

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy Committee Meeting
December 12, 2013

Attending: Commissioner Cruz (Chair; Commissioners Powell and Campos. Parent Representative: Barbara Van Kerkhove absent. District staff: Ed Lopez-Soto, Chief Counsel; Beverly Burrell-Moore, Deputy Superintendent of Teaching and Learning; Vicky Ramos; Chief of School Operations; Robin Hooper, Director of Early Childhood Education. Board staff: Debra Flanagan.

Commissioner Cruz convened the meeting at 7:12PM.

I. Review and Approve Minutes of November 14, 2013 Policy Committee Meeting

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the minutes of the November 14, 2013 Policy Committee meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Campos. **Adopted 3-0.**

Since several key District staff members were unable to attend this Policy Committee meeting, Commissioner Cruz suggested postponing consideration of revisions to the Parent & Family Engagement policy (1900) and to the School-Based Planning policy (2265) until the next meeting on January 16, 2014.

II. Review Major Achievement Program Policy (4350)

Beverly Burrell-Moore recalled that the Major Achievement Program (MAP) was established in 1965 to provide challenge and opportunity for gifted students to encourage them to remain in the District. She noted that substantial changes in the educational system and curriculum have occurred since the program's inception, and the number of participating students has also dwindled. Ms. Burrell-Moore attributed the decline in participation to the fact that the program qualifications are too general and other opportunities have expanded in the District for students with a wide range of abilities (e.g. School of the Arts, International Baccalaureate program).

Ms. Burrell-Moore reported that the MAP program has been implemented for grades 4-6, with the following levels of student participation:

<u>School #</u>	<u>MAP Student Participation</u>
12	62
50	61
23	64
43	64
4	42 (School #4 re-instituted MAP in 2013-14 school year, after discontinuing the program for several years)

Ms. Burrell-Moore pointed out that PEP tests were used in the past for screening students for the MAP program, but these tests have long since been abandoned at the State level. She noted that only about 5% of RCSD students are deemed proficient on the new Common Core assessments, and this curriculum

has created substantially greater challenges for all students. Ms. Burrell-Moore noted that the impact of all of these changes has led to less of a need for a MAP program.

Commissioner Cruz inquired whether the Administration is considering phasing out the MAP program. Ms. Burrell-Moore replied that educational reforms have led to phasing out the program.

Commissioner Powell imparted historical information about the MAP program, which was established with the support of federal funding. She described MAP being used by the District initially as a mechanism to achieve greater racial balancing, by offering it as a magnet program to attract parents to schools they might not have otherwise chosen. Commissioner Powell recalled former Superintendent Brizard proposing that MAP be based on the location of the gifted students, rather than being housed in particular schools. She asserted that the underlying educational concept of this proposal is that children move in and out of giftedness, so the program should follow the child rather than placing children in specific schools. Commissioner Powell suggested overhauling the existing MAP policy on the basis of this philosophy, rather than eliminating the policy altogether. She emphasized the importance of recognizing different types of abilities among students, rather than only academic achievement.

Commissioner Cruz commented that the Common Core curriculum obviates the need for identifying and segregating gifted children because of the inherent challenges in the curriculum.

Ms. Burrell-Moore agreed that the policy must address all different types of talents and provide corresponding opportunities to students.

Vicky Ramos advocated for maintaining recognition of academic achievement, pointing out that providing a path for academically gifted students enables them to accelerate in middle school and to compete for AP classes and honors programs. She pointed out that School Nos. 12, 23 and 50 have maintained the MAP program and have very active student participation in enrichment activities.

Commissioner Powell asked about the possibility of offering a MAP program in schools that have at least four strands of students in each grade level.

Ms. Burrell-Moore emphasized the need to re-define MAP to appeal to students in light of the significant challenges presented in the Common Core curriculum. She stated that screening for the program cannot be based on one single test, but must utilize a variety of measures.

Commissioner Cruz summarized the main considerations for future discussions:

- Separating gifted students from the general student population
- Providing enrichment in schools attended by gifted students to expand opportunities for other students

III. Review and Discuss Proposed Revision of Preschool Education Programs Policy (4320.5)

Robin Hooper highlighted the main revisions proposed to this policy:

- Omitting reference to the NYS design tasks, as these are apparently obsolete

- Omitting reference to child care, as the District has not provided child care for students since 1996
- Updating the criteria by which community-based providers applications are evaluated

Commissioner Cruz expressed concern about the policy incorporating the Common Core standards and curriculum in preschool programs. Ms. Hooper replied that a foundation has been developed for implementing the Common Core standards into the preK curriculum, but NYS has only released 3 units for ELA and none for Math. She reported that RCSD is piloting the curriculum and has been conducting staff training for implementation beginning in January.

Commissioner Cruz inquired about the timeframe for full implementation of the preK Common Core curriculum. Ms. Hooper indicated that the State seems to be developing all of the ELA units before beginning the Math materials, and she has not received information as to the timeframe for completion of all of the units.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve proposed revisions to the Preschool Education Programs policy (4320.5). Seconded by Commissioner Campos. **Adopted 3-0.**

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

Meeting adjourned at 8:10PM.