

Quality Assurance Minutes
Thursday, February 10, 2005

Quality Assurance Committee Attendees:

Bowers
Thompson
Brown

Additional Board Members in Attendance:

Powell

District Staff in Attendance:

Rivera
Carlisle
Christman
Hernandez
Hofer
Mora
Silver

Commissioner Thompson convened the meeting at 6:40 p.m.

Commissioner Thompson asked about whether or not there were any questions regarding text book adoption and Spanish language texts.

Commissioner Powell posed a question about the process used for selection.

Mr. Mora distributed a copy of the process used by foreign language but also by Social Studies and Math.

Agenda Item I: Quarterly Report Template

The template was reviewed by Michael Christman, Managing Director of Research, Evaluation, and Testing, who indicated that the District is an annual system trying to report quarterly.

Mr. Christman indicated when various updates would occur and what each section of the completed template would include. He further discussed that benchmark data would be included once the District moves to a benchmark assessment system – for which the District recently sent out an RFP and staff are evaluating and plan to bring to the Committee in March or April.

Commissioner Bowers asked whether or not Mr. Christman believed that all the Board's questions and additions to the template had been addressed.

Mr. Christman confirmed that staff had done so.

Commissioner Thompson asked for larger font and recognized staff for their willingness to modify the template as per Board input.

Commissioner Powell asked about the analysis of data and how the District uses/interprets what the data mean. She noted the QA committee made a request for analysis of the data eighteen months ago.

Dr. Rivera offered the recommendation that, when the QA reports were given, moving forward staff would also provide a summary of action items related to the analysis of data. The completed template (with analysis) will come back to the QA Committee in March.

Agenda Item II: Elementary Choice Policy Recommendations

Dr. Rivera set the context for why the District at this stage was revisiting the policy, in part referencing the Children's Institute report, which was recently made final.

The presentation represented a review of the report, the recommendations, and Dr. Rivera's "read" on the data.

Dr. Rivera's presentation covered the following:

- Major changes as a Result of Parent Preference / Managed Choice
- Implementation Issues
- What the District Knows About Elementary Choice
- What the District Doesn't Know About Choice
- Superintendent's Recommendations to the Board.

In regard to implementation issues, Dr. Rivera highlighted the need for improved communications about the policy and kindergarten lottery, especially about families with higher concentrations of low income children; the need to revisit the ½ mile radius policy component; the need to define instructional capacity for each elementary building; K-6 staffing logistics in relation to the lottery, walk-in process, and elementary transfer periods; and resolving any outstanding technology integration issues between the Enroll/Edu database and the District's student management system.

He also reviewed data and conclusions regarding the success and challenges associated with the first year of the choice plan and its implementation.

Dr. Rivera then made the following recommendations to the Board:

1. We cannot guarantee that home school students have the right to attend their home school
- 2a. We must continue to improve policy implementation and address major implementation issues
- 2b. We must address "operational" recommendations in the Children's Institute Report
3. We must secure and maintain better data and information about parent preferences, the choices they make and why (throughout the placement process)
4. We must continue to examine both the implementation and impact of this policy..., it is too important to treat as "business as usual"
 - We should establish:
 - A Superintendent's planning and implementation team to:*
 - ✓ Track implementation
 - ✓ Determine data and information needs
 - ✓ Analyze data and initiate changes, as needed
 - ✓ Report in Fall
5. We should improve parent satisfaction by: maintaining the 70% / 30% formula for home school/non-home school for placement, during the 2005 enrollment period..., and run the lottery
 - Take 1st week in June to complete a school-by-school review (before letters are sent to home)... Then "release" some of the un-requested home school seats to interested non-home school students
 - Tighten Walk-in Period (month of June)

- ✓ Process walk-ins – guarantee first choice among all schools with available seats (home school/non-home school)
- ✓ Release additional unfilled home school seats (on July 1) but retain at least 5% for home school walk-ins
- ✓ Monitor wait list for opportunities to place students
- ✓ Send confirming placement letter to parents on July 5
- Tighten “Walk-in Period” (July – August)
 - ✓ Process walk-ins – place first choice among all schools with available seats (home school/non-home school)
 - ✓ Release remaining unfilled home school seats on August 20th
 - ✓ Monitor wait list for opportunities to place students
 - ✓ Notification to families

Commissioner Thompson asked for questions.

Commissioner Bowers had none.

Commissioner Brown asked about the composition of the Superintendent’s committee.

Dr. Rivera indicated that he considered Board members, staff with particular expertise (e.g., technology) but expressed a willingness to consider input from the Board.

Commissioner Brown asked about students moving throughout the year.

Dr. Rivera answered that it would be as it is now – go to placement center, identify available seats, offer choices available.

Ms. Hernandez indicated staff would also try to identify parent needs.

Commissioner Brown followed up with the notion that capacities would essentially be fixed at the beginning of the year.

Dr. Rivera indicated the ability to increase capacity by 10% (two students at kindergarten if absolutely necessary).

Commissioner Porter asked about using extra rooms that may be there for parent rooms or other purposes.

Dr. Rivera indicated the need to identify and place value on alternative room uses.

Commissioner Porter asked about the process for after the lottery and the documentation of decisions and choices.

Dr. Rivera indicated that the District will assess parent desires during the walk in period going forward.

Commissioner Porter asked about the impact of charter school closing on schools of choice process.

Dr. Rivera noted the fact that the District was aware that two schools whose charter are up for renewal, which would have a huge impact on available seats, may be closed / charters not renewed.

Commissioner Powell indicated the need to develop new policy language, transitional policy, and suggested the element of the zone school improvement committees be reincorporated into the policy.

Commissioner Brown indicated that the policy committee could reconsider the zone school improvement committees and the policy language.

Commissioner Brown expressed concern about holding up the transition year policy renewal.

Commissioner Brown further asked about facilities modernization and whether schools would be involved in determining their needs.

Ms. Carlisle indicated that schools would be involved in reviewing "schools of the future" components, weighing in on their possible designs, and signing off on the designs during a public discussion phase.

Commissioner Thompson asked about replication of programs and equitable programs across zones.

Dr. Rivera reiterated the importance of distinguishing programs requiring equity and the need for these "choice" discussions to also be part of the facilities modernization and planning team discussions.

Commissioner Bowers indicated that two items requiring technical language change (Superintendent's review team) and the zone school improvement committees) should be moved to policy committee.

Commissioner Thompson indicated the desire to move everything to policy.

Commissioner Bowers expressed that the 70%-30% was within the purview of Quality Assurance as it had been last year.

Dr. Rivera expressed the need to simply extend the transition year policy amendment another year.

Commissioner Powell indicated that the ½ mile radius was also part of the transition year policy and could also be extended as part of the year extension of the transition year policy amendment.

Commissioners Brown and Bowers reiterated the desire to only bring to policy the "new" items.

Commissioner Thompson inquired about whether or not there would be specific targets set for ethnic participation in the lottery. She further asked about whether or not academic performance in determining placement is being calculated into the results and wondered how academic performance will be factored into choice data.

David Silver indicated how difficult it is to gauge because of the effect of the No Child Left Behind transfers versus elementary choice.

Dr. Rivera indicated that, over the next six months, his committee will have to address this and to get into data more deeply. He further indicated the need to mine the data we do have.

Commissioner Thompson asked about the percentage of seats to be released by July 5th and how we would determine the release of seats.

Ms. Carlisle outlined the type of data used to make these decisions – students who in the past had registered from the neighborhood – and indicated that staff had consulted with Mr. Alves to determine if releasing seats after the lottery in any way compromised the intent of the policy; Mr. Alves had indicated that the algorithm / parameters of the lottery were for the lottery and not necessarily for the walk in process. In other words, if staff adhered to the lottery during the lottery, it had done its job. Nevertheless Ms. Carlisle reassured Commissioner Thompson that staff took every effort to ensure objectivity.

Commissioner Thompson asked whether or not anyone was willing to take action on the policy amendments.

Commissioner Bowers offered the need for a few days to think about it and to a meeting later in the month.

Commissioner Thompson asked about Dr. Rivera's expectations regarding such a resolution.

Dr. Rivera indicated a desire to have it added to this month's board resolutions, however he did convey that not all Board members were expected to be present and that a postponement until February 28 could be accommodated.

Commissioner Bowers asked that all BOE members reconvene again prior to the February 17 meeting.

Commissioner Brown indicated a willingness to move forward for February 17 or to defer to Commissioner Bowers for the February 28 date.

Commissioner Thompson offered a motion to adjourn rather than to move a resolution for February 17.

Commissioner Powell then expressed concern about the Board having to rely on in-depth staff analysis and in-depth third party analysis if these analyses weren't in-depth enough.

Commissioner Brown indicated that he believed staff can get it right and that he gives them credit for going to a third party.

Commissioner Porter concurred with Commissioner Brown. He indicated that instruction in laying out the task is critical but that we can't always expect that questions we didn't ask be incorporated after the fact. He further articulated that third party reviews are better received by the public.

Commissioner Thompson felt the Children's Institute could have been more "on point" in its analysis.

Dr. Rivera expressed the kinds of things that consume time of District staff that prevent District staff from having the real capacity to do everything required.

Motion to adjourn by Commissioner Bowers, Seconded by Commissioner Brown Adopted 3-0 at 8:13 p.m.