

**SPECIAL MEETING
May 10, 2018**

Attending: Board President White; Commissioners Sheppard, Powell, LeBron, Funchess, and Hallmark.

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Board President Van White called the Special Meeting to order at 5:36PM, noting that an Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole will be held with Commissioner Sheppard as the Chair.

**EXCELLENCE IN STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT COMMITTEE
MEETING OF THE WHOLE**

Attending: Commissioner Sheppard (Chair); Commissioners Powell, White, LeBron, Funchess, and Hallmark.

District Staff: Superintendent Deane-Williams; Dr. Giamartino, Chief of Accountability; Rob Ulliman, Planning Director; Lawrence Wright, Deputy Superintendent for Administration; Dr. Mascitti-Miller, Chief of School Innovation; Amy Schiavi, Chief of School Leadership; Everton Sewell, Chief Financial Officer; Mike Schmidt, Chief of School Operations; Dr. Guillory, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching & Learning.

District Students: Kyonna Ford and Zymereia Daniels, students at the School Without Walls

Community Representatives: Justin Murphy, Education Reporter for the *Democrat & Chronicle*

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

Commissioner Sheppard convened the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole at 5:37PM.

I. Review Minutes of April 12, 2018 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole

Commissioner Hallmark stated that she did not have a hardcopy of the April 12, 2018 minutes of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole in her packet. Ms. Flanagan explained that the meeting minutes were sent to Board members via email and posted to BoardDocs the previous Friday, May 4, 2018, along with the other meeting materials.

Commissioner White stated that he prefers hardcopies to use as a reference in meetings, and requested that these be provided in the future.

Commissioner Sheppard concurred, noting that hardcopies of all materials will be provided for each Board member for future Committee meetings.

Action Item: Ms. Flanagan will provide hardcopies of all meeting materials to Board members for each Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the minutes of the April 12, 2018 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole. Seconded by Commissioner Funchess. **Adopted 6-0.**

II. Presentation regarding New York State Regulations under the Federal *Every Student Succeeds Act*

Dr. Giamartino provided a brief overview of new state regulations pertaining to the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act*, which affects school and district performance evaluations and accountability designations. He noted that more specific information and detail is needed regarding the new regulations and accountability system, which his team hopes to learn more about at a training session next week.

Dr. Giamartino announced that a variety of performance indicators are being added to expand the State's performance evaluation beyond the core subjects of Math and ELA:

- Science –included in NYS assessments for students in 4th and 8th grades, but not currently used in evaluating district or school performance.
- Social Studies
- College, Career and Civic Readiness
- English-Language Learners
- Chronic Absenteeism

Dr. Giamartino reported that Ruth Turner, Director of School Social Work & Counseling, has been working toward improving chronic absenteeism in the District, thereby addressing this performance measure.

Dr. Giamartino noted that additional performance indicators are expected to be added in the future:

- Out of School Suspension (beginning with 2018-19 data)
- High School Readiness Index, which has not yet been finalized
- Other learning environment indicators

In terms of accountability designations, Dr. Giamartino reported that priority schools will be considered in need of “comprehensive support and improvement” (CSI schools), and focus schools will be deemed in need of “targeted support and improvement” (TSI schools). He stated that much more information and clarification is needed about the new performance and accountability system, and he plans to provide an update to Board members after attending training from the NYS Education Department next week.

Dr. Giamartino explained that CSI and TSI schools are required to collaborate with parents, families, and community members to craft a plan with school-focused solutions. He noted that the District has anticipated these regulatory changes by examining collaborative efforts with community members and partners, planning for community schools and the RISE model, and replicating high-performing schools. In addition, the new performance indicators have been incorporated into the District's Data Dashboard.

Commissioner Hallmark questioned the way in which the performance indicators will be measured and weighted. Dr. Giamartino replied that his team will be looking for clarification and additional detail regarding the indicators in the training provided by the NYS Education Department next week. He reported widespread concern among school district leaders across the State about the potential for increasing the number of schools subject to receivership at an exponential rate in the next few years due to the additional performance indicators, and the changes in school and district performance assessments and accountability designations.

Commissioner LeBron observed that the District has had a longstanding graduation rate of approximately 20% for English-language learners, which is not likely to change in the near future. She pointed out to her colleagues that there is an opportunity to close and redesign schools *before* being subject to NYS mandates regarding receivership. Commissioner LeBron encouraged Board members to be proactive in this process to allow greater local input and control of schools. She noted that three RCSD schools are at risk for receivership next year, and approximately 20 schools over the next two to three years.

Mr. Ulliman reported that the NYS Education Department is planning to use five different data measures to assess the performance of elementary and middle schools: Math, ELA, and Science exam scores; English-language proficiency; student growth; progress (based on changes in Math and ELA exam scores year over year); and the chronic absenteeism rate. Previously, the NYS Education Department evaluated elementary and middle school performance based on students' scores on standardized Math and ELA exams and student growth on these measures from year to year. Each of the five measures will now be used to determine the accountability designation for elementary and middle schools.

Mr. Ulliman noted that there are also changes in the way in which each school's Performance Index is calculated, particularly in the weights assigned to students scoring at each level of proficiency on the standardized exams. Specifically, students scoring at an advanced level (i.e. Level 4) will be assigned 2.5 points instead of 2 points, giving the school additional credit for these students' performance.

To guarantee a minimum of 95% participation on standardized exams as required by the federal government, the state will *either* use: 1) the percentage of students continuously enrolled and tested; OR 2) 95% of the number of students continuously enrolled (i.e. enrolled in an RCSD school on BEDS day), **whichever is greater**. By using the greater of these numbers, the overall Performance Index for a school will be reduced, making it more difficult to demonstrate progress. Another implication of this regulatory change is that students who "opt out" of taking standardized assessments will now reduce the school's overall Performance Index. Mr. Ulliman pointed out that the District's "opt out" rate was significantly lower this year than in previous years.

Commissioner LeBron noted that state officials have told parents that there are no consequences if they choose to have their child opt out of NYS assessments. Mr. Ulliman clarified that there are no consequences for parents or students from opting out of the NYS exams, but this will be used against schools in evaluating their performance.

Commissioner LeBron observed that the District has a much lower opt out rate than suburban districts, but suburban districts do not seem to be affected by this change in state regulations.

Commissioner Powell pointed out that suburban schools may wind up with a lower Performance Index because of the larger percentage/number of students opting out of standardized assessments, but these schools are not at risk for receivership.

Commissioner Hallmark asked about the District's performance on NYS Science assessments. Mr. Ulliman replied that RCSD students tend to perform much better on the NYS Science assessment than on the ELA or Math assessments.

Mr. Ulliman noted that the remaining performance measures (i.e. English-language learner proficiency, chronic absenteeism) will be considered by the state, but preliminary designation as a CSI school will automatically be assigned if the school's combined Math, ELA and Science Performance Index or student growth is found to be at the lowest level (i.e. Level 1). Mr. Ulliman reported that the final CSI designation will be assigned to the schools in the lowest 5% of performance in the state.

Commissioner Powell pointed out that schools performing in the lowest 10% in the state will receive a preliminary designation as CSI schools, and questioned the impact on the RCSD schools at risk for receivership. Dr. Giamartino stated that this question would be addressed later in the presentation.

Mr. Ulliman observed that these regulatory changes will have the greatest impact in 2018-19 on calculation of the Performance Index and student growth in Math, ELA and Science. He stated that there is little specificity about the way in which the state will evaluate school performance after next year, or the cut points that will be used for each of the measures.

Mr. Ulliman reported that growth measures will now be based on changes in students' scores on NYS assessments over three years, rather than two years. He pointed out that growth score calculations will only include students' performance on Math and ELA exams.

To calculate English language proficiency, the state will include English-language learners who score at the emerging, entering, transitioning, or expanding level on the NYS Identification Test for English Language Learners (NYSITELL). Once a student has reached the "commanding" level of English language facility, they will not be included in this measure of school performance.

Mr. Ulliman explained that targets have been established for English language learners' progress, based on their initial proficiency level on the NYSITELL exam and the number of years in an English language learner (ELL) program. Each combination of proficiency level and number of years in an ELL program have been assigned specific point values by the state.

The state has provided probability calculations regarding the likelihood of a student attaining the progress goal within the specified number of years, based on their initial proficiency level. The point value assigned for each English language learner student is multiplied by the corresponding probability of attaining the targeted progress goal. The results for each student are added to derive a "Success Ratio" of the school's performance in educating English language learners. Mr. Ulliman explained that the "Success Ratio" essentially reflects the *actual* number of English language learners in the school attaining the progress goal, compared to the number of students *expected* to attain this goal. School performance with regard to language proficiency gains of English language learners will be based on the "Success Ratio", and the corresponding performance level (i.e. Level 1-4).

Mr. Ulliman reported that the NYS Education Department has not yet provided the conversion charts, so it is not certain when this measure will be applied. He noted that this aspect of the new NYS performance evaluation system will be the most time-consuming and cumbersome because of the requirement to examine each of the variables for each student (initial English language proficiency, number of years in an ELL program, and probability of attaining progress goals) and to perform this series of calculations for each individual student.

Commissioner Sheppard suggested referring this issue to the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee to continue discussing the implications of implementing the new state performance evaluation and accountability system; recommend ways in which the District should respond to these requirements; and advocate for support and assistance. She requested that Board members be updated regarding developments in the new state system. Dr. Giamartino replied that the state has not provided much guidance to school districts to date regarding the federal *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA).

Action Item: An update will be provided to Board members of the specific measures, weights, and calculations involved in New York State assessments of school and district performance. This update will be provided after District staff have obtained greater detail and clarity from attending the professional development session offered by the NYS Education Department next week, and information will continue to be provided to the Board as it becomes available.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired as to when the new NYS school performance measures will be applied. Mr. Ulliman responded that some of the data will be based on this year and some of the baseline data will be used from last year. Each school's Performance Index will be based on students' performance on NYS assessments in 2017-18.

Mr. Ulliman noted that end goals, long-term goals, and measures of interim progress will be determined for each school. For the school Performance Index (PI), a score of 200 will always be the end goal because this reflects a perfect score. He stated that the long-term goal for each school will be a 20% reduction in the gap between a school's baseline PI and a score of 200 by the 2021-22 school year. To calculate the gap, a school's actual Performance Index score is subtracted from a perfect score of 200. The result is multiplied by 20% (0.20) to identify the number of points by which the school's PI is required to increase by 2021-22.

The total number of points by which a school must increase their Performance Index by 2021-22 is divided by five to indicate the annual progress that must be achieved (i.e. "Measure of Interim Progress"). This is because schools will have five years to reach their targeted long-term goal (2017-18 through 2021-22).

Mr. Ulliman provided an example of the way in which these Performance Index calculations will be performed:

Example:

School A obtained an initial Performance Index of 97, based on students' scores on NYS exams. To meet the 20% gap reduction standard, the school will need:

$$200 - 97 = 103 \quad 103 \times 20\% (0.20) = 21 \text{ (required increase in PI from 2017-18 to 2021-22)}$$
$$\text{Long-term Performance Index goal: } 97 + 21 = \underline{118} \text{ (by 2021-22 school year)}$$

To realize a gain of 21 points in their Performance Index over the next five years, School A must realize the following annual progress goal (i.e. “Measure of Interim Progress”):

$$21 \text{ points} \div 5 \text{ years} = 4.2 \text{ points per year from 2017-18 through 2021-22}$$

Mr. Ulliman pointed out that dividing the 20% gap reduction standard by five years is a more realistic expectation in terms of schools being able to attain the required Performance Index targets. He noted that the long-term and interim progress goals will be re-calculated every year, according to the previous year’s results. The state will designate performance levels (1-4), based on a school meeting or exceeding their specified goals or the goals for the state:

- Level 1 - School did not meet their *annual* progress goal
- Level 2 - School met their *annual* progress goal
- Level 3 - School met the *NYS annual progress goal*
School met their *long-term goal*
- Level 4 - School *exceeded their long-term goal*
School *met or exceeded the NYS long-term goal*

Mr. Ulliman reported that progress levels will be determined separately for Math and ELA, and the results will be averaged and rounded down to calculate the overall progress level for the school.

Commissioner White contended that teachers will not pay attention to these performance and accountability measures because their first priority is student instruction. He declared that the entire system is a tremendous waste of time because it detracts from the District’s entire mission of supporting and improving student achievement. Commissioner White asserted that none of the measures or efforts leads to improving outcomes for students.

Commissioner Hallmark asked whether the changes to the NYS accountability system are responsive to public concern. Mr. Ulliman replied that he cannot answer this question because the state has not provided information about public input in developing these changes, and there is no information about the extent to which public input actually affected design of the new performance assessment and accountability system. Mr. Ulliman reported that review of the NYS plan under *ESSA* revealed that the federal government was very restrictive in terms of requirements for the state to guarantee a 95% participation rate on standardized exams. He noted that the NYS Education Department submitted a plan based on current methods for ensuring the required 95% participation rate, but the federal government refused to allow this method to be used because it was not sufficiently rigorous.

Commissioner Hallmark inquired whether the new accountability system will provide a fairer or more accurate assessment of school and district performance. Dr. Giamartino replied that this question cannot be answered at this point because greater detail is needed in terms of the specificity and weights assigned to different measures.

Mr. Ulliman reviewed the new measures to be used in assessing performance and determining accountability status at the high school level. Students’ scores on Math, ELA, Science, and Social Studies Regents exams will be used to evaluate performance, but different weights will be placed on

each of these exam results. A simple average is then used to calculate the overall Performance Index for a high school. The same process of determining end goals, long-term goals, and measures of interim progress will be used. Secondary school performance will also be evaluated based on the 20% gap reduction standard and the extent to which school or state progress and long-term goals have been met or exceeded.

Overall high school performance will be evaluated on the basis of the Performance Index; 4-, 5-, and 6-year graduation rates; college, career, and civic readiness; proficiency of English language learners; and chronic absenteeism.

Graduation rates for each student subgroup in a school will be measured against school and NYS progress and long-term goals. The baseline will be the school's 4-year, 5-year, and 6-year graduation rate in 2015-16. The school's long-term goal will be based on a 20% gap reduction from the actual graduation rate to the following NYS end goals:

- 4-Year Graduation Rate: 95%
- 5-Year Graduation Rate: 96%
- 6-Year Graduation Rate: 97%

Interim progress will be measured by dividing the total increase required in the school's graduation rate by five years:

Example:

The 4-Year graduation rate in 2015-16 for School Y: 80.4%
The NYS end goal for the 4-Year graduation rate: 95%

To calculate the 20% gap reduction:

$$95 - 80.4 = 14.6 \quad 14.6 \times 20\% (0.20) = 2.9\%$$

To calculate the long-term 4-Year graduation rate required for the school by 2021-22:

$$80.4\% + 2.9\% = \underline{83.3\%} \text{ Target long-term 4-Year graduation rate for the school}$$

Mr. Ulliman explained that School Y would be expected to increase the 4-Year graduation rate by 0.5% each year for the next five years (2.9% long-term graduation rate increase \div 5 = 0.5%). He stated that these calculations will be re-examined every year, based on the school's performance in the previous year.

At the secondary level, interim progress will be determined by the extent to which the school attains or exceeds its targets or the NYS targets for ELA and Math performance (Performance Index) and graduation rate.

In terms of measuring chronic absenteeism, Mr. Ulliman reported that the state has established a maximum rate of 5% as the end goal, and a school's long-term goal and progress goal will be based on reducing the gap between their actual chronic absenteeism rate and the 5% end goal by 20% over five years.

The final measure to be used in evaluating secondary school performance is college, career and civic readiness. Mr. Ulliman explained that this measure involves assigning a specific weight to the diploma designation of each student; scores on AP, IB, and CTE exams; and credits earned in AP, IB or dual enrollment courses.

In evaluating secondary school performance in 2018-19, the focus will be student scores on NYS Regents exams (ELA, Math, Science, and Social Studies) and graduation rates. Mr. Ulliman explained that although the other measures are included in evaluating school performance, a Level 1 on either the composite Performance Index, growth rate, or graduation rate will lead to a preliminary designation as a CSI school.

In terms of accountability designations for all schools, Mr. Ulliman noted that priority schools that become designated CSI schools will *automatically* be subject to receivership. Under the new system, a newly identified CSI school is allowed three years to make progress. If the school fails to make the required level of progress within three years, it will *automatically* be subject to receivership.

Commissioner Hallmark stated that she would advocate for a longer period of time than three years to adapt to the new performance benchmarks (e.g. four years). Dr. Giamartino responded that a minimum of five years is typically needed to realize changes in school performance.

Commissioner Powell observed that closing schools only displaces students and creates disruption for the students at the schools to which they transfer. This process has a ripple effect in terms of student and school performance, and all of the performance and accountability metrics fail to take this into account.

Mr. Ulliman offered to meet with Board members as a group or individually to explain the metrics and accountability system because of the volume of information to consider and the complexity involved.

Commissioner Powell noted that the District has been focusing on attendance, and suggested checking the data from the internal Finish Line Reports with the data provided to the NYS Education Department to verify the accuracy of internal data. Mr. Ulliman replied that he generates the Finish Line Reports for each school, and there should not be any discrepancy in attendance data for previous years. He noted that current year attendance data is cumulative and will appear to fluctuate, depending on the date that the data was extracted.

III. Presentation of Student Journalism Project on Student Homelessness

Justin Murphy explained that Kyonna Ford and Zymereia Daniels have been working with him on a journalism project to examine student homelessness in the District. Both young women are 9th grade students at the School Without Walls, and interviewed a number of students who have experienced homelessness. Their interviews culminated in a video and a news article to enhance understanding and awareness of homelessness, which was presented in this evening's meeting.

After the video presentation, Ms. Daniels and Ms. Ford provided data reflecting the increase in student homelessness in the District over the last several years. In 2016-17, over 2400 students in the Rochester City School District were homeless for a period of time during the school year. This figure represents

approximately 9% of the entire student population. Ms. Ford and Ms. Daniels reported that homelessness disproportionately affects children of color and the youngest students in the District (e.g. PreK and Kindergarten). They discussed the trauma from homelessness, which interferes with a child's ability to learn and succeed in school.

Commissioner Funchess asked both students why they chose to focus on homelessness in their journalism project. Ms. Daniels replied that she wanted to examine the issue of homelessness because most people do not focus on families or children in need and the struggles they endure. Ms. Ford commented that homeless students are struggling for their lives, yet there is little awareness of their plight. Both young women advocated for the District to provide greater support to students who are homeless, particularly in fostering relationships with caring adults. Ms. Ford and Ms. Daniels also discussed the need for affordable housing in the community for women with children to provide safety and stability.

Commissioner Sheppard inquired about the students' choice of journalism as a career path. Ms. Daniels responded that she has enjoyed writing from the time she was very young, and would like to address current social issues.

Commissioner Hallmark asked the students about their work experience at the Rochester *Democrat & Chronicle*. Ms. Ford stated that she has learned a great deal from this experience, which has also clarified her career choice. She reported that she has learned the importance of allowing different perspectives to be presented, and she intends to pursue a career as an editor.

Mr. Murphy noted that Ms. Daniels and Ms. Ford have been very dedicated in working on this project, declining the increased notoriety from having his name associated with their article in favor of composing their article independently with less fanfare. He stated that the students' article will appear in the editorial section of the *Democrat & Chronicle* this weekend.

Commissioner LeBron commended Ms. Daniels and Ms. Ford for their outstanding work and for selecting a topic of such significance to the Rochester community. She expressed the hope that they will continue to raise awareness and educate their peers about the issue of homelessness.

IV. Path Forward Presentation

Commissioner Sheppard announced that the Administration has prepared an interactive activity to learn of Board members' preferences in terms of the specific option to pursue in the Path Forward initiative.

Lawrence Wright explained that this activity will involve pairs of Board members going to each of the four poster sessions to examine the implications of each of the Path Forward options with regard to Equity; Constituent Response; Complexity of Implementation; and Budget, Facilities, and Transportation. The three Path Forward options presented were:

1. Implement the existing *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy (5153)* with fidelity, ensuring that each student attends a District school within their zone of residence;
2. Establish neighborhood schools and feeder patterns over time, while continuing to implement the current *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy*; or

3. Implement a new multi-dimensional socioeconomic model, which would provide access to every school for every student and a full continuum of choices for families.

Board members discussed each of these options with District leaders to gain a deeper understanding of the impact on school operations; transportation; structural displacement between the location of schools and students' residences; equity of opportunity in accessing resources, services and quality academic programs; costs; and planning for the future.

Commissioner White requested a motion to reconvene the Special Meeting to avoid detaining District staff members who are waiting for the Board's vote on a resolution.

Motion by Commissioner Hallmark to reconvene the Special Meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. **Adopted 6-0.**

At 7:41PM, Board President White re-convened the Special Meeting for Board members to consider Resolution No. 2017-18: 823 regarding appointment of new principals to Kodak Park School No. 41, James P.B. Duffy School No. 12, and Northeast High School.

Motion by Commissioner Hallmark to approve Resolution No. 2017-18: 823. Seconded by Commissioner Powell. **Adopted 6-0.**

Special Meeting recessed at 7:47PM.

After reconvening the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole, Board members shared their concerns and thoughts about the three options presented for the Path Forward initiative.

Commissioner White commended Superintendent Deane-Williams and her team for their efforts, and for utilizing the poster session approach to facilitate inquiry and discussion. Deputy Superintendent Wright pointed out that this approach was actually suggested by Commissioner Sheppard.

The Superintendent thanked her team, noting the extensive time and effort expended by many staff members to develop pathways for student placement, redevelop bilingual and Special Education programs by zone, redesign parent engagement and pop-up registration centers, as well as many other initiatives to build coherence within the District.

Commissioner LeBron reported that there have been concerns about the School No. 33 and East High School collaboration that has been established in the District, noting that this arrangement also interferes with implementing two of the three Path Forward options. She expressed appreciation for staffing registration centers in each zone to improve accessibility for parents, and advocated for pay equity among the staff in the registration centers and the Office of Student Placement in the Central Office. Commissioner LeBron also suggested hiring and training these staff members as specialists to address issues related to the registration and student placement process.

Commissioner LeBron stated that she prefers the option of maintaining the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy*, but only if effective corrective action is taken to address the specific aspects of the policy or its implementation that have failed in the past. She requested an Action Plan to address:

- Each of the particular aspects of the policy or its implementation that have failed;
- The specific steps/actions to be taken to resolve each of these problem areas;
- Assignment of staff responsibility for carrying out each of the necessary corrective actions;
- A timeline for completing the necessary corrective actions; and
- Ways in which staff members will be held accountable for adhering to the policy in the future, including consequences for violating the policy.

Commissioner LeBron pointed out that the Regional Transit System (RTS), City of Rochester, and most community organizations arrange services according to a four-quadrant system, and the District is the only organization that is structured on the basis of three zones. She suggested considering creation of a four-quadrant structure in the District to correspond to other government, community and service organizations.

Commissioner LeBron pointed out that the schools and needs of students and families in the Southwest quadrant of the City are often overlooked because the main focus in the District's South zone has been on the Southeast section.

Commissioner Powell provided an overview of the historic context of managed choice in the District and the study that was conducted to enhance equity in access to quality education and schools. The current zone boundaries were developed to create socioeconomic and racial/ethnic equity in different geographic areas of the District. Commissioner Powell acknowledged that the current three-zone structure has become outmoded, and further study is needed to determine the structure best supported by current demographic characteristics in the District. She explained that at the time the zones were created, the population in the Northeast zone contained 10% more Hispanic residents than in the other zones. Similarly, the population in the South zone consisted of 10% more African American residents and the Northwest zone had 10% more Caucasian residents than the other zones. At that time, there were no significant socioeconomic differences in the population across the three zones. Commissioner Powell reported that school capacity/seats were also evenly distributed among the zones at that time, with a roughly equal distribution of students residing in each zone. She stated that ELL and Special Education services were also equitably distributed.

Commissioner Powell explained that closing schools and offering schools as swing space led to the District's inability to offer families residing in the Northeast zone a school of choice within their zone. She stated that this led many students to attend schools outside of the zone in which they live, and the need to transport many students over greater distances across zones.

Commissioner Powell asserted that implementing the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy* with fidelity would restore the levels of equity initially created in the zones. She noted that the current zones must be rebalanced to ensure sufficient capacity to accommodate students residing in each zone, programs and services for these students, and quality schools for families to choose in each zone. Commissioner Powell expressed support for sustaining the managed choice system, but also in re-evaluating the existing zone structure.

Commissioner LeBron discussed concerns about allowing PreK families to choose a program anywhere in the District, and then requiring that their child change schools in kindergarten if not in their zone. She contended that this approach sets families up for failure, and urged her colleagues to be aware of these issues in future discussions.

Commissioner Hallmark concurred with Commissioner LeBron about the discrepancy in requirements at the PreK and kindergarten level, which creates significant issues. She expressed support for implementing the managed choice system with fidelity, appreciating the focus on concern for promoting equity among the zones and for families. Commissioner Hallmark also commended the efforts of District staff to create pop-up registration centers to increase accessibility to parents, and the redistribution of some of the bilingual and Special Education services in the District.

Commissioner Hallmark noted the following remaining concerns from this discussion:

- The highly mobile population in the District, which necessitates making difficult decisions about the number of times a family can move before their child is required to change schools;
- The need for ongoing monitoring to ensure that the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy* is implemented with fidelity in the future. She pointed out that the policy itself stipulates that student placement is to be monitored and re-evaluated every year.

Commissioner Funchess stated that she also supports the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy*, but called for greater clarity in defining “implementation with fidelity” and ways in which this is to be applied in practice. She discussed the importance of meeting with families to discuss the impact of mobility on their children and their education. Commissioner Funchess advocated for the District collaborating more closely with the City of Rochester to stabilize neighborhoods. She pointed out that many factors compel District families to relocate, and these factors must be addressed to help stabilize neighborhoods and communities. Greater stability would enable families to relocate within a few blocks and their children to remain in the same school.

Commissioner Funchess observed that the District has had a tendency to initiate plans, and stray from them over time. She recommended creating a rubric to use in decision-making regarding moving or altering a school or program, so that the implications for the entire system are examined. Commissioner Funchess stated that using such a rubric would enable District leaders to uphold and sustain the original intent and provide fidelity to the plan/policy in the future.

Toyin Anderson expressed preference for maintaining the current *Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy*. She voiced concern about comments that were made about family mobility, noting that District families often do not *choose* to move. Ms. Anderson pointed out that school may be the only source of stability for a child whose family is confronted with a great deal of difficulties and trauma. She declared that the District only compounds the problem by displacing students from school whenever their family relocates. Ms. Anderson stated that she appreciates the District’s efforts toward involving parents in the managed choice process, particularly since they must live with the consequences.

Commissioner White stated that he also prefers maintaining the existing *Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy*. He commended the Superintendent and her team for their work and Commissioner Sheppard for suggesting an effective process to consider and weight the options.

Commissioner LeBron asserted that parents often do not want their child to change schools, but the District requires them to do so through the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy* and managed choice system. She urged her colleagues to have the foresight to examine all of the issues related to this policy and system as they arise. Commissioner LeBron reported that many families have been forced to have their child change schools as a result of moving to a different zone, and the District has been unwilling to provide transportation to the school that their child has been attending.

Commissioner Sheppard inquired about taking a vote on the option for the Path Forward at this point.

Commissioner Hallmark contended that the matter should be addressed by the full Board.

Commissioner Powell pointed out that a vote can be taken by the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee, which would result in a recommendation being made to the full Board regarding the specific option to pursue.

Commissioner White noted that the preference of the majority of Board members present is to implement the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy* with fidelity, which essentially involves more faithful adherence to the existing policy. Under these circumstances, he questioned whether a vote is even necessary.

Commissioner Funchess pointed out that exceptions have been made to this policy, such as the feeder arrangement between School No. 33 and East High School. She questioned the impact of implementing the policy with fidelity in light of these exceptions.

Commissioner Powell noted that these exceptions have been approved by the Board through resolution, and the Administration is expected to adhere to the Board's guidance. She stated that the directive to implement the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy* with fidelity will require additional work because of the need to examine demographic characteristics in each area in the District and ensure adequate seat capacity in each zone and/or recommend changes in the zone boundaries. Commissioner Powell declared that the program offerings in each school must be examined to ensure equity across zones. She gave an example of the Northwest zone having no options for a student entering 7th grade, requiring these students to attend a city-wide school. By contrast, the other two zones have options including K-8 schools and 7-12 schools within their zone. Commissioner Powell noted that a great deal of work remains to ensure sufficient seat capacity, English-language learner and Special Education programs in each school.

Commissioner White pointed out that the District has had a policy in place that required equity and balance among the zones, but the policy was not followed in practice. He asserted that the Board must ensure District adherence to policy, and the most effective means is through monitoring. Commissioner White stated that Board committees (e.g., Excellence in Student Achievement, Policy) should be monitoring policy implementation to ensure fidelity.

Commissioner LeBron disagreed with Commissioner White, asserting that the Board cannot rely on the same process that has been used in the past and expect different results. She pointed out that a great deal of time and effort has been put into researching each of the options for the Path Forward initiative. Commissioner LeBron urged Board members to vote on a particular option at this point to enable the District to move forward. Commissioner LeBron stated that the vote could be contingent upon receipt of the Action Plan to address past failures and identify the specific corrective actions needed.

Deputy Superintendent Wright concurred with Commissioner LeBron about the importance of clarifying the definition and specific actions needed to implement the existing policy with fidelity. He stated that the District's examination of the registration, student placement, and managed choice process revealed that a lot of the issues involve District practices, rather than the policy itself.

Deputy Superintendent Wright asserted that there would be a substantial impact from the District improving outreach and communication with families, particularly with regard to the registration process. He pointed out that two out of three District families have not yet registered their child for the upcoming 2018-19 school year, which indicates that they are disconnected from this process. Mr. Wright stated that most RCSD families are not aware of the options available to them. He noted that the long lines of families waiting at the Office of Student Placement reflects the District's poor performance in informing and explaining the process to families. Deputy Superintendent Wright emphasized that these are not the only aspects of the process in need of improvement, but would yield the most immediate results.

Commissioner LeBron stated that she does not want to learn of the specific problems in the managed choice process in a piecemeal fashion, but an Action Plan to ensure that all problematic aspects of the process will be addressed. She requested a written Action Plan that identifies the specific steps to be taken to effectively resolve each of the problems in the implementation of the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy*; a timeline; specific RCSD staff members to be held accountable for each corrective action; and explanation of the consequences that will be imposed for staff members' failure to adhere to the policy in the future.

Action Item: An Action Plan will be provided to the Board prior to submission of a resolution to adopt a particular option for the Path Forward initiative. The Action Plan is to include:

- **The specific aspects of the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy (5153)* and/or its implementation that have failed in terms of placing students in a school within their zone of residence;**
- **The specific actions needed to correct each of the failures in the managed choice system, and the District staff member responsible for monitoring and evaluating each of the corrective actions;**
- **Timeline for corrective action;**
- **Methods to be used to ensure staff accountability in implementing the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy (5153)* with fidelity in the future; and**
- **Consequences for staff violations of the *Parent Preference/Managed Choice policy (5153)*.**

Commissioner Sheppard suggested reviewing the Action Plan in the next Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting on June 12th.

Commissioner White agreed that the Board cannot continue to utilize the same approach and expect different results, but clarified that he was referring to past practices in failure to monitor implementation of Board policies. He concurred with Commissioner Sheppard about allowing some additional time to consider the necessary steps involved in implementing the policy with fidelity. Commissioner White suggested that the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee and/or Policy Committee discuss these issues and determine the extent to which changes are needed in the existing policy v. District practices.

Commissioner Funchess pointed out that the District has used a transactional approach with families, focusing on immediate, short-term situations rather than a transformational approach in which families are involved in discussing expectations and long-range planning for their child (e.g., plans for their child this year v. for their child's educational career).

V. Presentation of Findings/Recommendations of the Special Education Advisory Committee

Considering the length of the meeting at this point and the need to recess in Executive Session, Commissioner Funchess suggested that the recommendations of the Special Education Advisory Committee be presented in an upcoming Board meeting.

After some discussion, it was decided that this presentation would be given in a Special Meeting on Tuesday, May 15th, in conjunction with the Board's vote on the proposed 2018-19 RCSD budget.

Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting of the Whole adjourned at 8:29PM.

Motion by Commissioner LeBron to convene in Executive Session. Seconded by Commissioner Sheppard. **Adopted 6-0.**