

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting
October 13, 2015

Attending: Malik Evans (Chair); Commissioners Adams, Elliott (arrived at 7:22PM), White and Powell (joined at 7:42PM).

District Staff: Dr. Christiana Otuwa, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching & Learning; Keith Babuszcak, Chief of School Innovation for Career Pathways and Integrated Learning; Ray Giamartino, Chief of School Transformation; and Adele Bovard, Deputy Superintendent for Administration.

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

I. Review Minutes of September 22, 2015 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Adams to approve the September 22, 2015 minutes of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting. **Adopted 2-0.**

II. Review Career & Technical Education (CTE) Application for Rochester Early College High School and Accompanying Resolution (Resolution No. 2015-16: 302)

Commissioner Evans emphasized the importance of clarifying whether Rochester Early College High School is intended to be an early college high school, or to become a comprehensive school with career and technical education programs. He pointed out that maintaining fidelity to the school's mission is an essential aspect of ensuring that students are placed in accordance with their needs and goals. Commissioner Evans observed that failure to sustain this fidelity was a significant contributor to the failure of previous early college high schools (i.e. NE and NW College Preparatory Academies), which did not actually offer a college preparatory curriculum or program. He stated that his concern is to ensure that Rochester Early College High School lives up to its name, and suggested locating early college high schools on college campuses.

Dr. Otuwa stated that the CTE application is being pursued for the school to address the needs of all students, including those who want a more focused career track.

Keith Babuszcak provided an overview of the plans at Rochester Early College High School for an Entrepreneurship Studies program in which students would develop the skills and knowledge to operate their own small business:

- Dual enrollment at Monroe Community College (MCC), enabling students to earn college credits while still in high school. Mr. Babuszcak pointed out that dual enrollment is a central feature of an early college high school.

- Teachers certified by MCC teacher dual enrollment courses, and students are given feedback throughout the course to eliminate high stakes year-end testing.
- The curriculum has been developed through collaboration between RCSD teachers and MCC professors, and reviewed by local business and industry partners to ensure relevance to Rochester and regional workforce needs. By their senior year, students in this program will operate their own small business.
- The Entrepreneurship Studies program includes courses in Microsoft Office software, personal money management, introduction to business, entrepreneurial studies, and fundamental business concepts. Students also work in paid and unpaid positions related to their course of study and offered by local business partners.
- Student progress is assessed based on written and performance evaluation, along with a portfolio developed by each student. Students can elect to take an assessment based on fundamental business concepts instead of the Regents exam for Global Studies or U.S. History.
- Graduating students from the Entrepreneurship Studies program will earn a Regents diploma with technical endorsement and advanced standing, the highest level diploma issued by New York State.

Mr. Babuszcak reported that 130 students at Early College High School are currently enrolled in this program.

Commissioner Evans observed that small businesses are the fastest growing segments of the U.S. economy, yet entrepreneurship is rarely considered as a career path. He noted that these types of opportunities also help to keep kids engaged in school, citing a number of similar programs in the community (e.g. Biz Kid\$ program through the City of Rochester and the Young Entrepreneurship Academy through the Boys & Girls Club).

Commissioner Elliott noted that the fastest growing small business owners in the country are people of color, particularly African American women. She pointed out that this would be a motivating factor for RCSD students, the majority of whom are African American.

Commissioner Evans inquired about the MCC courses offered in the program. Mr. Babuszcak replied that students in the Entrepreneurship Studies program can earn a maximum of 12-15 credits in business courses and obtain credits in other college courses, which would enable them to be at least halfway toward earning an Associates' degree by the time they graduate from high school.

Commissioner Adams requested a breakdown of the grade level of the students enrolled in each of the CTE courses in the Entrepreneurship Studies program. Mr. Babuszcak replied that he did not have this data readily available, but the foundational courses would typically be taken in 10th grade, Microsoft Office in 11th grade, and Introduction to Business in 12th grade. He added that the Virtual Enterprise course is not yet being offered, but approval of the CTE application will be used as leverage to obtain approval for this course in the future. Mr. Babuszcak observed that there is a history of offering Virtual Enterprise in Rochester, and reported that he has met with

staff from the Young Entrepreneurship Academy with the Boys and Girls Club to discuss their program.

Commissioner Adams requested data of enrollment in the Entrepreneurship Studies program by grade level, noting that the 130 students currently enrolled appear to comprise a large percentage of the total student population at Rochester Early College High School. She emphasized the importance of the school offering many different pathways to a college diploma. Commissioner Adams discussed the importance of ensuring that students are informed and counseled in choosing college and career paths. She stated that she wants to ensure that students are not being funneled into the Entrepreneurship Studies program as a strategy for increasing the percentage of students passing Regents exams or boosting graduation rates for the school.

Action Item: Mr. Babuszcak will provide data to the members of the ESA Committee of the percentage of students at Rochester Early College High School enrolled in the Entrepreneurship Studies program, with detail for each grade level.

Commissioner Evans asserted that pursuing the Entrepreneurship Studies program and taking business courses does not necessarily reflect a less rigorous pathway toward graduation. He reiterated the importance of ensuring that students are actually choosing their own career or college pathway and selecting the appropriate RCSD school to meet their goals.

Commissioner Elliott suggested offering the Personal Money Management course throughout the District because it could prevent many problems faced by young people in our community.

Action Item: Dr. Otuwa will provide members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee with information about the financial management courses offered in the District.

Adele Bovard reported that there has been a resurgence of interest in the Rochester business community in partnering with the District in an advisory capacity, particularly with the success of the Edison platform and the Middle Schools Task Force. She stated that there is a new sense of engagement and commitment on the part of the local business community, which is critical to the success of all the pathways created in the District.

Commissioner Elliott asked about graduation rates at Edison High School and the extent to which improvements have been realized. Ms. Bovard stated that 2014-15 graduation rates did not show improvement, although STEM High School had a slightly higher graduation rate than Robert Brown High School.

Mr. Babuszcak reported that the 2014-15 graduation rate was slightly higher at Robert Brown High School than at STEM High School, and these schools were combined to form Edison High School this year. He added that the 2014-15 school performance data is still embargoed by the NYS Education Department.

Dr. Otuwa stated that STEM High School and Robert Brown High School both made progress in 2014-15, but the final data is not yet available.

Commissioner Elliott emphasized the importance of having data about the performance of technical/CTE programs to provide a baseline in terms of expectations for the Entrepreneurship Studies program at Rochester Early College High School. She noted that the Board of Education is being asked to approve the Entrepreneurship Studies program without data about the performance of similar programs.

Commissioner Evans pointed out that 2014-15 school performance data is provided in Ms. Flanagan's presentation regarding RCSD priority schools, which could be used as a basis for decision-making. Ms. Flanagan reported that preliminary 2014-15 data was obtained for RCSD priority schools from Rob Ulliman, Director of Planning for School Operations. She stated that 2014-15 graduation rates were available, but other performance data (e.g. Performance Indexes, Student Growth Percentiles) was not.

Dr. Otuwa cautioned against making assumptions about the Entrepreneurship Studies program based on the past performance of STEM High School and Robert Brown High School. She pointed out that past performance does not always serve as an accurate predictor, and performance typically declines with the changes involved in implementing a new program.

Ms. Bovard noted that graduation rates are a long-term outcome measure and reflect the performance of a particular cohort.

Commissioner Elliott stated that from the perspective of the Board of Education, approval is being sought for a new program without any data to indicate potential efficacy. Mr. Babuszcak replied that the courses in the Entrepreneurship Studies program have been offered for the last several years at Rochester Early College High School.

Commissioner Adams requested CTE enrollment data for Rochester Early College High School for each course by grade level for each year that these courses have been offered. She asserted that these enrollment trends would be indicative of the extent to which students at the school have been selecting a CTE pathway.

Action Item: Mr. Babuszcak will report to the ESA Committee regarding enrollment in each CTE course at Rochester Early College High School by grade level and by year for each year that these courses have been offered at the school.

III. Overview of Progress and Current Status of RCSD Priority Schools

Debra Flanagan presented an overview of the NYS requirements for making annual progress as a priority school, and for removal from priority status altogether. She also discussed the specific challenges experienced by each RCSD priority school in meeting these requirements and their prospects for removal from priority status:

Elementary Schools:

Annual Progress	Removal from Priority Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Index of at least 55.5; OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Progress in <u>Previous</u> Year; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% Improvement in Performance Index; OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Progress in <u>Current</u> Year; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Growth Percentile (SGP) above 50%; OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Index of at least 45.5
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of Student Subgroups with an SGP above 50% 	
ONE TARGET TO BE MET	THREE TARGETS TO BE MET

High Schools (Grades 9-12 ONLY):

Annual Progress	Removal from Priority Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Index of at least 116; OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Progress in <u>Previous</u> Year; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% Improvement in Performance Index; OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Progress in <u>Current</u> Year; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% Gap Reduction in Graduation Rate; <u>AND</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Index of at least 106; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 60% Graduation Rate (4-Year or 5-Year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-Year Graduation Rate of at least 60%
TWO TARGETS TO BE MET	FOUR TARGETS TO BE MET

High Schools (Grades 7-12):

Annual Progress	Removal from Priority Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Index of at least 55.5 at Middle School Level AND 116 at High School Level; OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Progress in <u>Previous</u> Year at Middle School AND High School Level; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10% Improvement in Middle School AND High School Performance Index; OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Annual Progress in <u>Current</u> Year at Middle School AND High School Level; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Growth Percentile above 50%; OR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Index of at least 45.5 at Middle School Level; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Majority of Student Subgroups with an SGP above 50%; <u>AND</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Index of at least 106 at the High School Level; AND
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 60% Graduation Rate (4-Year or 5-Year) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-Year Graduation Rate of at least 60%
TWO TO THREE TARGETS TO BE MET	SEVEN TARGETS TO BE MET

Ms. Flanagan pointed out that the grade 7-12 structure of most RCSD secondary schools has created additional difficulty in meeting the requirements for annual progress and for removal from priority status. She explained that the NYS Education Department requires schools with grades 7-12 to make progress at both the elementary and secondary levels, which involves attaining many more benchmarks than traditional elementary, middle or high schools.

Ms. Flanagan noted that attaining progress to avoid external receivership is also more difficult for schools with grades 7-12 because a minimum of 14 targets must be met, in contrast to the minimum of 10 targets established for traditional elementary or high schools.

Ms. Flanagan reported that 2013-14 performance data show that School No. 3, 22, 34 and 44 made annual progress, but this will not count toward removal from priority status unless this progress was sustained in 2014-15 and the 45.5 minimum Performance Index (PI) was attained:

- School No. 3: Gain of at least 19.5 points in 2014-15 (2013-14 PI: 26)
- School No. 22: Gain of at least 24.5 points in 2014-15 (2013-14 PI: 21)
- School No. 34: Gain of at least 3.5 points in 2014-15 (2013-14 PI: 42)
- School No. 44: Gain of at least 10.5 points in 2014-15 (2013-14 PI: 35)

Based on the most recent data available (2013-14), Ms. Flanagan observed that School No. 34 and 44 are closest to being removed from priority status, but this cannot be determined definitively until the NYS Education Department releases all of the data for 2014-15.

As far as RCSD secondary schools' progress, Ms. Flanagan pointed out that NE and NW College Preparatory Academies are the only priority high schools in the District that have made annual progress since these accountability assessments were initiated in 2011-12. She noted that annual progress for both of these schools has been based on graduation rates, but NE College Preparatory Academy did not meet the 60% target in 2014-15.

Ms. Flanagan stated that the 2014-15 results for NW College Preparatory Academy cannot be determined until the NYS Education Department releases all of the data. Although the school surpassed the 60% minimum graduation rate in 2014-15 (69.8% for 2009 cohort's 5-Year rate), progress must also be made at the elementary/middle school level (i.e. meet Performance Index and/or Student Growth Percentile targets).

Ms. Flanagan reported that Monroe High School met the 10% improvement standard in raising the High School Performance Index in 2014-15, but the school was not considered to have made progress because neither the 4-Year nor 5-Year graduation rate met the 60% required minimum (2010 Cohort 4-Year Rate: 46.8%; 2009 Cohort 5-Year Rate: 50%).

Ms. Flanagan stated that while graduation rates are the most significant and meaningful measure in terms of students' life prospects and opportunities, test scores on NYS ELA and Math assessments have been the most significant challenge in terms of RCSD schools' performance evaluation and accountability status. She noted that detail regarding the performance of each RCSD priority school is posted on BoardDocs under the Library tab and will be updated as additional data becomes available.

Commissioner White commended Ms. Flanagan's efforts to identify the specific areas in need of improvement for each of the District's priority schools, and the schools most likely to be removed from the priority list. He expressed concern about the District and Administration focusing on the negative aspects of schools' accountability status, rather than their ability to remove schools from priority status. Commissioner White stated that he will discuss this concern in Leadership Meetings with Superintendent Vargas, particularly in incorporating this data into regular, routine reporting. In addition, Commissioner White suggested including removal of schools from priority status as a measure in the Superintendent's performance evaluation to encourage this to become a district-wide goal. He explained that the purpose is to emphasize the importance of realizing improvements to the point where schools are no longer on the priority list.

Commissioner White observed that members of the Administration have different information and lack a shared perspective on the current status of schools. He objected to the Administration's reluctance to share critical data within their team and also with the Board of Education. Commissioner White questioned the ability of the District to operate effectively without a common understanding and awareness of critical performance goals.

IV. Discuss Strategies for Assisting RCSD Priority Schools to Attain Targets

Dr. Otuwa reported that effective structures, teaching strategies, and resources have been put in place to support RCSD priority schools. She announced that each school chief will report on the schools in their purview.

Ray Giamartino stated that his focus is on the specific supports provided to each school this year. He described collaborating with school principals to assist in replicating best practices, and in providing support through professional development for teachers, staff and principals.

Commissioner Elliott inquired about the mechanisms/processes used in the District to ensure that schools are implementing planned improvements and addressing barriers. Mr. Giamartino described conducting bi-weekly site visits to schools and using very specific tracking sheets to record the extent to which elements of the School Improvement Plan are being put into effect. He also discussed conducting regular reviews with principals to examine student attendance, behavior, and course completion.

Action Item: Mr. Giamartino will provide a copy and/or examples to members of the ESA Committee of the tracking sheets used in site visits to schools to ensure that improvement plans are being implemented.

As an example, Commissioner Elliott inquired about the way in which attendance concerns would be addressed with the school principal and building leadership. Mr. Giamartino replied that one of the schools that he monitors has the lowest attendance of all elementary schools in the District, and he meets with the school team (i.e. Principal, Assistant Principals, Parent Liaisons, Social Workers and Americorps interns) on a weekly basis to review data and model effective ways to:

- Conduct home visits;
- Conduct parent and family meetings;
- Share data-specific resources with families; and
- Discuss school attendance barriers with families.

Dr. Otuwa added that there has been a lack of accountability at many levels in the District out of a reluctance to confront staff about performance problems. She stated that this was the impetus for developing strategies for approaching school principals and staff, which includes modeling effective interaction with parents and families to encourage further discussion and disclosure of problems. Dr. Otuwa observed that school administrators and staff members have historically been hesitant to request assistance or support because this might be interpreted as a reflection of performance problems.

Commissioner Elliott asserted that accountability and oversight are essential to the District's ability to make and sustain improvements.

Commissioner Evans pointed out that the presentation being shown is different from the one provided in advance of the meeting. Dr. Otuwa acknowledged that the wrong presentation had been sent to Committee members earlier.

Commissioner Evans instructed Committee members to review the current presentation and submit questions, which will be addressed in the November Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting.

Motion by Commissioner Adams to adjourn. **Adopted 3-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:23PM.

Next Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting: Tuesday, November 10th, following the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee meeting