

9/11/20 Rochester Coalition for Public Education

Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Howie Maffucci, Don Bartalo, Ralph Spezio, Connie Flahive, John Bouter, Don Pryor, Alicai Ward, Mark Hare, John Strazzabosco, Jamie, David Hursh, Dan Drmacich

Discussion & Decisions:

1. We agreed to have Jeannette Deuterman, the Long Island Opt-Out Director for Long Island, present by Zoom to the Coalition on Friday, Sept. 18th @ 2:00. Her work with Betty Rosa, the former Regents Chancellor & new interim Commissioner and Opt-Out work with schools should give us some insight for our future discussions with Rosa & for working with RCSD parents on opting out of testing. David Hursh will arrange & Howie will send out Zoom invitations to all Coalition members.

2. Dan reminded members of the following Zoom events:

- Don Bartalo's Hummingbird Theater's presentation by Rev. Myra Brown on how the Emancipation Proclamation has influenced current police practices; 7:30 pm, Sept. 14th.
- Kara Finnigan, U of R Ed. Professor & author of "Striving in Common," will present at 6:30 pm, on Tuesday, Sept. 15th. The focus will be on a regional approach to dealing with the RCSD's issues.
- At 4:00 pm, on Wednesday, Sept. 16th, a panel of several Rochesterians will discuss racial equity & justice issues at Nazareth College, and
- On September 24th, Rethinking Schools will have several experienced educators discuss teaching & learning strategies regarding racial inequities & the pandemic @ 7:00 pm.

*Notices with registration details have been sent out to Coalition members. But, if you need them re-sent, let me know asap.

3. Dan announced that we will meet with Assemblyman Harry Bronson to discuss several of our agenda items as soon as his Chief of Staff sets a date for the meeting.

4. Alicia announced that there have been several meetings of the organization: "Black Kids Matter," including one from 10-12 am, at the Penfield Harris/Whalen Park on 9/12, and that they appeared on WXXI's Evan Dawson Radio Show on 9/11, which can be accessed for a replay. Alicia will seek information on this group's leaders, which represents a group of which we have no members: STUDENTS.

5. Don Pryor led us in a discussion regarding the reasons and goals for developing a Coalition statement on "School Choice." We agreed that it's needed to inform individuals & organizations of what we believe regarding not only school choice but other issues, as well.

Dan will synthesize the feedback he's received, so far, on school choice & send it to our membership for feedback. The greatest controversy will deal with our position on charter schools.

6. We agreed to hold a special meeting for Coalition members on Friday, September 25th @ 3:00-4:30, on Racial Equity & Justice, at which we'll view the 25 minute video by Robin DiAngelo, author of "White Fragility," and have a follow-up discussion. Please plan on attending if at all possible. Howie will send Zoom invitations to all.

7. John Strazzabosco shared the progress of the City/County RASE Commission "workgroup" on Policing and asked for feedback on possible issues, questions & resources. This group's work is particularly crucial, given the Daniel Prude incident and the resignation of Chief Singletaty & his support staff. We shared a number of suggestions. If you have suggestions, please contact John.

8. Dan announced that he had sent Gov. Cuomo our Coalition letter urging him to rescind the 20% RCSD state budget reduction.. We all agreed that our letter was purely a protest with no leverage, and agreed we need to focus on other entre's to Cuomo and work on Federal aid. We agreed on the following:

A. Ralph will contact NIPIRG's attorney, Russ Haven & GRACE attorney, Brian Heatherington to request presentations to the Coalition on the realities of more NYS funding for schools & possible strategies for us to engage with.

B. Howie will seek a Zoom meeting with Joe Morelle, our Congressional House rep. for a similar meeting.

9. Dan will create a summary paper of our Coalition's goals for Howie's & Ralph's use.

10. For our next meetings, we will hopefully meet on Friday, September 18th, at 2:00 with Jeanette Deuterma, and on Friday, Sept. 24th @ 3:00 for a discussion on racial justice.

Please let me know if I missed anything. Feel free to send all comments to "Reply All."