

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Community and Intergovernmental Relations**  
**Committee Meeting**  
**September 17, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

Attendance: Commissioner Cynthia Elliott (Chair), Commissioner Mary Adams, Commissioner Melisza Campos; District Staff: Edwin Lopez, 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 August 13, 2013 minutes was made by Commissioner Elliott; seconded by Commissioner Adams, Mr. Jacobs concurred with the motion to approve.

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

- 1) Follow up with Willie Robinson (coordinate with Chip Partner, Communications) for Common Core Curriculum discussion on radio (WDKX).

**Update:** Mr. Robinson was contacted and stated that he has not made any progress on this.

**II. Department of Agriculture, Federal Food Register, vol. 78, no.27 dated Friday, February 8, 2013.**

The Department of Agriculture Federal Food Register was reviewed for relevance in the City School District's food programs. The CIGR Committee agreed that the District's programs are within the scope of what the Federal Food Register outlines.

Commissioner Elliott pointed out that potable water is available to children at no charge, in the district at places where lunches are served. This is in reference to statement on P. 9532. Mr. Jacobs stated that on his visits to schools during lunch time he has seen children offered water.

Commissioner Elliott reviewed the data regarding children and their willingness to eat healthier food: Overall the trend is positive. The mindsets of children have changed around eating healthy food. Children are eating food offered to them "knowing that it is healthy". The correlation between when children are

eating the healthy food at home vs. healthy options at school remains unchanged. The data suggests that healthy eating does not change at home.

Other topics regarding the Federal Food Register included different beverages, amount of calories and caffeine offered at school. Commissioner Elliott stated this information is not new to the committee. Revenues from competitive foods have increased even after healthy foods have been introduced. Competitive food are foods sold in competition with foods offered in school meal programs, i.e. ala carte items and vending machines.

Mr. Jacobs referenced an incident that happened with a parent paying money towards student account. Mr. Jacobs also stated that some parents may not be aware of free lunch to all students' policy in the Rochester City School District. Mr. Felix suggested that better communication is needed to parents regarding free lunch policy. Any food purchased that is not standard food, has an additional cost. Commissioner Elliott asked for follow-up on this matter.

Commissioner Elliott reviewed the obesity rates of children data and stated that it has leveled off. Referencing the Food Register, Commissioner Elliott stated that the federal food program is lending to that. Commissioner Elliott also stated that she would expect that rate to decrease in the years to come.

Commissioner Elliott provided an update on continued advocacy for healthier and tastier food choice for students in the district. Commissioner Elliott and Mr. Jacobs have visited schools and programs as part of this effort. Commissioner Elliott stressed the importance of keeping the Board visible in this initiative because quality and nutritious food to eliminate hunger and eating the right foods translates into higher academic achievements. Mr. Jacobs shared feedback from teachers regarding the importance of good meals to help children focus. Feedback included that proper nutrition makes the teacher's job easier, whereas children that have poor nutrition are harder to teach due to lack of focus and decreased energy.

Commissioner Elliott referenced several visits. On August 10, Commissioner Elliott and Mr. Jacobs made a visit to Food Link of Rochester. Commissioner Elliott shared feedback about this visit: children came to the program to get the food because they were hungry, the program is necessary for the children in the Rochester Community.

On September 17, Mr. Jacobs visited School #58 cafeteria. He reported that the school utilizes a chef to prepare fresh foods for breakfast and lunch. Mr. Jacobs was very impressed with this program and believes that this model should be highly considered to be used District wide. Mr. Jacobs will meet with Ms. Boyd, Parent Liaison at School #58 to get additional information.

On September 27, Commissioner Elliott and Mr. Jacobs will attend a meeting with Aramark.

### **III. Legislative Breakfast.**

The 2013 Legislative Agenda breakfast will be held on November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2013 starting at 9am. Commissioner Elliott would like to invite Federal, County City representatives to attend. There will be follow-up after invitations are sent on October 1 to ensure many of these representatives can attend.

### **IV. Commissioner King.**

Commissioner Elliott stated that she was at the August 28, 2103 Commissioner King's presentation at the School of the Arts. Commissioner Adams stated that she had not attended. Commissioner Campos was also not presented at this event. Commissioner Elliott stated that she asked Commissioner King if he would be willing to come back to Rochester to speak to the community. Commissioner Elliott stated that Commissioner King agreed to do this. Commissioner Elliott suggested that the event be informal, held at a local church and the conversation to be around Common Core Curriculum and other District issues. Another suggestion for a location was the Fredrick Douglass Campus. Commissioner Elliott is in the process of confirming this event. Commissioner Elliott suggested that content and purpose be discussed at the next CIGR meeting on October 15, 2013.

Commissioner Elliott asked for feedback regarding Commissioner King's potential visit. Commissioner Campos stated that it would be good to have Commissioner King speak especially in light of what is happening in the district. Commissioner Adams stated that she does not agree with Commissioner King's agenda as it may be harmful to the school in the district and for people that have already studied his agenda. Commissioner Adams stated that asking clarifying questions may not be helpful, if Commissioner King explains policies attempting to get the parents and community to agree with stated policies. Commissioner Elliott stressed that this would be Commissioner King sharing information to increase the parent's knowledge of Common Core Curriculum and NYS Board of Regents, recent activities.

Commissioner Adams suggested having a panel of various experts, teachers, community members, in addition to having Commissioner King. Commissioner Adams stated that this would create a balanced conversation. Commissioner Campos asked if the intent was to have Commissioner King provide information only. Commissioner Elliott stated that this was the intent and for it not to be political. Mr. Jacobs stated that this could be an opportunity for Commissioner King to translate the Governor's objective on failing schools in NYS. Mr. Jacobs stated that an explanation of the Governor's education models for NYS would also be helpful and important for parents to understand. The models that Mr. Jacobs referred to were 1) Transformation, 2) Turnaround, 3) Closure models.

Commissioner Adams stated that the goal should be to build parent engagement, provide adequate supports, to evaluate teachers consistently in meaningful and appropriate ways and to make change by supporting the schools.

Further discussion was held around the importance of providing a change as the current systems does not work and schools continue to fail the children of NYS. Commissioner Campos stated the importance of bringing stability and consistency within the district and schools in a targeted meaningful way. Commissioner Campos stated two examples. A school district in New Jersey under state control and a school district in California, under state control. Commissioner Campos stated that it did not work. Commissioner Elliott stressed a sense of urgency due to low graduation rates and need to come together, united and not expend energy on fighting each other.

Commissioner Adams stated that work is currently being done by parents, community members, teachers, and administration. This should not be overlooked.

#### **V. Miscellaneous.**

Mary Adams asked for an update on the Transportation Issue, State Legislative Plans. Commissioner Elliott stated that maybe we needed to talk to someone on the Senate side. Mr. Lopez asked for clarification was this regarding the transportation on the half mile issue and stated that meetings are scheduled with David Gantt and Joe Robach. Mr. Lopez stated that there was not going to be a problem in the Assembly because it passed last year. Mr. Lopez stated the problem would be in the Senate as the vote was lost by 2 votes. Mr. Lopez stated that Mr. Robach and Mr. Ted O'Brien working together to make sure that it will be passed. According to Mr. Lopez all local votes were for this transportation initiative; the lack of support came from downstate. Commissioner Elliott asked about the possibility of speaking to Senators. Mr. Lopez stated that he would be scheduling a meeting with Senator O'Brien and Senator Robach in the next couple of weeks. Mr. Lopez agreed to facilitate a conversation between the Board members and the Senators. Mr. Lopez referred to a meeting that David Gantt, Chair of Transportation Committee held with all key members and was effective in passing it through. Commissioner asked about concerns as to why it did not go thru. Mr. Lopez thought it was a timing issue and it not controversial. Mr. Lopez stated that there have not been any issues with transportation thus far. Commissioner Elliott and Commissioner Adams stated that they have not received any phone calls regarding Transportation.

Mr., Lopez stated a proposal for next year would be Two Weeks of Caring to address the students who registered late and transportation would be delayed. This would allow volunteers to transport the child to and from school. Mr. Lopez also stated that a possible grant would allow the district to by a van and committed to transporting the children.

Mr. Jacobs asked about a science and technology diploma. Is there a movement towards this effort? Mr. Lopez stated Dr. Vargas is looking into this to understand the particulars of introducing a new diploma.

Commissioner Elliott stated that she in on the 3-on-3 committee with City Hall and asked committee members if they had any questions or issues she would be willing to take and represent at this meeting. Commissioner Elliott suggested inviting the County Representatives to these meetings.

**Action Items:**

1. Follow up with Willie Robinson (coordinate with Chip Partner, Communications) for Common Core discussion on radio (WDKX).
2. School breakfast and lunches free policy; why would parents continue to pay?

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Commissioner Elliott at 7:21 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Adams. Mr. Jacobs concurred with the motion.