

Rochester Board of Education
Business Meeting
November 29, 2007

Minutes

Attendance: President Garcia, Vice President Evans, Commissioners Brennan (arrived 7:08 p.m.), Elliott (arrived 6:35 p.m.), Powell, Thompson (arrived 6:50 p.m.) and White; Student Representative R. Washington, Interim Superintendent Dr. Cala, Board Clerk L. Dunsmoor.

President Garcia convened the meeting at 6:31 p.m. and asked for a moment of silent to recognize the passings of longtime employee Isabel Hernandez and Ramon Padilla, a pioneer in the Rochester Hispanic Community. One of Mr. Padilla's daughters works in the District; the other is a former member and President of the Board of Education.

- I) Student Representative Rosetta Washington led the Pledge of Allegiance.
- II) Motion to approve minutes of October 18, 2007 by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner White. Adopted 5-0.
- III) Speakers Addressing an Agenda Item: Dan DiClemente, BENTE President, thanked President Garcia, Commissioner Thompson, and Dr. Cala for their service to the Board and District. He also welcomed incoming Superintendent Jean-Claude Brizard. Mr. DiClemente then discussed the salaries of district secretaries, addressing comments made by Commissioner Elliott at the October meeting. One hundred seventy district secretaries are minorities and are all hired from civil service lists. He discussed the role of school secretaries and their salaries. Commissioner Elliott left the dais to speak to Mr. DiClemente at 6:42 p.m. and returned at 6:46 p.m. President Garcia said the meeting would continue and asked Dr. Cala to provide his report.
- IV) Superintendent's Report: Dr. Cala discussed the new Family Mentoring Program at Freddie Thomas High School. He said participants would be tracked via longitudinal studies to document the new approach and possibly expand its success to other schools. He also discussed the "Rites of Passage" program at Marshall for seventh-graders to improve attendance. The Mayor's Literacy Initiative -- Dr. Cala is pleased they are using the District's goals as guiding principals, one of the major ones being full implementation of Pre-K. Dr. Cala is a member of the Governor's Children's Cabinet and heads up the Pre-K component. Meetings have been conducted across the state and they will be making recommendations to the Governor regarding full-day Pre-K and aid for transportation. He also welcomed Jean-Claude Brizard and offered warm wishes.
- V) Board Standing Committee Reports

Student Representative: Miss Washington discussed the Student Leadership Congress' "Winter Warmth" campaign collecting clothing. Collection boxes are throughout the District, including Central Office. In February the group will meet with the Mayor. The SLC has a partnership with School 22 REACH students; 18 students are being mentored.

Finance: Chair Willa Powell said the Finance Committee met on Tuesday, November 20th to review the October 2007 Financial Reports and resolutions 329 through 340 and resolutions 344 through 349. The Finance Committee of the Whole met on Wednesday, November 28th to review Budget Amendments and resolutions 341 through 343. Commissioner Powell moved that the October 2007 Financial Reports be approved. Second by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 5-0 with Commissioners Brennan and Thompson absent. Commissioner Powell moved that the Student Activity Fund Report be approved. Second by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 5-0 with Commissioners Brennan and Thompson absent.

Community and Intergovernmental Relations: Chair Malik Evans thanked all staff members who supported the recent Superintendent's Forums.

Audit Committee: Chair Van Henri White said Audit will meet in December.

Governance: Chair Cynthia Elliott said the Governance Committee met on Monday, November 26th to discuss: Evaluation of Board Staff; Board Self-Evaluations; and New Board Members' Orientation. The Board Governance Committee is working on establishing a process to evaluate the Board's staff. The committee is also in the process of developing the orientation for new Board members. The next meeting is on December 17th.

Quality Assurance: Chair Shirley Thompson said Quality Assurance met Monday, November 19. They discussed the 2006-07 end-of-year accountability report and the final report for Project 2006. The 2006-07 accountability report included information on New York State testing in English Language Arts, Math, Social Studies and Science. The data also included attendance and suspension figures. Information was provided for Grades 3-8; the data on Grades 9-12 is expected in December. All of this information has been provided to date has been sent to the full Board. The salient points from the conversation: We need to focus on replicating successful programs and initiatives while being careful of a "one-size-fits-all" approach; the sheer demographics of some schools put them in much greater peril of meeting performance standards; we should look at equitably distributing our special education and English Language Learner students so that those students -- and our schools -- can be successful; the Board should continue discussing how it can best advocate at the state and federal level for the benefit of our students and District, and expand our current efforts. Project 2006 is a group of students that the Board began tracking when those students entered ninth grade for the first time in 2002. Just a hair less than 54 percent of the students in that group graduated in four years. Another 25 percent are (right, Linda?) still in district schools and have not graduated. The report distilled several considerations regarding our students that have been discussed by QA over the years, including the effects that grade retention, suspension, and attendance have on our students' prospects for graduation. These are large issues, and Commissioner Thompson is working with Quality Assurance members to define a focus for Quality Assurance so that it can impact student achievement through policy recommendations, advocacy, and closer collaboration with the other Board committees. Quality Assurance's next meeting is Monday, December 10. Our agenda includes discussion of the district's Professional Development Plan and a report on the closing of Frederick Douglass. That meeting will begin at 6 p.m. and everyone is encouraged to attend.

Commissioner Elliott noted that she attended the QA meeting and said part of the discussion was whether the District is mislabeling students just to get funding. She said there was also discussion about parents wanting their children to be labeled because there is extra money that they receive as well. It was also discussed at Finance. Commissioner Elliott said the Board needs to do some analysis of these issues. Dr. Cala said administration is looking at a complete study of Special Education that would address those issues. Commissioner Powell said at Finance, the conversation included the fact that any

incremental increase provided for special education is more than offset by the cost of delivering the services. There is no benefit to the District to 'over-identify' students for services. Commissioner White said the Board is very serious about this issue, particular African-American young men being mislabeled.

VI) Consideration of Resolutions

2007-08: 301-328 -- Motion to approve by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Powell. Commissioner White asked whether timing is appropriate for 301-305; critical appointments may be better left to the incoming superintendent. He motioned that they be tabled for a month. No second. Motion died. President Garcia said the appointments are part of a restructuring approved by the Board some time ago. Mr. Brizard can make changes as he sees fit. Not to approve would be detrimental. Commissioner Elliott said she agreed with President Garcia. The current superintendent was directed to clean house and clean Central Office. It would be irresponsible to undo what Dr. Cala has started. Commissioner Powell made a procedural point. Commissioner White reiterated that he had made inquiries into the issue two weeks ago; he wanted to extend the same courtesy to Mr. Brizard that the Board has extended to Dr. Cala. Commissioner Elliott had questions on the resolutions that were answered by Chief Human Resources Office Joanne Giuffrida. Commissioner Elliott also said that one resolution was 40 pages long, which makes it difficult for the Board to complete its due diligence. President Garcia said every individual must be named who is teaching after school or on Saturday and that is why the resolution was so long. Ms. Giuffrida said legal has been asked to determine what exactly it is the Board's duty to approve. The rates are contractual. The superintendent will review the information with the Board, which can then decide if it wants to review the HR appointments if it is not absolutely required to do so. Commissioner Elliott also raised the issue of parity in salaries and what do we value. African American paraprofessionals and sentries are on the front lines making \$9.33 and (roughly) \$10 an hour. Secretaries are not on the front lines and those making \$20 an hour are for the most part white females. She discussed structural racism, found even in civil service exams.

Roll-call vote:

Commissioner Brennan:	Yes on all except 301, 302 and 303.
Commissioner Elliott:	No on 301, 302, 303, 306, 318, 319, 320, 321, 323.
Commissioner Evans:	Yes on all.
Commissioner Powell:	Yes on all.
Commissioner Thompson:	Yes on all.
Commissioner White:	No on 301, 302, 303 and 305.
President Garcia:	Yes for all except 318, from which he abstained for family relationships.

Resolutions 2007-08: 329-340 -- Motion to approve by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

Resolutions 2007-08 -- 341-343: Motion to approve by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0.

Resolutions 2007-08: 344-346 -- Motion to approve by Commissioner Thompson. Second by Commissioner Powell.

Resolution 2007-08: 347 -- Motion by Commissioner Brennan. Second by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 7-0.

Resolutions 2007-08: 348-354 -- Motion by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 7-0 except for 350, for which Commissioner Elliott dissented.

Resolution 2007-08: 355 -- Motion to approve by Commissioner Evans. Second by Commissioner Brennan.

Roll call vote:

Commissioner Brennan: Aye.
Commissioner Elliott: Yes. Board rushed into process. Politics aside, she lauded Dr. Cala, who is supported by the entire community. There must be something else going on that we want to get rid of this person. The Board is being irresponsible. She said Mr. Brizard will be held accountable to the community.
Commissioner White: Yes. Commissioner Elliott will be proved wrong just as she was with Dr. Cala. Mr. Brizard is someone who cares for children and people. He needs our endorsement and support.
Commissioner Thompson: Aye. It was important to finish process. Mr. Brizard brings a wealth of experience. Many of the issues he discussed resonated with her. It would have been irresponsible to abort the process. The Board had the best of both worlds.
Commissioner Powell: Yes. Welcome Mr. Brizard. You have my vote.
Commissioner Evans: Yes. The superintendent is only as strong as the Board. Important that the Board set an example for students. Board needs to create an environment in which superintendent can succeed. Board needs to show positive leadership.
President Garcia: Yes. Dr. Cala impressed him during his interview by saying he would come in and get the District ready so the next person could focus on what was important. Bill Cala is an exemplary individual but he was not looking for the permanent job. The Board made an excellent choice in Jean-Claude Brizard.

Motion adopted 7-0

President Garcia asked Mr. Brizard to say a few words. Mr. Brizard thanked the Board for its vote of confidence and said he would make the students of the Rochester City School District his life's work.

- VII) Unfinished Business. None.
- VIII) New Business: None.
- IX) Speakers on other than Agenda Items: Arthur Stoler asked that the emergency contact information process for students be altered so that it is not completed solely at the discretion of the custodial parent.
- X) Adjournment: Motion by Commissioner Powell. Second by Commissioner Thompson. Adopted 7-0 at 7:37 p.m.