

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Community and Intergovernmental Relations
Committee Meeting
January 14, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance: Vice President Cynthia Elliott (Chair), President Van White, Commissioner Mary Adams, Commissioner Melisza Campos. **District Staff:** Edwin Lopez, Lori Baldwin. **Parent Representative:** Felix Jacobs. **Board Staff:** Kimberly Turner.

President White called the meeting to order at 6:05pm. He asked for nominations for Chair of the Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee. Commissioner Mary Adams nominated Vice President Elliott. Vice President Elliott was voted 3-0, as Chair of the Intergovernmental Relations Committee. Mr. Felix Jacobs concurred.

I. Alternatives to Suspension.

District Attorney Sandra Doorley was the guest presenter. She stated her position on alternatives to suspension. She stated that it is best to address the suspension of a student while they are in school. This may prevent behaviors from escalating into criminal charges and court appearances.

District Attorney Doorley discussed District's programs that she currently participates in.

- PENCIL program at Nathaniel Rochester Community School (School No. 3).
- "Rapping with the DA", also located at School No. 3. This program provides an overview of the criminal justice system; creates mock trials and crime scenes.

District Attorney Doorley presented different programs that have worked in Rochester City Court. She stated that the goal of many of these programs is to divert the youth from the criminal justice system and help them get back on track.

The District Attorney's office refers youth to Pre-Trial Services, a county program. Pre-Trial Services may be helpful in providing statistical data of their programs, sharing program's curriculum and tailoring programs to fit RCSD.

The Pre-Trial Services programs suggested by District Attorney Doorley are:

- 1. Choices and Changes:** educational program designed to help youth explore why they make choices based on family history, education and experiences.
- 2. Mirror Program for Young Men:** program that explores critical topics to help modify problematic behaviors by providing new strategies for critical thinking and behavior management.

3. **Anger Management Class:** explores topics that can trigger anger and other negative behaviors and offers education and skills necessary to effect a change in thinking, resulting in positive behaviors.
4. **Partner Restorative Initiatives:** A mediation program, where the offender agrees to meet with all parties involved in an incident or crime. The goal is to discuss the incident and resolve differences. There may be a similar program at James Monroe High School.

District Attorney Doorley stated that individuals from the Partner Restorative Initiatives program have expressed interest in working with RCSD.

5. **Center for Dispute Settlement:** Offers mediation services for adult/youth and peer mediation for elementary, middle and high schools. Ms. Leslie Smith is the person to contact.
6. **Stop Shop Lifting Education program:** This program is a diversionary course allowing the offender an opportunity to attend an educational class instead of being charged with the crime, being prosecuted, and having a permanent criminal record. It is sponsored by the Better Business Bureau. Ms. Sara White-Smith from the District Attorney's office is a facilitator.
7. **Alive at 25:** This is a driver's education program that focuses on preventing youth from drinking or using other substances and driving. The course reviews the rules of the road and making good choices as a driver.
8. **Pathway to Peace:** This is a City of Rochester program. The program's goal is to effect positive change in the lives of youth, diffuse potentially violent situations, and help youth get on a track to a better life.

Other programs mentioned by DA Doorley were the following:

- Urban League of Rochester's job training program for youth
- Action for Better Community (ABC) youth gang program
- Boys and Girls Club – afterschool and weekend programs
- Huther Doyle – specifically for youth who have problems with substance abuse

Questions:

- Are the programs above (and others) funded through the Office of Court Administration (OCA) and would RCSD be able to send student's over as part of the RCSD disciplinary process? (President White)
District Attorney Doorley stated she did not know if this would be an issue. Lori Baldwin, Director of Security Operations at RCSD, stated that she would reach out to Pre-Trial Services and report back to the committee. (Action item)
- How effective are the programs in changing behaviors resulting in less repeat offenders? (Vice President Elliott)
District Attorney Doorley stated that she could not quote exact numbers, but Pre-Trial Services tracks that data.
- How do we address the issues before the student's behavior becomes disruptive in school? How do we handle the problem before it enters the criminal justice system? (Mr. Felix Jacobs)

The discussion included the following items:

- Treatment services, counseling and family based treatment. Family, schools and churches working together to promote a positive change.
- Early interventions to provide younger students with tools and resources to prevent problems as they get older.
- Alternative programs offered during the extended day as preventative measures.
- Programs offered at the beginning of the school year to deter potential problems.

Commissioner Elliott stated concerns with SRO (School Resource Officers) issuing appearance tickets to RCSD students. Discussion topics included the following:

- Appearance tickets are based on criminal charges (i.e. assault).
- Are there teachable moments for students - where actions can be preventable vs. punitive?
- The victim has the choice or right to decide on charges being filed so sometimes it's not up to RCSD if the arrest is made.
- Ms. Baldwin stated that RCSD standard practice is to diffuse the arrest and offer alternatives.
- School # 10 and #20 have invited police officers and firefighters to participate in the school's safety committee.

Commissioner Campos asked for an update on the restorative justice initiative at RCSD. Ms. Baldwin provided the following information:

- Youth for Change has a contract with RCSD.
- Pathways to Peace is accessible to RCSD.
- Gandhi Institute is located in Wilson Commencement.
- Programs are in schools that have high level of problematic behaviors.
- The RCSD Hearing Officer is trained in Restorative Justice practices, provided by the Gandhi Institute.

II. Commissioner Elliott stated that she wanted to table the approval of the December (12-10-2013) minutes until next meeting.

Action Items:

1. Obtain information from Pre-Trail Services regarding their success rate and partnership opportunity.
2. Invite Walter Larkin, Executive Director of The LyncX Academy, to present at a CIGR meeting.
3. Compile a list of the Legislative Agenda items supported by Government officials who attended the breakfast.
4. Contact government offices to determine the best time to meet with officials and create a schedule of meeting times.
5. Review long-term school suspension policy. (refer to meeting minutes from December 10, 2013)

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Elliott at 7:30 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Adams. Mr. Jacobs concurred with the motion.