

Rochester Board of Education  
Finance Committee of the Whole  
Tuesday, May 3, 2005

Attendance: Commissioners Brown, Evans, Garcia, Porter, and Thompson; Dr. Rivera, Ms. Kimberly Rohring  
Absent: Commissioners Bowers and Powell

Discussion:

Meeting convened at 6:14 p.m. by Commissioner Porter

Dr. Rivera provided an overview of the budget process to date in terms of questions.

Dr. Rivera spoke to the issue of outstanding items such as narratives and written responses to certain questions and committed to providing written information (answers to questions and narratives) by Thursday afternoon May 5.

Dr. Rivera noted that this year's process was much better than previous years, but we need to review the timelines in developing next year's budget calendar.

There was discussion about when budget deliberations would conclude given that all information had not come in prior to the meeting, another meeting would need to be scheduled.

Commissioner Thompson is in town until Friday May 6.

Commissioner Evans indicated that he cannot meet on Friday mornings unless it is early.

Commissioner Porter indicated that the Board will meet again on Friday, May 6 at 7 a.m.

Commissioner Porter asked whether or not members would like to receive information verbally tonight or in writing on Thursday.  
Consensus was in writing on Thursday.

Commissioner Garcia indicated that he has periodically asked questions about Bilingual Education, but has not received full and clear responses. He clarified that the reason he asks this is because he wants to make sure that "our people" are as well supported as other areas in the organization. He said, "I don't like it and don't like what is going on." He expressed concern about the number of people employed in the Bilingual Education department and the amount of money devoted to Bilingual Education students and Limited English Proficient students and wants

to make sure resources are devoted to this. He noted that there has been a significant increase in the staffing level of the Hispanic Studies Department; other departments have not been treated similarly. He emphasized that he wants to receive additional information, straight answer in writing on this. Resources that are to go to Hispanic students need to go to them.

Commissioner Porter referenced a rumor that the Bilingual Department is being dismantled.

Dr. Rivera indicated that this is not the case and that there are no reductions to this department, nor has he proposed any since coming to the District. The only reduction advanced is with ESOL staff and is predicated upon reduced enrollment. He further indicated that we will provide more thorough responses to Commissioner Garcia.

Commissioner Porter asked for detail on staff recruitment and the budget for this endeavor especially in regard to diversity recruitment.

Commissioner Evans asked whether or not the Madison-Wilson redesign will have any financial impact on this budget.

Dr. Rivera indicated that funds were earmarked to support the transitions as was noted in the amended budget provided to the Board on Friday, April 29. He stated that ballpark costs, not detailed budgets, associated with the various components of the High School piece could be provided by Thursday pm to the Board.

Commissioner Evans indicated that if he had any further questions, he would forward them to staff.

Commissioner Thompson found the Friday, April 29 packet helpful and confirmed that the Superintendent and staff would be providing additional information on budgets.

Dr. Rivera indicated that detailed budgets relating to Montessori and the Madison-Wilson piece would probably not be ready by Thursday, May 5.

Commissioner Thompson asked about the high school initiative and the specific wording about “minimizing the number of first year teachers in grades 7 & 8...” and model classroom teachers.

Dr. Rivera indicated that we want to assign lead teachers, more veteran teachers, to those grade levels and provide incentives to do so, along with receiving a two year commitment to the assignment.

Commissioner Porter asked that staff review responses to questions with the Board Special Assistant Kimberly Rohring prior to sending the responses to the Board so as to avoid additional work and back and forth.

Dr. Rivera indicated that he will review all of the questions and responses with his staff on Wednesday to provide the best responses possible.

Commissioner Thompson asked whether or not additional information on textbooks would be available by Thursday afternoon.

Dr. Rivera stated yes, but will probably want some discussion on it at Friday's meeting.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Evans, Seconded by Commissioner Brown. Adopted 5-0 at 6:34 with Commissioners Bowers and Powell absent.