

Rochester City School District Quality Assurance Committee Meeting Minutes
2/24/04

Commissioner Perez convened the meeting at 5:42 p.m.

Committee Members in attendance:

David Perez (QA Chair)
Willa Powell (QA member)

Other Board Members Present:

Shirley Thompson
Darryl Porter

Staff Members Present:

Jana Carlisle
Michael Robinson
Margaret Crowley
Barbara Jarzyniecki

Agenda Item I

February 13 Minutes

Motion to approve minutes from February 13th from David Perez; seconded by Willa Powell. Adopted 2-0.

Commissioner Perez asked that he receive minutes within 48 hours of meeting and that staff update minutes to reflect action items summarized at the end of the documents with areas of staff responsibility assigned (after formal minutes have concluded, indicate to whom actions have been assigned)

Agenda Item II

Discussion on Measurement/Metrics

Michael Christman presented summary of monthly achievement report: What was, What is, and What will Change (current performance charts)

Commissioner Powell inquired about requests that came out of December QA meeting
Christman indicated that there are efforts underway that the Superintendent has driven that address several issues.

Commissioner Perez asked about year to date information in order to compare YTD and benchmarks and whether or not we could show this.

Mr. Christman indicated that it is possible but Carlisle indicated that this is the first year that Dr. Rivera had categorized the schools in the three categories. Perez responded that this then should be considered the "baseline" year.

Commissioner Thompson inquired about whether or not the data is also being calculated by individual school. Christman indicated in the affirmative.

Commissioner Perez asked whether or not the data reflected in the chart is consistent with the Superintendent's goals. Christman indicated in the affirmative.

Perez inquired about whether or not we could also include information relating to the annual Superintendent goals so as to provide a perspective on whether or not we are on track. Christman shared Superintendent's goals for 03-04. Carlisle indicated that we could add this information to the monthly and quarterly reports.

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In regard to the Board's request for additional information on the ninth grade cohort, Christman emphasized the point that the way in which the District is tracking data and what the state is tracking differs. He also suggested we not refer to the "group" as a "cohort" but instead refer to it as "Project 2006", because some students, originally in the group, may have fallen out of it.

Commissioner Thompson asked what the differences are. Christman indicated that the State doesn't currently track the same students (as one entity) from one school to school but that the State will in the future. When tracking the student data for the Board's goal, it is necessary for us to determine where every student in the cohort ends up. He reviewed the following categories that staff is suggesting the Board track. The categories and data are organized as follows: 1) who we are; 2) by school breakout; 3) where did we come from; 4) how old are we; 5) our attendance; 6) our average attendance; 7) climate; 8) mobility; 9) grade movement; 10) core courses.

Commissioner Powell asked about relationship between attendance and suspension. Mr. Christman indicated that they do have an impact on each other.

Commissioner Powell asked about the overlap between short term and long term suspensions. Mr. Christman indicated that we can calculate unduplicated suspensions.

Mr. Christman reviewed the mobility and summarized that 17% had left the District. Of the students left, item #9 summarized what their status was.

Commissioner Powell inquired about the Special Education figures and was concerned that it was too low. Mr. Christman concurred and said that the data reported the figure as such. Commissioner Powell also asked if there were enough ungraded special education students to warrant an impact on the number. Mr. MacGowan indicated in the negative.

Commissioner Porter asked about the students who may be incarcerated and how we track them. Mr. Christman answered that the three students who went to jail were still receiving services from the District but are not *in* the District.

Commissioner Porter inquired about where the migrant students would be shown. Mr. Christman indicated that it could be included in category #1 but that they had not. Commissioner Porter asked that migrant students be included in that section.

There was inquiry about whether or not Math A was included. Mr. Christman indicated that it was not yet included because the data was not yet available.

Commissioner Thompson asked about how the *Pathways* initiative was being tracked as part of this. Mr. Christman indicated that this is the first time we have tracked students as a group like this and that going forward, we could determine who was doing what but that historically the data had not been captured this way.

Mr. Christman then covered information being recommended for action for Project 2006. These included focusing on student achievement; focusing on retention in grades prior to grade 9; focus on grade 9 retention; focus on school climate; and focus on school's ability to hold students over time.

Commissioner Thompson expressed concern about the timing of the meeting. Commissioner Perez asked about what still needed to be covered and suggested that Commissioners review Andrew MacGowan's piece and provide comments, recommendations, questions to Board staff by Friday, March 5 – at a minimum QA Committee members and then to extend the request to all Board members.

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Motion by Commissioner Powell, seconded by Commissioner Perez to share information on Mr. MacGowan's data findings with the full board and for a response to be shared with Board staff by March 5. Adopted 2-0.

Commissioner Powell asked if the "Project 2006" data hasn't already changed what we are doing. Mr. Christman indicated that this is a brand new look at our student population and that it links strongly to efforts by School Development and Operations already underway.

Commissioner Thompson indicated that Commissioner Vargas had requested this information several years in a row and was pleased to have this available.

Motion to postpone the Superintendent goals, Board goals, Strategic plan metrics until next meeting. By Commissioner Perez, Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 2-0.

Agenda Item III

Math Textbook Adoption

Mr. Robinson presented on math textbook adoption. He reviewed the process of the committee briefly and then indicated that the textbook adoption committee is now ready to forward recommendations. He then introduced Margaret Crowley.

Ms. Crowley indicated that the Board policy and RTA processes were followed. She identified committee members and that parents were difficult to involve but there were ongoing attempts to obtain parental input. She then reviewed the criteria considered, and the conclusions drawn by the Committee about specific ways in which to proceed and the rationale supporting the proposed direction to support *Investigations*. This recommendation was forwarded to the Superintendent, who supported the Committee's recommendation and to bring the recommendation to the Board.

Commissioner Powell asked who had experience with the Investigations program. Ms. Crowley identified several teachers who have used the materials in different districts, and different RCSD schools operating under a grant from the University of Rochester who are using the *Investigations* documents.

Mr. Robinson indicated that we typically don't adopt new textbooks every three years. However, he indicated that there were multiple disconnects with math texts and resources from elementary to middle grades over the last few years impacting the preparedness of students.

Commissioner Powell inquired about what the process was with the 2000 Textbook adoption and why *Investigations* was not chosen then. She further asked why Harcourt Brace ended up being selected and not *Investigations* and whether or not there was any documentation of why the prior Committee's decision was not supported at the time. Mr. Robinson indicated that those in math, school supervision, were not in their current positions at the time but that we could comb through the Superintendent's Office files to determine if a paper trail exists. Ms. Powell also expressed concern about the processes being followed and why the process resulted in the current need to revisit the District's decision making process.

Mr. Robinson further indicated that when Dr. Rivera became Superintendent he asked Ms. Crowley to review the math program. He said Ms. Crowley's team indicated to Dr. Rivera that there were significant problems with the connection and link between elementary and middle schools.

Commissioner Perez asked if the recommendation is to forward the Committee's and Superintendent's recommendation to the next business meeting. Mr. Robinson indicated in the affirmative. Commissioner

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Perez then inquired whether or not any Board members had “show stopping” concerns about forwarding the recommendation.

Commissioner Powell indicated that the District needs to use a better decision making process and to present information in a way that doesn't allow committee recommendations to be turned over so easily. She asked that problem solving processes be applied to District decision making. She wants to apply this to our work going forward.

Mr. Robinson responded that there was no comparison between the Committee's recommendations from 2000 in regard to Investigation versus Harcourt Brace. He also indicated that the application of such problem solving templates required explicit training.

Commissioner Powell indicated that she would not ask for us to go back over this process but to apply it to future textbook decisions going forward. She stated that there are individuals in the district that can provide this training, and experts outside that would be fairly inexpensive. She also indicated that cost should not be an overriding factor and that the current workbooks shared with the Board look expensive and wondered if additional purchases would be required.

Ms. Crowley indicated that these are the teachers' books on which the lessons are based.

Ms. Cianca indicated that cost was not the driving factor but rather the alignment between Connected Math and Investigations is a key component not cost and the ways in which Investigations come alive in the classroom. It represents a method for engaging students from critical thinking, problem solving, kinesthetics, multi-sensory. Manipulatives and games that are reusable within classrooms.

Ms. Powell again asked if it involved repurchasing. Mr. Robinson answered “no” and that one of the negotiated items with the company was the right to redistribute/reproduce. Ms. Powell then indicated that she did not have concerns.

Commissioner Thompson departed at 7:03 p.m.

Commissioner Porter asked whether or not the decision to forward the Committee's recommendation should be held until after a special board meeting on Wednesday, February 25th that deals with the same topic.

Commissioner Porter asked why the particular materials shared tonight with the Board were not on display in the Board area for them to review. Ms. Crowley indicated that a different grade level book was on display downstairs and then shared *that* grade level book with the Board members present.

Commissioner Perez summarized that the day delay would allow for further review of the materials because they aren't traditional materials. Ms. Holloway invited commissioners to go to a school with her to see the new math program in action.

Agenda Item IV

Customer Satisfaction Survey Overview

Ms. Jarzyniecki introduced Ms. Carol Malach, survey consultant, to the Board members remaining (who were Porter, Powell, and Perez).

Carol Malach quickly reviewed the goals and rationale for developing the customer satisfaction surveys and the focus group process.

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Commissioner Perez asked about the focus groups conducted to date. Ms. Malach reviewed those that occurred to date and that a new element, which will address specific site based concerns, will also be conducted. Ms. Malach also indicated the status of survey design and the compilation of focus group data.

Commissioner Powell inquired whether or not the purpose of the focus group was to develop the surveys. Ms. Malach indicated that about 80% of the information that comes up in focus groups is already evident from research data. She indicated that her 15 years of survey development and implementation in this field, current research is mostly used; the focus groups define pieces that may have been missed, especially in an urban district.

Commissioner Powell also asked about the school level surveys / site analysis being developed and wondered whether or not could incorporate the roll out of the school choice program (especially in under chosen schools). She wondered whether or not principals and school based planning teams couldn't use this data to better attract parents and to understand why / why not certain schools were being chosen. Ms. Malach indicated that the data from the surveys could definitely be used and that it is important to use the data from the surveys and not to make knee-jerk reactions. She also indicated that the timing of the additional focus on sites is timely.

Commissioner Perez asked when the draft of the measurement tool would be shared with the Board. Ms. Malach indicated that they will be done within a few weeks but has concerns about too much *word smithing* occurring.

Commissioner Perez felt that he wanted to understand the weighting system in order to feel comfortable. Ms. Malach indicated that there is no weighting system but that there is a straightforward question process. Mr. Perez asked whether or not the surveys would be ready by the March 16 Committee meeting. Ms. Malach indicated that she would provide the surveys in advance of that meeting.

The customer satisfaction survey piece will be added to the March 16 agenda.

Motion to recess this meeting until after February 25 special board meeting by Commissioner Perez, Seconded by Commissioner Powell. Adopted 2-0 at 7:32 p.m.

Commissioner Perez indicated that it will take a while to get the committee agendas to be timed to 1.5 hours

Commissioner Powell expressed concern about bringing closure on the metric/ data pieces.

The QA Committee reconvened Thursday, February 26, 2004. David Perez called the meeting to order at 11:45 AM. Other attendees: Willa Powell. We understood that Jim Bowers was unable to attend during that time frame, but opted to move forward with a quorum.

The following three action items resulted with a 2-0 vote:

- 1) The QA Committee will go on record as supporting the Investigations series textbook adoption and recommend as much to the Board at next month's business meeting.
- 2) The committee noted that the recommendation summary had no information about cost or cost comparisons of the different textbooks under consideration. We are formally requesting a recap of the cost of the Investigations textbook series, including information about the dollar amount saved by early commitment to the vendor.

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- 3) The QA Committee is formally asking the Policy Committee to review the Textbook Selection and Adoption Regulations (4511-R) for alignment with any state law on this matter, as well as to consider ways to ensure greater adherence to process in the future.

Willa Powell moved to adjourn at 12:09, seconded by David Perez - motion carried 2-0.

Actions:

- 1) QA Minutes within 48 hours
 - Jana Carlisle
- 2) QA Agendas timed to 1.5 hours
 - Apply to next meeting
 - Kimberly Rohring, Jana Carlisle, David Perez
- 3) Include information relating to the annual Superintendent goals to the monthly and quarterly reports – include a “target” column aligned with Superintendent’s annual achievement goals.
 - By next report
 - Michael Christman
- 4) Calculate & include in monthly and quarterly reports unduplicated suspensions
 - By next report
 - Michael Christman
- 5) In the Project 2006 summary, section 1, include migrant students
 - By next report
 - Michael Christman
- 6) Recap the cost of the Investigations textbook series, including information about the dollar amount saved by early commitment to the vendor
 - By March 6th Board packet
 - Michael Robinson
- 7) Documentation on the Math textbook decision process in 2000 leading to Harcourt Brace recommendation and adoption – review files in Superintendent’s office
- 8) If available, provide any math student achievement information for the five schools that have implemented the Investigations curriculum – those schools in the RCSD. Make comparison of student achievement pre implementation, with one year exposure, with multiple years of exposure.
- 9) Develop a better decision making process and identify problem solving processes that need to be applied.
 - By July 2004
 - Jana Carlisle
- 10) Consultant Carol Malach indicated that she would provide the customer satisfaction surveys – and the measurement system – in advance of the March QA meeting
 - In Friday March 12th packet if possible
 - Barbara Jarzyniecki