

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting
March 11, 2013 at 6:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner Van White (Chair), Commissioner Mary Adams; District Staff: Beverly Burrell-Moore, Deborah Harloff, Robin Hooper, Andrew MacGowan; Parent Representative: Dr. Craig Cypher; Jacqueline Morgan (Board Staff)

Absent: Commissioner Cynthia Elliott

I. **Minutes**

Motion to approve March 11, 2013 minutes was made by Commissioner White; seconded by Commissioner Adams.

II. **Preschool Special Education Services**

Early intervention for pre-school students is required by the State and the County as well. At mid-year on January 28, 2013 a total of 725 students were classified as preschoolers with disabilities. Of these students 141 were receiving services provided by RESD staff. The rest of them received services provided by County approved agencies.

Data for 2011-12 indicated that 910 preschoolers received special education services.

Trends indicate that there was a 22% increase in the number of two-year-old students referred from Early Intervention to the Committee on Preschool Special Education from 2010-11 to 2011-12. This increase was reflected in the number of three year-old preschoolers with disabilities receiving services in 2012-13. An 11% increase over the previous year on BEDS day in October.

Students are assessed for Special Education services when they exhibit a lack of skills that most kids in that age bracket are able to perform. The lack of skills may be due to an absence of exposure to learning opportunities or may indicate a disability. A lack of exposure to learning opportunities does not cause a disability.

Students who begin to be exposed to a rich learning environment tend to development and grow in that environment once exposed; but children who have a disability will continue to show a significant lack of growth in the area of disability despite repeated exposure to the learning environment.

It should be noted that preschoolers who have been classified as in need of Special Education services must be reassessed to determine if the services should be continued before they enter kindergarten. Nearly one in five kids is declassified by first grade.

Pre-K teachers receive professional development designed to support their classroom instruction with a focus on language development and the design of a rich learning environment in the classroom.

The department is moving forward with several initiatives to enhance and improve the Pre-K program and to improve the transition from Pre-K to kindergarten. In addition, all community based organizations are undergoing a reapplication process (RFP) to be UKP providers. This process is designed to ensure the District is selecting the highest quality providers to deliver the UKP program.

III. Arts Impact Study

The Committee also reviewed the findings of the 2006-2009 Rochester Arts Impact Study from the Visual and Performing Arts Department. The study showed that there is a positive impact between integrated arts instruction and increased student achievement. Arts integration was explained as the process of combining content of the arts with other classroom content such as English Language Arts, Science, Social Studies or Math by making clear content connections between the various curricular areas with the use of visual art, dance, theater and music.

260 teachers participated in the treatment group for the study, as well as 4,000 students from seven grade levels (K-6), in ten schools. The remaining 29 schools served as the control group, with approximately 30,000 students in all over the course of four years (baseline year plus three years of treatment; treatment being having arts integrated into the curriculum.) The treatment schools were randomly selected with no inherent bias.

The results of the Study revealed that there were gains across all levels; with the unexpected finding that arts impact acts worked as well for

students who did not have the benefit of attending a higher performing school. Using both national and New York State tests, there were positive and significant effects from 5-20% improvements. There were gains in all treatment schools in ELA and Math across most grade levels k-6 including Students with Disabilities and English Language Learners. The director provided the gains for each grade level, including for students with disabilities.

In summary, across most of the seven grade levels (K-6), Arts Integration increased student achievement in ELA and Math, as measured by standardized tests. Arts Integration in the early grades (K-2) is especially effective for English Language Learners and Students with Disabilities. The earlier the intervention, the greater the effect size.

IV. Youth in Transition Budget Recommendation

On another note, at the February ESA Committee Meeting, the Committee requested that budget recommendations be drafted for the African and African American Department and for the Transition Systems Department (Youth in Transition). The Committee **recommends** approval of the budget recommendations to add an FTE to both of these departments to assist with the workload of the directors of the departments.

Action Items:

1. Dr. Hooper will provide a copy of *The 30 Million Word Gap* to the Committee.
2. Mr. MacGowan will provide cost data of implementing arts integration District-wide.
3. Ms. Morgan will continue to work with the African and African-American Studies Department to prepare a draft budget recommendation on behalf of the ESA Committee to be submitted to the full Board at the March 28th Business Meeting to fund an administrator position for the African-American Studies Department.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner White at 8:55 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Adams.