

Rochester City School District Quality Assurance Committee Meeting Minutes
May 3, 2004

Committee Members in Attendance:

Domingo Garcia
James Bowers
Willa Powell

Additional Board Members in Attendance:

Malik Evans
Darryl Porter

Staff in Attendance:

Jana Carlisle
Marie Cianca
Kim Dyce
Barbara Jarzyniecki
Tom Keysa
Cheryl Holloway
Ed Lemon
Andy MacGowan
Henry Marini
C. Michael Robinson
Karen Sangmeister

Agenda:

- I. Dare to Care
- II. Secondary Ramp Up
- III. CALC Redesign
- IV. Next Meeting

Commissioner Garcia started the meeting as an informational meeting (until other committee members arrive and establish a quorum) at 5:40 p.m.

Commissioner Bowers arrived at 5:48 p.m. and Commissioner Garcia noted that the Committee now has a quorum. Commissioner Powell arrived at 5:50 p.m.

I. Dare to Care

Kim Dyce introduced the Dare to Care program, specifically the objective, the program goals for ninth grade and for seventh grade. She then reviewed the following program components: student profile, program structure, agency enrichment component; academic component; parent connection; teacher and staff professional development; data and evaluation; current successes; and differences for 2004-2005. She highlighted the role community agencies play in supporting students beyond academics and she noted the student performance indicators that have increased.

Commissioner Garcia asked how many students at each site and in total
Ms. Dyce indicated 40 at each site, and 120 total

Commissioner Powell commended Ms. Dyce for an "on target" presentation that responds directly to the questions in which the Board is interested from an oversight perspective. She also asked if we could break out attendance more specifically (not just "90 percent or better").

Commissioner Bowers asked if we could identify the dependent and independent variable in the evaluation section.

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Andy MacGowan joked that he could never tell the difference between the independent and dependent variables but reminded Board members that we focus on the two most pressing needs of evaluation and the notion of an "implementation lag". He indicated that we've developed a bank of questions to administer to the five constituencies, which Andy will administer and analyze, and the importance of rapid feedback and systematic approach to allow for providers and policy makers to punch up information on a key board to track student performance. In the next year, he suggested we look at robust data that might look at "pre" post" or match students in Dare to Care with students who are not in Dare to Care. He suggested the most important evaluative component is to have a mix of qualitative and quantitative data.

Commissioner Bowers asked if we will have the data analysis for the next budget cycle.

Mr. MacGowan suggested that data would be available at the end of the year (students who passed three or more subject areas)

Commissioner Bowers emphasized that our challenge will be to make the case that the program made the difference. He also suggested that this is a good start on the evaluation.

Mr. MacGowan also said he wanted to look at social and emotional indicators as well as student performance.

Commissioner Evans stressed the fact that his involvement with community agencies made the difference for him and his own performance. He then asked about summer programming.

Ms. Dyce indicated that there is a summer program, including internships and jobs, a and other school to work experiences.

Commissioner Porter asked about the cost of the program

Mr. Robinson answered that the program cost a little more than \$900,000 for ½ of a year (the program started in February) and noted the \$1 million request for the full 2004-05 school year.

Commissioner Porter also asked why we were targeting both 7th and 9th grade.

Ms. Dyce indicated that the focus on ninth graders was to get kids on the right track immediately. The concept was the same for seventh grade to get them on track to move into eighth grade.

Commissioner Porter expressed concern that we weren't targeting eighth grade students and questioned the rationale for not targeting eighth grade.

Mr. Robinson indicated that the lowest attendance and highest suspensions were at grade nine and that it was also the carrot of "earning of credit". He stressed the importance of student success if they successfully complete ninth grade. The same was true with seventh grade to prevent these students ("squeeze play") from experiencing some of the same outcomes and behaviors as ninth graders.

Commissioner Powell asked why we would just focus on ninth grade for next year and was concerned that we weren't reaching below ninth grade because there is justification for this.

Commissioner Porter concurred but also expressed concern that we weren't targeting more grade levels.

Commissioner Garcia asked if there were any other questions and then moved to the next agenda item.

II. Secondary Ramp Up

C. Michael Robinson introduced the Secondary Ramp Up program, specifically as a follow up to the past QA meetings. He stressed the fact that Ramp Up is part of America's Choice and the significant cost associated with our America's Choice Comprehensive School Reform model implementation and also the fact the National Center, because of the success of Ramp Up, had decided to "unbundle" Ramp Up. He

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referred to Ramp Up as an intensive literacy program that is best delivered at entering grade level (7th grade English classes and in 9th grade English classes).

Piloted Ramp Up 37 grade 7 sections; and 36 sections in grade 9; trained 26 teachers in Ramp Up; proposing next year to train 48 new teachers; and to double the number of sections in grade 7 and grade 9. He also mentioned that we are developing our own in house trainers in order to build our own capacity in future year. He also indicated the alignment with Dr. Rivera's Board-approved goals.

95% of students in Ramp Up were performing at Levels 1 & 2 (compared to 74% not in Ramp Up). In the mid term exam, the Ramp Up group scored 70% compared to 76% of non Ramp Up. One classroom has read more than 206 books. Another school reported that 95% of students in Ramp Up were passing English I

Based on these results, Mr. Robinson indicated a desire to expand Ramp Up with the desire to only offer this program at grade seven in three years time.

Commissioner Garcia opened the floor for questions.

Commissioner Powell asked about overlap between Dare to Care and Ramp Up

Mr. Robinson indicated that Dare To Care teachers are trained in and teaching Ramp Up. He also indicated the anticipated link between Ramp Up and the eventual eliminated need for Dare to care. He also pointed out the fact that Ramp Up is not an add on but is offered right in the school day.

Commissioner Powell underscored the expense attributable to these intervention programs and thus the need to be able to determine how variables can be credited or attributable to certain programs, especially where there is overlap. She further requested that research demonstrate how variables will be controlled for if possible.

Commissioner Bowers concurred.

Commissioner Porter concurred also and congratulated Mr. Robinson and the staff on the program's success. He also questioned why Ramp Up has been successful without the behavior aspect of Dare To Care.

Mr. Robinson suggested that, when students have success and are learning, they are more likely to come to school, less likely to be suspended and to get into trouble. He emphasized that Ramp Up allows us to change the program that we already have in place; it changes what teachers do by providing training, gives them a proven program, and a proven curriculum.

Commissioner Porter compared the programs (Dare to Care and Ramp Up) and questioned why Dare to Care is more expensive and does not have the immediate impact that this program has. He also asked if we could shift the Dare to Care monies to support Ramp Up.

Mr. Robinson indicated that it is because Dare to Care is an add-on and that Ramp Up is training teachers that are already in place. He also showed that Dare to Care is a structural change and offers a different school day for some students who need that, whereas Ramp Up is an instructional change. He went further to say that the students in Dare to Care require something very dramatic because they would otherwise drop out while simultaneously addressing the foundation level needs through Ramp Up.

Commissioner Powell asked whether or not each of these has a single benchmark, which is the ELA exam.

Mr. Robinson indicated in the affirmative: eliminate those scoring at level 1 and increase the percentage scoring at levels 3 & 4.

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Commissioner Garcia moved to the next agenda item

III. CALC Redesign

C. Michael Robinson introduced the CALC Redesign, specifically program goals including reducing direct services to students and improvement of direct services to students. Mr. Robinson noted what does and is not working in this program; cost effective, approximately 50% of the tutoring program. He highlighted that we are changing temporary instruction for two groups: those suspended from their school who are waiting for their hearings; and those long term suspended for disciplinary reasons who are required by the hearing officer to receive home instruction. For these students, the redesign is not to take the resources to them but rather to take them to the resources.

Mr. Robinson indicated that there should be no waiting period for students to receive instruction by placing the staff at schools and not to separate the students from their support system (they stay a part of the school, can be in contact with coaches, counselors, others). What is being eliminated is the overhead: e.g., the building with custodial and cleaning services, separate staff, separate clerical and teaching.

Mr. Robinson also indicated the desire to move the teachers to the school and to build on the expertise of the teachers who are already working with students effectively and to eliminate the disconnect between students and the school.

Commissioner Bowers asked whether or not we are describing "in school" suspension.

Mr. Robinson indicated that the difference is that this is an "out of school" suspension and that the students will receive instruction at home or an alternative site, and that there is a possibility for "group instruction" inside of the school. The students will still be attached to their school.

Mr. Robinson indicated that the savings is \$1.2 million without a loss of service while eliminating disconnects, lost instructional time, increased flexibility, and more efficient use of staff. For example, tutoring staff without a full assignment can be used to provide additional instructional and social /emotional support. In addition, Mr. Robinson suggested that he was pleased that students could remain affiliated with the school while still holding students accountable.

Commissioner Bowers asked how they can be part of the school culture while suspended.

Mr. Robinson indicated that counselors could accompany an instructor to a student's home and that the counselors would be held accountable for providing services with students whether on temporary instruction or not, and that the same house administrator would still be accountable for the student.

Commissioner Powell asked what the supervisory relationship would be for those 50% of the program that would still be providing services as is.

Mr. Robinson indicated that the program administrator's position remains and would supervise these people.

Commissioner Powell asked if schools have adequate space to accommodate the rooms needed.

Mr. Robinson indicated a need for one classroom and some shared office space. He noted space at East and Marshall would be tight, but believes it would be feasible.

Commissioner Powell also asked about relationships to Board policies particularly around out of school suspensions and view the policy with Board-level encouragement and mechanisms to make sure that personnel are held accountable for the presence or absence of continuity.

Mr. Robinson indicated that these students were not formerly counted as part of their home school but, as of this year cause of NCLB, the home schools are accountable. This is one reason that the home schools are supportive of the plan and want to remain involved in these students' academic performance. He also indicated that every secondary school is to decrease the percentage of students suspended by 10%

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per Dr. Rivera's goals. Mr. Robinson further stressed that the accountability for these students would increase and that out of school instruction is "temporary" in nature.

Commissioner Evans asked about the downtown facility and what the expectation for that facility is.

Mr. Robinson indicated that once the Board makes decisions, our Facilities Department would propose alternative uses for different spaces.

Commissioner Evans also asked if students would be allowed to participate in sports or other extra-curricular activities.

Mr. Robinson proposed that perhaps students who have been found "guilty" through long term hearings should not participate. On the other hand, he expressed concern that we assess guilt before they've been found guilty and that a principal may, at his discretion, allow a student to participate in some activities.

There was discussion about alternative uses of the facility and the fact that the City can recall the facility at any time with ample notice. Commissioners noted its prime location and that if the City recalled the building, it would also recall the parking lot, which provides income.

Commissioner Bowers departed at 6:50 p.m.

Commissioner Porter asked about the difference between instructors: Home instructors versus group instructors.

Mr. Robinson indicated that each school would get home instructors (up to four students) and a number of group instructors (who can teach up to 15 students). He indicated that the reason the program is so expensive is because of the teacher-student ratio and the salaries associated with "instructors".

Commissioner Porter asked about the different use or assignment of these different types of instructors and if it was related to how violent the offense is and whether or not a student had been found guilty yet, and how the home instructor can connect back to the school support system.

Mr. Robinson indicated that there is not always a pattern because it depends on the nature of the offense and that there could be a connection of support systems back to the home school.

Commissioner Porter questioned how the connection to the school would occur.

Mr. Robinson indicated that students would continue to be connected to their school support and that there would be no break in the connection (and will not have to switch support systems when they transfer to and from CALC as is currently the case)

Commissioner Porter asked about the overhead

Mr. Robinson indicated that the reduction is 38 positions: 2 administrators, 23 instructors, 11 BENTE employees, and 2 paraprofessionals; and that if necessary, there are positions in reserve if there is a need to add people back. He also proposed that most reductions could be made through attrition.

Commissioner Porter asked about the PPS team

Mr. Robinson indicated that the PPS team would be kept for the students in the jail, agencies, medial, and transition program.

Commissioner Porter asked about the different cultures associated with "home instructors" versus in school instructors.

Mr. Robinson indicated that there will be an implementation team, with union reps, to provide some transition assistance for staff. Mr. Robinson also spoke about the fact that there were preliminary discussions with and input from the staff and that they are in support of the redesign.

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Commissioner Powell proposed a scenario in which a school may have an event that results in a large need and questioned whether or not we could re-deploy staff to assist

Mr. Robinson indicated that if a principal felt he had run out of space, Mr. Robinson would ask for a review of students to determine if they could return to the regular program and, if they still had needs, there would be a rotating group of home-school instructors that could be re-deployed.

IV. Next Meeting

Commissioner Powell motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Garcia at 7:07 p.m.