

**Rochester City School District Board of Education  
Quality Assurance Committee  
April 6, 2005 Minutes**

Meeting Convened at 6:09 p.m.

In attendance: Thompson, Garcia, Porter, and Powell (departed 6:17 p.m.)

**Board of Education Staff in Attendance:**

Rohring

**District Staff in Attendance:**

Carlisle

Cianca

Hill

Holloway

Robinson

Silver

Yansen

**Agenda Items:**

- I. SPED Redesign
- II. Montessori Closure
- III. CSR Redesign

**Agenda Item #1 SPED Redesign Budget Recommendation**

Dr. Rivera introduced Ed Yansen and Chris Hill as presenters of the SPED Redesign

Ed Yansen covered the following items:

1. Budget Implications of Dr. Rivera's Recommendation
2. Principles & Objectives of the SPED Redesign
3. Context for the SPED Redesign, including enrollment, student performance, new federal legislation and state regulations, etc
4. Specific Aspects and Implications of the Redesign touched on services to students, staffing, professional development, instructional strategies, new technology system called IEP Direct, parent involvement and information sharing
  - a. Dr. Rivera interjected emphasizing the point of building efficiencies into the staffing of classes for 6 and 8 students. This represents the bulk of the savings with the 34 teacher reduction and 34 para reduction and comes from more efficient staffing. Also, Education Resource Strategies work and recommendations support this redesign.

Mr. Yansen completed his presentation at 6:30 p.m.

Mr. Thompson opened questions up to committee members.

Mr. Garcia asked about staffing scenarios, specifically slides 3 & 4 (reconcile staffing numbers; they are off by 1.5 FTEs). Dr. Rivera indicated that the budget book numbers are accurate, just this slide is slightly off.

Mr. Garcia pointed out on slide 15 in regard to SWD performance, that the drop from 38% (in 2002) to 13.6% (in 2003) does not constitute a positive trend.

Mr. Yansen pointed out that students had a new testing requirement in ELA. The difference between ELA and Math performance is attributable to the reading required on the ELA exam, which required a great deal of interpretation.

Mr. Porter asked if the 34 teachers are representative – or proportionate – to the reduction in enrollment.

Mr. Yansen responded that the redesign is not solely attributable to the enrollment drop and that services required by the IEP will not be compromised in any shape or form.

Ms. Thompson asked about slide on page 18, 3<sup>rd</sup> bullet – the impact of the changes included improving student performance – was pleased to see that data would better inform instruction. She asked on what the District is basing the projected improvements. What data are we basing the redesign on?

Mr. Yansen responded that, in cases where students are spread across multiple grades in classes, students tightly grouped would be able to track and monitor these students over time. Mr. Yansen also indicated that the Education Resource Strategies (ERS) in San Diego and in Maryland, has resulted in better outcomes.

Ms. Thompson further asked for instructional staff to be involved in this redesign.

Mr. Yansen indicated that 1.5 years ago, SPED teachers, paras, union members and presidents, and committees provided input, raised issues, suggested changes, suggested professional development strategies. He further outlined the committees work to define professional development.

Mr. Garcia asked if we make specific accommodations to Students With Disabilities in regard to suspensions. In other words, are the rules for suspending SWDs different than general education students.

Mr. Yansen indicated that there are different rules.

Mr. Robinson further indicated that school staff examine program and classes in regard to SWDs prior to suspending a child. If modifications are identified as needed, then these are made.

Ms. Thompson asked about the IEP Direct program and how it would work.

Ms. Bates laid out the anticipated changes, processes, and improvements that would come from use of IEP Direct, as well as the training and technology required. It is intended to greatly reduce amount of time needed to complete required paperwork.

Ms. Thompson asked about when would be a reasonable timeframe during which he could come back and update the QA Committee

Dr. Rivera indicated that staff would come back with regular updates.

## **Agenda Item #2: Montessori Closure Budget Recommendation**

Dr. Rivera indicated that his recommendation regarding Montessori was based on equity and the program not reaching its growth goals.

C. Michael Robinson presented the Montessori recommendation

Mr. Robinson shared information on the Montessori program including the budget analysis, enrollment analysis, specific challenges associated with the program's design and growth, and recommendation.

In regard to challenges, he specifically highlighted information about the NYS support for three year olds and the loss of preK funds; the access to the program and the entering age level being for three year olds, the selection process, the profile of students; and the grade configuration of the Franklin redesign.

Mr. Robinson then reviewed the "transition year" recommendation and some of the things that Dr. Rivera would put in place for one year for current three year olds.

Mr. Robinson completed his presentation at 7 p.m.

Ms. Thompson opened up the meeting to questions from members.

Mr. Porter asked about the facilities plan and where the District was in the process of capital renovations.

Mr. Robinson answered that the District had continued to renovate Franklin .

Mr. Garcia asked if the annual \$200,000 was in addition to the \$1.3 million already spent on operations.

Mr. Robinson concurred.

Mr. Garcia asked about the retention rate of teachers in the Montessori program.

Ms. Carlisle answered that in regard to teacher retention, of the seven original teachers, three have been with the program since the first year; a fourth teacher added in 01-02 is still teaching in the program, and a fifth added in 02-03 is still with the program.

Mr. Garcia asked if the District was willing to alter the model and what the implications are for the International Montessori model.

Dr. Rivera answered that the International Model would not allow for this and continuing accreditation.

Dr. Rivera reiterated that the issues in advancing this recommendation revolved around the challenges Mr. Robinson pointed out in his "challenges" section, including the loss of \$343,000 in state funds for the 3 year old program, the cost of transportation for three and four year olds, the enrollment numbers, etc. He also left the opening for dialogue if any of these challenges were mitigated.

Commissioner Thompson asked for the District to pick up on trends or flags that might have provided – or provide in other cases -- early warning signs and that allow the District to address them before they become problems.

### **Agenda Item 3: Comprehensive School Reform (CSR) Redesign**

Marie Cianca started the presentation.

Ms. Cianca covered the “challenges,” including K-12 alignment, capacity building, .....and the breakdown of the CSR budget support as well as CSR models, and the structure of the redesign.

Dr. Rivera indicated that this redesign was directly a result of the challenge from the Board last year to diversify and try to build District capacity for delivering these models.

Mr. Porter asked if there are impediments within CSR contracts to our moving forward with this redesign.

Mr. Robinson indicated that the District is currently in negotiations with some CSR vendors to determine where there is opportunity for the District to deliver services, with the vendor providing the coaching and some train the trainer sessions, etc.

Ms. Cianca also elaborated about the fact that it took a year or so for the District to develop its own capacity and for people to feel comfortable taking on these expanded roles.

Mr. Garcia asked about the commitment we make to the state when we take these monies and adopt these programs.

Ms. Cianca indicated that the agreement with the state extends to supporting the programs, allowing vendor materials and training, releasing staff for training, ensuring adequate implementation, and spending state monies appropriately.

NOTE: State grant funds are for three year period. Ongoing support is derived from the general fund.

Mr. Garcia asked if, after three year period, we have drawn conclusions about which programs are more successful and then seek to replicate them versus continuing all models.

Ms. Cianca indicated that the District doesn't only support one model, and that the choice rests with the school.

Mr. Garcia further asked about economies of scale, reduction of new training for staff if they transfer to another school with a different model or practices for students, etc.

Mr. Silver indicated that originally when the State offered the programs and monies to the District, the District had to allow the schools to select the model.

Mr. Garcia warned that the more models we have in place in the District, the less likely we are to be able to hold people accountable.

Dr. Rivera indicated that, as we develop our own model, schools will begin to move toward common practices, standards, and themes.

Ms. Cianca referenced the Rochester Instructional Framework (RIF) as one step the District is taking to bring practices to a common standard.

Mr. Porter thanked Mr. Silver for his perspective and indicated that parents and staff had to agree to participate or support a particular program. Mr. Porter further stated that, if we develop our own program,

we would have to fund the programs or strategies out of our local dollars and not receive state dollars for support of specific programs.

Ms. Thompson asked for a response and surmised that the District is actually adapting what we've already learned as opposed to creating a "program."

Ms. Holloway again referenced the Rochester Instructional Framework (RIF) as a means of implementing a variety of best practices even with the loss of State funding.

Ms. Cianca highlighted the fact that many schools are actually coming out of the state funding cycle, which is a logical point for the District to take over and build its own capacity.

Mr. Robinson indicated that this year the State did not fund any additional CSR models while directing all funding to NYC.

Ms. Thompson asked Ms. Rohring to include in Friday packet the Montessori questions from parents.

Motion to Adjourn made by Commissioner Porter, Seconded by Commissioner Garcia. Adopted 3-0 at 7:37 p.m. with Commissioners Bowers, Brown, Evans and Powell absent.

**Action Items:**

Budget information on School #17's Montessori Program