

Rochester Board of Education
Community and Intergovernmental Relations Committee
May 15, 2007
6 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance: Chairman Evans, Commissioners Brennan and Elliott. Commissioner Thompson out of town. Parent Partnership Council representatives Carolee Albert, Tenia Bradley, Marsha Okung, Lillie McClary. Dr. Dwight Fowler, Director of Parent & Community Involvement. Board staff Linda Dunsmoor.

Chairman Evans convened the hearing at 6 p.m.

PPC Update:

- The Parent Partnership Council is in its second year.
- Partnerships formed:
 - Pathways to Peace
 - Center for Youth
 - The Advocacy Center
 - VESID
 - Metro Justice
 - National Coalition of ESEA/Title I Parents
 - National Network of Partnership Schools
 - Alliance for Quality Education
 - Metropolitan Women's Network
 - National Council of Negro Women, Inc.
 - Rochester Fund (Educational Accountability)
 - Finger Lakes DDSO
 - Parent University
- Members have attended School Improvement Team meetings, Site-Based Planning Team meetings, and the meeting regarding the District's Strategic Plan.
- Goals for 2007-08 -- Continue to: work with District (DACT & Bilingual) and community partners; hold workshops for parents; reach out to the PTAs/PTOs; reach out to parents.
- Accomplishments 2006-07:
 - Hosted a workshop on the parent role on a School-Based Planning Team.
 - Sponsored an evening with education advocate and AQE.
 - Sponsored forum on Strategic Plan.
 - Sponsored workshop on new testing assessment.
 - Sponsored Town Hall meeting, Curbing Gang Violence.
 - Sponsored workshop on Special Education.
 - Distributed "Parent Rights and Responsibilities" posters and fliers
 - Improved communication by broadcasting meetings via telephone to all families, issuing news releases, personal contacts, sending fliers, and announcing meetings on WDKX.

Discussion:

Members of the Council discussed their recent Town Hall meeting on Curbing Gang Violence. They said the meeting was disrupted by two individuals (one of whom is employed by the District) and if it happens again are prepared to call 911. The disruption caused many parents to leave the meeting.

Commissioner Evans said he would look at the tape of the meeting. In response to Commissioner Brennan, Ms. Albert said she had spoken to the individual's supervisor but had not gotten a response. Commissioner Elliott said there has to be an understanding of what is really going on. It has to be about more than behavior; it should be about issues faced by children, about which people are passionate.

Commissioner Elliott asked what the PPC's role has been when parents face criticism from the unions and others about a lack of parent involvement. Ms. Albert said PPC members have worked on various committees on this issue but are not yet satisfied with the results.

Commissioner Elliott asked about the PPC's position on issues of suspension, particularly black males in grades 7-9. She would like to see the PPC work more closely with the Board to develop an appropriate policy.

Commissioner Elliott asked about the PPC's position on the graduation rate. She suggested the PPC be more vocal and visible in the community to combat the idea that parents are not involved.

Chairman Evans said it is essential that the PPC work with Dr. Fowler, Director of Parent & Community Involvement. Ms. Albert said the PPC would like Dr. Fowler to be its partner, not its District liaison. Mr. Evans said he would bring up the liaison issue in his next meeting with the Superintendent.

Commissioner Brennan asked that, if there are specific policy remedies, the PPC should bring them directly to him (as Chair of Policy Committee) or to Board staff.

Drop-Out Age Increase:

At Commissioner Elliott's suggestion, CIGR agreed to:

Have Board staff draft language for legislation that would provide the Board of Education with the ability to raise the drop-out age to 18. The language will be considered at the next CIGR meeting.

Refer to the Policy Committee the idea of raising the drop-out age from 16 to 17. New York State Education law currently provides this option.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Brennan. Second by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 2-0 at 7:15 p.m.