

Rochester Board of Education
Quality Assurance Committee
November 13, 2006

Minutes

Attendance: Commissioners Thompson, Elliott and President Garcia; PPC Representative T. Bradley, Administrators C. Holloway, M. Cianca, K. Dyce-Faucette, J. Silvers, Board Staff L. Dunsmoor. Commissioner Henley arrived at 6:45 p.m.

Commissioner Thompson convened the meeting at 6:05 p.m. and removed the Cohort 2006 report, the Gay Straight Alliance report, and the Biennial Review follow-up from the agenda because written information was not provided in advance.

1) Parent Liaison Role in Summer School

Cheryl Holloway reported verbally that she had met with Parent and Community Involvement Director Dwight Fowler and he will develop a plan for how Parent Liaisons can better assist schools during summer school. There would be financial implications because Parent Liaisons have not worked during the summer in the past; Commissioner Elliott said they could perhaps be used on an as-needed basis and Commissioner Thompson noted that much of the Parent Liaison role in summer school may take place before the program begins. Commissioner Elliott said that creative methods of working with parents should be used rather than just phone calls.

2) End-of-Year Accountability Report

Director of Testing Jeanette Silvers walked Commissioners through the report, which includes standardized test score, attendance, and suspension data. Commissioners said that the type in the report was difficult to read because of its size and the colored charts. All reports provided to the Board and or committees should be in readable type; color can also be problematic and should be avoided. Ms. Silvers said she would re-print the report and provide it for Commissioners. Board staff Linda Dunsmoor will provide information in memo form to administration about report presentations.

Ms. Silvers explained that the ELA 4 or 8? exams had a greater degree of difficulty in 2005-06 than in 2004-05, making comparisons tricky to draw. She noted that Grades 4 and 8 did not meet achievement targets. In response to Commissioner Elliott, she explained that the Superintendent's goals are more rigorous than those in the NCLB because he wants to see all students scoring in Levels 3 and 4. Ms. Silvers said she would provide the Committee with the current NCLB achievement timeline through 2014.

Commissioner Thompson asked whether the efforts in schools with high achievement are being replicated in other buildings. Marie Cianca said there are plans to establish a more formal network of model classrooms coupled with effective training for staff. Commissioner Thompson also commented on the achievement gap and that in some cases it is widening rather than shrinking, despite efforts that are underway. Ms. Silvers said that issue is being examined.

Commissioner Elliott commented that the former Middle School system should not have been dismantled in favor of the current K-6, 7-12 building configuration.

DRAFT NOT APPROVED BY CHAIR

Commissioner Henley asked if there is an emphasis on reading skills required for math tests and asked how many students are not doing well on the math tests because they can't read and or comprehend the questions. Dr. Cianca said reading skills are targeted more to grade level than content area.

President Garcia noted that NCLB requires that all students take the exams, even if they speak a language other than English and have been in the country less than a year. Commissioner Thompson said this is the type of information the Board needs to have in order to work with Albany on reform measures.

Commissioner Thompson asked how it is that only 15 percent of Wilson Foundation students in Grades 7 and 8 score in levels 3 and 4 on the NYS math assessment, yet Wilson Commencement Academy achieves at a level qualifying it as one of the top 100 high schools in the country. Ms. Holloway said that if Commissioners visited Wilson during the day, they would see a lot of order in the building; inside that order teaching and learning is taking place. Dr. Dyce-Faucette explained that a "top down" approach focusing on student achievement worked at Wilson. Commissioner Thompson noted that whatever model was used at Wilson should perhaps be replicated across the District.

Action items:

J. Silvers to re-print the report and provide it for Commissioners. (Due 11/17)

L. Dunsmoor to send memo about presentation format to administration. (Due 11/17)

J. Silvers to provide current NCLB achievement timeline through 2014. (Due 11/17)

Other

Dr. Dyce-Faucette said she had thought that the Gay Straight Alliance report was viewed as an on-going need to communicate and provided a brief written report on actions to date at the meeting. Commissioner Thompson accepted it and said she will determine whether the report can be put on the Committee's December agenda.

Commissioner Thompson took the same action for the Biennial Review materials, which were provided shortly before the meeting.

Commissioner Thompson said that in the future she wants to see better communication regarding materials being provided to the Committee; when reports are provided one hour before or at the meeting, it suggests that the information requested by Quality Assurance is not considered important. Dr. Dyce-Faucette stated that it is not the intent of the administration to give that impression.