

Rochester Board of Education
Finance Committee Meeting of the Whole
April 16, 2013

Attendance: Commissioner Powell (Chair); Commissioners Evans (left at 7:36PM), Elliott, Cruz (left at 8:09PM), Campos, and Adams. Parent Representative: Giancarlo Giannini.

District Staff: Superintendent Vargas; Bill Ansbro, Chief Financial Officer; Vern Connors, Budget Director; Vicky Ramos, Director of Student Placement; Bethany Centrone, Chief of HCI and Beverly Burrell-Moore, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching & Learning.

The meeting was convened at 6:10PM by Commissioner Powell, who explained that Section 4 (“School Profiles & Budgets”) is to be reviewed, as well as any follow-up questions regarding the previous sections.

Section 4 (“School Profiles & Budgets”):

Parent Representative Giancarlo Giannini asked when responses will be provided to Round 2 questions that were not submitted until today. Vern Connors replied that the responses will be provided by Friday, April 19th.

Mr. Giannini requested clarification about the amount of time for art and music instruction reported in Appendix 30, with 2000 minutes per year for music and 1000 minutes per year for art. He noted that the Appendix indicates that 40 minutes of instruction will be provided for each section, but this time was divided in half for art instruction. Mr. Connors explained that art classes are limited to 15 students, so the instructional time was divided to ensure that art is provided to all students.

Mr. Giannini asked about the way in which art instruction is to be structured. Vicky Ramos responded that elementary schools will rotate art classes among sections for the entire school year, while secondary schools have greater flexibility to determine whether to offer art for one semester or on alternate days throughout the year.

Mr. Giannini asked whether the elementary school art classes will be offered only half the time because of the 15-student class size limit. Ms. Ramos replied that half of the class will attend art at one time and the other half of the class will attend at another time. She stated that every class will have the same number of minutes for art instruction.

Commissioner Evans inquired about plans for obtaining a separate building for the Leadership Academy for Young Men, noting that sharing a building with another high school undermines the school’s mission and that these students have been subjected to ongoing taunting from students in the other school because of their dress code. Superintendent Vargas acknowledged that a more suitable location must be found for the Leadership Academy for Young Men, but without expending additional funds because a significant budget gap is expected for 2014-15. He discussed the importance of implementing initiatives with fidelity, so that the Leadership

Academy is located on its own campus without these other external influences. The Superintendent offered to look into possible resolutions to this issue in the future.

Commissioner Evans expressed concern about the proposed reduction of teaching staff at Wilson Commencement Academy (Section 4, p. 175), from 102.3 FTE to 79.4 FTE – even though no significant changes are expected in student enrollment (1012 in 2012-13; 1007 projected for 2013-14). He stated that he had understood that Wilson Commencement Academy was to gain students in 2013-14, and asked for clarification of the enrollment projections. Commissioner Evans commented on the low pupil – teacher ratio at the school, but expressed concern about the availability of teaching staff for all of the courses offered in light of these proposed reductions. Mr. Connors explained that a number of positions that had been listed in the schools and departments have been centralized in this budget (e.g. School Health Coordinators, Special Education Coordinators, ELA and Math Coaches), so comparison with previous budgets makes it appear as though schools are losing staff in 2013-14. He stated that the centralized positions will be allocated to schools to meet their instructional needs.

Commissioner Evans inquired about the way in which these positions are reflected in the budget, and the extent to which schools are aware of these changes. Mr. Connors replied that the centralized positions are reflected in the section of the budget pertaining to the Chief of Schools, noting that schools have been informed of these changes. The Superintendent cited School No. 58 as an example in which it appears as though there will be a reduction of approximately 6.0 FTE, but the staff will actually increase in 2013-14 by 1.5 FTE with allocation of the centralized positions.

Commissioner Elliott asked about ways to conduct discussions with schools before the budget is publicly released, so that concerns can be mitigated as questions arise. Superintendent Vargas stated that conversations have taken place with principals, but there have been some misunderstandings and disagreements (e.g. centralizing the ELA and Math Coaches). Beverly Burrell-Moore noted that the chiefs met with each of the principals to review the Master Schedule and the process of apportioning staff among the schools. The Superintendent acknowledged that some principals were understandably confused about the Master Schedule and the ability to offer elective courses.

Commissioner Evans emphasized the importance of completing the class schedule earlier to enable families and students to plan before the beginning of the school year. Ms. Ramos reported that principals were also given specific information about mandates regarding course requirements for each school. She cited Wilson Commencement Academy as an example in which additional ELA and Math teachers will be allocated due to the requirements of the core instructional program. Ms. Ramos stated that 13.4 FTE of teachers have yet to be assigned on the basis of course requests, which are currently being completed and reviewed. She indicated that all course requests will be completed for incoming 9th grade students in the next week, while those for students in grades 10-12 are currently under review. Ms. Ramos reported that the class schedules are being developed for students in grades K-6, and this will be done for secondary students as soon as the course review process has been completed.

Bill Ansbrow commented that developing school staffing levels on the basis of instructional needs and students' course requests will lead to greater stability in staffing overall for the District, mitigating historic fluctuations that led to staff layoffs in the spring only to re-hire again in September.

Commissioner Powell expressed concern that students are directed by school counselors to take certain courses to fill classes and minimize changes in staffing. She questioned the extent to which the particular mix of teachers in staffing allocations determines the courses that students take. Ms. Ramos reported that safeguards are in place to prevent this situation, primarily by informing parents and students in June of the courses that students have requested. She noted that any changes to a student's course requests can be accommodated in July and August. Ms. Ramos also stated that the course catalog has been closely aligned with the classes and level of rigor required by the State, and school counselors have received training to ensure their understanding of the new choices available to students. She pointed out that if an insufficient number of students choose a particular course, the course request will be reviewed by the Cabinet to make a final decision. Ms. Ramos stated that the District does not want to prevent courses from being offered because the number of students does not meet the threshold. She discussed the importance of each of these elements in developing a schedule that is supportive to students and parents.

Commissioner Powell noted that the budget appears to contain a lot of cuts to art and music programs in schools, without much clarity regarding the use of the remaining resources and staff. She asked whether schools that eliminated art and/or music last year will be able to restore these programs in 2013-14 (e.g. School No. 23). Commissioner Powell also raised the issue of the Teacher Reserve pool containing an insufficient mix of teaching positions to accommodate schools' course requests (e.g. if every school decided to restore art and music programs). Superintendent Vargas replied that the District will offer courses to meet requirements, noting that schools have had the option in the past to make choices without regard to requirements. He stated that this lack of compliance has led to centralized management of certain resources and staffing. He expressed the hope that these measures will not be necessary after greater accountability has been established in the schools.

Commissioner Powell commented that her questions about having an adequate mix of teachers in the Teacher Reserve pertain more to electives than to requirements, and asked about the basis for allocating these positions to schools. Ms. Ramos replied that staffing for K-8 schools was based on the assumption that the same courses would be provided in 2013-14 as in the current year to ensure that there are no reductions in art or music classes. She reported that principals have requested additional courses to offer opposite art class, such as choir, band, and library time. Ms. Ramos stated that these staffing requirements were determined based on the principals' requests. She indicated that some schools will have additional art and/or music by design, by request, or to restore programs that had been cut back in the past.

Commissioner Evans requested clarification regarding student – teacher ratios and class sizes because this information can seem confusing or contradictory. Superintendent Vargas reported that the smallest class sizes in the District are for 11th and 12th grades, but it would be much more effective to have the smallest class sizes at the K-3 level. He stated that contractual class sizes

are quite small, particularly for an urban district. Mr. Connors noted that much of the confusion about the teacher – student ratio and the average class size is due to non-instructional positions (e.g. registrars, counselors, coaches, non-classroom teachers) being included in the teacher classification, which reduces the teacher – student ratio. He stated that the proposed 2013-14 budget is based on maintaining or reducing average class sizes, and the proposed staffing reductions are primarily of teachers who are not providing instruction in the classroom. Mr. Connors explained that these reductions may increase the teacher – student ratio in some schools, but the average class size will not increase. Superintendent Vargas stated that 282 teachers have been on special assignment outside of the classroom and reductions in these positions have helped to close the \$50M budget gap without increasing average class size.

Commissioner Campos requested information about the teacher – student ratio for general education, Special Education, and ELL to obtain a more comprehensive perspective of staffing in the classroom.

Action Item: The Administration will provide information to the Board as to the teacher – student ratio for general education, Special Education, and ELL programs.

Commissioner Adams asked whether the centralized teaching positions were included in the teacher – student ratios reported for each school in the Budget Book. Ms. Ramos replied that the teacher – student ratios in the Budget Book reflect only the number of teaching positions assigned to each school, and excludes the positions in the centralized Teacher Reserve. She noted that this also appears to inflate the teacher – student ratio for each school in 2013-14.

Commissioner Adams requested information about the allocation of positions in the Teacher Reserve for each school. Ms. Ramos replied that this information is not yet available.

Commissioner Adams discussed reports that the ELA and Math coaches will rotate among schools, focusing more time and attention on priority schools in 2013-14. She noted that schools that have had a full-time ELA and/or Math coach will now only have a fraction of that time. She asked when information will be available regarding the ELA and Math coach positions. Mr. Connors asserted that ELA and Math coaches' time and expertise was not appropriately utilized in some schools this year, which led to many of these positions being centralized. He stated that these coaches will not be assigned to particular schools in 2013-14.

Commissioner Adams requested information regarding all of the centralized teaching-coded positions and estimates as to the allocations for each school. She contended that the proposed 2013-14 budget includes staffing reductions as well as centralization of certain positions, and emphasized the importance of clearly examining these factors to understand the impact on schools. Commissioner Adams reported that some principals have expressed deep concern about their ability to deliver quality instruction with the staffing levels proposed in the 2013-14 budget. Ms. Ramos explained that information about the allocation of centralized positions is not yet available because these allocations are based on course requests, which are still in the process of being completed and reviewed. She offered to provide a general description of the process for allocating centralized positions among schools, noting that some positions will work across schools (e.g. registrars, athletic directors). Ms. Ramos stated that the ELA and Math coaches

will provide training to teachers across the District, and the number of coaches and amount of time spent in any particular school will be determined by school performance and staff needs.

Action Item: Ms. Ramos will provide the Board with a general description of the process for allocating centralized positions among the schools in the District.

Commissioner Adams inquired when more specific information will be available regarding staffing allocations, noting the importance in terms of the resources available to each school. She expressed concern about the ELA and Math coaches being used for professional development, pointing out that coaches in her children's school have been instructional leaders and modeled best practices by teaching in the classroom. Commissioner Adams emphasized students' need for highly effective instructional leaders in the classroom. Ms. Burrell-Moore reported that the ELA and Math coaches are funded through Title I and therefore are not supposed to have teaching responsibilities. She stated that these funds are to be used for the coaches to model assignments to teachers to build their capacity to deliver instruction in a way that is meaningful and engaging for students.

Commissioner Adams asserted that one of the clear priorities of the Board has been for coaches and teaching specialists to teach in the classroom. She stated that she had thought the rationale for centralizing the ELA and Math coach positions was to improve supervision to ensure that their time and expertise was utilized appropriately in each school.

Action Item: Mr. Ansbro will provide to the Board aggregate information of the number of ELA and Math coaches and an explanation of their roles in the current year and for 2013-14.

Commissioner Adams noted that some parents are concerned about the possible elimination of the MAP program and honors classes. Ms. Ramos stated that honors classes are anticipated to be offered in all schools for grades 7-12. She explained that high-level AP classes were added to the course selection and schedule for schools that did not appear to have provided them.

Commissioner Adams questioned how the District will accommodate requests from schools if a large number choose to use the centralized Teacher Reserve to provide instrumental music or another specific program for which there may not be an adequate number of positions in the Reserve. Ms. Burrell-Moore responded that a contingency FTE fund will be allocated this summer according to enrollment in different classes. She stated that this contingency could include any adjustments needed to support expansion or restoration of programs in schools. Ms. Burrell-Moore cited the example of School No. 23, in which families requested District-wide Spring ensembles. She stated that schools are being contacted to identify the students who would like to participate, and opportunities will be created for those students to work in ensembles for the additional 30 minutes available in their schedule. Ms. Burrell-Moore reported that opportunities are being identified for schools to expand their art or music program.

Commissioner Adams asked about the number of positions contained in the central FTE contingency fund. Ms. Ramos replied that this pool includes any staff member that did not have a course to teach. She stated that staffing for schools was based on the eight periods of the

normal school day, and any staffing beyond these levels was placed in the contingency pool. She reported that she has been meeting weekly with school staff to discuss progress in developing the schedule and use of the contingency pool. Ms. Ramos stated that the number of FTE in the contingency pool fluctuates at this point, as requests are received and courses are determined.

Commissioner Adams inquired about the cap on the FTE contingency pool. Mr. Connors replied that the Teacher Reserve is based on the best estimate of allocations needed to accommodate the schedule in each of the schools. He noted that this is the first time that staffing has been determined according to student needs and course requests, rather than simply adding to a base level from the previous year. Mr. Connors cautioned against assuming that the current staffing allocations are correct because of historic patterns of rolling forward the number of staff from the previous year. He pointed out that \$5M in the budget reserve is available to cover any unforeseen circumstances that may arise during the year, which could include additional staff.

Commissioner Elliott asked whether the requests for equipment for the Central Kitchen and for other improvements to Food Services have been included in the proposed 2013-14 budget. Mr. Ansbro responded that the Central Kitchen equipment is estimated to cost approximately \$15M, and has not been addressed in the proposed budget. He added that requests have been received to install hybrid kitchens in elementary schools because these types of kitchens greatly improve the quality of food provided to students, as compared to the pre-packaged meals from the Central Kitchen. Mr. Ansbro stated that efforts are being made to explore the possibility of installing ovens in school kitchens as a facility improvement, and thereby obtaining NYS Aid to help defray these costs.

Commissioner Elliott contended that the Food Service issue is significant in this District, and the infrastructure must be improved to ensure the quality of food served. She stated that she would like to see these issues addressed in the budget because this is a high priority for students. Commissioner Elliott reported that these concerns have been raised over the last five years, but there is not yet a resolution. She stated that the District also needs to hire a nutritionist to ensure that students' nutritional needs are met and the proper menus are developed. Commissioner Elliott pointed out the waste involved from students not eating meals, particularly since they have to take an entire meal even if they only want a portion of it (e.g. milk) and the rest is then thrown away. She asserted that the high percentage of RCSD students qualifying for free and reduced-price meals indicates that quality is an even greater priority.

Mr. Ansbro offered to discuss these Food Service issues further, but contended that the issue centers on the schools having hybrid kitchens and warming ovens.

Commissioner Elliott noted that a group of Food Service employees are not part of any collective bargaining unit, and should be given pay increases in conjunction with those who are covered by a union contract.

Action Item: Bethany Centrone will provide information to the Board regarding the last time Food Service employees not covered by a union contract were given a pay raise.

Commissioner Powell questioned the rationale for switching from teachers to teaching assistants to staff In-School Suspension (ISS) rooms. She asked whether this shift is being proposed because students do not receive direct instruction while in the Alternatives to Suspension (ATS) program, since they are coming from different classes and grade levels. Ms. Burrell-Moore reported that ATS will continue in the elementary schools and in one high school, supported by the Center for Youth. She stated that a decision was made to discontinue the contract to have the Center for Youth Social Learning Specialists in the classroom for ISS and ATS, and instead to have a certified teaching assistant in these classrooms. Ms. Burrell-Moore pointed out that each school is obligated to provide work supervised by a teacher for students to complete while in ISS.

Commissioner Powell noted that the State has chastised the District for having high teacher – student ratios, yet staff in each of these types of positions (e.g. ATS, Student Support Centers, social workers, and school psychologists) have played an important role outside of the classroom. She encouraged a firm response to the State in underscoring the significance of these positions in providing vital services to students in a high-need district.

Ms. Burrell-Moore stated that this new model for ISS and ATS involves reframing the role and responsibilities of school psychologists, social workers, and counselors. She noted that the possibility is being explored of having staff in these positions go into ISS rooms and work with students to improve their skills.

Mr. Giannini asked when the centralized positions will be defined and allocated to the schools. Ms. Burrell-Moore stated that ELA and Math coaches are currently being identified for 2013-14, with a structure and plan in place in May, although specific allocations for schools will not yet be available.

Ms. Burrell-Moore explained that the current Teacher Coordinator of Special Education positions work with the Office of Special Education to ensure that each student's Individual Educational Plan (IEP) is followed. She stated that these positions are to be replaced with additional case managers from the Office of Special Education, and the work will be reorganized with supervision by administrators. Ms. Burrell-Moore pointed out that these changes are part of the Special Education reform in the District, which also includes professional development to ensure compliance with NYS mandates and provision of high-quality instruction and services. She stated that these staffing decisions will be made by May.

Superintendent Vargas stated that additional time is needed for staffing allocations to schools because all of the current ELA and Math coaches will be interviewed and an accurate job description developed to ensure that they are assigned to the appropriate role and responsibilities.

Commissioner Adams urged the Administration not to adopt too much standardization, emphasizing the need for flexibility to support effective models in schools that are already in place and which may not conform to the standard mold.

Commissioner Elliott remarked on the number of major changes and initiatives each year that have a significant impact on the budget. She asked whether the District is reaching a point of

stability in implementing the Common Core curriculum and other initiatives that have a budgetary impact. The Superintendent responded that the District has every reason to believe that the Common Core curriculum will be in place for the foreseeable future, particularly since the State has made a substantial commitment in terms of funding and providing technical assistance to all of the NYS school districts.

Commissioner Elliott inquired about the timeframe for the State to determine whether RCSD has been successful in implementing the Common Core curriculum, since this will have fiscal implications in the future. The Superintendent noted that the stability of programs is affected by low-performing (“priority”) schools because the District is required to take action to improve these schools. He stated that until significant improvements in student achievement are attained, reforms will continue to be required. Superintendent Vargas discussed the different types of reforms required under NCLB:

- The turnaround model, involving removal of the principal and half of the staff;
- Conversion of an RCSD school to a charter school; or
- The transformation model, which involves implementing substantial changes to the instructional program.

He pointed out that the District has focused on the transformation model because it involves the least disruption to the school community, but still affects the budget as schools are phased in or out.

Commissioner Cruz asked about the reason for high suspension rates in some of the schools, particularly as a percentage of the student population (e.g. School No. 42, 44, and 50).

Action Item: Superintendent Vargas will provide information to the Board regarding the factors affecting the relatively high suspension rates in certain schools (e.g. School No. 42, 44, and 50).

Section 5 (Program Profiles & Budgets):

Commissioner Cruz inquired about the elimination of 12.0 FTE in the bilingual program at School No. 9. Ms. Ramos replied that many of these FTE were actually teachers on assignment or participated in the extended day program, and assured that there have not been any staffing reductions to the bilingual program at this school. She stated that there will be changes in staffing allocations as schools go to extended day programs in 2013-14, but core staff in that school have not been decreased.

Commissioner Campos pointed out that the principal of School No. 9 developed a bilingual program that she felt was meeting students’ needs, and questioned whether the teachers on assignment might have been a part of that program. Ms. Ramos replied that School No. 9 has a type of literacy and computer technology program for ELL and bilingual instruction, and these resources will continue to be available in 2013-14. Superintendent Vargas noted that School No. 9 is a priority school and the expanded day program is being offered as part of the transformation

model for school reform. He stated that this is not reflected in the proposed 2013-14 budget and the cost will be approximately \$1500 per student. The Superintendent explained that these costs will be covered by grants that have been earmarked to help schools with performance issues.

Commissioner Cruz requested a breakdown of the ethnicity of students at the Young Men's Leadership Academy.

Action Item: The Administration will provide the Board with a breakdown of the ethnic composition of the student population at the Young Men's Leadership Academy.

Commissioner Campos expressed concern about elementary schools having created systems for implementing PBS and ATS, observing that a lot of programs put in place by the previous administration are now being discontinued. She objected to the District's historic pattern of implementing and then dismantling programs, creating a great deal of waste and a lack of stability. Commissioner Campos questioned the rationale for eliminating PBS and ATS, noting that these programs were to assist in improving school climate. Ms. Burrell-Moore responded that the data regarding ISS and out-of-school suspension indicated that PBS has not made a difference, although some schools implemented the program with greater fidelity than others. She stated that PBS is only one among a number of strategies that schools should use to address school climate. In terms of ATS, Ms. Burrell-Moore reported that these strategies will continue to be addressed through staff professional development.

Commissioner Campos asserted that the issue with PBS is the extent to which it was implemented, rather than a fundamental problem with the program itself. She objected to the proposal to eliminate the program on this basis and contended that schools must be held accountable for their performance in terms of implementing PBS. Commissioner Campos pointed out that best practices could be shared among schools and a greater degree of standardization in program implementation could be established by requiring certain elements to be in place to ensure the success of PBS, rather than abandoning the entire program after 3-4 years. Ms. Burrell-Moore replied that the District is not eliminating opportunities for schools to utilize PBS strategies.

Commissioner Campos questioned the utility of having PBS strategies in place without the program, asking how schools will be supported with implementation. Ms. Burrell-Moore responded that this will be done by providing professional development, ensuring that schools are safe, and instruction is productive. She pointed out that many PBS strategies have become embedded in school culture.

Commissioner Campos maintained that the District has not held staff accountable in schools for failing to implement PBS adequately, and requested data regarding the suspension rates for the schools that have implemented PBS with fidelity and for those that have not.

Action Item: Ms. Burrell-Moore will provide the Board with suspension rates for the schools that have implemented PBS with fidelity and for those that have not.

Commissioner Elliott emphasized the Board's fiduciary responsibility in closing the budget gap and having to make difficult decisions, particularly in conveying to employees that there are limits in terms of pay raises and benefits. She noted that contract negotiations will begin with RTA soon, and expressed the hope that these employees will be willing to make some concessions. Commissioner Elliott pointed out that 70% of the budget is for staffing costs, so contracts may need to be re-negotiated to reduce these costs.

Commissioner Campos contended that the main concern is the programmatic investment that has already been made over the last 3-4 years and that elimination of PBS does not address the real issue of staff being held accountable for implementation. She also emphasized the importance of basing programmatic decisions on data.

Commissioner Adams noted that she had asked a number of questions during last year's budget cycle about the different school climate programs (e.g. PATHS, Primary Project, ATS) to obtain a clearer understanding of the efficacy of each program and the wide variability in implementation among the schools. She expressed concern that the District does not have the fundamental conditions in place in schools as far as behavioral expectations of students or in creating an environment conducive to learning.

Commissioner Adams requested information regarding the amount expended on the PBS program over the years, including professional development and staff training hours. She also asked about the specific content of professional development for PBS, and the way in which this program investment can be used to improve school climate. Ms. Burrell-Moore described classroom management as the most basic mechanism for promoting positive school climate, particularly in defining expectations and holding students accountable. She reported that she is exploring with the NYS Office of Professional Learning ways to provide support to new teachers and those who are struggling with these issues, noting that this is not currently offered to teachers.

Action Item: Information to be provided to the Board regarding the amount invested in PBS since its inception, including the number of staff hours for professional development, program funding, staffing, and other resources.

Commissioner Adams asked about current efforts to ensure accountability in schools and effective replication of programs. Superintendent Vargas replied that he would like these factors to be captured in performance evaluations, and agreed with Commissioner Adams' concern about large expenditures for professional development with no indication as to the outcome. He stated that professional development will be evaluated to ensure that it is targeted to the needs of the school.

Commissioner Adams stated that Board members must be informed of the professional development plan. Ms. Centrone reported that the professional development plan is being finalized, and will be presented to the Board when completed.

Commissioner Elliott recommended eliminating the Careers in Teaching (CIT) program because it appears to have no real benefit. She stated that a five-year retention rate for RCSD teachers of

over 82% does not indicate success, but may reflect part of the problem to the extent that teachers with seniority have not adequately educated students. Superintendent Vargas stated that the CIT program is mandated by the State and collective bargaining agreements, pointing out that this program provides the greatest support to teachers that need it. He pointed out that teachers have the most difficulty in their first year, and CIT has an excellent record of providing support. Ms. Centrone noted that the primary purpose of CIT is to provide mentors to teachers in their first year, which is required by NYS law. She stated that coaching is also provided to teachers after their first year if they are struggling, but the availability of this coaching is affected by budget constraints. Ms. Centrone reported that the District evaluates mentors to ensure that the coaching provided to teachers is effective. The Superintendent added that the CIT program is so effective that many other school districts are considering replicating it.

Commissioner Elliott expressed concern that the CIT program is not translating into improvements in student achievement. Superintendent Vargas acknowledged that one of the weaknesses of CIT is that it is limited to the first year of teaching, rather than for the first 3-5 years. He emphasized that one program alone cannot boost student achievement, which is affected by many different factors.

Commissioner Elliott questioned the proposed increase in the budget for the CIT program over the next two years. Ms. Centrone explained that CIT is also responsible for maintaining peer review, which is part of the APPR performance evaluation system. She stated that the program budget is consistent with the number of mentors needed.

Commissioner Powell expressed concern about proposed funding reductions of 25-33% for the Young Mothers' program, noting that the number of program participants has not declined to this extent. She pointed out that students were given the option of remaining in the Young Mothers' program last year. Commissioner Powell asserted that the low number of returning students indicates that either students were not encouraged to return to the program, or the program is not meeting their needs. She stated that she will discuss her additional questions about the Young Mothers' program with Ms. Burrell-Moore, who has been working on these programmatic issues.

Motion by Commissioner Elliott to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. **Adopted 4-0.**