

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Policy Review and Development Committee Meeting**

**July 14, 2016**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance**

Commissioners – Commissioner Willa Powell (Chair), Commissioner Mary Adams, Commissioner Jose Cruz, and President Van White (arrived at 5:57PM)

Parent Representative – Barb Van Kerkhove (arrived at 5:43PM)

District Liaison – Steve Carling (Interim General Counsel and District Liaison)

Presenters/Guests – Jerome Underwood (Director of Family Initiatives)

Board Staff – Mia Johnson

Commissioner Powell called the meeting to order at 5:34PM.

**I. Review Minutes of April 7, 2016 and April 26, 2016 Policy Committee Meeting**

Motion by Commissioner Cruz to approve the minutes of April 7, 2016 and April 26, 2016 Policy Committee Meetings. Seconded by Commissioner Adams. Adopted 3-0.

**II. Policy Report Deliverable/Responses: Policy 1900: Parent and Family Engagement Policy – Mr. Jerome Underwood**

Mr. Underwood described the policy as good, but the implementation has been inconsistent across the system with loose accountability. He stated that for the past two years, there has been structural challenges with the parent liaison and homeschool assistant positions. He stated that two years ago he wrote a recommendation that would require parent liaisons and home school assistants to report to the Office of Parent Engagement (OPE) instead of the principals. He stated that about 60% of the parent liaisons and home school assistants attend the professional developments hosted by OPE mostly due to not being released by principals. He stated that he recommended parent liaisons and home school assistants work throughout the summer to develop the School Comprehensive Plans, to maintain School Based Planning Teams, and to prevent relationship loss. He stated that another challenge is that parent liaisons and home school assistants are a part of two different labor unions and home school assistants are paid more. He described that OPE is currently re-writing the job descriptions for parent liaisons and home school assistants. He stated that his recommendations did not advance for two years prior due to budgetary reasons.

Commissioner Adams inquired about other structural recommendations Mr. Underwood made. He recommended establishing field supervisors who serve as a parent liaison within their school and gather reports from other assigned schools to submit to OPE. This recommendation has budget implications. He suggested that OPE has a community facing focus and a school facing focus. He stated that Parent University has been struggling because it does not have a staff person. He stated

that Parent University should provide training on the regulations and partner with community agencies in other areas including budgeting, fitness, health, etc. A Parent University staff member would also provide support to the Student Leadership Congress which was challenged this year due to AmeriCorps support being removed.

He stated that an improvement for OPE was the use of the parent contact database to track the types of calls and complaints. He stated that OPE does not have access to the types of calls and issues being raised on the school level. He stated that he desires to see issues resolved on the school level because they have the support staff and there is a strong demand on OPE which has a staff of about 6. He stated that the OPE staff underwent conflict resolution training through a small contract with the Center for Dispute Settlement. In August, the parent liaisons and home school assistants will receive a similar training to solve issues on a schools level. He stated that he would also like to add one more customer service representative to restructure OPE with each representative focused individually on elementary, secondary, and bilingual.

Commissioner Powell suggested requiring principals to release parent liaisons and home school assistants to professional development in the regulation. She also suggested that the establishment of building based organizations and parent engagement should be a part of principals' annual evaluations. Mr. Underwood stated that the District is currently writing the District Comprehensive Plans. He suggested the "Power of 2" model to empower parents to recruit other parents to participate and each school should have a "Family Affair in the Park" event.

Commissioner Adams stated that there needs to be systemic changes in which every staff is prepared to engage parents in a way that is empowering and not assume that the parent is at a deficit and needs help. She recommended that an OPE staff person serves as a point person to conduct training and for parent complaints regarding a school not being welcoming. Mr. Underwood responded that parent engagement needs to be everyone's job.

Commissioner Adams suggested the need for an elaborate plan with identified resources when intervening with schools with high and low parent complainants. Ms. Van Kerkhove suggested a tiered model of intervention similar to restorative practices. Commissioner Powell suggested that Mr. Underwood and Mr. Ken Davis of OPE create a model/process/profile of the parent grievance model. She further suggested that the Board creates a directive to the Superintendent to create customer service survey cards for parents, require that schools collect the information, and draft a Board report. President White suggested bringing the suggestion to the new Superintendent at an upcoming retreat.

Commissioner Cruz stated that parent engagement needs to be prioritized in the District. He suggested developing a strategic plan with a process on evaluating parent engagement. He also suggested replicating where parent engagement is working in the District. He stated that the role of parent liaisons and home school assistants and how they are utilized need to be reviewed. He suggested that the District should see how each new program meets the goal of parent engagement.

Mr. Underwood stated there is a need for transformational change. Commissioner Adams inquired if there is parent engagement professional development for teachers. Mr. Underwood stated that he is unaware of a parent engagement professional development for teachers. Commissioner Cruz suggested a need to invest money in parent engagement professional development for teachers.

President White stated that there was a special committee on parent engagement that discussed elevating OPE to a cabinet level position or under the supervision of the Board. President White stated there is a need to revisit it with the new superintendent at an upcoming retreat. President White also stated the need for courageous conversations about what parents need to do and their choices. Commissioner Adams stated that parents are not given power, but have power that they can take. She stated that her and her husband hold parents accountable. She stated that there is a need to discuss the Board's institutional role related to parent engagement and the need to engage parents consistently and competently. Mr. Underwood expressed that Parent University could be a strong piece that is lacking and be used to elevate parents' awareness and embrace their responsibility. He stated that a majority of parents are injured and expressing trauma. Commissioner Powell further suggested a need to focus on schools' behavior until the behavior becomes the norm through the use of customer service surveys at schools.

Parent Representative Van Kerkhove stated that she desired transformational changes. She suggested that a next step after the parent focus group is to invite principals and staff for a discussion and planning with parents. She also suggested a need for professional development on implicit bias for parents and staff, and Parent University should train parents on how to improve schools.

President White stated that it is the responsibility of the Board to discuss the District's responsibility as well as the responsibility of others including the police, city government, and parents. He suggested a need for a whole school parent report (not individual parents) that measures attendance, parent survey responses, and parents' access to Parent Connect. Commissioner Cruz stated that there is a need for parent responsibility and accountability. Commissioner Adams stated that the need is to focus on the District's responsibility, accountability, and priorities. Parent Representative Van Kerkhove stated that the need is to shift the blame and take shared responsibility of the District. She suggested an assessment of school climate around parent engagement.

Mr. Underwood stated that there a need for parents to be present at schools to create village approach to responsibility. He stated that parent engagement needs to elevate with more funding and a consciousness among peers. He asked the committee about their input regarding restructuring of the parent liaisons and home school assistants reporting to OPE. Commissioner Cruz suggested having the discussion with the new superintendent.

Commissioner Powell stated that the next steps include the following: (1) Mr. Underwood and Mr. Carling reviewing the NYSBBA sample policy and recommendations related to Policy 1900; (2) Mr. Underwood developing draft policy language and providing a redlined copy to Mr. Carling for legal review; and (3) Mr. Underwood reviewing and updating the regulation to be presented to the next superintendent. Parent Representative Van Kerkhove stated that the regulation needs to be updated to reflect the changes outlined in the current Policy 1900.

### **III. Follow-up Items**

The remaining agenda items were moved to the August meeting. Commissioner Powell asked Mr. Carling to review the NYSBBA updates for the Safe Schools policy for the August meeting. Parent Representative Van Kerkhove announced that she will no longer serve as the Policy Committee's parent representative. Commissioner Powell inquired if she would still be willing to

provide responses as the Committee continues to review the policy manual. Parent Representative Van Kerkhove stated that she would consider it.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Cruz to adjourn. Adopted 4-0 with concurrence from the Parent Representative.

Meeting adjourned at 7:11PM.