

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Excellence in Student Achievement Committee**  
**September 10, 2009 at 5:30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

Attendance: Commissioner Van White (Chair), Commissioner Melisza Campos, District Staff: Linda Blankenhorn, Joyce Dunn, Brandon Keaveny, Carlos Leal, Caterina Leone-Mannino, Marilyn Patterson-Grant, Board Staff: Jacqueline Morgan

Absent: Commissioner Allen Williams

Commissioner White called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

**I. Minutes**

**Motion** to approve June minutes was made by Commissioner Campos; seconded by Commissioner White. **Adopted 2-0 with Commissioner Williams absent.**

**II. College-Going Culture Campaign Overview**

Joyce Dunn gave a presentation on the College-Going Culture Campaign. This is a campaign that encourages students (beginning at the elementary school level) to think about the option of college after graduation. The objective of the campaign is to build awareness relating to attending college and to start having conversations with students and parents at the elementary school level.

In the month of December, in addition to the widespread media campaign, the academic showcase will be utilized to help students and parents to begin to think beyond RCSD, and begin to think toward college.

This campaign will encourage students to take more vigorous courses to prepare for college and also paint a vision for students and parents to see college as something that is attainable by changing the mind set by utilizing visuals.

**III. Response to Intervention Presentation**

Caterina Leone-Mannino and Carlos Leal gave a comprehensive presentation outlining the District's Response to Intervention (RTI) Program. RTI is an important strategy to close achievement gaps by

preventing smaller learning problems from becoming overwhelming gaps for students.

Response to Intervention is a framework for changing the District's culture in the way it currently makes educational decisions. RTI suggest that we become more proactive in our thoughts. Following this framework ensures that we examine what instruction the child has been exposed to; and what interventions took place before saying that it falls on the child in saying that he has a disability and placed in special education classes. Each building will have a team to address the needs of children to ensure that intervention services are provided before failure occurs.

Once a child has been screened and has been found to be falling below a certain cut off point intervention services will be provided before failure occurs. By moving forward with the initiative of response to intervention we will be able to ensure that constant progress monitoring occurs so that parents are not waiting until the end of the marking to find out that their child is failing.

RTI is a tiered model with Tier I being classroom based interventions utilizing effective first teaching that is aligned with the core curriculum with differentiation and modifications using a universal screening for all students. Tier II consists of targeted individualized interventions tailored to the needs of students with significant gaps by using effective and strategic intervention progress monitoring. Tier III uses intensive individual intervention by implementing 1-2 strategies for 4-6 weeks and monitoring the students' progress once a week or twice monthly.

The Teaching and Learning staff is working on establishing a District-wide draft guidance document that will outline core instructional practices that go across every content area.

Commissioner White stated that he was extremely encouraged and glad to see the framework for breaking through the pipeline of children being placed in SPED classes before academic intervention has taken place; and noted that an effective RTI program could have an impact on SPED. Commissioner White noted that he would like to have the RTI Team to return in the spring to give a status report on the first RTI cohort.

At the end of the RTI presentation Mr. Glenn Williams suggested that the RTI Team present the information to parents.

#### **IV. Pupil-Teacher Rations/Class Size**

Marilynn Patterson-Grant and Brandon Keaveny provided information regarding the impact of smaller class sizes vs. larger class sizes. Mrs. Patterson-Grant noted that class size is a large umbrella term not really used for instruction, but more as an administrative tool that identifies the number of salaried staff versus the number of students to whom they are assigned; and that teachers have to be effective in both small and large classrooms. She also noted that changes in class size do not seem to impact teaching; but more research is needed in this area.

Three case studies were presented dealing with the subject of pupil-teacher ratios.

Mr. Keaveny stated that there is no data that concludes that smaller class sizes will generate more graduates.

Commissioner White questioned the accuracy of data regarding graduation rates and wanted to know why when data is presented and is shown to be able to be understood differently it's explained that the community is very transient. Commissioner White also wanted to know why data is okay for the administration to use, but when others have a different construction of the data presented they are told that the data is not so reliable. Mr. Keaveny stated that this happens because the administration is often at the liberty of the State's methodology for retrieving data.

**Action Items:**

- ▶ Commissioner White will invite RTI Team as guests on the WDKX Water Cooler Show to discuss the RTI Initiative.
- ▶ Caterina Leone-Mannino will contact Gladys Pedraza-Burgos regarding the possibility of presenting the RTI information to parents.
- ▶ Marilynn Patterson-Grant will provide qualitative data in regards to pupil-teacher ratios.
- ▶ Brandon Keaveny will provide categorical comparison data regarding graduation cohorts for 2005-06, 2006-07 and 2007-08 in relation to 2008 respectively.

**Motion** to adjourn was made by Commissioner Campos at 7:31 p.m.; seconded by Commissioner White. **Adopted 2-0 with Commissioner Williams absent.**

The next meeting is scheduled for October 8, 2009 at 5:30 p.m.