

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting
September 22, 2015
5:30PM

Attending: Malik Evans (Chair); Commissioners Adams and Powell (arrived at 5:36PM).
Commissioner Elliott absent.

Parent Representative: Toyin Anderson.

District Staff: Dr. Christiana Otuwa, Deputy Superintendent for Teaching & Learning; Michele Alberti, Executive Director of Office of School Innovation; Andrew MacGowan, Project Administrator with the Department of Internal School Operations.

Community Representatives: William Chandler, Project Manager of Arts Integration Project

Board Staff: Debra Flanagan

I. Review Minutes of August 18, 2015 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Adams to approve the August 18, 2015 minutes of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of Parent Representative.**

II. Review School Comprehensive Education Plans (SCEPs) for Monroe High School and School No. 9

Commissioner Evans pointed out that review of the Comprehensive Education Plans for Monroe High School and School No. 9 were originally included in the agenda for the August 2015 Excellence in Student Achievement Committee, but had not yet been finalized at that time.

Dr. Otuwa reported that the SCEP plan for Monroe High School was approved by the NYS Education Department in July, and she presented the highlights of this plan:

Monroe High School Comprehensive Education Plan (Continuation of School Improvement Grant Plan):

- Differentiation of District supports (fiscal and staffing) for Priority Schools, particularly those at risk of receivership
- Define ways to provide school principals greater autonomy and authority, particularly in staff selection, school scheduling, instructional programs, and the use of resources

- Enhance professional learning communities to support District and school improvement and to integrate District and school perspectives
- Weekly cross-functional meetings to address outstanding issues at each priority school and supports to ameliorate problems, as well as bi-weekly meetings to ensure expenditure of grant funds is used to promote school improvement priorities. Monthly meetings will be held with the School-Based Planning Teams for updates on implementation of School Improvement Plans.

Monthly “data dives” will be conducted for each priority school to monitor progress toward goals.

- Early start of the 2015-16 school year for students of Monroe High School, and extended day to provide supplemental academic and enrichment opportunities to students, including college-ready ELA and Math courses.
- Instructional coaches will continue to provide support for teachers, including embedded modeling of high-quality instructional practices and a minimum of 24 hours of School-Aligned professional development.
- Develop and implement a formal Response to Intervention plan for the school this year, with training in restorative practices for all staff members.
- Recording and following up on all contacts with parents, and continuing to support and expand the use of Parent Ambassadors in the school.
- Utilize inquiry-based, interactive approaches to instruction to a greater extent than teacher-centered lessons.
- Expand the Bilingual program to address the needs of ELL students.

Dr. Otuwa reported that the Community Engagement Team has been convened to develop the receivership plan. She also discussed the specific criteria required by the NYS Education Department (NYSED) to evaluate performance at Monroe High School over the next year to assess whether “demonstrable improvement” has been made, which will determine whether the school will be placed under external receivership in 2016-17. The school will be required to demonstrate progress according to the 12 indicators mandated by NYSED, and another 7 indicators chosen at the District level and subject to NYSED approval. The 12 mandated indicators are:

- Attain annual progress as a Priority School;
- 10% reduction in serious incidents at the school;
- Increase the percentage of students in grades 3-8 attaining at least a Level 2 score on NYS ELA assessments by 1% and on Math assessments by 1%;
- Increase the Student Growth Percentile on grades 3-8 NYS ELA assessments by 1% and on Math assessments by 1%;

- Increase the percentage of Students in grades 4 and 8 obtaining at least a Level 3 score on the NYS Science exam by 1%;
- Increase the percentage of 10th-grade students passing the Math Regents exam by 1%, and the percentage of 11th-grade students passing the ELA Regents exam by 1%;
- Increase the 4-Year graduation rate by 1%, the 4-Year graduation rate with advanced designation by 1%, and the 5-Year graduation rate by 1%

Parent Representative Toyin Anderson inquired about the process for identifying the additional 7 indicators required by NYSED, and the ability of parents and community members to have input. Dr. Otuwa replied that the Community Engagement Teams are currently in the process of deciding on the additional indicators to be used for each school.

Commissioner Adams asked whether the Community Engagement Teams are involved in preparing the entire receivership plan for each school, or only in identifying progress indicators. Michele Alberti reported that the Community Engagement Teams are engaged in preparing the receivership plan for each school, and have been meeting weekly or bi-weekly to finalize planning by the deadline for submission to NYSED. She clarified that the deadline for schools with continuing School Improvement Grants (SIG) is September 30th and the metrics are to be submitted by October 2, 2015.

Commissioner Adams observed that the SCEP plan for Monroe High School has already been reviewed and approved by the Board. She stated that she was hoping for an update regarding the receivership plan, Community Engagement Team recommendations, and additional progress indicators selected for evaluation of school performance in 2015-16. Commissioner Adams expressed concern that this information is not yet ready for review by the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee and will be submitted to NYSED before the next Committee meeting in October, so there will not be an opportunity for Committee members to examine the plan before it has been finalized and submitted.

Ms. Alberti clarified that the six schools that do not have a continuation of SIG/SIF grant funds will have 60 days after approval of their SCEP plan by NYSED to develop their receivership plan. Ms. Alberti stated that School No. 9 cannot proceed with their receivership plan because the SCEP plan has not yet been approved.

Dr. Otuwa asked whether the members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee would like a review of the SCEP plan for School No. 9, or to focus on the progress indicators that have been established for the school by NYSED for the 2015-16 school year.

Commissioner Evans stated that the Committee members have already examined the SCEP plan for School No. 9, and would like information about the specific targets that the school will be required to meet this school year.

In recognition of the concerns that have been expressed regarding transferring students from the Boys Academy at School No. 9, Dr. Otuwa provided the following breakdown of the schools currently attended by these students:

2015-16 Eighth-Grade Students		2015-16 Ninth-Grade Students	
Leadership Academy	17	Vertus Charter School	9
School No. 3	1	Edison	3
School No. 28	2	Wilson Commencement	1
School No. 58	2	School Without Walls	1
No Match	1	Leadership Academy	2
		Rochester Academy	1
		Parental Placement	3
		No Match	3
Total	23	Total	23

Dr. Otuwa stated that NYSED has identified six required progress indicators for School No. 9 over the next year:

- Annual progress as a Priority School;
- 10% reduction in Serious Incidents at the school;
- Increase the percentage of students in grades 3-8 attaining at least a Level 2 score on NYS ELA assessments by 1% and on Math assessments by 1%; and
- Increase the Student Growth Percentile on grades 3-8 NYS ELA assessments by 1% and on Math assessments by 1%

Commissioner Adams pointed out a discrepancy between the actual K-6 structure of School No. 9 and the information reported in the SCEP plan (K-8). She asked whether these corrections will be included in the receivership plan, and about guidance provided by NYSED regarding revising the SCEP plan.

Action Item: Dr. Otuwa will provide a copy of the NYSED recommendations for revising the School Comprehensive Education Plan for School No. 9 to the members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee.

Ms. Alberti clarified that schools will still be required to meet the October 2nd deadline for submitting the specific metrics to be used in evaluating performance in 2015-16, regardless of whether the SCEP plan has been approved for their school.

Commissioner Adams inquired whether NYSED has approved the SCEP plans for all other schools besides School No. 9. Ms. Alberti replied that the District has not received a response from NYSED regarding the other schools that do not have a continuation of SIG/SIF grant funding. She explained that all “persistently struggling”/”struggling” schools are currently working to develop metrics because this will form the basis for their performance evaluation over the next school year. She noted that the receivership plans for each school will be required to indicate the way in which each of the targets in the metrics will be met over this school year.

Commissioner Adams asked whether the recommendations of any of the Community Engagement Teams are available at this point. Dr. Otuwa replied that she has not received this information from any of the Teams.

Commissioner Adams expressed concern about this lack of information in light of the fact that the receivership plans for seven schools with continuing SIG/SIF grants are due in one week and the metrics for all thirteen schools are due within two weeks. Ms. Alberti responded that the input received in the public hearings has been used to develop the receivership plans for the schools.

Commissioner Adams objected to basing the school receivership plans on input from the public hearings because this input does not constitute legitimate recommendations. Ms. Alberti concurred, adding that the Community Engagement Teams have reviewed the input from the public hearings, established priorities, and developed recommendations for updating receivership plans.

Commissioner Adams maintained that the Community Engagement Teams should be using more comprehensive information in formulating receivership plans. She pointed out that the Community Engagement Teams were convened after the public hearings, and should be considering school improvement planning in a broader context and using raw data to perform their own analysis.

Commissioner Adams also noted that the District has missed the opportunity to obtain local input regarding the specific metrics being used to evaluate each school's performance over the next year.

Dr. Otuwa acknowledged that the District was offered the option of extending the timeline for this process, but chose to move forward with the public hearings because the groups were already in place. Commissioner Adams argued that these groups did not constitute adequate or legitimate representation in most cases.

III. Overview of the Arts Integration Project and Study

Commissioner Evans requested that William Chandler introduce himself to the members of the Committee and to explain his background and involvement with this project. Mr. Chandler stated that he was a music teacher for 30 years, and then became involved with Arts Integration. He reported that he taught elementary school teachers to use the arts as an instructional method for the academic curriculum and that he has been involved with the Arts Integration project for the entire period of the two federal grants (i.e. 2006-2009, 2010-2014).

Andrew MacGowan stated that he has served as the Lead Evaluator of the project, and presented an overview of the work performed to date:

- The Arts Integration project was supported through two grants awarded to RCSD, so the project consists of two study periods: 2006-2009 and 2010-2014. A total of \$2M was awarded through the U.S. Education Department, and RCSD scored 13th out of 169 applicants for 25 funding slots.
- RCSD Elementary schools were randomly selected (10-11 schools) to participate in the Arts Integration initiative, comprising a total of approximately 4200 students, 250

classrooms, and 350 teachers. All other RCSD Elementary schools served as the control group in the study.

This led to inclusion of every RCSD elementary student in the database since 2005-2006, which is the largest Arts Integration database in the U.S.

- In the first phase of the initiative (2006-2009: RAIS), a particular arts modality was assigned to each of the participating schools (e.g. School No. 1: Dance; School No. 5: Theater; School No. 12: Music).

In the second phase (2010-2014: RAISE), arts modalities were assigned to all schools based on grade level (e.g. Kindergarten: Music; Grade 2: Theater/Movement; Grade 3: Visual Art).

- Teaching Artists co-taught 10 sessions of ELA and Math, and classroom teachers received 10 hours of professional development regarding integrating the arts into curriculum instruction.
- The findings from the first phase of the study (RAIS) found statistically significant results at the 95% confidence level that the students in the arts integration schools attained between 5-30% higher scores on NYS Math and ELA assessments than students in the control schools.

Preliminary results from the second phase of the study indicate the greatest gains from Arts Integration in kindergarten, 3rd grade, and 6th grade.

- Perhaps the most significant findings from both phases of the study is that the greatest gains from Arts Integration were attained in schools with higher levels of student poverty, low-performing schools, and among ELL students and students with disabilities. These results were observed consistently for each year of the seven years of the study.
- The final analysis and report is currently being prepared to meet the October 30th deadline for submission to the U.S. Education Department.

Commissioner Adams noted that the consistency in the study findings reflect the benefits of students' participation in the Arts Integration program. She stated that when significant benefits have been shown from a particular treatment in the medical model, all participants are then given the treatment. Commissioner Adams explained that once it is clear that a treatment is effective, it becomes unethical to withhold it from the control group. For this reason, she stated that it would be unethical not to consider providing Arts Integration to all students.

Dr. Otuwa observed the significant gains experienced by ELL students and students with disabilities, stating that she would like the District to obtain grant funding to support Arts Integration for at least these student populations.

Commissioner Adams emphasized the importance of conducting a cost-benefit analysis of implementing Arts Integration district-wide to consider the impact more comprehensively and to

determine ways in which the program could be supported and sustained, even without grant funding.

Action Item: Dr. Otuwa will provide members of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee with the final analysis and report regarding the Arts Integration project, which is due for submission to the U.S. Education Department by October 30, 2015.

Dr. Otuwa will also provide Committee members with a cost-benefit analysis regarding implementing Arts Integration throughout the District.

In addition, Dr. Otuwa will discuss the Arts Integration project with colleagues and review the curriculum as a whole to identify ways to use various art modalities for academic instruction.

IV. Review Resolution for a Contract with the Center for Youth for the Alternatives to Suspension (ATS) Program

Dr. Otuwa reported that all RCSD K-8 schools have ATS programs, except for School Nos. 4, 9 and 50. She noted that some District schools have private funding sources to support the program, while other schools receive RCSD funding.

Dr. Otuwa explained that students who have committed an infraction that would usually result in a short-term suspension are eligible for referral to the ATS program. Overall the program is designed to improve academic performance, reduce student suspensions, promote social-emotional skills, and reduce classroom disruptions. Interventions and services are based on assessment of each student's particular needs, and include conflict resolution, problem-solving, anger management, assertiveness, and interpersonal skills.

Dr. Otuwa pointed out that the Center for Youth has partnered with the District for years in support of the Alternatives to Suspension program, and has been highly effective in addressing the needs of these students. She noted that the Center for Youth is committed to continuous improvement, and began efforts to enhance program efficacy over the summer.

Motion by Commissioner Adams to approve the resolution for a contract with the Center for Youth for the Alternatives to Suspension program. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of the Parent Representative.**

Motion by Commissioner Adams to adjourn. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of Parent Representative.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:27PM.

Next Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting: Tuesday, October 13th, following the Community & Intergovernmental Relations Committee meeting