

EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE MEETING OF THE WHOLE

April 12, 2018

Attending: Commissioner Sheppard (Chair); Commissioners Powell, LeBron, Hallmark, Elliott, and Funchess (arrived 6:13PM).

Parent Representative: Toyin Anderson

District staff: Beth Mascitti-Miller, Chief of School Innovation; Kelly Bauman, Director of Expanded Learning; Ray Giamartino, Chief of Accountability; Rob Ulliman, Director of Planning; Shirley Green, School Chief; Harry Kennedy, Chief of Human Capital Initiatives; Ann Brady, Senior Human Capital Initiatives Director; and Maurice Snipes, Diversity Recruitment Manager

Students: Daniel Garwood (School of the Arts), Jaydn Buckhannon (Rochester Early College High School), and Michael Oliver (World of Inquiry School No. 58)

Board staff: Debra Flanagan, Executive Assistant to the Board

Commissioner Sheppard convened the meeting at 6:03PM.

I. Review and Approve Minutes of February 1, 2018 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole

Motion by Commissioner Elliott to approve the minutes of the February 1, 2018 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole. Seconded by Commissioner LeBron.
Adopted 3-0.

II. Presentation by RCSD Students Receiving Scholarships to Monroe Community College

Commissioner Sheppard announced that she plans to begin each meeting of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee with a presentation from students regarding a program in the District. For this evening's meeting, she announced that several students would discuss their background, future plans and efforts toward attaining a scholarship to Monroe Community College (MCC) in September 2018.

Daniel Garwood attends the School of the Arts, and plans to enroll in the 2+2 program at MCC to continue on to SUNY Brockport. Daniel discussed his participation in a leadership program that enabled him to attend Camp Good Days for one week each year for several years. He credited these experiences with helping him to overcome social anxiety and boost his confidence. Daniel also reported receiving a great deal of support from his fellow students and staff at the School of the Arts after having multiple surgeries.

Jaydn Buckhannon is a student at Rochester Early College High School, and will also enroll in the 2+2 program at MCC to continue her education at Rochester Institute of Technology in pursuit of a career in veterinary medicine. Jaydn reported that her experiences with the District have

impressed upon her the importance of networking in finding and pursuing opportunities. Her mother is also continuing her education, and she and Jaydn attend MCC together.

Michael Oliver is enrolled at the World of Inquiry School No. 58, and plans to enroll in the 2+2 program to study computer science at MCC and then at Rochester Institute of Technology. Michael reported needing more assistance in school than most other students, and credited his teachers with providing the support and encouragement he needed to succeed and enjoy each of his classes. When asked about his interest in computer science, he noted that many members of his family have careers in the information technology field.

Harry Kennedy offered to assist each of these students with employment opportunities as they transition through Monroe Community College.

III. Review and Discuss Quarterly Academic Achievement Reports for 2nd Marking Period and Projected Graduation Rates

Ray Giamartino emphasized that the data being presented reflects a single snapshot in time, and is based on tracking credits and courses for each student in the 2014 cohort for the 2nd marking period of the school year. The data is provided to each school and reviewed with school staff, so that interventions can be designed according to each student's progress and needs.

Dr. Giamartino reported that the 2014 cohort has increased by 78 students due to an influx of youth from Puerto Rico, and re-enrollment of students who had previously withdrawn from the District. He noted that a significant percentage of students with disabilities and English-language learners have dropped out of school since 2014:

	2014 Cohort*	Dropped Out*
Total number of students:	2048	15.0%
English-language students:	266	33.1%
Students with disabilities:	424	20.3%

*Based on NYS Education Department data as of February 2018

Commissioner Elliott commented on the need for intense triage to reduce the number of students dropping out and to increase the graduation rate in the District. Dr. Giamartino replied that the School Chiefs collaborate closely with Assistant Principals, school counselors, and social workers to locate students who have not been attending school. He added that District staff also check other databased to determine whether a student has transitioned to another school or district, or is attending a GED program.

Dr. Giamartino emphasized that the data presented this evening is only one snapshot in time, and estimates of the projected June 2018 graduation rate are based on the number of students in the 2014 cohort who have earned at least 16 credits and passed a minimum of 3 Regents exams. He clarified that the estimates include students with disabilities who obtained a low Regents exam score, passing exam scores for 504 safety-net eligible students, and students obtaining a passing score using the CTE option. Dr. Giamartino pointed out that the June 2018

graduation rate estimate of 49.9% does not include students who have passed the Regents exam using the compensatory option, or whose appeal has been approved to graduate with a lower Regents score. Inclusion of these students will raise the graduation rate further.

Commissioner LeBron requested an explanation of the basis for appeals and of the appeals process. Rob Ulliman replied that the District has received 78 appeals to date, and a total of approximately 250 appeals are anticipated by the end of the school year. He explained that appeals of Regents exam scores are allowed as follows:

General Education students: score of 60-64

Students with disabilities: score of 52-54 on Regents exams

Student in Special Education programs: score of 52-54 on Math or ELA exam
(with Superintendent determination appeal)

English-language learners: ELA exam score

Commissioner Hallmark asked about the criteria used to grant each type of appeal of Regents exam scores. Mr. Ulliman noted that the NYS Education Department grants appeals if the student has an exam score within the appropriate range. Prior to submission of an appeal to the NYS Education Department, each appeal must be approved at the school level, subject to review by the Accountability Office and the Office of Teaching & Learning, and ultimately approved by the Deputy Superintendent for Teaching and Learning. Mr. Ulliman reported that the appeals review includes consideration of the number of credits the student has earned. He stated that appeals are typically returned to the school if the student is not close to the number of credits needed to graduate, indicating that the student needs more time to prepare.

Dr. Giamartino emphasized the use of data in enabling School Chiefs and principals to closely examine student progress, identify the students in need of assistance in obtaining the minimum 65 passing score on the Regents exam, and students who have the potential to appeal their exam score. He stated that school counselors also monitor these students closely, and consult with their parents regarding appeals. Dr. Giamartino reported that each District school has an accountability tracking system to monitor each student's progress toward graduation.

Mr. Ulliman pointed out that the information used for tracking student progress is based on the Student Data Profile, which combines data in the RCSD Student Management System with NYS records. The Student Data Profile also indicates cases eligible for appeal. Mr. Ulliman reported that every RCSD school is provided with the Student Data Profile to assist with monitoring, tracking, and planning targeted interventions at the beginning of the school year and after each marking period.

Commissioner Hallmark asked about the length of time that the District has been gathering and utilizing Student Data Profiles. Mr. Ulliman replied that this data source has been available for approximately the last three years. He explained that creating the Student Data Profiles involves a cumbersome process of extracting data from the Western New York Regional Information Center (WNYRIC) for each school and from the RCSD Student Management System to integrate the two data sources. He stated that this is a manual, labor-intensive process which could be facilitated by the NYS Education Department providing the data from their system to the District. Mr. Ulliman reported that the NYS Education Department files have been requested

a number of times over the past three years, but the Department has not been willing to relinquish them.

Commissioner LeBron questioned the rationale provided by the NYS Education Department for refusing to provide the District with access to these files. Dr. Giamartino noted that the response from the NYS Education Department has been that access to their data files would have to be granted to all school districts, and could not only be given for the Rochester City School District.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired about changes in the Student Data Profiles over the last year. Dr. Giamartino responded that the Student Data Profiles have been refined and supplemented with additional features to make them more useful to schools in examining student progress in detail.

Commissioner Funchess sought verification that the estimated June 2018 graduation rate is based on the number of students in the 2014 cohort who have earned at least 16 credits and passed at least three Regents exams. Mr. Ulliman confirmed that this student population forms the basis for the projected June 2018 graduation rate. He pointed out that another 5-8% of students in the cohort typically graduate two months later in August. Mr. Ulliman stated that these estimates are conservative because of the greater flexibility currently allowed in meeting graduation requirements (e.g. students appealing Regents exam results, or pursuing a CTE pathway).

Commissioner Elliott inquired about efforts to assist students who have earned 11.0-15.5 credits, and the likelihood of their graduating in June or August 2018 according to historical data. Mr. Ulliman responded that many of these students attend summer school, increasing the likelihood that they will graduate in August.

Action Item: Information will be provided to the Board of the likelihood of June or August 2018 graduation for students who have earned 11.0-15.5 credits, based on historical data trends.

Dr. Giamartino noted that the supplemental credit recovery program has also been instrumental in assisting students to obtain the necessary credits needed to graduate.

Commissioner Elliott observed that the graduation rate would increase by as much as 11% if the District is able to successfully support students with 11.0-15.5 credits to earn the minimum necessary to graduate.

Commissioner Sheppard asked whether the District has a sufficient number of counselors to track students who have 0-10.5 credits and to refer them to necessary resources. She suggested that school counselors focus primarily on assisting seniors with progressing toward graduation, rather than attempting to support all students in the school. Dr. Giamartino pointed out that a variety of models are used in different school districts, some of which assign counselors to follow a particular cohort of students to graduation to provide continuity of support and services.

Commissioner Funchess suggested establishing specialized triage teams to address students' needs at each level of credit accumulation (e.g. 11-15.5 credits; 5.5-10.5 credits, etc.).

Commissioner Elliott pointed out that while focusing on the specific needs of each group of students is important, consideration also must be given to their progress in terms of taking and passing Regents exams.

Action Item: For the group of students who have earned 11.0-15.5 credits as of the end of the 2nd marking period, information will be provided to the Board of the specific requirements that these students need to fulfill to graduate.

Parent Representative Toyin Anderson questioned why students have not been tracked since their entry into high school, so that their needs could be addressed earlier and the risk of failing to graduate on time would be minimized. She asked about the lack of progress made by some students by their senior year. Dr. Giamartino replied that students have been tracked since their entry into 9th grade, comprising the 2014 cohort that is expected to graduate in June 2018. He stated that a number of factors could affect students' progress through high school.

Commissioner Powell noted that some students may be in the 2014 cohort, but may not have advanced to 12th grade yet.

Dr. Giamartino stated that some students may not have had the opportunity to take or pass all of the necessary courses required for graduation.

Commissioner Funchess cited an example of a student with a disability who took the same Regents exam six times because a disability prevented her from having the stamina to sit through the entire exam at one time. Her exam scores dropped lower and lower over time because of her diminishing self-confidence. Commissioner Funchess questioned the extent to which the students with earned credits below the minimum (i.e. 16) may be in this same situation. She emphasized the importance of the District preventing students from being set on a path to failure by assessing each student's specific needs to tailor the services and supports they receive. She asserted that the District has to improve tracking of students taking Regents exams to prevent these types of situations.

Toyin Anderson observed that the number of students in each credit accumulation group is not that large, and the District should be able to monitor each group to identify their needs and help them to obtain better results. Dr. Giamartino noted that the situation described by Commissioner Funchess led the Office of Accountability to conduct an extensive examination to identify students who had repeatedly taken the same Regents exam. He offered to provide information regarding the number of students with insufficient credits who have repeatedly taken the same Regents exam. Once these students have been identified, an assessment will be conducted to determine the specific supports or accommodations they may need to be successful.

Action Item: An update regarding student academic progress and graduation rate projections will be provided in the May Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting, which will be held after the third marking period. This meeting will also include a discussion of efforts being made for each group of students who have

accumulated an insufficient number of credits to graduate in June 2018 (e.g. 11.0-15.5 credits; 5.5-10.5 credits) and/or have repeatedly taken the same Regents exam.

Shirley Green reviewed the data contained in the School Chiefs' Quarterly Academic Reports, which provide detail for each school in each network. She discussed the common elements in each report: the results of fall and mid-winter NWEA exams, which are used to evaluate student academic growth in all RCSD schools; attendance; and data for each cohort in each school. Dr. Green stated that some schools (e.g. Edison High School) use a graduation coach in collaboration with school counselors to assist students in progressing toward graduation.

Commissioner Sheppard inquired about progress demonstrated with the use of a graduation coach. Dr. Green replied that Edison High School is not in her network, but School Chief Toyia Anderson meets every other week with counselors to examine cohort tracking, progress for each student, and additional supports that each student may need.

Commissioner Elliott requested additional detail regarding the charts of NWEA Math and ELA proficiency that compare fall 2017 to winter 2018 results. Dr. Green clarified that the charts reflect the percentage of students in grades 3-8 in each school who scored at or above proficiency levels (i.e. Level 3 or 4) on the NWEA Math and ELA exams in fall 2017 and winter 2018. She added that NYS assessments are only administered once per year, whereas the District conducts the NWEA exams three times during the school year to obtain an indication of student progress.

Commissioner Elliott asked about the ways in which the NWEA exam score data is used in the District. Dr. Green reported that she meets with staff in each school in her network every five weeks to analyze the data and create a watch list of students at risk academically. She explained that Reading Teachers and Intervention Teachers work with these students to improve academic performance. Dr. Green noted that 94% of the students in the schools in her network need academic support. Since support cannot be provided to all of these students at once, she works with school staff to plan and time interventions strategically throughout the year. She stated that her meetings with school staff involve discussing each group of students, the skills being developed, and ways to collaborate with classroom teachers. After the Reading Teacher and Intervention Teacher have established student support plans, the plans are carried over by the classroom teacher.

Commissioner Elliott observed that the data shows a decline in NWEA ELA and/or Math scores for some schools since the beginning of the school year (i.e. from fall 2017 to winter 2018). Ms. Green explained that the schools participating in the Zearn program have experienced an increase in the percentage of students proficient in Math over the course of the school year. She stated that although there is a much greater variety of interventions for ELA, improvements in terms of mid-winter NWEA ELA scores have not been realized. Dr. Green noted that the District has historically seen a drop in the percentage of students testing proficient in ELA from fall to winter, but significant increases in the spring.

Commissioner Sheppard observed that there are issues with the increased use of substitute teachers because this disrupts a child's learning momentum. She requested additional data for each school to examine the extent to which the use of substitute teachers is associated with reductions in NWEA scores from fall 2017 to winter 2018.

Commissioner Sheppard also pointed out that student mobility and frequent transitions affect their learning over the course of the school year.

Action Item: Data will be provided to the Board of the use of substitute teachers in each school, with a comparison to fall 2017 and winter 2018 NWEA ELA and Math scores for the current school year. In addition, data will be provided regarding the number/percentage of students transitioning into and out of each school in the current school year, with a comparison to NWEA scores.

Commissioner Elliott commented on the chart reflecting student growth in Math and ELA from fall 2017 to winter 2018, and requested additional clarification of the information presented. Dr. Green replied that this chart shows the academic growth overall in each K-8 school in Math and ELA during the current school year.

Commissioner Powell pointed out that few schools seem to have attained 50% growth in ELA or Math, yet the District is halfway through the school year.

Commissioner Funchess questioned the specific tool used to evaluate academic growth, and requested clarification of the data represented in the different charts. She noted that the percentage of students at School No. 10 considered proficient in Math has dropped since the beginning of the current school year, yet another chart shows that the school experienced almost 60% growth so far this year. Dr. Green pointed out that a student may experience growth during the school year, but still not be considered proficient.

Commissioner Funchess pointed out that additional data is needed of the extent of growth in Math and ELA for each group of students (i.e. at each NWEA score level, 1-4) to discern the meaning of the overall growth percentages for each school. She emphasized that there is no basis for the data regarding growth over the school year without this level of detail, particularly with such low percentages of students scoring at or above proficiency.

Commissioner Elliott commented on the District's culture and history of having low expectations of students and failing to challenge or engage them in learning. She emphasized the importance of establishing more ambitious goals for students to promote their engagement in learning. Dr. Green pointed out that NWEA assessments are only one measure of student academic progress, and are included in the School Chiefs' Quarterly Academic Achievement Reports because these assessments are used consistently throughout the District. She explained that teachers set targets for each student and schools use a variety of other measures to evaluate academic progress. Dr. Green asserted that these other targets and measures tend to be more challenging than NWEA assessments because they are based on each student's level of academic achievement at the beginning of the school year.

Commissioner LeBron requested clarification regarding the proficiency scale only reaching a maximum of 25% for Math and ELA NWEA assessments. She also asked for the raw figures used to calculate the proficiency and growth percentages shown on the charts because percentages can be misleading. Commissioner LeBron also inquired about the reason for the significant increase in the percentage of School No. 28 students obtaining failing grades in the Living Environment from fall 2017 to winter 2018. Dr. Green replied that the NWEA proficiency

scale is based on the highest percentage of students scoring proficient on these exams. She stated that 25% was the highest percentage for the students in the schools in her network.

Action Item: The Board will be provided with the raw data that was used as the basis for determining the NWEA proficiency and growth percentages for ELA and Math for the current school year.

Commissioner LeBron observed that only 2.5% of K-8 students at School No. 4 scored proficient in Math on the NWEA exam in fall 2017, and this percentage has only increased to 5% of students by winter 2018. She stated that the percentages of students with Math and/or ELA proficiency are extremely low for each school.

Commissioner Funchess noted that only 2.5% of students in the school were considered proficient in Math in the fall of 2017 and 5.0% in winter 2018, which would indicate approximately 47% growth. However, this reported increase in growth only represents an increase from 2.5% to 5% in the percentage of students proficient in Math at this school. Ms. Green confirmed that this is the way in which data presented in the different charts are related.

Commissioner LeBron again requested an explanation of the reason for the increase in the percentage of 8th grade students at School No. 28 who are failing the Living Environment course from fall 2017 to winter 2018. Dr. Green replied that number of itinerant staff at the school has been increased to enable a greater number of students to receive academic intervention.

Commissioner Sheppard pointed out that the Living Environment course is not based on a progression of skills, but of discrete topics taught at different times during the school year. She proposed that this may account for the apparent lack of relationship between grades for each marking period for this course.

Commissioner Hallmark noted that in light of the keen interest among Board members to understand learning theory, instructional goal-setting and establishing learning objectives, professional development should be offered on this topic. Dr. Mascitti-Miller asserted that low expectations of students is a significant contributing factor in the low proficiency percentages across District schools. She clarified that the minimum expectation is for student academic growth, but proficiency is the ultimate goal. She acknowledged that continued work is needed within the District in terms of staff promoting student proficiency and recognizing students' abilities to attain this achievement level.

Commissioner Elliott pointed out that the children in the District have a great deal of experience and skill in navigating extremely difficult situations, but often these skills are not recognized. She maintained that the District must offer coursework that matches students' maturity level. Commissioner Elliott asserted that the District has not effectively challenged or engaged students, which results in many dropping out or becoming disengaged.

IV. Discussion of Expanded Learning Opportunities and Providers

Dr. Mascitti-Miller reported that the District is in the fifth year of expanded learning, and progress has been made in terms of planning, implementation, and assessment. She noted that

her presentation is intended to provide an update in support of a resolution to be considered in the April 26, 2018 Board Business meeting (Resolution No. 2017-18: 810).

Dr. Mascitti-Miller explained that expanded learning is designed supplemental individual or group instruction to improve students' academic, social/emotional, or physical outcomes. She stated that expanded learning providers are selected for each school based on the school's specific needs and the particular services offered by the provider. She noted that expanded learning is offered in schools that have chosen this programming, community schools, afterschool programs, and summer learning programs.

Dr. Mascitti-Miller discussed the RFP process, timeframe, and composition of the RFP Review Committee. She pointed out that a common set of metrics has been established for all contracts with expanded learning providers for ongoing monitoring, and to examine the impact on student outcomes. She reported that the metrics are based on national standards and include essential elements of expanded learning.

Commissioner Funchess asked whether the members of the RFP Review Committee have an understanding of culturally responsive practices, so that they are able to assess this aspect of prospective providers' qualifications. Dr. Mascitti-Miller replied that Crystal Clark, Community Site coordinator on the Douglass campus, has a great deal of experience with the elements of culturally responsive instruction. In addition, Ms. Clark has collaborated with Ruth Turner, Director of School Counseling and Social Work, to understand the social-emotional aspect of culturally responsive approaches.

Dr. Mascitti-Miller reported that 29 of the 30 respondents to the RFP have been approved to provide expanded learning supports to District schools under a five-year contract. She also stated that each provider will be evaluated on an annual basis for accountability in an effort to reverse the District's tendency to overlook the effectiveness of contracted services. Dr. Mascitti-Miller explained that the vendor that was not selected in the RFP process provides services that the RFP Review Committee thought could be offered by the District.

Commissioner Powell sought clarification regarding the process by which each school selects expanded learning providers. Dr. Mascitti-Miller replied that school selection of providers is conducted through a vetting process that involves the Office of School Innovation and approval by the School Chief.

Commissioner Funchess inquired whether a rubric is used in the vendor selection process in terms of content and culturally responsive programming and approaches. Dr. Mascitti-Miller explained that the services offered by a provider must align with the School Comprehensive Education Plan and receivership plan, and stakeholders must be consulted in the selection process (e.g., School-Based Planning Teams, Community Engagement Teams, and families).

Commissioner Funchess asked about the District's methods for assuring that an expanded learning provider is culturally competent. Dr. Mascitti-Miller replied that cultural competence is a requirement in the RFP, and included in the criteria for evaluating proposals.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired about:

- The specific goals/objectives to be attained through expanded learning;

- The way in which the District ensures that each program is aligned with specified goals/objectives; and
- The process for evaluating each program on the basis of specified goals/objectives.

Commissioner Hallmark pointed out that the goals and objectives require a great deal of work because they often do not correspond to the program description. She emphasized the importance of making these changes to the rubric for selecting providers. Dr. Mascitti-Miller responded that the specific goals and objectives must be included in rubric and in providers' contracts to ensure accountability.

Commissioner LeBron discussed her experience working with a variety of community providers in a number of RCSD schools (e.g. Community Place, Action for a Better Community, Boys & Girls Club, Nazareth College, YMCA, Ibero-American Action League, and Encompass). She noted that students and teachers are asked to evaluate each provider in terms of their alignment with the curriculum, instruction provided during the school day, and the expanded learning contract. Staff members in each community agency were required to submit lesson plans that matched those of the classroom teacher and required approval by their supervisor. Commissioner LeBron pointed out that student feedback was used to modify lesson plans and curriculum to enhance student engagement. She added that many of the community providers also used evaluation instruments to assess the performance of their own staff, and conducted joint training sessions throughout the year.

Commissioner Elliott remarked that community providers have objected to the expectation that they accomplish more in the few hours that the student is in their program than District staff accomplish in an entire school day. She stated that this reflects an issue of fairness in terms of expectations and evaluation of performance.

Commissioner Powell inquired about the extent of expanded day programming that is being conducted by District staff. Dr. Mascitti-Miller replied that some of the funding in the resolution is for additional pay for RCSD staff to provide this programming. She explained that funding is also included for community agencies to provide expanded day programs during the regular school day, noting that the specific arrangements vary by school.

V. Diversity Recruitment and Hiring Initiative

Dr. Guillory announced that the District is developing implicit bias training for new employees, with a pilot planned to begin in mid-May. He stated that the District has been collaborating with Dr. Joy DeGruy, Dr. Noma LeMoine, and Dr. Susan Goodwin to create a similar professional development program for current RCSD employees. Dr. Guillory added that a leadership summit will be held with principals to assist them in working through this process.

Harry Kennedy reported that increasing diversity in the teaching workforce is a challenge locally and nationally, as evidenced by the following data:

- The racial and ethnic composition of elementary and secondary teachers does not match the diversity of the student population or the overall population in the U.S.;
- Students of color are expected to comprise over 56% of the student population by 2024, but the teaching population remains overwhelmingly white;

- The federal Department of Education reports that 82% of public school teachers are white – a figure that has remained unchanged for the last 15 years.

Commissioner Elliott reported that several teachers of color have applied to the District, and were not hired. She emphasized the need to identify barriers to hiring and retention of teachers of color in the District, so that these barriers can be addressed.

Commissioner Funchess expressed concern regarding implicit bias in hiring practices, emphasizing the importance of identifying the specific factors affecting hiring candidates of color in the District. She asserted that the system should be color-blind in terms of hiring qualified applicants who have teaching certification in New York.

Mr. Kennedy noted that each case would have to be examined to identify the reasons that each of these candidates were not hired. He stated that the District is trying to prioritize recruitment and hiring qualified teachers of color. Mr. Kennedy discussed several factors that may disproportionately affect candidates of color: obtaining teaching certification, passing a drug test, and fingerprinting for a criminal history check. He stated that each of these requirements is more challenging for individuals of color than for other candidates because of the systemic racism in our culture.

Commissioner Powell questioned the extent to which teachers of color tend to be certified in specific areas for which the District does not have openings for teachers (e.g. K-6).

Commissioner Funchess emphasized the importance of obtaining teachers in the District with a specific set of lived experiences, along with theoretical knowledge. She asserted that these experiences and skills should be considered an asset and an essential qualification in engaging students in the District. Mr. Kennedy discussed efforts to reframe the District's recruitment message to state that "mission-driven" teachers are sought who have a passion for teaching in an urban environment and in partnership with parents and community members. He pointed out that this establishes a different set of criteria for recruiting and screening candidates.

Commissioner Elliott pointed out that the Board established a Hiring and Recruiting policy that requires candidates to have at least two years of experience working with youth in an urban setting. She stated that two years is not a sufficient length of time, and the policy needs to be revisited to ensure that candidates hired by the District have a depth of understanding of students' backgrounds and the implications for learning and instruction.

Commissioner Elliott asked whether the District assists graduates of color from teaching programs in meeting the required qualifications to teach in New York. Mr. Kennedy

Mr. Kennedy compared the percentage of teachers from diverse racial/ethnic backgrounds in Rochester to the percentage for the entire nation, and for the Syracuse and Buffalo School Districts:

% of Teachers:

	<u>White</u>	<u>Racially/Ethnically Diverse</u>
United States:	82%	19%
Rochester:	75%	25%
Buffalo:	86%	14%
Syracuse:	88%	12%

Mr. Kennedy reported a number of efforts that have been made to increase diversity in the District workforce:

- Increased communication and collaboration with historically black colleges and universities;
- Use of data from the United Negro College Fund to target college juniors and seniors to encourage them to come to Rochester;
- Early recruitment events to facilitate greater choice among candidates;
- Increased reliance on data to avoid laying off teachers in the spring, only to rehire them in the fall. This also prevents laying off the last hired staff members, and relying instead on retirements and resignations to attain correct staffing levels.

Mr. Kennedy noted that early recruitment events have been successful in attracting potential teachers to the District, but the majority of attendees have been Caucasian. He added that staff in the historically black colleges and universities have reported a significant decline in the number of students entering the teaching profession.

Commissioner Sheppard asked about opportunities offered to Paraprofessionals and Teaching Assistants to advance their careers to become teachers. Mr. Kennedy confirmed that the District has been using this approach also to enhance workforce diversity.

Commissioner Elliott suggested that Mr. Kennedy and his team develop contacts with the Black Congressional Caucus because they are in touch with a network of African American professionals.

Commissioner Funchess requested data regarding the racial/ethnic composition of newly hired employees in the District.

Mr. Kennedy reported the following demographic information about RCSD employees hired in 2017-18:

	RCSD Employees Hired in 2017-18	
<u>Ethnicity</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
White:	458	42.0%
Black/African American:	342	31.4%

Hispanic/Latino:	178	16.3%
Multiracial:	12	1.1%
Not specified:	32	2.9%
Asian:	20	1.8%
Native American:	2	0.2%
Total:	1090	100.0%

Commissioner Funchess requested additional data of the job titles for new District employees, with information of the racial/ethnic composition for each title. She expressed concern that newly hired employees of color may be concentrated in lower level positions, and emphasized the importance of expanding diversity at all levels in the District.

Action Item: Additional data will be provided to the Board regarding the racial/ethnic composition of District employees hired in 2017-18 for each job title.

Mr. Kennedy presented additional data regarding the demographic composition of teachers hired in 2017-18:

Teachers Hired in 2017-18 in the District:

White:	79.9%
Black/African American:	8.4%
Hispanic/Latino:	5.2%
Not Specified:	1.9%
Asian:	1.3%
Native American:	0.3%

Mr. Kennedy pointed out that there are open contracts currently for over 150 candidates who have until July to respond, and the response may change the figures cited above. In addition, he noted that candidates of color are much more likely not to indicate their race or ethnicity on applications, so a large percentage of those in the “Not Specified” category are likely to be of diverse backgrounds.

Mr. Kennedy pointed out that a number of factors affect the pool of candidates of color entering the teaching profession in New York State: the lack of reciprocity in teaching certification among states, and the fact that New York is one of the most difficult states for prospective teachers to obtain certification.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Elliott. Seconded by Commissioner Funchess.

Meeting adjourned at 8:16PM.

**Next Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting:
Thursday, May 10th, at 5:30PM**