

11/27/20 Rochester Coalition for Public Education Meeting Minutes

Attendance: Howie Maffucci, Mark Hare, Connie Flahive, Don Pryor, Don Bartalo, Peter McWalters, Ralph Spezio, Donna LaMura, Chojy Schroeder, Lila Alshehri, John Strazzabosco, John Boutet, Dan Drmacich

Discussion & Decisions:

1. We welcomed Donna LaMura as a representative from the Asbury 1st United Methodist Church Racial Justice Committee. Jeff Brubaker and other members of the Racial Justice Committee may also attend in the future.
2. Dan will make sure members will receive a 2nd draft of our "Relationship Building" addition to our RCSD Intervention Recommendations this week for review & feedback.
3. We critically discussed the RCSD SED Monitor's recommendations and agreed that we should send a Coalition critique to the BoE, Monitor & Supt. Don Pryor will write & send a draft for input, through Dan, this week.
4. We discussed BoE President Van White's consideration of a charter school CEO for appointment to the Board. Van shared with Dan that the charter school CEO was no longer considered & that Bill Clark, former Urban League President, was appointed, after resigning his position as a charter school Board of Trustees member. However, Van also stated that the RCSD attorney's interpretation of the NYS law on criteria for BoE membership does not exclude charter school employees, even though RCSD employees are disqualified from consideration. Since a large piece of charter school employee salaries are funded by the RCSD, the charter school legislation allowing their BoE membership appears to be unfair. We decided to table any efforts to change in legislation, given our focus on other issues. This concern is not directed at any specific charter school employee; but is rather a concern of equity.
5. Ralph urged the Coalition to seek the participation of a local attorney, knowledgeable of NYS education law to assist us in making future decisions. Ralph & Dan will discuss possibilities, off line. If anyone has suggestions, please let me know.
6. We discussed our Dec. 9th, 2:00 Zoom meeting proposed agenda & process, with the RCSD Supt. We agreed that we should ask for her response to any of the issues/recommendations Linda Darling-Hammond (see attachment) makes in the memo Dan had sent her & focus on how we might be able to assist. In particular, we will raise questions regarding:
 - A. Darling-Hammond's advocacy for alternatives to high-stakes standardized testing, (see attached Coalition memo to former Chancellor Rosa) and
 - B. How the CSD will prevent a "business-as-usual" mode of operation if the district returns to in-school education for students or a hybrid model.
 - C. Please let Dan know if you plan to participate in this meeting or desire to, but did not receive a Zoom invitation to the meeting.

7. We discussed our positive reactions to the "21 Day Racial Equity Challenge," and the possibility of interested Coalition members participating in the December 3rd, 2 pm Zoom summary discussion of the "Challenge." You must register to participate. Let me or Bart know if you need the invitation.

8. John Strazzabosco gave a summary of his work on the City/County RASE Commission Policing Committee, stating that the committee's recommendations are in progress. He also recommended the book: "Caste" as extremely important in understanding race relations. Bart shared the work of the RASE Commission's Education Committee, stating that their recommendations were also taking shape.

9. John Boutet proposed that the possibility of increasing the number of CSD volunteer mentors & tutors could be increased through computer technology. Ralph cautioned that the CSD needs to be concerned about volunteer qualifications & endangerment to students. This recommendation can be shared at the Supt. meeting.

10. Ralph proposed that the Coalition consider a presentation by "Future Search" advocates, as a regional process for achieving new visions, goals & action for education transformation. We can discuss this at our next meeting.

11. We agreed to meet again on Friday, December 11th, by Zoom @ 4 pm. to de-brief our Dec, 9th meeting with the Supt. & determine follow-up action.