

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Excellence in Student Achievement Committee of the Whole**  
**July 16, 2012 at 5:00 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

Attendance: Commissioner Van White (Chair), Commissioner Mary Adams; District Staff: Beverly Burrows-Moore; Jacqueline Morgan (Board Staff); and Dr. Craig Cypher (Parent Representative)

Absent: Commissioner Cynthia Elliott

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

I. **Minutes**

**Motion** to approve the June 18, 2012 minutes was made by Commissioner Adams; seconded by Commissioner White.

II. **Dr. Craig Cypher Introduction**

Commissioner White introduced and welcomed Dr. Craig Cypher, the Parent Representative for the 2012-13 school year. Commissioner White noted that Dr. Cypher brings considerable experience in serving youth in several community agencies. His expertise and professional perspective will provide valuable insight to the committee regarding students' needs and potential barriers to achievement. Dr. Cypher has two children who both attend Francis Parker School No. 23.

III. **Proposed School Closing Resolution**

Commissioner White introduced a proposed resolution for the process of closing schools for discussion. The committee discussed whether not the school closings resolution should be presented as a Board policy or if the resolution should be presented as a Superintendent regulation. It was decided that that after the Administration had an opportunity to review the proposed resolution with the Law Department a decision would be made as to whether or not the resolution would be presented as a policy or a regulation.

Commissioner White noted the Board determined that, as a result of past recommendations for school closings, it should develop a process that was fair and inclusive in considering the closures. The process should include all stakeholders. When No. 16 School was recommended for closure, Commissioner White was reminded that the Board had not developed a protocol for closings. Because of this, he submitted a draft resolution proposal for discussion.

Commissioner White stated that while the draft proposal is not comprehensive, it does describe why such a process is necessary and what the Board would like to see the Superintendent do regarding closing school buildings.

Ms. Beverly Burrell-Moore stated that the draft proposal should list all of the entities who should be invited to a discussion when considering school closings.

Commissioner White noted that in addition to listing the stakeholders, there should also be a clause relating to emergencies closings.

Commissioner Adams asked that clarification be given around closing school buildings as there are times when the building may not be closing, but programs within the building may be closing and there are times when the buildings are closed pertaining to the school, but the building is continuing to be used for educational purposes.

Dr. Cypher asked if the draft proposal would be considering greater clarity around the criteria of closing schools, i.e. physical conditions and school performance. Commissioner White stated that the proposal as written is more of an engagement process.

Commissioner Adams noted that Dr. Cypher's question was precisely the kind of questioning that went on when both Schools No. 6 and No. 2 were proposed for closure. There were arguments around academic performance that shifted into facilities and back again. She noted that it would be useful to consider performance and facilities when considering closings. Commissioner Adams suggested that when the Administration brings a proposal to the Board to close a school that the Board be provided with a check list that includes such items as cost, academic performance, school population, number of parents choosing this school.

Commissioner Adams wanted to ensure that there is room for public hearings included in the policy/regulation. Commissioner Adams suggested that in addition to the list of stakeholders listed on the proposed resolution for vetting school closures the following groups should be included: parents at the affected schools who may not be

associated with the parent/teacher organization and who may not be affiliated with the School Based Planning Team. She also suggested that neighborhood members, volunteers and future families of the affected school also be included in the vetting process.

Commissioner White suggested that the District's robo call system be engaged for informing all stakeholders of any upcoming public hearings and/or forums regarding school closures. Commissioner White also suggested including timeframes the regulation/policy to inform the Board, as well as all other stakeholders, of any upcoming proposals to close schools/buildings.

Commissioner Adams stated that discussion of this proposed resolution for creation of a policy/regulation does not in any way represent an agreement that any schools need to be closed until the Board sees further comprehensive District wide cost benefit analyses of space use; taking into account many variables including the following:

- facilities modernization swing space needs,
- rental property,
- potential to get out of rental property,
- the plan regarding shifting away from the total K-8 /9-12 models.

#### **IV. Proposed Standardized Testing Resolution**

Commissioner Adams also presented a proposed resolution for discussion. This proposed resolution is a resolution requesting the New York State Education Department, the New York State Legislature, and the Governor to re-examine public school accountability systems and to develop a system based on multiple forms of assessment which do not require extensive standardized testing.

Commissioner Adams noted that the Proposed Standardized Testing resolution is a model of a national resolution that has been adopted by hundreds of school boards across the country identifying some of the problems of over emphasis on high stakes testing in schools.

Commissioner Adams went on to note that this proposed resolution does not call for any specific by the Administration or the Board. However, she feels that it important that the Board adds its voice of concern to the damaging effect of over emphasis of standardized testing can be in the classrooms.

Commissioner White recommended that Ms. Moore and the Superintendent, along with the appropriate staff, be given an opportunity

to review the proposed resolution and report back to the committee with the progress.

**Action Items:**

Ms. Moore will have a discussion with the Superintendent to determine his view on whether the proposal on school closings should be a Board policy or a Superintendent regulation.

Ms. Morgan will schedule a time for Ms. Moore to report back to the committee with the progress of the draft school closing and the draft standardized testing resolutions.

Ms. Morgan will provide a copy of the proposed resolution to Mr. Johnson for review to determine if the resolution can be included in the August resolution packet as it does not require any action from the Administration or the Board.

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Commissioner Adams at 6:52 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner White.

The next meeting of the Excellence in Student Achievement Committee will be held on **Monday, August 13, 2011, at 6:00 p.m.**