

ROCHESTER BOARD OF EDUCATION
Policy Committee Meeting
October 17, 2013

Attending: Commissioner Cruz (Chair); Commissioner Powell. Commissioner Campos absent due to daughter's illness. Parent Representative: Barbara Van Kerkhove. District staff: Ed Lopez-Soto, Chief Counsel; Robin Hooper, Director of Early Childhood Education. Community Members: Bill Benet. Board staff: Debra Flanagan.

Commissioner Cruz convened the meeting at 7:59PM.

I. Review and Approve Minutes of July 18, 2013 and September 24, 2013 Policy Committee Meetings

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve the minutes of the July 18, 2013 and September 24, 2013 Policy Committee meetings. **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of Parent Representative.**

II. Discuss Proposed Revisions to the Values Education Policy (4311.2)

Bill Benet described the process of linking the 22 values contained in the current policy with the five polarities proposed in the revised policy. He acknowledged that 14 of the 22 values are not explicitly stated in the proposed revision, but are related or subsumed under at least one of the polarities. Mr. Benet stated that he modified his presentation to illustrate the way in which each of the original 22 values are related to the polarities.

Commissioner Powell commented that the framework presented by Mr. Benet would easily and naturally stimulate discussion, particularly in a civics class.

Mr. Benet explained that instructional materials would involve examining the positive and negative aspects of each polarity (e.g. freedom – authority, diversity – equality), and would not be difficult to develop. He emphasized the importance of managing each polarity effectively to balance between individual rights and larger society.

Barbara van Kerkhove expressed concern that the current policy contains specific, explicit values, while the proposed revision (i.e. polarities model) does not. She stated that the polarities model does not provide explicit guidelines and therefore creates uncertainty as to which values to uphold. Mr. Benet replied that the polarities framework does not provide a precise definition for each element because of the tension that exists between values in a democracy. He contended that the polarities are intended to foster discussion to determine the balance between different values, which will change with the context and over time.

Commissioner Cruz remarked that the proposed framework is perfect for describing civil responsibility and accommodating changes over time. He emphasized the importance of facilitating students' thinking and analysis regarding balancing these values. Commissioner Cruz suggested that the proposed revised policy be reviewed by staff in the Teaching & Learning Division to consider ways that the polarities framework can be incorporated into classroom instruction.

Mr. Benet offered to provide assistance with implementing the revised policy, noting that he had experience with creating an implementation and evaluation plan for this model under former RCSD Superintendent Manuel Rivera.

Commissioner Powell suggested creating posters and other graphic depictions of the polarities, illustrating the way in which moving to one end of the spectrum involves sacrifices at the other end (e.g. increased authority leads to less freedom). She also stated that there may be greater opportunity to incorporate the polarities framework into civics and social studies courses because of the difficulty in standardizing these subjects under the Common Core curriculum.

Ms. Van Kerkhove observed that the five polarities are interrelated, so that respect for authority is enhanced when there is participation and due process.

Commissioner Powell recommended revising the policy proposal to conform to the format generally used for Board policies, and circulating it to the Superintendent and Cabinet to obtain their feedback. Ed Lopez-Soto stated that Mr. Benet suggested having a series of meetings with staff in the Social Studies Department to discuss ways to integrate the revised policy into instruction.

Commissioner Cruz stated that he would like to convene a meeting with the Superintendent, Mr. Lopez-Soto, and Mr. Benet to review and discuss the proposed policy before presenting it to Cabinet members.

Action Item: Mr. Lopez-Soto will schedule a meeting with the Superintendent, Commissioner Cruz, and Mr. Benet to discuss the revisions proposed to the Values Education policy and ways to integrate it into instruction.

Commissioner Powell noted the importance of involving School-Based Planning Teams and Parent – Teacher organizations in implementation of this policy to reinforce these discussions at home and improve the alignment between home and school instruction.

III. Review and Discuss Arts Education Policy (4320)

Commissioner Cruz recalled that the Policy Committee decided to rescind the Arts Education policy in the July 18, 2013 meeting. He stated that he has brought the policy back to the Committee for review in case some provisions should be retained or modified.

Commissioner Powell asserted that the current policy has no standards or guidelines and does not add anything beyond the requirements of NYS law/regulation. She objected to having Board policies that simply reiterate the provisions of law/regulations as unnecessary and cumbersome.

Commissioner Cruz discussed the importance of educating the community about the rationale for rescinding the Arts Education policy, noting that this action does not indicate a weakening of support for arts education in the District – but an effort to streamline policies to ensure that they are effective and meaningful.

IV. Review and Discuss Equivalence in Instructional Staffing and Materials Policy (4010)

Mr. Lopez-Soto stated that the proposed revisions to the Equivalence in Instructional Staffing and Materials policy reflect the recommendations made by Committee members in the September 24, 2013 meeting. He noted that the revised policy states that the Superintendent will prepare the NYSED Comparability Report annually and submit it to the State, then provide a copy of the Report and any comments from NYSED to the Board for review.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to approve proposed revision of the Equivalence in Instructional Staffing and Materials policy (4010). **Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of Parent Representative.**

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

Robin Hooper highlighted the revisions proposed to the Preschool Education Programs policy:

- Removing references to child care because this is no longer provided in the District
- Eliminating reference to the District's five design tasks as the basis for evaluating community service providers' applications for operating preschool programs
- Including the criteria currently used to assess community service providers' applications:
 - ❖ Program Quality (including accommodations for special needs students and English Language Learners);
 - ❖ Student Attendance and Achievement;
 - ❖ Family Engagement (i.e. a plan for family participation that is responsive to the diverse cultures of families and children in the District);
 - ❖ Compliance with all federal and state regulations, including those of the New York State Commissioner of Education and the Office of Child and Families Services; and
 - ❖ Adherence to state and fiscal guidelines for grant budgets, including proof of fiscal responsibility.

In addition, the policy proposal incorporates NYS standards for pre-K programs to ensure that all providers are aware of these educational requirements.

Ms. Hooper pointed out an additional change needed to the proposed policy: to state that each school or community organization is required to adhere to the RCSD curriculum for pre-K programs.

Commissioner Powell inquired about feedback from community-based pre-K providers regarding the District's pre-K curriculum. Ms. Hooper replied that she can ask for this information, and provide it to the Committee in a future meeting.

Commissioner Powell reported that the Children's Institute has cautioned RCSD against basing the curriculum in early grades on the expectations for the following grade level (e.g. pre-K curriculum designed according to demands of kindergarten) because this approach does not take into account

children's developmental needs and readiness to absorb the material. Ms. Hooper responded that the Common Core standards and the District's pre-K curriculum must be examined further to determine whether it is developmentally appropriate. She stated that she will attend NYS training on the Common Core curriculum and standards for early childhood programs in mid-November.

Commissioner Cruz recommended continuing review of the proposed policy revisions in December, after Ms. Hooper has attended the NYS training.

Action Item: Ms. Flanagan will include review of the proposed revised Preschool Education Program policy to the agenda for the December 12th Policy Committee meeting.

VI. Review and Discuss Possible Revisions to the Major Achievement Program (MAP) Policy (4322)

Debra Flanagan reported that input has been sought from the Chief of Teaching & Learning and the Director of School Operations regarding revisions to this policy. She stated that the MAP program has not been supported in the District due to budget constraints over the years, but some schools have retained it. Ms. Flanagan explained that additional information is needed to ensure that the policy is updated in a way that will continue to support the existing programs in schools.

Commissioner Powell contended that the program is supposed to follow the students and not be provided only at specific sites. She noted that the State no longer funds this program.

Action Item: Ms. Flanagan will include review of the MAP policy in the agenda for the December 12th Policy Committee meeting, and invite the Chief of Teaching & Learning and the Director of Student Placement to attend to provide input.

VII. Information regarding Revision of Superintendent Regulation, "RCSD School Field Trips" (4400-R)

Mr. Lopez-Soto stated that this regulation has been changed to allow parents to transport their own child(ren) in their own car to or from school field trips, rather than requiring their child(ren) to take the school bus.

Motion by Commissioner Powell to adjourn. Adopted 2-0, with concurrence of Parent Representative.

Meeting adjourned at 8:01PM.