

APPROVED BY COMMITTEE

Rochester Board of Education

Finance Committee of the Whole

April 28, 2008

6:00 p.m.

Conference Room 3A

Minutes

Attendance: Commissioners Powell (Chair), Campos, Elliott, Williams, and White.
District Staff: Superintendent Brizard, V. Carfagna, V. Connors, T. Keysa, A. Wheatcraft
K. Dyce-Faucette, R. Ulliman, J. Sheppard and Board Staff: H. Washington.

Chairwoman Powell convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m.

Minutes for April 22nd Meeting:

Motion to approve the April 22nd Committee of the Whole minutes was made by Commissioner White. Seconded by Commissioner Elliott. **Adopted 5-0**

Program Based Budget

Commissioner Powell asked why we are not expanding the Reading First program, which is viewed as successful. Superintendent Brizard pointed out the funding was cut from 3 million dollars to 600k; that grant money dries up sooner or later and the goal is to move away from programs; and that teachers need to understand literacy and begin to build capacity. V. Connors stated that each school has 2 positions that assist with reading and literacy, which are additional teachers outside of the regular classroom teachers. V. Connors also noted that grant funding is no longer in tact for Reading First and that there is a national focus on expertise in reading.

Commissioner Campos pointed out that the program measures used for Bryant & Stratton were great and asked if the increase in the Great Beginnings program is due to expansion of the program to other schools. V. Connors said that the District was trying to implement the programs in all the schools, but that it was not entirely off the ground, yet.

Commissioner Powell asked if any of the programs were eliminated from last year, because they did not meet benchmarks. V. Connors said that there were no programs eliminated, but that they may be incorporated into other programs. Superintendent Brizard noted that equity issues were being reviewed and that we are moving towards having transition programs across the entire system.

Commissioner Campos asked what happens after the Reading First grants end in 2008-09. Superintendent Brizard responded that programs are good, but we cannot depend on grant funding and that we need to build our own capacity, by training staff on strategies to teach literacy. Commissioner Campos also asked why the proficiency rates dropped by 20 percent in grades 2 and 3.

Action: Administration will provide an explanation on the 20 percent drop in the proficiency rate for grades 2 and 3.

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Commissioner Williams requested the following data on the Agency Youth Program, the number of students that successfully transition back into schools, average length of stay, and the number of new entrants annually, the recidivism rate and the graduation rate. Commissioner Powell stated that there should be a process to reintegrate students back into schools. V. Connors noted that the District is required to provide tutoring and instructional services to any RCSD student in any placement until the students are able to come back to school.

Action: Administration will provide data on the Agency Youth Program to the Board regarding transition rates, length of stay, annual new entrants, recidivism rate and graduation rates.

Commissioner Campos expressed a concern regarding the quality of the food that is served in the schools and asked for an explanation on the decrease in food service. V. Connors noted that the District expects that the food service program will be self-sustaining; if it runs in the red, then the District will pick up the cost. He also stated that the District is looking at the quality of the food. Next year the District will look for another vendor. Commissioner Elliott noted that New York City schools are going back to a fast food operation, because of the rising costs and asked if the District has reviewed the possibility. Superintendent Brizard pointed out that we may have to invest more money for better quality. Commissioner Elliott asked if we are tying nutrition to academic success. Superintendent Brizard responded that nutrition, health and fitness all impact academic success and that kids deserve the best quality of food.

Commissioner Elliott pointed out that the District may want to reconsider support for Quad A, because there are other programs out there doing the same work. Superintendent Brizard noted that the District will focus on the 3 – 6 p.m. timeframe for kids and extended day. The District has applied for the 21st Century Grant. According to V. Connors, the funding for Quad A is shared funding and that the District's portion has increased. Commissioner Powell recommended that Quad A set benchmarks. Superintendent Brizard noted that benchmarks will be set in the future.

Action: Superintendent Brizard will provide the Board with an updated Organizational Chart.

Commissioner Elliott asked which schools will be included in MAP. Superintendent Brizard replied that the majority of schools will be included in the program. Commissioner Williams asked how the MAP program can be expanded without additional funding. Superintendent Brizard said that there will be no increase in cost, but increased training and professional development.

Action: Administration will provide the Board with a list of MAP schools.

Commissioner Williams asked about the 400k increase in Site Based Budgeting. The Superintendent is trying to increase support from foundations.

Commissioner Elliott brought up the issue that was in the newspaper regarding safety and having security cameras that are not installed. The audit conducted by J. Sheppard highlighted a number of issues that need to be addressed, such as communication. J. Sheppard pointed out the need to have cameras installed was not properly communicated

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with facilities. Superintendent Brizard pointed out that the issues mentioned are reasons why he supports site based budgeting.

Commissioner Powell noted that Central Office reductions in staff have not been clearly communicated to the Board. Superintendent Brizard said that the Chief of Staff is currently conducting an analysis of all positions in Central Office and that the goal is to reduce Central Office staff by 20 percent. He offered to discuss reduction in executive session.

All sentries will report to J. Sheppard. Commissioner White expressed his pleasure with an increase in safety and asked if the salaries that sentries are paid is competitive. Superintendent Brizard noted that sentry positions are moving to an 11 month salaries and that their salaries are expected to increase by 15 percent. Commissioner Elliott pointed out that sentries should be professional and paid a decent salary. Commissioner Powell asked if reducing the number of School Resource Officers and offering better training for sentries was an option. Superintendent Brizard responded that is an option to be considered.

Superintendent Brizard has increased support for Libraries; however it does not eliminate the schools portion of contribution to Library resources.

Commissioner Campos asked what the difference between DataCation and the Chancery systems is. Superintendent Brizard stated that the District will use the DataCation system in addition to the Chancery system, which does not currently provide timely data. R. Ulliman noted that the DataCation will pull information from the Chancery system, which will be updated nightly and is expected to be implemented in September.

Action: Administration will provide the Board with demo presentation on the DataCation system.

Capital Improvement Program

Commissioner Powell asked about projects scheduled to be completed in schools. T. Keysa pointed out that projects are done once every 3 years in schools and that special needs and safety projects take priority over other projects. A. Wheatcraft pointed out that dollars shift on an annual basis, based on the amount that the City allows us to borrow and other initiatives by the Superintendent may impact changes.

Commissioner Elliott asked if there were any special regulations on going green. T. Keysa replied that the State encourages going green and that there are regulations around cleaning supplies.

Commissioner Williams asked how the FMP process affects the CIP. T. Keysa noted that both the FMP and CIP will have the same reimbursement rate from building aid; the CIP addresses immediate needs and the FMP focuses on major improvements to buildings that we typically do not have the money for. Schools in the FMP process will not be included in the CIP process at the same time, but will be added back into the CIP process after 3 years.

Commissioner Powell asked about the lower maintenance staff to square footage. T. Keysa pointed out that there is an issue on the custodial side. The District has the highest square footage per FTE, well above industry standards. Commissioner Powell asked if

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there has been an analysis on the cost to keep custodial staff at a low ratio with respect to square footage. A. Wheatcraft's response was that they have looked at the cost of salaries to get the District up to the level of other Districts.

Action: T. Keysa will provide the Board with a copy of custodial analysis.

Commissioner Williams asked if the City School District has its own credit rating. V. Carfagna replied that the District falls under the City's credit rating, which is currently an A rating. He also noted that we cannot issue more debt than we pay off in a year and that the District is reimbursed at a 98 percent rate.

Miscellaneous:

Commissioner Elliott requested a breakdown of services provided by Harter, Secrest & Emery LLP.

Action: Law Department will provide a breakdown of services rendered by Harter, Secrest & Emery LLP.

Adjournment: Motion by Commissioner Campos. Seconded by Commissioner White at 8:05 p.m.

Prepared by H. Washington