

Rochester Board of Education  
Policy Committee  
May 9, 2006

Minutes

**Attendance:** Chairman Brennan, Commissioners Henley and Powell; Board staff Linda Dunsmoor; District Counsel Michael Looby, District staff Judith Rutalis.

Commissioner Brennan convened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

**CODE OF CONDUCT**

*Under New York State's Project SAVE legislation, each school district in the State is required to annually review its Code of Conduct, conduct a public hearing, and adopt the document.*

**Discussion:**

Mr. Looby has contacted the Student Leadership Congress and all four district unions for input. The Rochester Teachers Association suggested an aspiration that parents/guardians make every effort to participate in person or at least by phone in meetings when a child returns from suspension, and in parent-teacher conferences. It also suggested a modification of dress code language to enhance student understanding and promote consistent enforcement. Mr. Looby added those proposed changes to the draft.

Parents are not required to attend and cannot be compelled to attend suspension hearings and re-entry meetings.

**Action:**

Motion to begin policy adoption process made by Commissioner Powell, Seconded by Commissioner Henley. Motion stipulates discussion at May 18, 2006 Business Meeting, public hearing on Thursday, May 25, and action by full Board of Education anticipated June 2006. Carried unanimously.

L. Dunsmoor will advertise public hearing and post information on Board website.

**PROPOSED REVISION TO POLICY 1510.20 (TECHNICAL AMENDMENT)**

*The amendment would alter the tone of the second paragraph of 1510.20, by removing the "reason to believe" language of the present policy.*

**Action:**

Motion by Commissioner Powell to forward recommendation to full Board for discussion at May 18, 2006 Business Meeting with action by full Board of Education anticipated June 2006. Seconded by Commissioner Henley, carried unanimously.

## **PROPOSED CHANGE IN BOARD'S MONTHLY BUSINESS MEETING DATE**

*Commissioner Powell, who chairs the Board's Finance Committee, is recommending a change in the date of the Board's monthly Business Meeting from the third Thursday of each month to the fourth Thursday.*

### **Discussion:**

Commissioner Powell began by noting that the Board's monthly meetings are business meetings. They should revolve around the financial schedule and the ability to process monthly financial reports -- a notion that hasn't really come to light before.

A byproduct of moving the date is that other Board members will have an opportunity to review meeting informational packets for an additional week. Dr. Rivera has said he will maintain the same timetable for producing resolutions. Commissioners will receive the packets two Fridays before the Business Meeting instead of one Friday before (Finance resolutions will not be included).

Commissioner Henley said the idea was originally raised at Board Governance. Board Governance is very supportive of the proposal as it provides Commissioners with the opportunity to better review the packet and submit more substantive questions.

Commissioner Brennan asked Commissioner Powell to address three concerns:

- Business office is said to need an extra week to prepare reports. The prior Chief Financial Officer (CFO) met the timelines. We might at least wait until a permanent CFO is in place, whoever that may be.
- If there is merit to provide more time to review resolutions, there is merit in having time to review financial reports, technology matters, and associated resolutions. Response to questions in these areas have been problematic at times as it is.
- We need to consider the impact on other committees, perhaps meeting at different times of the month. A change like this should not be driven by the imagined needs of one (temp status) district staff member. It should most properly come from the superintendent, and take into account the agendas and calendar needs of all committees, staff, and Board.

Commissioner Powell responded that there was not a truly rigid schedule in place before regarding when the Finance Committee met. She had told this individual many times to determine month-end four to six months out. Other CFOs have handled this issue more diplomatically and have been able to adjust the schedule. She isn't sure that the calendar has been so demanding in the past. Commissioner Powell emphasized that she is offering the idea because it makes sense in the greater context of the Board's work, not because of or for one individual. The Finance Committee is the one standing committee that meets every month to forward action items to the Board; the other committee schedules are usually not as urgent. Dr. Rivera was consulted on this issue and had no problems with moving the dates. It makes sense that if the Board's function is fiduciary and the Finance Committee reviews the reports, that the reports be high caliber. Under the new proposed timetable, the Finance Committee would meet nine days after month-end rather than two days.

Commissioner Brennan warned against unintended complications and the potential ripple effects of the date change proposal; he suggested the committee wait until a new CFO is in place. Commissioner Powell said the "effective" date of the policy could be far enough out to resolve that.

### **Action:**

Motion by Commissioner Henley to forward recommendation to full Board of Education for May 18 meeting. Second by Commissioner Powell. Approved 2-1 with Commissioner Brennan dissenting.

### **LOCAL WELLNESS POLICY**

*The Federal government issued a mandate through the 2004 Child Nutrition and WIC Reauthorization Act to establish standards for diet and health in public schools. These standards will be reflected in local wellness policies taking effect in September 2006. A district committee has been formed to discuss the RCSD policy, which will be advanced to the full Board through the Policy Committee.*

#### **Discussion:**

Commissioner Powell, who is a member of the local committee, reported that there was no action in February, not much action in March, and that the next meeting was May 15. A plan needs to be developed for writing the Administrative Guidelines for implementation. Commissioner Powell said the committee is anxious to move forward and have the policy and guidelines in place for September 2006.

The district may not meet the July 1 policy deadline, but Commissioner Powell said there are no real consequences. Mr. Looby noted that districts are in various stages regarding the deadline.

Commissioner Brennan said he was chagrined that the deadline will not be met; the district has known since January that the policy is required. He asked Commissioner Powell whether she was satisfied by the number of community people participating in the process, and she said she was.

### **APPRENTICESHIP OPPORTUNITIES:**

*A Board resolution adopted in June 2005 stipulated certain requirements for contracts approved in excess of \$200,000. These contractors would be required to have approved apprenticeship programs. This resolution was suspended for six months and referred back to Policy in February 2006 upon the recommendation of Dr. Rivera, who said it actually works against the Board agenda of including minority contractors and City residents/vendors. It does so by placing an undue burden on small-sized minority companies that cannot afford to provide apprenticeships.*

#### **Discussion:**

Commissioner Brennan pointed out that any amendment discussion should include the same stakeholders who participated in the original discussion. Although the policy seemed reasonable at the time, it may effectively reduce the number of apprenticeships available.

Commissioners agreed that the union representatives, the Superintendent, and district Counsel, with the Policy Committee, should be working on the amendment. Former Board member Dr. James Bowers will also be invited, as he spearheaded the initial effort.

#### **Action:**

Commissioners set a public hearing for Thursday, May 25 regarding apprenticeship opportunities provided by contractors working with the Rochester City School District.

Linda Dunsmoor to gather names of previous participants, send invitations, and publicize hearing.

**NEXT MEETING:**

Thursday, May 25, 6 p.m., Third Floor Conference Room of Central Office.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

Motion by Commissioner Henley, Second by Commissioner Powell, carried at 7:10 p.m.