

Rochester Board of Education

Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee Meeting

December 15, 2004, 3:00 p.m.

Minutes

Attendance: Commissioners Brown, Evans, Garcia and Porter; Dr. Rivera; Ms. Rohring; Senator Robach; Assemblyman Gantt; Alan Richardson of Susan John's office; Bonnie Turner of Joe Errigo's office; Mr. Marini; Mr. Looby; Ms. Jarzyniecki.

Discussion:

Commissioner Porter welcomed those present and introduced Ms. Sanchez, SLC President.

Dr. Rivera did a presentation regarding student achievement, strategies and goals for the District.

He noted that it would take eight years to improve secondary achievement versus the original plan of five years. He also stated that we must show progress annually to regain community confidence.

Dr. Rivera stated that credibility is a key issue for RCSD.

Senator Robach asked what happens to the 50% who do not graduate. Dr. Rivera stated that with GED, graduation rate is approximately 57%; RCSD loses the greatest number in ninth grade transition.

Senator Robach asked what happens to the other 43%. Are they going into alternative programs, other schools, etc?

Dr. Rivera noted that they could provide some information on that from Dr. Christman.

Commissioner Evans noted the need for surround care for students.

Assemblyman Gantt asked for the % of inmate in county jail and state prisons that were dropouts.

Mr. Marini was asked to speak to the \$20 million spin up.

Mr. Marini stated that the District anticipates using much of the approximate \$11 million in fund balance for the 2005-06 budget to aid with the gap. The District has used some of the revenue to pay for nursing services no longer provided by the county; contracts and audits associated with the spin up itself; restorations to instructional programs. Assemblyman Gantt stated that this "breached" the agreement made. Funds were not to be expended until the State Comptroller's audit is completed and a need is established.

Dr. Rivera suggested an offline meeting on this concern.

Mr. Looby was asked to speak to the legislative agenda. He highlighted the top three.

Senator Robach stated the court should not be making the decision on CFE. He stated that he would not vote for a budget driving money to NYC at the expense of Upstate NY.

Assemblyman Gantt stated that RCSD should have court case ready to go; should have been there yesterday, not today. NYC has been shortchanged for years. Long Island gets more than their fair share.

Assemblyman Gantt asked what RCSD is doing with social service agencies to help kids before suspension/discipline issues.

Dr. Rivera cited student support centers in secondary schools; the District has partnered with local organizations to serve as Lead Agency for these centers. This year the District is proposing to add centers at Edison, Franklin, FTLC, and provide a lead agency for Jefferson.

Assemblyman Gantt asked for a list of contracts with social service agencies such as PRYD, Baden Street, etc. He stated the child ought to arrive in the classroom ready to learn, that we cannot expect teachers to do everything.

Senator Robach stated he would entertain recommendations from RCSD regarding student discipline – which coincides with one of the items on the RCSD legislative agenda for 2005. He asked the students present for their input on student discipline and the feeling of safety in their school buildings.

Ms. Sanchez suggested looking at long-term suspension impact on dropout rates.

Mr. Evans stated the District needs to get more resources to put programs in the schools.

Assemblyman Gantt stated RCSD needs to change the way it does business. Some of the things done here are very expensive. Must get parents involved in the education of our children.

Commissioner Garcia stated that RCSD keeps good records on suspensions. He suggested providing this information to the legislators in response to their questions.

Members of SLC in attendance stated:

- Teachers do not have high expectations of students; nor do they provide challenging material; do not adequately explain information
- Need more accelerated programs
- No AP courses at Bioscience Academy at Franklin – not enough challenging material in the courses offered

Senator Robach asked if following completion of the State Comptroller's Audit, if the District could not use some of the fund balance to restore some of the programs the student attendees mentioned.

Dr. Rivera stated that the District will face a significant increase in the retirement contribution rate and healthcare creating an immediate \$10 million gap. So the District needs to maintain the fund balance in 2004-05.

Assemblyman Gantt stated he is not here to give away money or pay high salaries. Unless the District changes the way it does business and gets better outcomes, it will not receive more money.

Commissioner Porter noted that he is hoping to have quarterly updates with the legislators.

Adjournment:

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Brown, seconded by Commissioner Evans. Adopted 3-0 at 4:31 p.m.

Action Items:

- Provide Senator Robach with information on what happens to the remaining 43% of dropouts. Are they going to other schools, alternative programs, etc?
- Provide Assemblyman Gantt with a list of contracts with social service agencies.
- Provide Senator Robach with data on suspensions.