

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Contract for Excellence Public Hearing**  
**June 24, 2009**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**Minutes**

**Attendance:** President Evans and Commissioners Brennan, Campos, Elliott, White, and Williams, Superintendent Jean-Claude Brizard and Board Clerk Shanai Lee.

President Evans opened the hearing at 5:32 p.m.

President Evans noted that each school district's Contract for Excellence shall be developed through a public process consistent with shared decision making requirements of section 100.11 Commissioner's Regulations. In keeping with this process, this public hearing is held to provide an opportunity for oral and written comments to be submitted by any interested party. He then requested public input and questions regarding the District's Contract for Excellence.

**Charlie Richardson**

Mr. Richardson stated that he is not speaking as a representative of any community agency or advisory board; instead, he is speaking on behalf of the parents, students, and community members of the Rochester City School District. Mr. Richardson said the money saved on transportation should go towards purchasing more resources for classrooms and further funding parental involvement throughout the District. He said that he advocates for taxpayers to begin voting on the District's budget. He also mentioned that alternative education, along with resources to address the health issues of our students, should be funded by the District's Contract for Excellence money. Mr. Richardson stated that the District should also invest in creating additional recreational centers for our students.

**Ruth Danis**

Ms. Danis submitted the following written comment:

Excellence and Equity are not the same. To achieve "equal opportunity," programs have to be geared to clearly articulate what end results are desired. "Reaching one's potential" is meaningless unless the larger context of our society is referred to. In fact it destroys the real opportunity of young people to excel. To excel is to reach beyond.

As a former staff person for the RCSD's "Civic Values Policy" I believe excellence is ensuring all programs provide the opportunities that prepare students for citizenship. Citizens in a democracy are about service to family, friends, and the society they live in. Personal potential is elevated by believing in greater goals. The Constitution requires that two competing values such as "liberty" and "equality" are

preserved by educating young people who can collectively maximize these values. President Obama's statement that health care for all Americans is both "economic" and "moral" is an example of excellence. The RCSD needs to define "excellence" for the sake of our society, our community and our students.

**Jon Greenbaum**

Mr. Greenbaum submitted the following written comment:

I'm Jon Greenbaum, Organizer with Metro Justice, and I'm here today to speak for the Alliance for Quality Education. We object to the Superintendent's Contract for Excellence due to its exclusion of class size reduction plans. Over the past few years the District has reduced class sizes so that now, according to District reports to the SED, average RCSD class sizes are on a par with the county and the region. The Pre K classes are a little bigger, the elementary classes are a little smaller and the high school classes are a little bigger. But for the most part, the District is in the right place now. But with elimination of 200 teaching positions the District is going in the wrong direction. Fewer teachers will mean more crowded classrooms. The Contract for Excellence provides an opportunity for the District to maintain lower class sizes and the District should take advantage of it. Thank you.

**Glenny Williams**

Mr. Williams thanked the Board for the opportunity to provide input on the Contract for Excellence. He said that the District should invest funds provided by the Contract for Excellence to reduce class sizes or maintain current levels, particularly in the District's elementary schools. He mentioned that several studies exist to support the idea that small class sizes positively impact student achievement. He said these studies prove that smaller class sizes enhance the learning environment. Mr. Williams expressed concern about Superintendent Brizard's efforts to increase class sizes by reducing the number of teachers in the District. He said the District's students and teachers have benefitted from smaller class sizes. He urged the Board and the Superintendent to maintain the District's current class sizes.

President Evans thanked the speakers for their comments and announced the schedule of future Board meetings.

President Evans concluded the hearing at 6:02 p.m.