

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Excellence in Student Achievement Committee Meeting
January 14, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.

MINUTES

Attendance: Commissioner Van White (Chair), Commissioner Willa Powell, District Staff: Robin Hooper, Andrew McGowan, III, Marilyn Patterson-Grant; Board Staff: Jacqueline Morgan

Absent: Commissioner Cynthia Elliott

Commissioner White called the meeting to order at 5:38 p.m.

I. Minutes

Motion to approve December minutes was made by Commissioner Powell; seconded by Commissioner White. **Adopted 2-0 with Commissioner Elliott absent.**

II. Pre-K and Early Childhood Program Presentation

Mrs. Marilyn Patterson-Grant noted that according to the National Institute for Early Education Research, children who attend high quality preschools enter kindergarten with better pre-reading skills, richer vocabularies, and stronger basic math skills than those who do not. This makes for an easier and smoother transition to kindergarten. In addition, high quality preschool education can improve the educational success of all children and by doing so, decrease school failure, dropout rates, crime and delinquency.

Ms. Robin Hooper briefed the committee on the highlights of the district's Early Childhood program. Ms. Hooper noted that Rochester has a high quality Pre-K Program as measured by independent evaluation. On the Early Childhood Environmental Ratings Scale (ECERS), we ranked up as the finest Pre-K System in the U.S. and Western Europe.

The Pre-K Program includes an integrated evaluation system which pays close attention to the needs of parents, students, providers who work with the program, policy makers and the community.

Over the past eight years the Early Childhood Program has had a strong collaboration with the New York State Education Department, the Board of Education, the City of Rochester, Monroe County, community

advocates and parents, as well as the Rochester City School District. This collaboration continues to the current day.

- ♦ Community advocacy has been key to Pre-K programs. The Early Childhood Development Initiative (ECDI) continues to advocate for early care and education. The Universal Prekindergarten Advisory Council (PAC) was instrumental in the implementation of UPK in Rochester.
- ♦ The Universal Prekindergarten Advisory Council (PAC) was instrumental in the implementation of UPK in Rochester. It has met monthly for over a decade.
- ♦ The Rochester Area Community Foundation has supported the prekindergarten initiative.

During the 2009-2010 school year Pre-K programs are provided at 27 district sites and 31 community sites; and the 2009-2010 Universal Prekindergarten enrollment is 1,947 students.

The UPK Program at the Family Learning Center serves four year old students who have recently immigrated to the United States with their parents. While the parents participate in adult education classes their preschool children attend UPK.

In addition to serving children who have language deficits, the UPK also serves students with special needs in integrated special classrooms blended for children with special needs. These classrooms are staffed with a UPK teacher, a special education teacher and two para-professionals. These classrooms are located at Schools 8, 19, 33 and 57. There is one classroom in each school; with 2 two half day sessions.

There are bilingual programs located at schools 6, 9 and 33. These are full day programs. The purpose of the program is to provide a strong native language foundation to facilitate bilingualism and learning English.

The district also provides a Montessori International Pre-K Program at the Franklin Campus. The students in this program receive transportation and a full day program. The American Montessori is provided at School 17. The students in this program participate in a half day program. Admission into the Montessori program occurs through a random selection process.

Current Pre-K Initiatives

- ◆ Adoption of a district-wide research-based curriculum.
- ◆ Implementation of recognition and response intervention model/strategies.
- ◆ Implementation of an interactive whiteboard pilot program at 15 UPK sites.
- ◆ Implementation of a computerized attendance system in agency sites and on-line submission of assessment from all sites.
- ◆ Implementation of the PRE-K PATHS social emotional curriculum at UPK sites.
- ◆ Forthcoming professional development on working with children of incarcerated parents.
- ◆ Planning for the implementation of the Parents as Teachers Program in 2010-11.
- ◆ Participation of kindergarten teachers in early childhood professional development.
- ◆ Improving the transition from Pre-K to kindergarten.

Areas of Challenge

- ◆ Ensuring Pre-K special education fulfills its promise in closing the gaps with general education.
- ◆ Summer drop-off – students losing IQ points over the summer.
- ◆ Gender gap – boys consistently lagging behind girls.
- ◆ Hispanic/Latino boys' growth.
- ◆ Overall health issues.

Future Initiatives

- ◆ Optional transition planning for preschool students declassified from special education services prior to entering kindergarten.

- ♦ Improvement in the CPSE/CSE process for transitioning students with disabilities from prekindergarten to kindergarten.
- ♦ Establish a collaboration with the Young Mothers Program.

Commissioner White inquired why transportation was not cited as an area of challenge. Ms. Hooper responded that transportation is an area of challenge; and that some of the agency sites do provide transportation, but Franklin Montessori is the only school site that currently provides transportation. Transportation is not provided because it would cost as much to provide transportation as it does to run the entire program; and this cost is not reimbursable from the state.

Commissioner White also questioned whether or not the UPK Program had been considered to be provided as full day classes. It was noted that to have full day programs would double the cost of running the program.

Motion to adjourn was made by Commissioner Powell at 7:20 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner White. **Adopted 2-0.**

The next Excellence in Student Achievement Committee meeting is scheduled for February 11, 2010 at 5:30 p.m.