

## Speaker Comments

### Special Meeting December 1, 2020

Name	Affiliation	Topic	Comments
	Student		No Comments
Rachel Dobbs	Parent	State Monitor Report	<p>I am both a district employee, teaching music at School #4, and a district parent of two students. I have been following along with Dr. Jallow's reports to the Board and have tuned in to watch the public hearings. My main commentary is on the section on Programmatic Decision Making, specifically about increasing enrollment by offering programs that meet the needs and interests of students and their families, and competing with charter schools. This is where a strong arts program, such as the RCSD has, is truly an asset. Most charter schools cannot and do not offer the same level of arts programming that the RCSD does, with opportunities for students to participate in band, orchestral and vocal music, as well as general music, visual arts classes and elective offerings. For students whose families are interested in their participation in the arts, charter schools simply CANNOT meet that need. These programs are an important piece of school culture and growing our schools as places where families want to send their children.</p> <p>In terms of academic growth, students who participate in music programs have been shown to have significant improvements in attendance and academic achievement in a variety of studies over the years.</p> <p>I have been with the district through several administrative changes that have, at times, decimated our music programs. Last year's budget cuts in the spring were damaging to our visual arts department. I would be a liar if I said that I did not fear in these financially uncertain times that our programming could be seen as superfluous and that our students would lose out on a critical aspect of their education. When it is time to make the hard decisions, please remember that our students need access to these kinds of programs.</p> <p>Also, Dr. Jallow, I'd like to thank you for your attention to all speakers at the hearings. I was so impressed to see you listening so closely and taking notes. It really means a lot to see that the stakeholders who participate are being heard.</p> <p>Thank you--stay safe and well.</p> <p>Rachel Dobbs</p>

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	Community		No Comments
Clairre Labrosa	Staff	State Monitor Reports	<p>First, let me share my continued disappointment with the Board, after I presented a petition signed by hundreds of parents, educators, and community members just a couple weeks ago in opposition to appointing a charter school affiliate to our Board, you went forward and appointed one anyway. I know I won't forget when it is time to vote again, and I urge others to remember as well.</p> <p>Next, I'd like to share some points in response to Dr. Jallow's media comments over the last several months. I would first like to point out that for some reason, our district that is owed millions of dollars in Foundation Aid, is being forced to pay for the state monitor out of our own budget. \$155 dollars per hour plus a living stipend. To give some context, as a teacher in this district my hourly pay is \$37 dollars per hour. So for every 1 hour we pay Dr. Jallow we could pay 4 teachers to work directly with students.</p> <p>In response to class sizes and student to teacher ratios, just recently Dr. Jallow said, <i>"I'm not saying you have to go to the max, but you have to do a little bit better on these (ratios)," "I think it's costing you financially but also it has an impact on academics as well."</i> I know I am not alone in being baffled by Dr. Jallow's class size assessments. Not only are the majority of our classes at capacity, if they are NOT, it is either because an IEP dictates the size of the class, or because the district is not able to predict which students will be returning from charter schools, or moving in between RCSD schools at any given time. And my confusion continues, as I'm not sure there is a single piece of credible education research that shows larger class sizes increase student achievement. What the research does show is, "...smaller classes lead to better results for all kids – especially those who need help the most. Class size reduction has been shown to lead to higher test scores, better grades, more engaged students, fewer disciplinary referrals, and less teacher turnover. Children assigned to smaller classes are more likely to graduate from high school on time, attend college and get a STEM degree. Smaller classes will also likely lead to substantial cost savings by lowering special education referrals, boosting four year graduation rates, reducing the need for expensive and often less effective intervention services. Economists have estimated that <b>reducing</b> class size yields benefits about twice the costs, especially for low-income students and children of color, who make up most students in Rochester City schools. As a result, class size reduction has been identified as one of only a handful of reforms shown to narrow the achievement/opportunity gap between disadvantaged and more advantaged students." <a href="https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Class-Size-FAQ-for-officials-2.24.20.pdf">https://www.classsizematters.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/Class-Size-FAQ-for-officials-2.24.20.pdf</a></p>

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