

Rochester Board of Education

Roc BOE News



Board Goals: September 2023 to June 2028

Increase the percentage of students in grades 3-8 who are proficient on the NYS ELA assessment from 16% to 40%.

All students reading by third grade –Increase the percentage of students proficient on the 3rd grade NYS ELA from 15% to 50%.

Increase the percentage of students in grades 3-8 who are proficient on the NYS Math assessment from 14% to 40%.

Increase the number of students earning 5 or more credits in 9th grade from 70% to 90%.

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President's Desk

As we enter the holiday season and look ahead to the new year, I invite us all to pause and reflect on our shared purpose. We choose to champion public education because we know that when we create the right conditions, our students have every opportunity to flourish.

The Rochester Board of Education is now entering budget season with a clear focus on our collective priorities and a commitment to responsible fiscal stewardship. We remain dedicated to ongoing governance training that strengthens our ability to serve the district effectively.

As we continue leaning into the second marking period and approach the third marking period, we look forward to the progress and outcomes it will bring. We understand that steady, incremental improvement leads to powerful results, and we know the Rochester City School District is moving in that direction with determination and pride.

With Gratitude,

Camille Simmons
Board President



Student Outcomes Focused Governance

Student Outcomes do not change until adult behaviors change.

What is the Board currently working on?

During the November 6, 2025 Board Retreat, in collaboration with the Council of the Great City Schools (CGCS), the Board focused on effective question asking.

What is effective question asking?

Effective questions from our Board members to the Superintendent reflect a governance mindset, using SMART, decision-focused inquiries that strengthen decision-making, monitoring, and the overall quality of Board meetings. While off-topic questions should generally be avoided during meetings, members may occasionally ask informational questions outside of meetings to support ongoing learning.

What are SMART questions?

SMART questions are strategic, measure-focused, ask-oriented, results-focused, and time-bound. Board members should consider the tone of their questions and the Board's position in the decision-making process to avoid governance failures and delays. *Preparation is essential to remain effective and strategy-focused.*

How to be strategy-focused?

During meetings, the Board's conversations should be strategy-focused, relying on technical questions (to understand measures) and tactical questions (to understand how or by whom something is done) prior to the Board meeting. Our Board uses the "Board Question Log" to submit questions.

Questions from the Board can influence administrative behavior and priorities.

What are next steps for the Board?

- ◆ Finalization and adoption of the Board's guardrails.
- ◆ Realignment of the 2023-28 Board goals timeline and metrics to reflect the current reality.
- ◆ The Superintendent's finalization of interim goals and guardrails.
- ◆ The Superintendent to create a draft monitoring calendar for the interim goals and guardrails.
- ◆ Providing community updates.

For more information about the Student Outcomes Focused Governance (SOFG) framework, visit <https://www.rcsdk12.org/sofg>.

DID YOU KNOW....

Any Board decision—whether it's being approved or denied—requires at least four Commissioners voting in agreement.



DID YOU KNOW....

When making public statements, either oral or written, on behalf of the Board, the President represents the position of the Board; one Commissioner's viewpoint does not.



Advisory Group Corner

Get Involved in District-wide Advisory Groups!

Are you a **current** RCSD student or parent? Are you aware that there are three District-wide parent groups and one District-wide student group?

For Students

The Student Leadership Congress (SLC) is a body of student leaders representing their respective high schools and serves as the voice of students to the Board of Education, Superintendent, District administration, and community leaders. Participating members offer their perspectives on education policies, school climate and

inform their administrators about relevant citywide school issues. For more information, visit <https://www.rcsdk12.org/youth>.

For Parents

District-wide groups offer parents and caregivers a space to engage in advocacy and support their children's education. Most parent groups meet monthly.

District-wide parent groups include:

1. Bilingual Education Council (BEC)
2. Parent Leadership Advisory

3. Council (PLAC)
3. Special Education Parent Advisory Council (SEPAC)

For more information about each District-wide group, visit <https://www.rcsdk12.org/parentgroups>, or contact the Office of Parent Engagement by emailing parentcenter@rcsdk12.org or calling 585-324-9999.

To learn more about participating in a school-based student or parent group, contact your school.



Board Ad Hoc Committees

The Board of Education values the talent, resources, and interests found throughout our community. To tap into this expertise, the Board may establish Ad Hoc Committees, temporary advisory bodies, formed to advise and recommend courses of action to the Board for its consideration in resolving issues of significant impact.

These committees are created only when the Board determines that additional expertise or community voice will strengthen decision-making. Each committee is

established through an official Board resolution that outlines its purpose and timeframe, ensuring that every committee has a clear, focused charge for completing its work.

Members of Ad Hoc Committees are selected based on their expertise, experience, interest, and concern for the topic. Typically, the Commissioners of the Rochester Board of Education, the Superintendent, collective bargaining units, District-wide parent groups, and Student Leadership Congress are invited to provide

recommendations to the committee.

Once a committee completes its work, it provides its recommendations to the Board, who reviews the findings and may accept, reject, or request additional study. Upon completion, each committee is discontinued, and its members are acknowledged for their service.

More information can be found in Policy 2260, Advisory Bodies, at www.rcsdk12.org/policy.



School Choice

Are you a parent/guardian of an incoming kindergartner, 7th grader or 9th grader?

School choice is now open!!!!

Policy 5153, Parent Preference/Managed Choice Policy, outlines the expectations for the District for registering students.

What is school choice?

Students will be matched to zone schools of choice by a computerized lottery, which requires the District to assign students to their first choice school in accordance with the following priorities:

- (a) Sibling Preference when there is one child enrolled at

a school for the **next school year** living in the same household;

- (b) Pre-kindergarten preference where if a student attended a school for PreK and is **within their zone**, they would have a preference to a kindergarten seat (**this preference does not apply in city-wide schools**); and
- (c) 0.75-mile proximity preference for up to 60% of capacity.

Students who cannot be accommodated in first-choice schools will be assigned to their second-

choice schools, then to their third-choice schools, and so on.

What is the timeline to participate in school choice?

School choice is opened from Monday, December 8, 2025 to Friday, February 13, 2026.

For children ages 3 or 4 by December 1, 2026, program selection deadline for PreK is April 2026.

To enroll and for questions on how to enroll, visit <https://www.rcsdk12.org/schoolselection>.

For the full policy, visit <https://www.rcsdk12.org/policy>.

“Even the greatest was once a beginner. Don’t be afraid to take that first step”.

- Muhammad Ali

Can Someone Please HELP ME?!

Oftentimes our District families, staff, and community reach out to the Board Office, a Board member, and/or register to speak at a Board meeting because they do not know who to call, or they feel unseen or stuck. **FRUSTRATION!**

While the Board and its Board department are always happy to assist our families, going directly to the District staff who can resolve the issue is often the fastest way to get help. The right connection makes all the difference.

When you are not sure where to start, here are two resources available to you:

RCSD Family Services:

When our families have an issue or concern, we want to provide you with a clear method for communicating those concerns. We ask that you follow the process outlined on <https://www.rcsdk12.org/familyservices>, which provides the appropriate steps to take for most school-related issues.

Let’s Talk!

Customer Service Platform:

The District is utilizing Let’s Talk! to help create new lines of communication for school and District services for parents, staff, students, and our community to access anytime, anywhere. Visit <https://www.rcsdk12.org/letstalk> for more information on the Let’s Talk! platform.

Clear communication helps us resolve concerns faster, so we can stay focused on what matters most—our students’ success.



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