

**Rochester Board of Education**  
**Finance Committee Meeting of the Whole**  
**March 18, 2010**  
**5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**Attendance:** Commissioner Powell (Chair); Commissioners Evans, Cruz, Campos, White (joined at 5:43PM), and Williams (joined at 5:52PM). Commissioner Elliott absent.

District Staff: Superintendent Brizard, Joyce Martelli, John Scanlan

Board Staff: D. Flanagan

Commissioner Powell convened the meeting at 5:36 p.m.

**Superintendent Brizard's Presentation of the Proposed 2010-11 Budget:**

Superintendent Brizard emphasized that the New York State budget has not yet been finalized, so that the proposed 2010-11 budget is subject to change.

Fiscal issues currently confronting the District include:

- Rising cost of staff salaries and benefits
- Increasing cost of supplies, fuel and other necessities
- Economic recession
- Substantial reductions in State aid, which comprises 63% of the District's revenue
- "Funding cliff" with 2010-11 as last year for receipt of federal stimulus funds
- Cuts in State-funded Medicaid
- Reductions in grants and Special Aid
- Increases in the State deficit

Given these difficulties, Superintendent Brizard underscored the importance of basing funding decisions on core values as described in the Strategic Plan (Achievement, Equity, Accountability).

Joyce Martelli discussed declining student enrollment at both the elementary and secondary levels since 2002-03, which is projected to continue into future years.

John Scanlan described an iterative process involved in developing the budget, with management preparing estimates, revisions provided by schools, and modifications made based on input from schools. He stated that this has been an ongoing process throughout the year.

Superintendent Brizard clarified that while school leaders are being given greater autonomy in making decisions regarding staffing and funding allocations, management is continuing to examine the aggregate impact to ensure that expenditures are aligned within the overall budget.

Mr. Scanlan provided data indicating that the Rochester City School District has the greatest number of administrators in proportion to students of any of the Big Five districts in New York State. The number of students for every administrator is: 67 for RCSD, 101 for Buffalo, 83 in Syracuse, and 107 for the Yonkers School District.

Superintendent Brizard emphasized the need to reduce the administrative burden in the District to align more closely with the ratios in the other Big Five districts, particularly since this makes Albany reluctant to provide funding to RCSD.

The Superintendent presented an overview of efforts made to reduce the structural deficit:

2009-10:

- 20% reduction in non-school operating budgets
- Hiring freeze for vacant positions

2010-11:

- 40% reduction in non-school operating budgets
- Decrease expenses for building-based substitute teachers (40 FTEs)
- Eliminate vacant positions (188 FTEs)
- Reduce program expenses by 30-35%
- Use Fund Balance (\$25m)

These measures will cover 73% of the estimated \$61.1m RCSD budget deficit for 2010-11.

The following measures will cover the remaining 27% of the projected deficit:

Reductions in Staff:

- Administrative: 10%
- Civil Service: 4%
- Teachers: 2%

These staffing reductions will result in an overall 5% decrease in staffing levels, which will include eliminating 169 FTEs from Central Office.

Long-Term Fiscal Issues identified by Superintendent Brizard:

- Declining revenue from New York State and the federal government
- Optimizing class size throughout the District
- Growth of special education, which costs twice as much per student as general education
- Costs rising faster than the rate of inflation
- Double-digit increases in employee benefits and contributions to the New York State retirement fund

Commissioner Powell noted that Listening Tours will be conducted on March 22<sup>nd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> to hear from parents and community members as to their concerns and priorities for funding in the District. She explained that the intent is for Board members to consider this information in the subsequent budget deliberations.

Commissioner Powell also announced that questions from Board members regarding Section 1 of the budget are due to Board staff by Tuesday, March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Commissioner White commented on the resolution approved by the Board to have one City Council representative serve as a non-voting member of the Finance and Audit Committees, provided that the City establishes an Education Committee which would provide for reciprocal representation by a Board member. He emphasized that this is the most opportune time for the mayor and City Council to become involved with the work of the District, and suggested that President Evans prepare a letter to invite the mayor and City Council to attend the budget deliberation meetings.

**Motion** by Commissioner White to have President Evans prepare a letter on behalf of the entire Board to invite Mayor Duffy and members of City Council to attend the upcoming Finance Committee Meetings of the Whole to deliberate on the proposed 2010-11 budget for the Rochester City School District. Seconded by Commissioner Evans. **Adopted 6-0.**

**Motion** by Commissioner Evans to adjourn. **Adopted 6-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:02PM.