schools are struggling. Ms. Burrell-Moore highlighted the importance of partnering with colleges to benefit from their expertise, and to engage more motivated teachers.

Commissioner Elliott discussed racial differences between the majority of teachers and the majority of students in the District, noting that 85% of teachers are white and 85% of students are of color. She stated that the cultural differences between students and teachers have a significant impact, citing research showing that students' motivation and ability to succeed are enhanced when the teacher is of the same culture and background. Dr. Sika added that there are fewer disciplinary referrals when teachers and students share the same background. She discussed issues related to teacher recruitment and retention among under-represented groups, noting that one of the major issues is that the instructional materials have no relevance to their culture or experience. Dean Sika pointed out that increasing the number of teacher candidates of color depends on providing authentic learning experiences, a sense of belonging within a community, and a steady income while in college. She reported that work-study opportunities are being explored to enable student teachers to be paid for after-school sessions with students at School No. 19. She stated that grant opportunities are also being sought to develop teachers while also benefiting students.

Commissioner Evans requested a summary of the sequence of steps and deadlines involved in establishing an EPO with SUNY Geneseo for School No. 19.

Commissioner White pointed out that the SUNY Geneseo proposal is quite different from the EPO established by the University of Rochester for East High School in terms of the models used and the level of financial commitment. He noted that this is an exciting opportunity for the District because the SUNY Geneseo EPO will serve as an incubator for another model.

Commissioner White suggested revising the language in the introduction of the SUNY Geneseo EPO Plan to clarify that the program at School No. 7 was for a specific time period and only at 4th and 5th grade levels. He added that School No. 7 students' scores on the NYS ELA exam have risen significantly since 2012-13. Ms. Carey reported that these students demonstrated substantial gains in NWEA and AIMSWeb ELA scores this year.

Commissioner White suggested that the Board Clerk collaborate with Dr. Sika and Superintendent Deane-Williams to craft a resolution regarding deadlines in the EPO process and circulate the draft to Board members.

Action Item: The Board Clerk will work with Dr. Sika and Superintendent Deane-Williams to craft a resolution regarding the deadlines in the EPO process, and distribute the draft resolution to Board members.

Commissioner Hallmark questioned the plan to have a part-time superintendent for School No. 19 under the EPO, which would be supported by School Improvement Grant funds.

Commissioner Powell added that the letter from the NYS Education Department states that a full-time leader of the school is required.

Dean Sika stated that School No. 19 is small and does not require a full-time superintendent. She stated that a school principal may suffice in meeting this requirement, but she plans to discuss this further with officials at the NYS Education Department.

Commissioner Hallmark asked about the collective bargaining agreements and the need for negotiations regarding professional development and other work expectations under the EPO. Dr. Sika responded that draft agreements have been developed, but the approach with the collective bargaining units has not yet been determined because of the collaborative work being performed. She stated that preparations will begin for addressing these issues, particularly in light of the guidelines recently provided by NYSED.

Commissioner Adams noted that the demonstration of support for the EPO Plan by the majority of teachers at School No. 19 is quite promising, expressing optimism about the prospects for negotiating collective bargaining agreements. She pointed out that the first step outlined in the letter from the NYS Education Department is approval of a formal resolution by the Board of Education. Commissioner Adams asked whether this approval would be helpful for the meeting between SUNY Geneseo representatives and SUNY staff on May 15, 2017. Dean Sika responded that having formal, official approval from the Rochester Board of Education would be most valuable in supporting their presentation of the EPO Plan to the SUNY system leadership.

Commissioner Adams requested that her colleagues consider a resolution seeking permission to enter into an educational partnership with SUNY Geneseo to lend support to Dr. Sika and her team for the May 15th meeting. She suggested that a more comprehensive resolution specifying more of the expectations under the EPO could be considered in the May Business Meeting. Commissioner Adams pointed out that a Special Meeting is already scheduled for May 11th for adoption of the proposed 2017-18 RCSD budget, which could also include consideration of a basic resolution regarding the SUNY Geneseo EPO.

Commissioner Elliott asked how the representatives from SUNY Geneseo would handle a situation in which some of the staff members at School No. 19 are resistant to the EPO Plan. Ms. Carey replied that the union distributed an anonymous survey today to their members at the school, which addressed more specific questions (e.g. willingness to work in an Integrated Co-Teaching classroom; degree of support for SUNY Geneseo to serve as the EPO).

Commissioner Powell observed that the documents handed out in this evening's meeting reflect a considerable degree of support for the EPO plan among teachers at School No. 19, but parents' input is lacking. She requested additional information about parents' response to the EPO proposal. Ms. Carey replied that there was some hesitation among parents because of initial reports that teachers at School No. 19 were not necessarily supportive of the proposal. She explained that teachers were asked to provide a statement about their view of the EPO plan to address parents' concerns, and their statements are contained in the document presented in tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Elliott inquired whether staff members not in support of the EPO Plan would be expected to remain at School No. 19. Ms. Carey noted that staff have the option of transferring if they do not want to stay at the school under the EPO arrangement. Dr. Sika pointed out that the EPO Plan has a high level of support because of the collaborative approach that has been used in the school, adding that plans have been modified based on the feedback received.

Ms. Carey discussed concerns about parent and family engagement, noting that the proposed governance structure under the EPO Plan was revised to increase parent representation. In light of the difficulty for some parents to participate in school activities on a consistent basis, she stated that some opportunities are offered to allow greater flexibility in terms of attendance. Ms. Carey added that the student-led conferences facilitate communication between school staff and parents, as well as enabling students to present and discuss their work.

Commissioner Elliott expressed concern about school staff members' expectation that parents will seek them out, rather than reaching out to parents in their home and community. She emphasized that staff willingness to meet parents and families in their surroundings shows a greater level of commitment, care and concern for their well-being.

Commissioner Powell focused on the importance of regular contact and communication with parents to demonstrate a real commitment to their attendance and participation, including reminders of school events/activities.

Commissioner Adams suggested including parents in the hiring process, particularly for teachers. She noted that her husband has been participating in selecting and hiring teachers, and would be willing to mentor other parents who would like to serve in this capacity.

Steve Carling clarified that the letter from the NYS Education Department requires the Board to approve a resolution to seek the permission of the NYS Education Commissioner to enter into an agreement with SUNY Geneseo to serve as the educational partnership organization (EPO) for School No. 19.

Meeting adjourned at 8:22PM.