

**ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**Policy Review and Development Committee Meeting**

**November 5, 2015**

**MINUTES**

**Attending**

Commissioners – Commissioner Willa Powell (Chair), Commissioner Jose Cruz, and Commissioner Melisza Campos

Commissioner – Elect – Dr. Elizabeth Hallmark

District Staff – Edwin Lopez-Soto (General Counsel and Committee District Liaison), Adele Bovard (Deputy Superintendent of Administration), Chip Partner (Chief Communications Officer), Amy Schiavi (Chief of Secondary Schools), and Barbara Goldammer (Executive Director of Student Equity and Placement)

Board Staff – Mia Johnson

Commissioner Powell called the meeting to order at 5:35PM and made a motion to approve the agenda. The motion was approved by Commissioner Cruz and Commissioner Campos.

**I. Review Minutes of October 15, 2015 Policy Committee Meeting**

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the minutes of October 15, 2015 of the Policy Committee Meeting. Adopted 3-0.

**II. Review of Draft School Placement Booklets and Student Enrollment and Placement Data**

Ms. Goldammer described meeting with parent groups alongside Mr. Partner and Ms. Bovard to gain feedback, their perspective, and their understanding of the placement process. Using feedback, the Office of Student Placement created to separate placement booklets – one for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade and one for the 9<sup>th</sup> grade. The deadline application for both 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grades is January 29<sup>th</sup> with the Expo on January 9<sup>th</sup> at the Monroe Community College’s Damon City Campus. The Expo will enable parents to make the first and initial connections to the schools.

In addition, based on parent feedback, the parents wanted to know their chance of receiving one’s choices because there are misconceptions around the lottery process and choice. She emphasized the need for parents to be involved in the lottery. Ms. Goldammer stated that 97% of the 9<sup>th</sup> graders received one of their top three choices. Data also showed that the number of 9<sup>th</sup> graders who participate in the lottery is low because of number of students choose to remain in their current 7<sup>th</sup> – 12<sup>th</sup> grade schools.

Commissioner Powell suggested that there be a clear process outlined for parents regarding School of the Arts (SOTA) admission process and system. Ms. Goldammer answered that the lottery runs separate of the SOTA application.

Commissioner Powell stated that in last year's booklet, there were no percentages of the families who received their 1<sup>st</sup> choice within the walk zone. She further stated that World of Inquiry does not have the walk zone criteria, but preference to siblings. She described that that the year before last, all the seats were filled by students who had siblings already enrolled in the school. She stated that parents need to know as they go through the lottery process. Commissioner Powell commended Ms. Goldammer on emphasizing that parents become involved in the lottery process. Commissioner Powell stated that there should be conversations about strategies that can be employed by parents during the lottery process.

Ms. Goldammer stated that booklets promote the good things that are happening in the schools including extra-curricular activities. Ms. Goldammer stated that unlike previous years, the Communications Department developed a script for each school to have a consistent format among the schools this year. Each school's pages is formatted with the location, parent liaison contact information, uniform requirement, extended day offered, and the schools' features. She stated that the booklet is going to press soon and will be distributed before the Thanksgiving break.

Parent Representative Barb Van Kerhove submitted questions and suggestions through email that was answered at the committee meeting:

- "I notice that the front of the booklet says 9th grade, but then there are schools that say '7-12 School' (i.e. SOTA and Leadership Academy for Young Men). Nor is there anything in the intro about the entering at 7th grade schools; in fact it emphasizes 9th grade. If this is going to be the only booklet for these 7-12 schools, I suggest you make it clear up front. Alternatively, create a separate booklet for the 7-12 schools/programs. Also, how is a 7th grade applicant auditioning for SOTA going to choose other appropriate schools in the lottery, as other 7th grade programs are not in the booklet. Would the "lottery" for this student be: stay in current school; choose new school via lottery."

Response from Ms. Goldammer: The 9th grade book was shared. We are finalizing the 7th grade book and it will be very similar but will speak to the specifics of the 7th grade school of choice schools.

- "According to Vice-Chair of PAC, Makita Saloane, the Wilson High School PTO is meeting tomorrow to discuss its recruitment and application process. Someone from Central Office may want to contact the school to make sure that any agreed to changes are included in the booklet."

Response from Mr. Goldammer: We have been working all along with Wilson and yes, these statements are accurate. We will be at the PTO meeting tomorrow night after the Policy meeting.

Commissioner Powell asked for clarification regarding the Wilson Commencement and the International Baccalaureate (IB) program process. Ms. Goldammer stated that under the directive of the Superintendent, Wilson Commencement will become an application school similar to SOTA because all students will be enrolled in the IB program. Commissioner Powell asked about what happens to the students enrolled in the Wilson Foundation Academy. Ms. Goldammer responded that Wilson Foundation and Commencement Schools have been working collaboratively with the parents to understand what the process and expectations are for students.

Commissioner Powell asked if parents will know the criteria of Wilson Commencement because there is no guarantee that students enrolled in the pre-IB program at Wilson Foundation will have access to the IB program at Wilson Commencement. Ms. Goldammer stated the application process for Wilson Commencement ensures that families are aware of the commitment. Commissioner Powell stated that there is the presumption that Wilson Foundation served as a feeder school and interested in the capacity to accommodate for 8<sup>th</sup> graders interested in attending the 9<sup>th</sup> grade at Wilson Commencement. Ms. Goldammer responded that last year about half entered Wilson Commencement and the other chose not to attend. Ms. Goldammer stated that the initial enrollment of the 9<sup>th</sup> grade call was 130 students and the additional 12:1:1 classroom to equal to 160 total enrollment. She stated that there is room in the building to expand, but the focus is on rolling out IB. Commissioner Powell stated that capacity will become important based on space utilization of the Facilities Modernization Program.

- “I think the red boxes and text below re: application for Wilson and SOTA need to be clarified. It’s not clear when students who apply only to Wilson or SOTA (and don’t at first participate in the lottery) are notified. If they are notified after the Jan 29th deadline, then it seems that everyone should participate in the lottery. Maybe rephrase, “To ensure that you have a chance at another school of your choice, should you not gain acceptance to Wilson/SOTA, you must participate...””

Response from Ms. Goldammer: Nice suggestion and will forward it to Mr. Partner. She further stated that during the orientations and open houses that the schools are reinforcing

- “Also, are students allowed to both audition at SOTA and apply to Wilson? (And participate in the lottery?)”

Response from Ms. Goldammer: Yes, they can participate in all 3.

- “Is there another pre-K to 8th grade booklet? Which families will get this? And which families will get the 9-12 booklet?”

Response from Ms. Goldammer: There is a 9th grade book, 7th grade book, and 3 Kindergarten books-one specific to each zone.

Commissioner Powell suggested looking at the profile books from several years ago to gain an understanding as to how successful parents are in getting into their neighborhood school. She further stated that it should be 100% in every zone wide school.

Commissioner Powell asked how Pre-K is being treated in kindergarten enrollment because kindergarten is the entry point because Universal Pre-K (UPK) is not in all schools. Commissioner Campos also stated that UPK is not mandatory. Ms. Goldammer stated that the challenge is parent awareness and communication around kindergarten selection when the child is attending pre-K outside of their zone. She described the 3 year old Pre-K program as encouraging parents to enroll and stay within their zone.

Commissioner Powell asked if there are more opportunities to bring more UPK into schools that do not have it by altering the number of strands in those schools going forward. Ms. Goldammer stated that when looking to relocate UPK programs, they also looked into how many strands of kindergarten were offered at each school to ensure that there are enough seats.

Commissioner Powell asked when the committee and the Board will be able to review the Kindergarten and 7<sup>th</sup> grade booklets to offer feedback. Mr. Chip stated that Kindergarten booklet will be drafted by November 30<sup>th</sup> and then sent to the principals for feedback.

Commissioner Campos asked about providing and including student achievement level with the number/percentage of students in each level test score because as a parent, she would want to see this information. Commissioner Campos further state that she thinks such information should be included for parents as they make a decision regarding school selection. Ms. Bovard responded that there is not much confidence in the assessments. Ms. Goldammer suggested having a station at the Expo and Fair to talk about school data. Commissioner Powell stated that including the achievement data demonstrates a correlation with poverty. Mr. Partner stated that the data was not included because it is available on New York State Education Department's website.

Mr. Partner stated that he will work to clarify the lottery system for kindergarten books and will circulate that.

Commissioner Campos asked if there is a place where parents can find out about the open houses and recruitment nights. Ms. Goldammer stated they are on the calendar. Mr. Partner stated that the dates change so much, but will create an insert page in the booklet as a separate document.

Commissioner Campos asked if elementary students go on high school tours. Ms. Bovard responded that counselors come to the elementary schools.

Commissioner-elect Hallmark stated that she would like to see non-academic included like the social aspect and environment.

Commissioner Powell asked if there is an effort being made to encourage elementary principals to walk the neighborhood in order draw neighborhood students. Ms. Goldammer

responded that School #17 have community picnics and she will be meeting with the principals about how to market their school. Commissioner Powell stated that there is a need to recruit on the elementary level based on the charter school expansion. She then asked what the Pre-K enrollment of the city is. Ms. Goldammer stated that the number is approximately 95%. Commissioner Powell stated that if the addresses of these Pre-k students are known, they can be used to recruit the students for enrollment in neighborhood schools. Commissioner-elect Hallmark stated that this could be the role of parent liaisons.

Commissioner Cruz suggested that the compact agreement be defined in the booklet, translated in Spanish, resource page that lists different District departments' contact information if parents have questions, and making sure the community partners and recreation centers are aware of the process in order to inform parents. Commissioner-elect Hallmark suggested moving the check page to the front and adding a visual flowchart on how to choose a high school. Ms. Schiavi suggested that using visuals and less words could be helpful.

Commissioner Powell will provide Mr. Partner with older placement books that have visuals to reference. Commissioner Cruz suggested provided website links in the booklet. Mr. Partner stated that there will be a video online highlighting each school. Commissioner Cruz stated that the video viewing could be an item on the December Business Meeting.

### **III. Follow-up Items**

Commissioner Powell will meet with Ms. Johnson regarding the re-adoption Policy Manual.

**Motion** by Commissioner Powell to adjourn. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. **Adopted 3-0.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:30PM.