

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

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner Van White (Chair), Commissioner Mary Adams; District Staff: Beverly Burrell-Moore, Enid DeJesus-Lopez, Marjorie Lefler, Djinga St. Louis; Parent Representative: Dr. Craig Cypher; Jacqueline Morgan (Board Staff)

Absent: Commissioner Cynthia Elliott

Commissioner White called the meeting to order at 6:05 p.m.

I. **Minutes**

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

II. **African and African American Studies Department Update**

The Committee received a status report from the African and African American Department. The committee discussed the department's Historically Black College and University Tour. This tour is sponsored in collaboration with the Hillside Work Scholarship Connection Program. Seven district students who are not a part of Hillside will also participate in the tour.

Ms. St. Louis informed the committee that three students were still working on funding for the tour. Commissioner White made a donation that allowed all three students to have the funding needed for the tour.

The committee discussed the work of the Freedom Schools and ways to incorporate some of that work into the district's professional development. It was suggested that the PD be followed up with a survey to determine what has changed and what is different with the PD utilizing Freedom Schools' strategies and techniques.

Ms. St. Louis noted that the RCSD is partnering with the Children's Defense Fund® Freedom School to begin a summer school enrichment

program with 50 students as a pilot. This program is a 100% literacy enrichment program. Students will spend time in the program from 8:30 a.m. – 3:00 p.m. Half of the day will be spent on literacy and the other half will be set up for extracurricular activities that promote community service, community stewardship and arts and crafts.

Following the release of the Schott Report that was released in 2012 that indicated that New York State has the lowest graduation rate the state the department formed a committee of African-American and Latino males in leadership and other necessary district personnel and community members to develop a set of established goals to increase the graduation rate of Black and Latino boys by 10% by August 2013 and by 20% by August 2014.

The committee selected five schools to use as a model for the work that will be done. The schools are Leadership Academy for Young Men, Monroe, East, Charlotte and School No. 9. The building principals and administration from each of these schools are a part of the committee.

Ms. St. Louis also noted that the committee is looking to host an all-male conference for Black and Latino boys in May as a way of introducing the work that the department is doing to the community.

Commissioner White asked how the work of the African American Studies Department is being measured to know if it's working or not. Also, as part of the budget discussions, is there a way that this work can be supported? Is the department adequately funded?

Ms. St. Louis noted that she is still working on the measurement piece of her work, but gave several examples of how the work of the department is being measured. Ms. St. Louis stated that she'd like to have another person to help with PD in the schools. She would also like to have funding to bring in Dr. Goodwin to utilize her services to ensure that everyone is speaking the same language and modeling the same thing.

III. Youth in Transition Update

The committee also received a status update regarding the Youth in Transition Initiative. The committee received a progress report on this initiative in February 2012 and was asked to come back to the committee with its findings because this was a new initiative. This initiative was developed to coordinate a cross-systems transition and support for high risk children and youth re-entering the Rochester City School District from justice and mental health treatment agencies to improve their success in school and in the community.

Ms. Enid DeJesus-Lopez noted that the primary focus of Youth in Transition is to re-engage students who are dis-enrolled from the district and returning from long term alternatives in justice or mental health treatment. The transitioned students are between the ages of 13-19, and are in grades between 8th and 12th, with one student in a GED program. Currently, 121 students are in placement since being returned back to the district since Ms. DeJesus-Lopez began tracking them since December, 2012.

Sixty-four of the transitioning students are males and 36 are females. One hundred of these students are African American, 11 Hispanic and 1 Asian. The majority of the students are in grades 9 and 10; which makes them overage and under-credited.

The areas of improvement since the initiation of this initiative are in the tracking of students in Chancery, having a uniform system for communicating discharges and placements and professional development. Other areas of improvement are:

- Uniform processes for implementing placements have been established including putting protocols in place with the residential placement agencies for student tracking and pre-discharge, communication of placements on a weekly basis and site visits to discuss areas of improvement with the housing agencies.
- Students are now able to have access to a variety of options and approaches to allow them to receive Rochester City School District credits in the five core courses and four AP courses. They also have access to regents prep courses.
- Prior to students being discharged, they, along with their family, meet with a problem solving team to address re-entry concerns. The school is now notified of the students' return to the building to allow the administration to develop a plan to ensure the students' success.

When asked by Commissioner White how the Board could provide support to this initiative Ms. DeJesus Lopez and Ms. Marjorie Lefler suggested that funding to provide another level of support in the form of a counselor or social worker.

Motion to craft draft budget recommendations from the committee to the Board to fund and an administrator position for the African American Studies Department and a counselor/social worker for the

Transition Systems Department was made by Commissioner White; seconded by Commissioner Adams; parent advisory vote by Dr. Cypher – aye.

Action Items:

1. Ms. Morgan will follow up with Ms. St. Louis to determine how Dr. Goodwin is being paid.
2. Ms. Morgan will craft draft budget recommendations on behalf of the ESA Committee to the Board to fund and an administrator position for the African African-American Studies Department and a counselor/social worker for the Transition Systems Department
3. Ms. Morgan will schedule a presentation from the Transition Systems Department to the committee in six months.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner White at 8:00 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner Adams.