

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Community and Intergovernmental Relations
Committee Meeting
October 15, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner Cynthia Elliott (Chair), Commissioner Mary Adams, Commissioner Melisza Campos, Commissioner Powell; **District Staff:** Lori Baldwin, Edwin Lopez, Brenda Pacheco, Willie Robinson, Jerome Underwood, **Parent Representative:** Felix Jacobs; **Board Staff:** Kimberly Turner

Commissioner Elliott called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

I. Minutes.

Motion to approve the September 17, 2013 minutes was made by Commissioner Elliott; seconded by Commissioner Adams, Mr. Jacobs concurred with the motion to approve. Commissioner Adams made two suggested updates to the minutes. The minutes were updated to reflect her changes.

Commissioner Elliott reviewed the Action Items from the August 13, 2013 meeting for completion.

II. Judge Geraci presentation on Rochester Teen Court.

Judge Geraci was invited to present on Rochester Teen Court at the CIGR meeting. The purpose was to determine if the Teen Court model can be used as an alternative to suspension. Commissioner Elliott stated that the Board should consider policies that are less punitive and use negative behaviors as teachable moments. The focus should be on keeping youth in school, increase graduation rates and test scores and help student's succeed in mastering the new academic standards.

Key points from Judge Geraci's presentation:

- Teen court model is that "teens judge teens". In Rochester there is an official judge (from Rochester City Court) presiding over the court sessions. This is an alternative to regular court. According to Judge Geraci it sends out a message that this is serious and consequence of the youth's behavior. Non-compliant youth will have to adhere to the original sentence.
- The youth learns to be attorneys and jurors, helping them to learn about the judicial system. The defending teen has to serve on the juror, subsequent to the trial. The teen juror listens to the case and decides the sentence. Once

the youth agrees to teen court, he or she has already admitted their guilt. The juror decides how to help the young person not to go back to court.

- The opportunities exist to slow the judicial process – allowing the teen to learn the process and consequences from their actions. One of Teen Court’s goals is to work with teens so they can alter their behaviors. This goal is achieved through sanctions given by the court that may include community service, counseling: drug, alcohol, mental health and anger management.
- 60% of cases referred to Teen Court come from RCSD students (15-18 year old) arrested for nonviolent crimes; 80% of youth who complete Teen Court are not re-arrested; Judge Geraci stated that based on Rochester Police Department studies this is the opposite percentage in Rochester City Court; where the youth tend to be repeat offenders.
- There is a need to expand/target younger kids, 3rd/4th grade – to reduce the potential of negative behaviors in teen years
- RCSD application: Should we consider implementing a teen court model at school(s)?
- RCSD application: “Peer Court” a pilot program part of VanGuard Collegiate High School’s criminal justice curriculum has some feature of Teen Court – we need to look at this further.

Question/Comments for Judge Geraci’s presentation.

Mr. Jacobs commented he that there needs to be options for youth because there are too many children sitting in courts and crafting options would help them in the long run.

Commissioner Adams asked a question about the youthful offender status at age 19 years old; is there a similar comparison for those individuals who participate in teen court verses those who do not? Would attending the court give the youth a better chance at having a youthful offender status. Judge Geraci stated that the youth who participate in Teen Court are non-violent offenders. He also stated that due to the overwhelming number of cases in Rochester City Court, this youth would be the most likely one to have charges dismissed; thereby not learning the lessons that are learned in Teen Court.

Commissioner Powell asked if there is a potential for more youth to be sent to Teen Court then the ones who are actually being sent. Judge Geraci stated that the current Teen Court model could accommodate as many youth as needed. The real problem is that the funding does not allow the staffing necessary to support the program,

Commissioner Powell asked about the impact of long-term suspension rate of youth who attend Teen Court? Is there a relationship? Judge Geraci stated that overall there could be a relationship but it is not all ways the case. He cited an example of a case where a suspended youth attended Teen Court and the judge helped him get back in school. Ms. Baldwin stated that she does not believe that this has ever been tracked.

III. Commissioner King. Commissioner Elliott updated the committee on the proposed Commissioner King's visit to Rochester to host a community conversation at a local church. A formal letter of invitation was sent to Commissioner King in early October. Commissioner Elliott stated that it is uncertain at this time if Commissioner King will accept the invitation because he cancelled his visit to Rochester at the time when she invited him to host the community event. She has asked Chip Partner to follow up with this and is currently waiting for a response.

Mr. Jacobs asked is education a part of the Governor's platform for re-elections 2014. Commissioner Elliott stated that the Deputy Secretary of Education will attend the School Board Association meeting in Rochester. This may be a time where she could reach out to him and perhaps get feedback on Governors educational platform. Commissioner Elliott asked if Commissioner King is going to attend. Commissioner Powell stated that he is usually part of the event.

Commissioner Adams stated that this would be a positive event for parents. Commissioner Elliott stated that the purpose of this meeting would be to seek unity (State, District, Parent) to accomplish educational goals.

Mr. Lopez offered a suggestion that the structure could be set up to allow Commissioner King time to speak and also provide a prescribed amount of time for parents or others to ask questions. Commissioner Powell stated that speakers open the meeting and let Commissioner King take notes on what he wants to respond to.

IV. 3-on-3 meeting update.

Commissioner Elliott stated that she attended this schedule 3-on-3 meeting with President Evans and Vice President White. Commissioner Elliott stated students bussing was the topic that was discussed, specifically students transferring Downtown. She suggested that this is an opportunity to get youth involved. A Youth Summit was held, some time ago, and there were reports that came from this Summit. The 3-on3 group will read thru them to determine what can be done to combat the negative behaviors displayed by some students in the Downtown area.

Commissioner Elliott has also proposed to the group that the Monroe County Representation would be valuable to the current 3-on-3.

V. Legislative Breakfast. Invitations were sent on October 1, 2013. There have been six responses, next step would be to begin follow-up with invitees to confirm attendance.

VI. Miscellaneous.

Commissioner Elliott wants the committee to consider meetings with Congressional, State, Local and Monroe County School Board State representatives to begin to establish relationships, to network to ultimately advocate the Legislative Agenda. This would be in addition to the Legislative Breakfast meeting. Commissioner Elliott stated that there is more to come on this topic.

Transportation update: Mr. Lopez stated that Senator Robach is spearheading this issue and he thinks it will pass in January 2014. Mr. Lopez stated that the District needs to make sure that we are ready to transition to neighboring schools. If this Bill is passed, Mr. Lopez stated that RCSD will need a minimum of 1 year to prepare.

Common Core update from Office of Parent Engagement: Mr. Underwood stated that here are two areas where parents may need help included is a general area and subject matter expert area. General information is provided from Engage NY and Office of Parent Engagement. Subject Matter Experts are needed for specific subject areas. The WDKX conversation would need a subject matter expert to host that event. Mr. Robinson continues to work with Mr. Partner on this request.

School meal policy update: Mr. Underwood stated that parents were informed over 1 year ago about the free lunch policy. The only time students are paying is when they go outside the policy. This would include students not selecting exactly what the policy defines as a free lunch or reimbursable meal.

Mr. Jacob asked Mr. Underwood and Mr. Robinson on update on problem with Parent Connect. They stated that issues are happening, problems were communicated to parents. Commissioner Elliott stated that she will follow-up with Superintendent.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Elliott at 7:45 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Adams. Mr. Jacobs concurred with the motion.