

Rochester Board of Education
Quality Assurance Committee
October 16, 2006

MINUTES

Attendance: Chairwoman Thompson, Commissioner Henley. Commissioner Elliott arrived at 6:05 p.m. Also C. Holloway, M. Cianca, E. Gandy, S. Kaufmann, J. Silvers, G. Sullivan, K. Dyce-Faucette.

Chairwoman Thompson convened the meeting at 6 p.m. and addressed Item 3, Restructuring Report. She said the discussion of this item needs to be spread over additional meetings because of its importance and volume of information provided.

1) Summer School

Elizabeth Gandy presented data on sixth-graders attending the literacy summer school in preparation for grade 7. This was an initiative to ensure that entering seventh-graders' literacy skills were at a minimum of Grade 5. 472 students were enrolled in the program and 368 completed it. Of those, 289 were promoted to Grade 7.

Discussion points:

- Some students dropped out of the program because their parents pulled them out and the hot weather.
- The program was not housed in a building with air conditioning because of space use/renovations issues and the effort to keep the program close to students' homes.
- A grade 5 reading level is the minimum a student needs to be successful at grade 7. Commissioner Elliott said the expectation should be higher and should be stated as such.
- The decision on whether a student was offered an additional year in grade 6 was made at the student's home school, not in the summer school program, so data was not immediately available on how many students would repeat grade 6. Administrators will supply the information, as well as the numbers of Students With Disabilities and language-affected students took part in the program.
- Commissioner Elliott said administration should anticipate questions and have answers ready at committee meetings, not later, so that the public is aware of the questions being asked. Chairwoman Thompson suggested that the committee's standing meeting date may need to change so that commissioners have more time to digest the reports.
- Chairwoman Thompson said the role of parent liaisons and how they could help in ensuring students' participation should be looked into.

Action items:

- Marie Cianca/Cheryl Holloway to provide information about how many 6 Go 7 Summer School students accepted the "offer" of another year in Grade 6. Due in Friday, Oct. 20 packet.
- Elizabeth Gandy to provide numbers of Students With Disabilities and language-affected students taking part in the program. Due in Friday, Oct. 20 packet.
- Cheryl Holloway to look into role of parent liaisons working with parents to ensure that children who need it attend the program. Due for Nov. 13 QA meeting.

2) Seven Essential Standards

Cheryl Holloway presented information on district-developed tenets on what every school should know and be able to do in order to be a high-performing school.

Discussion points:

- Ms. Holloway said implementation is in the learning stage this year, with implementation discussion taking place at principals' meetings. Commissioner Elliott said that was inadequate; monitoring and accountability systems should be in place for principals with corollary consequences.
- Commissioner Henley said the entire District, including the Board, should be evaluated according to the Seven Essential Standards.
- Chairwoman Thompson questioned if the Seven Essential Standards are manageable in light of the other initiatives in buildings. She asked that additional questions from commissioners be submitted in writing.

Action items:

- Commissioners to submit questions regarding Seven Essential Standards to Linda Dunsmoor so she can obtain answers from administration. Linda to notify commissioners as to how questions should be submitted. Format to be supplied to commissioners by Friday, 10/20 with questions due by Monday, 10/23. Responses due in Friday, 11/3 packet.

3) Restructuring Report

The District has seven schools identified as in need of restructuring for failing to make adequate yearly progress as defined in the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Discussion points:

- The plans are being implemented now.
- There is no danger of New York State taking over district schools.
- Barriers to schools making AYP include resource allocation, annually changing regulations/goals, and instructional delivery issues.
- Commissioner Elliott said the district hires the wrong people and teachers are not required to take part in professional development.
- There is a provision in federal law for poorly performing schools to change to charter schools, but that provision is not supported by New York State.
- Commissioners would like to delve further into the report by having additional meetings and focusing on two schools per meeting.

Action items:

- Linda to work with administration on schedule for schools to come to QA and what data will be presented. Schedule due in Friday, 10/27 packet.

4) Biennial Review

The Board President is asked to sign off on the Biennial Review of Shared Decision-Making before it is returned to the State Education Department.

Discussion points:

- Sue Kaufmann said that the document has not been returned to Albany.
- QA will not recommend that the Board authorize the president's signature until members are confident that parents' opinions and experiences are accurately represented in the report.
- Commissioner Elliott said administration undermined the committee by changing the parent responsible for signing off on the document.
- Chairwoman Thompson said she has met or will meet with the parent representatives involved.

Action items:

- Kim Dyce-Faucette will provide written documentation on the parent sign-off process for the Biennial Review. Specifically how Minister Florence came to be replaced as designated signer by Carolee Albert. Due in Friday, 10/27 packet.

5) Gay Straight Alliance organizations

Discussion points/motion:

- Prompted by a report of misuse of authority, QA requested that the administration provide a status report on the GSA clubs, and other organizations that support alternative lifestyles, to be sure that they are being treated equitably regarding funding and other resources, as well as the challenges members and advisors in these groups face from students and school staff. Motion by Commissioner Henley, second by Chairwoman Thompson. Approved 2-1 with Commissioner Elliott dissenting.

Action items:

- K. Dyce-Faucette to provide for Nov. 13 QA meeting. **deadline may be extended to 30 days if necessary.*

6) Bilingual Program Evaluation

The program evaluation was brought to QA in June but there was no recommendation to the Board; it was unnecessary since the administration had already begun the process.

Discussion points/motion:

Motion to pull Resolution 309 from the October 19 Business Meeting Agenda because the vendor selected to complete an evaluation of the Bilingual Program was not vetted through Quality Assurance. Motion by Commissioner Elliott, second by Commissioner Henley. Approved 3-0.

Commissioner Thompson said that if it were not within the purview of QA to pull the agenda item, she would make a member request from the floor.

7) ELA scores

New York State has provided information on the English Language Arts assessments. The state has provided only percentages of students scoring in each category (1-4). Information on subgroups and actual numbers has not been provided.

Discussion points:

ESOL students, starting in 2006-07, will have to take the ELA assessments if they have been in the U.S. for at least 10 months. They were not required to take the assessments in 2005-06.

Commissioner Thompson asked that the data be presented using percentages and numbers, as well as page numbers. She said she needed additional time to read the data more closely.

8) Other

No issues raised

9) Next meeting

Monday, Nov. 13, regular monthly meeting.

Adjournment:

Motion by Commissioner Henley, second by Commissioner Elliott. Approved 3-0 at 8:05 p.m.