



**Date:** November 3rd, 2021

**To:** Dr. Lesli Myers-Small, Superintendent of Schools  
Van Henri White, President

**CC:** Dr. Shelley Jallow, State Monitor  
Cynthia Elliott, Vice President  
Ricardo Adams, Commissioner  
William Clark, Commissioner  
Beatriz LeBron, Commissioner  
Amy Maloy, Commissioner  
Willa Powell, Commissioner  
Carleen Pierce, Chief Financial Officer  
Genelle Morris, Deputy Superintendent  
Melody Martinez-Davis, Deputy Superintendent  
Kathleen Black, Chief Academic Officer  
Dr. Christopher Miller, Chief of Human Capital  
Michael Schmidt, Chief of Operations  
Carrie Pecor, Executive Director of Grants  
James Sheppard, Director of School Safety and Security

**From:** A Coalition of Parent Groups of RCSD Students

Dear Superintendent Dr. Myers-Small and President White,

As Parents of the Rochester City School District, we are concerned about safety in our schools, and we have a vested interest in creating safe learning environments for our children. We, the district's Parents, have not been invited into the conversation about how safety will be established. It is understood that there is a dual effort that must be taken. Together, we must ensure the safety of all members of the school community, while creating welcoming and affirming environments for our scholars.

We see the current challenges in our schools. Yet, we are concerned that the district sees only student behaviors as the issue, and not the compounded issues that drive these behaviors. In an effort to highlight the complexity of safety in our schools and to determine the strategies being used to promote safety, please provide the following:

- 1) A detailed explanation of what is being implemented to support our students, including but not limited to<sup>1</sup>:

- What protocols are in place to ensure that schools are following the Code of Conduct, specifically the Guiding Principles as outlined on pages 7-10?
    - How are the district's funds being invested in strengthening the systems that support these guiding principles?
  - What protocols are being utilized to communicate to families on a regular, predictable basis about safety in their child's school?<sup>2</sup>
  - Please provide a specific list of mental health, restorative practices, conflict resolution, and social-emotional supports currently being implemented and those that are forthcoming.
    - Please provide the funding sources for these services (1-time or renewable grants, regular budgetary expenditures)<sup>3</sup>.
- 2) Please provide an outline of the plan to evaluate the efficacy of placing RPD outside of schools and its impact on our scholars and greater school community.
  - 3) Please provide an outline of how RCSD will guide how RPD handles issues with our children, so that conflict resolution and restorative practices will outrank reactive disciplinary responses.
  - 4) Please provide an outline of plans being developed for parents to partner in addressing the challenges inside our schools, disrupting our children's education.
  - 5) Please provide an outline of plans being developed for the City to partner with RCSD in addressing the city's challenges inside our schools.
  - 6) What efforts will be made to reduce class sizes to better accommodate the educational, social, and emotional needs of our students?
  - 7) What is the District's strategy for increasing racial diversity of educators, so that our children can learn from people who look like them?

Parents and the community are part of the solution to safety. Parents expect to be involved in decisions. We look forward to your written response to this letter within the next five (5) business days.

Sincerely,

A Parent Coalition of:

**PLAC, Parent Leadership Advisory Council**  
**SEPAC, Special Education Parent Advisory Council**  
**BEC, Bilingual Education Council**  
**PECAN, Parent Engagement Collaborative Action Network**  
**BIPOC PEEEEEEK**  
**And the Parent Groups of**  
**East High School**  
**Edison Tech**  
**Franklin Upper School**  
**Rochester Early College International High School**  
**World of Inquiry School**

<sup>1</sup> It is unclear what steps the Rochester City School District is taking to help our students' social-emotional development and recovery from the stressors they have experienced during this pandemic, and its aftermath.

<sup>2</sup> The regular, predictable communication currently being done with COVID cases can be used as a model. A clear accountability process would include, but is not limited to: regular, predictable reports to parents on discipline issues per school community, as well as detention, suspension and expulsion reports. Our scholars should be experiencing the Guiding Principles of our Code of Conduct and we ask for evidence of that.

<sup>3</sup> Parents are in overwhelming agreement with additional investment in social-emotional supports and utilizing restorative practices.

<sup>4</sup> The decision to station police outside schools was reactionary, not evidence-based, and not done in consultation with parents. While it may be permissible to allow police around a campus, they should not be the first person any child sees upon arrival. Once assigned, behavior management professionals should assist in greeting our students.

