

Quality Assurance  
Work Session Minutes  
Thursday, March 30, 2006

**Meeting began at 6:30 p.m.**

**Present were Commissioners Thompson, Elliott and Henley.**

**Committee Role/Scope**

The QA Committee's historical role in the Board organization has been oversight of academic programs and achievement data. The Committee is examining the potential broadening of its scope to assure the quality of systems and processes in place throughout the District. As the committee name suggests, quality assurance is relevant to all facets of the District.

Committee members have been working on what a framework for this expanded scope would look like and have drafted a Mission Statement and identified practices for the committee:

***Mission Statement***

The Quality Assurance Committee of the Rochester City School District Board of Education is dedicated to enhancing the quality of all aspects of the District's systems and educational programs. We will accomplish this through cooperation with faculty, staff, administration, community and students as they interact with one another. Our focus is on the advancement of teaching and learning regarding the future needs of our society. Our activities are based on respect for the individual, and fair and equal treatment of all students.

***We will:***

- Monitor Board of Education and District activities to ensure high standards for practices, processes and systems are used to improve student achievement;
- Work with Board colleagues and the Superintendent to establish standards for high quality practices, processes and systems.
- Work with Board colleagues and the Superintendent to optimize delivery of high quality services and programs.
- Provide status reports to the Board of Education on these efforts.
- Serve as the primary conduit between the Board of Education and Administration on issues of quality assurance, recommending practical approaches to improving the work of the Board of Education and District.
- Work with the standing committees of the Board of Education to identify additional ways in which quality assurance can be woven into the fabric of each committee's work and throughout the District.

Commissioner Elliott said she would like to see the committee work on textbooks. She provided an example of a textbook policy and noted that the Board needs to drive the goals of the District via policies. She used the textbook policy to illustrate how to achieve a goal of providing every student with a textbook of his/her own: "Children on all grade levels should be able to have books in the classroom and outside of the classroom in order to enhance learning that assists in increased grade point averages, increased graduation rates, increased critical thinking skills and increased study habits." Commissioner Elliott said such goals should be tied to the Superintendent's evaluation.

Commissioner Elliott also proposed 2006 goals to:

Increase graduation rates to 75% by the school year 2007.

Reduce suspension rates by 25% by the school year 2007.

### **Future tasks**

Identified by the committee as a top priority, among many, is increasing the graduation rate. Approaching this issue from a systematic standpoint, the Committee would like to know:

- What programs are in place to improve the District's graduate rate?
- What are the graduation numbers, broken down by ethnicity and gender, for the last few years?
- What initiatives have been tried to increase the graduation rate and have they been successful or not?
- What are other districts comparable to Rochester doing to increase their graduation rates?

Commissioner Elliott noted that union members are essential to improving the graduation rate. She suggested that QA meet with ASAR Present Vicki Gouveia and RTA President Adam Urbanski to discuss what the unions' roles are in improving the graduation rate. She and the other committee members would like to know what the unions' views are regarding the graduation rate, and their members' roles as it relates to graduation. Commissioner Henley said such a meeting would need to be "team" oriented. Commissioner Thompson agreed, noting that people don't have to mince words, but that everyone should leave such a meeting feeling like they are part of a team working on improving students' lives.

**ACTION ITEM: Linda Dunsmoor to determine how above information can be provided to QA as soon as possible.**

### **JROTC**

Commissioner Thompson shared her view of the JROTC program and asked the other commissioners to elaborate on what they have determined thus far through the QA examination of JROTC. Commissioner Thompson does not believe JROTC belongs in RCSD high schools and that it is draining resources away from other programs that could potentially provide the same opportunities for students. From a philosophical standpoint, she does not appreciate a military presence in schools. Commissioner Henley said his position is not written in stone, but that he wants to see as many alternatives as possible provided for students. He noted that principals support the program and he is inclined to keep it. Commissioner Elliott said a career in the military is probably no more dangerous than one as a police officer. She also noted the principals' support of the program and that the data indicate that JROTC students are not looking at the military as a career. Commissioner Elliott said she would support a recommendation from Commissioner Thompson to the full Board.

**Meeting Adjourned** at 7:50 p.m., motion by Commissioner Elliott seconded by Commissioner Henley.

**Next Meeting:** April 10, 2006, 6:15 p.m.