

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

Wednesday, April 27 2005

Committee Members Present: Thompson, Bowers, Brown

Additional Board of Education Members Present: Powell

BOE Staff Present: Rohring

District Staff Members Present: Carlisle, Cianca, Christman, Holloway, Robinson

Call to Order: Commissioner Thompson called the meeting to order at 6:00pm.

Agenda Item I. Carlisle reviewed Program Evaluation presentation points, the document that you were given summarizes why we do program evaluations, the history of the evaluation and currently where we are with them. We are looking at program evaluations that have been conducted to-date and current program evaluation partners. This was a good process for us to go through. Page 4 mentions all the programs that we have monitored...they are not all research based, but we did want to capture them.

Commissioner Bowers

Q. For these evaluations that have been done over the past five years, are these evaluations on file if someone wanted to see them?

A. Christman stated, yes, they are primarily in the Office of Research, Evaluation and Testing.

Q. Which evaluations do we currently have underway?

A. Carlisle - Blue Ribbon Panel study is currently underway. URSON piece has just been received. Hillside Work Scholarship is underway. The Parent Preference/Managed Choice piece is completed, but still needs ongoing monitoring. ERS professional development study is underway. We have received preliminary report from them, but needs to continue. AIS extended day is underway. School nursing CSR model as was mentioned earlier is underway. We have not started the review of the instructional framework. Fast ForWord and facilities modernization are both underway. School closures are in the process. We are moving forward with benchmark assessments.

Wednesday, April 27 2005

Q. Does the RUMP Group have the scientific ability to evaluate anything? Concerns about partners and their role; and the extent to which partners are involved in assessments when our partners are Scantron and Tungsten and if they are involved in the evaluations, one of them is trying to get our money because we are going to purchase one of their products, so depending upon how you are using the word "partners", I would be comfortable with who is doing the outside evaluations when we are not doing it ourselves and would like the assurance that the outside individual/company doing it is qualified, such as the Children's Institute. Please clarify who is partnering and who is implementing?

A. Carlisle - Just as the data sources are not the same, partners are the same way. These partners are not all conducting the evaluations, some are implementing the programs.

Commissioner Bowers indicated there should be clarification on someone who is partnering with us who may be implementing a program versus those outside resources that we are using to evaluate. And those two things should not be allowed to mix, because as soon as you mixed them the evaluations become tainted and it has to be pure to be good data.

Commissioner Thompson

Q. It would be helpful not to have a detailed report on how the evaluations are going to be done, but it would be helpful to know the role that the partners have versus who is doing the evaluations. Could you provide this information so there is an understanding regarding who is doing what?

A. Carlisle - Yes.

Commissioner Brown

Q. Commentary relating to Dr. Bowers, who will be conducting the Hillside Work Scholarship Connection evaluations?

A. Carlisle - CGR. We have the original evaluation from CGR a year ago and this information was used publicly. We have spent the last six months with CGR, Hillside and Wegmans staff working with the data and helping them to identify a constructive way to evaluate the data. In fact Sandy Parker, RBA

Wednesday, April 27 2005

corrected the way the statistics were used in her statement at last night's public hearing.

Q. CGR differs from Children's Institute in the sense that CGR is supported by the Rump Group. What is the assurance that the research will not be bogus, and that it is rigorous?

A. Carlisle - We do contribute some funding. What would the Board like for us to convey to Hillside and CGR?

Commissioner Brown indicated that the District needs to stay on top of the data to make sure it is not bogus. Be very careful that study is rigorous; need to have enough controls to ensure integrity.

Commissioner Bowers

Q. Before we agree to any recommendations by CGR, we should have their study validated/assessed by another entity like Children's Institute or the district's staff – peer review.

Commissioner Thompson

Q. Could Children's Institute assess the evaluation without conducting the evaluation?

Commissioner Bowers suggests a "peer review" model. We would ask CI or Research, Evaluation and Testing staff to review it as though submitting an article for approval. A good reviewer would critique the methodology and the soundness of the data.

Commissioner Powell amends that the results of CGR work does not get released until it is reviewed. If it is biased, their agenda will be to release it before anyone has a chance to refute it.

Commissioner Thompson asked if the District had the authority to prevent CGR or the RUMP Group from releasing or refuting the information that we commissioned?

Commissioner Brown stated we have the rights to shadow the evaluation and program because we are contributing donors to support the program.

Commissioner Powell stated they needed to get their data from somewhere, so they need our cooperation.

Carlisle indicated it is a unique situation with HWSC given it is an individual program, and that they are matching funds with the district.

Commissioner Bowers suggested that if they still want the district's \$300,000 we get to review that evaluation before releasing the reports/data.

Commissioner Brown indicated that it would be unlikely that the District would continue funding of HWSC unless their evaluation is more rigorous. The first evaluation was based on correlation rather than causation.

Commissioner Thompson

Q. How do you propose moving forward with everything that you have heard?

A. Carlisle - If this proposal regarding the HWSC evaluation is coming from the Board, then they will have to submit because of the disbursement of the money.

Commissioner Brown indicated if they want our discretionary funding, we can say that it is unlikely that we will consider it unless they have a study that is considerably more rigorous than in the past. It is necessary condition, but not a sufficient condition.

Commissioner Bowers recommended that we do not have to have a complete resolution, before the district acts on the recommendations of the evaluation of the CGR Report, but the Board would expect a "peer review" so that we knew that it was a report with integrity.

Ms. Carlisle asked how to respond to HWSC in the event that they express feelings of being held to a higher standard than others.

Commissioner Brown stated we choose to make them an example because they uniquely have the ability to succeed.

Commissioner Thompson

Q. What kind of additional heightened expectations are they talking about that we are imposing on them?

A. Carlisle indicated that HWSC has expressed concern that the District is imposing additional criteria on HWSC but not on other partners. For example, Center for Youth may come out and say more graduates cross the stage at East High and yet CFY sees only a certain percentage of all these students from East High and that they see a correlation because of their involvement. We have said to CFY, that before they can make these types of statements or public presentations, they must conduct a scientifically based evaluation.

Commissioner Thompson stated that we need to be consistent. I also agree we need to start somewhere which should be with CGR and Hillside Program.

Commissioner Powell indicated that we can caution any of our partners not to make claims that they cannot back up, because they might be put on the spot and compelled to back up their claims by the district or Board.

Commissioner Thompson advised that we need to communicate this as we move forward with oversight of our different programs.

Commissioner Thompson:

Q. Asked about page 7 (the program evaluations that have been conducted), what are the purposes of these evaluations? On page 6 on the black and white Achievement Gap, the purpose stated there is about "monitored" district progress towards success?

A. Carlisle indicated it is monitored so that the District can be proactive and intervene if necessary. The information does include Asian and white and Hispanics and white.

Q. On page 11, trial of a new skill-based mentoring program. What program is that?

Wednesday, April 27 2005

A. This is a program for teachers instead of students. **Carlisle indicated that she would get Commissioner Thompson the exact name.**

Q. On page 21, you talk about continuing to refine and assess the parent preference/managed choice pending grant funding. Are we relying on grant funding to evaluate the managed choice?

A. Carlisle - We had applied for a federal research grant, however, we did not receive the grant. We will now have to do a more modest evaluation/study than originally proposed.

Q. Thompson - It would be helpful to know what we are going to evaluate with the managed choice? Where funding will come from? And even if we do not know where the funding is coming from, we would hope the evaluation will be worth the effort.

A. Carlisle - in the next steps, we do identify strategies, priorities and timeline. We have captured a cross section of information in this report, and now we have to figure out exactly when and what happens next.

Q. Where is the diversity initiative? Has it been left out because it is being rolled out this year or are there plans for evaluation to keep it in this year?

A. Carlisle - It should be included. **Carlisle indicated that she would include the Diversity Report in this presentation.**

Q. What about some of the programs listed in the suspension document?

A. Carlisle indicated we would cross reference, check timelines and consider priorities. **Carlisle indicated that she would include some of the suspension programs in the list of upcoming evaluations.**

Commissioner Powell indicated that she wants the district to examine the link between program evaluation and program based budgeting and asked for a discussion of definition of "program". Would like to set meeting with Jana Carlisle, Mike Christman and Vernon Connors to discuss as soon as the budget

Wednesday, April 27 2005

process is complete to hear what Vern envisions and to see what makes the best possible models.

Commissioner Thompson requested being involved with meetings as well, especially to do with the quality pieces.

Commissioner Brown

Q. Do we need more budget for Research and Testing? For statistics and analysis? If we need to amend the budget, shouldn't we be aware of this?

A. Carlisle - Yes, such a request is forthcoming as part of Dr. Rivera's amended budget proposal and monies for program evaluation – as indicated in the Altreya report – should be built into the budget.

Commissioner Bowers indicated that when we hire the additional staff that they do not have degrees in education. Not being disrespectful, but educators come with a paradigm that is counter-intuitive to good evaluations in this regard. What you want are people with degrees in policy evaluation that is skills driven.

Agenda Item II. DICA Update

Carlisle reviewed District in Corrective Action presentation and key points on the audit of DICA/DINI. This audit will include Rochester, Yonkers, Buffalo, Syracuse, Hempstead and Wyandanch.

Commissioner Brown

Q. Will the curriculum audit be helpful or not? Will it lead to an improvement to achievement?

A. Carlisle indicated that the district will use this as an opportunity to work with NYSED and make the audit useful to the District. The recommendations that are made to NYSED and the Feds will be binding. Cianca noted that, given this is required; we are trying to make it relevant.

Q. Does professional staff believe it will add value to children?

A. Cianca stated the reason senior staff are involved, is to ensure that it will add value. We are making it a useful exercise. The rest of the districts believe

Wednesday, April 27 2005

the same thing. Holloway indicated while it is being imposed, we make it work for us. Something is not happening somewhere in this district that puts us as a District in Corrective Action. We can make it work for us, to make positive changes for our children.

Q. How much do we want to devote financially to someone else's ideas as well as resources for something we would not really want to do?

A. Carlisle - There are monies allocated by SED to the six districts participating. On Friday we will be looking at the formula per pupil. However, because the recommendations are binding there is another resource issue there.

Commissioner Powell

Q. How are we comparing each district's curriculum to each other's and how does this let us know if we are being successful?

A. Carlisle indicated that we are looking at a collaborative approach that does not compare us to each other but involves all districts in a common approach to the audit that clearly reflects the idiosyncrasies. Audit is actually written, taught, assessed curriculum. They are measuring each district, but not against each other.

Commissioner Thompson

Q. Are we on point with timeline?

A. Carlisle - Yes. There are additional timelines for next year. SED wanted June, but we have expressed a need for an extended timeline.

Agenda Item III. Achievement Gap, Suspension Data, Internal Evaluation of Michael Alves - Board Questions regarding written materials:

Commissioner Bowers

Q. Believes achievement gap is vastly outside of a district's capacity to alter?

Wednesday, April 27 2005

A. Christman concurs that nationally this is validated. It helps us identify where we can improve and where we can close the gap. There are strategies and we should be using them.

Commissioner Thompson

The Superintendent brought up the desire to make surround care work at a legislative breakfast and one of the legislators categorically dismissed it as optimistic. We can continue to be pessimistic about achievement, we can make surround care work, but it may take us 15 years to be successful.

Commissioner Bowers

This is a futile effort. Need to be “honest” assessment of what we can/can’t do, also pointed out that we shouldn’t try to be a super social service agency. We cannot fix everything.

Commissioner Brown

To the extent we take on certain responsibilities such as health care, without turning it back to the community as something beyond our control and not an “educational issue.” Need to communicate this effectively.

Commissioner Powell

That defines that the district has to be diligent in delivering education and analyzing what can improve.

Cianca stated that we also have to look at this carefully because of NCLB and penalties. We also need to look at how to meet needs of individual students through institution. Differentiate and provide supports for all students; challenges not strictly an ethnicity issue.

Commissioner Thompson

As we tailor instruction, we are better able to communicate to community what we are able to do. Similarly, we do need to address the special needs of ethnic groups as well. Not either, or but both.

Commissioner Thompson

Q. What happens with multiple suspensions?

Wednesday, April 27 2005

A. Christman indicated that over the last two years the data are shared with those who supervise schools, who then share and address the data with principals.

Q. In the recommendations area, to whom are the recommendations being made?

A. Christman - The Superintendent and the Board.

Q. Time and scope?

A. Christman - Recommendations have been made to the Superintendent and in many cases, these recommendations made last month are underway.

Q. It would be helpful to know how the Superintendent has handled the recommendations. Will there be further study and link?

A. **Carlisle indicated the need to follow-up/cross reference with program evaluation.**

Q. On page 15 In-school Suspensions are referenced as being used less frequently now than in the past due to the budget reductions. Why are some schools still able to use and others not?

A. Carlisle indicated that In-School Suspension teachers were eliminated as part of the budget cut two years ago. Cianca also indicated some schools may choose to take a student out of the classroom which proves to be more effective and use different strategies for accomplishing this.

Q. Are there common characteristics about this data on the race of the teachers and their teaching students of another race, i.e., white teachers teaching ethnic students?

A. Christman indicated we will have better ability to track this kind of information/situations as we become more automated. Cianca indicated that we need to look closer at our teaching staff.

Wednesday, April 27 2005

Carlisle suggested trends, data, and culture. Cianca believes we do need to be diagnostic. Explicit about needs of specific child, multi-sensory learning approach and second language difficulties may result in certain effective strategies.

Commissioner Thompson wants to keep ethnicity in the mix to look at why our students are not succeeding. She also indicated that she had additional questions on suspensions but would submit them in writing.

Q. Will we begin looking at additional funds for middle level grades?

A. Cianca and Holloway indicated that budget amendments will look at grades 5-9 instruction and provide more intensive resources. We are also looking at what we've done K-4 and learn from that in our 5-9 approach. The Gates initiative, which is focused on going deeper into curriculum and expectations for the secondary schools, is helpful.

Commissioner Powell

Q. Interested in interventions such as full day kindergarten and whether or not they've had an effect on 4th grade performance? Have we looked at timing of when RCSD transitioned and the grade level of those students today? Has it had an impact on achievement?

A. Cianca indicated full-day kindergarten was implemented around 1999. Holloway indicated that in addition to UPK and kindergarten, we're focused on specific instructional interventions with coaching teachers which is helping them with their students and this is why we are showing improvements.

Commissioner Thompson indicated that we want to convey to the community our successes.

Q. Commissioner Thompson asked if there were any responses to placement questions regarding Alves? What is the evaluation of the work that is being done?

Q. Commissioner Bowers asked why we continue to use Alves' software given that it is an ongoing cost to the district?

QUALITY ASSURANCE COMMITTEE

Minutes

Wednesday, April 27 2005

A. Robinson indicated looking at the extent to which we can transfer knowledge about secondary to elementary. Our agenda is to eventually phase out Alves and run this program on our own. Thank that can be part of new student management system.

Q. Thompson expressed some dismay over the summary of Alves work completed to date and that she had expected something more thorough in terms of an evaluation of the work completed?

A. Carlisle - There is a summary of what he has done. There are some things that we need to do differently. The first year may have contributed to the district's inadequacies in technology. We will evaluate whether the Alves software can be utilized with our new systems.

Commissioner Bowers motioned to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Brown. The meeting adjourned at 7:30pm.

Next meeting: *May 5, 2005, 6:30 pm*