

Quality Assurance Committee  
Special Meeting to Review Restructuring Plans  
Minutes  
November 20, 2006  
5:30 p.m.

**Attendance:** Chairwoman Thompson, Commissioner Henley. Commissioner Elliott excused. Board staff L. Dunsmoor, QA Liaisons C. Holloway and M. Cianca, D. Halpern of the Mid West School Support Center, Director of Testing J. Silvers, Principals K. Lamb, D. Rider and S. Jackson, M. Hancock and other administrators.

Chairwoman Shirley Thompson convened the meeting at 5:32 p.m.

David Halpern presented “The 900 Pound Canary in the Middle of the Room: Understanding the NCLB Accountability System.” The Mid West School Support Center is under contract with NYSED as a technical assistance provider for schools identified by No Child Left Behind as Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI) schools. It provides professional development, direct instructional support, and leadership coaching to RCSD schools.

Highlights from the presentation and questions:

- Buildings are assessed based on academic progress of the overall population (All) and the subpopulations, which are: African American, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, Socio-Economic Status, White, Limited English Proficiency and Students With Disabilities.
- There are 216 measures determining whether a building testing students in Grades 3-8 ELA and Math makes Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) toward all students meeting NYS Standards by 2014.
- There are 45 measures determining whether a secondary building meets AYP. At the secondary level, NCLB evaluates buildings based on ELA, Math and graduation rate. In addition, NYS uses three more assessments -- Global and American History and Secondary Science.
- All buildings, no matter what the configuration, are at risk of not making AYP based on the accountability measures.
- One student can be the determining factor in whether a building does not make AYP, even if it is in participation rate.

Jeanette Silvers presented “Why Schools are in Restructuring,” with data on the seven RCSD buildings involved.

Highlights from the presentation and questions:

- To be identified as a school in “good standing,” a building must
  - Test 95 percent of all eligible students
  - Meet AYP for all subgroups for two consecutive years

- To be identified as a School in Need of Improvement, a building has failed to meet AYP for two consecutive years in the same subject and grade. Overall, the building may make AYP but if a subgroup does not make AYP the building is identified.
- To be identified as a Restructuring Plan school, buildings have failed to make AYP for six school years.
- There are districts that do not have enough students in any one subgroup for subgroup performance to be counted. *Find out which ones / what is number needed.*
- In response to Commissioner Thompson, Ms. Silvers said it happens more often than one would think that one student can affect an entire school. Commissioner Thompson said it would be helpful for the Board to have that type of information.

## **EAST HIGH SCHOOL**

### **Kathleen F. Lamb, Principal**

Highlights from Ms. Lamb's presentation and Commissioner comments:

- East High School has applied for a grant to provide additional technology and training.
- 100 students are enrolled in the Rochester After School Academy and approximately 70-80 attend per day.
- There is a dedicated time for Academic Intervention Services within a student's schedule; some students also go for extra help at lunch.
- The common assessments used are tied to the NYS assessments. Define common assess
- The building is using creative ways to encourage parent participation; for example, parent/teacher conferences were scheduled prior to a recent athletic banquet. Similar events are planned because a single 2,000-family open house is not effective.
- Staff members are working with students after school on a volunteer basis.
- In response to Commissioner Thompson, Ms. Lamb identified the following top three challenges to meeting NCLB and NYS requirements:
  - Changing target numbers
  - Obtaining necessary data from the state regarding the exam results
  - Mobility of students who move into or out of the District
  - Federal and State government should provide resources for meeting the mandates

Commissioner Thompson commented that the Board needs to know the challenges faced by schools so that it can advocate for change at the State and Federal levels. She added that providing the information in a succinct, digestible form would be very helpful.

**Charlotte High School**  
**Deborah Rider, Principal**

From Ms. Rider's presentation and Commissioner comments:

- Academic Intervention Services instruction is project-based to heighten effectiveness and student interest.
- Data is critical -- staff needs to be able to track how every single student answered on every single exam question in order to adjust teaching.
- Two students in one subgroup did not attend on test day, which automatically identified Charlotte as not making AYP.
- Common assessments are done every marking period.
- Challenges:
  - Attendance
  - Enough time to teach the whole curriculum
  - Lack of data from NYS; for example, test results from January 2006 are still unavailable
- Commissioner Thompson asked Ms. Rider to provide specific examples of how the Board could help Charlotte and Ms. Rider said she would provide them. Haven't red
- In response to Commissioner Thompson, Cheryl Holloway and Marie Cianca said that high schools are sharing successful initiatives at principals' and academy directors' meetings.
- Commissioner Thompson asked the principals to address an idea raised at other QA meetings -- that a cultural disconnect between staff and students manifests itself in lowered expectations for students.
  - Ms. Lamb said it is desirable to have a staff that resembles the student population but said expectations for students are high.
  - Ms. Rider said 10 of the 30 teachers she has hired over the past two years are candidates of diversity. The use of common assessments and group grading prevents any one individual from 'dumbing down' the curriculum.

**School 9**  
**Sharon Jackson, Principal**

From Ms. Jackson's presentation and Commissioner comments:

- School 9 staff members work to meet the needs of all students, including English Language Learners (ELL).
- Students are not pulled out for AIS during core block.
- The building has applied for \$50,000 grant for three years that would fund equipment and resources to improve instruction for ELL students.
- Events for parents are held in the morning, during the day and in the evening.

- Challenges:
  - Staff cuts elaborate
  - Data availability from Management Information Services same
- Commissioner Thompson noted the importance of having this type of information so the Board can support the work of the buildings.

## **Conclusion**

Commissioner Thompson recommended a motion that Board and Administrative staff work together to pull the salient points from the meeting for the full Board. No motion. Do memo from st she will send draft.

Cheryl Holloway commented on the tremendous challenges faced by schools and Commissioner Thompson agreed, noting that everyone is on the same team.

## **Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Henley, second by Commissioner Thompson, adopted at 7:08 p.m.