

1/22/21 Rochester Coalition for Public Education Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Don Bartalo, Vicki Robertdson, Donna LaMura, Joe Simson, Don Pryor, Mark Hare, David Hursh, Connie Flahive, John Boutet, Ralph Spezio, Jeff Brubaker, Chojoy Schroeder, Howie Maffucci, Lila Shehri, Dan Drmacich (Did I miss anyone?)

Discussion & Action:

1. Dan announced that NYSAPE parent leader, Jeanette Deuterman has asked Commissioner Rosa to schedule a meeting with us to discuss our high-stakes standardized testing proposal. Rosa's secretary also communicated that he's working on it.

2. John Boutet reported that a combined Coalition, SW Council Education Committee with the mayor to review the proposal to seek a variance from the 1.5 mile requirement for students to be bused, was enthusiastically accepted by Mayor Warren. Ralph & Idonia also attended. Apparently, there is a state clause that allows any school district a variance if students experience danger while traveling to school within the 1.5 mile limit. Mayor Warren will consult with Supt. Myers-Small.

3. Bart & Vicki led our group in a racial equity activity that involved listening to a podcast called "Nice White Parents," and discussing its relationship to the Coalition, the RCSD, suburbs and us as individuals. It was a useful discussion with many insightful comments. We'll continue at our Feb. 5th meeting with part II of this activity.

4. Don Pryor gave feedback on attending the Parent Leadership Training Institute's seminar for interested candidates for the RCSD BoE. Unfortunately, the 2 current BoE members who facilitated the discussion talked too much, not allowing enough talk time for interested candidates to share their views on critical education issues. Most of the candidates were thinking of running for office in the future; not necessarily in 2021. One vocal candidate, Dexter Alexander, indicated that he may run this year. Howie noted that Monroe County legislator Josh Bauroth is very interested in running. We agreed that we'll schedule interested candidates to meet with the Coalition to discuss their candidacy and our possible endorsement.

5. Connie shared the "Building Relationships" addition to our Coalition RCSD Recommendations, that she & Dan worked on. Connie & Dan will make final edits & submit to Coalition members this week for final feedback.

6. Donna reported on the meeting she & Ralph had with Outreach Minister, Jacki Wilson of the Asbury First Methodist Church. Approval for bringing our school reform proposals to the Asbury Education Committee for support is one possibility. Joe Simson also suggested doing the same with the Roc Acts group, of which he is a member. We suggested that we ask for their support on the busing variance.

7. John Boutet reported that he attended the Citizens Action meeting on 1/20. They are just beginning to formulate their education agenda, according to Vicki, who is an active member.

This is another group we should present the busing variance proposal to for support, and perhaps our "Building Relationships" proposal, once it is approved by the Coalition.

8. We discussed RCSD plans to re-open schools with the "hybrid plan," & whether or not the Coalition should send our recommendation to the Supt. There were several positions on this by Coalition members, so that proposal is tabled. We did note that the RTA has issued an objection to going "hybrid" until all staff receive their vaccines & teachers receive more teaching resources for being virtually effective.

9. Dan encouraged all Coalition members to register for the Fairtest sponsored National Town Meeting on High-Stakes Standardized Testing, Tuesday, Jan. 26th, 6:00-7:30 pm. Dan sent out the registration form yesterday.

10. We agreed that we should meet with NYS Legislators to discuss our agenda for education change. Howie & Dan will work on this.

11. We did not have time to discuss Dan's proposal for a new recommendation on emphasizing critical thinking, civics, anti-racism & social justice in all city/county schools, nor Ralph's proposal for a new approach to preparing school administrators..

12. We agreed to meet again on Friday, Feb. 5th, @ 4:00.