



THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT / THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK

Interim Commissioner of Education
President of the University of the State of New York
89 Washington Avenue, Room 111
Albany, New York 12234

E-mail: commissioner@nysed.gov
Twitter: @NYSEDNews
Tel: (518) 474-5844
Fax: (518) 473-4909

December 11, 2020

Dr. Lesli Myers-Small, Superintendent
Rochester City School District
131 West Broad Street
Rochester, NY 14614

Dear Dr, Myers-Small:

I am writing to inform you that, pursuant to the provisions of Chapter 56 of the Laws of 2020, the academic improvement and financial plans that were jointly approved by the state monitor and local board of education for the Rochester City School District (the district) and submitted to the commissioner on December 1, 2020 have been received and may now be implemented by the district.

The next steps in the process will be as follows:

- District Budget:
 - The board of education will submit the district's proposed budget for the 2021-22 school year to the monitor no later than March 1, 2021. The monitor will review the proposed budget to ensure that it is balanced within the context of revenue and expenditure estimates and mandated programs.
 - The monitor will also review the proposed budget to ensure that it, to the greatest extent possible, is consistent with the district's academic and financial plans.
 - The monitor shall present his or her findings to the board of education and the commissioner no later than 45 days prior to the date scheduled for the board of education's vote on the adoption of the final budget or the last date on which the budget may be finally adopted, whichever is sooner. Over the next weeks, the New York State Education Department ("the Department") will provide guidelines regarding the process by which proposed budgets will be reviewed.
 - The commissioner may require the board of education to make amendments to the proposed budget consistent with any recommendations made by the monitor if the commissioner determines such amendments are necessary to comply with the academic improvement and financial plans and the law.
 - The district is required to make public the initial proposed budget, the monitor's findings, and the final proposed budget on the district's website at least seven calendar days prior to the date of the district's budget hearing.

- In the event it is necessary for the board of education to conduct subsequent votes on the budget, the board of education, in conjunction with the monitor, shall develop and submit the district's revised budget for the 2021-22 school year to the commissioner no later than seven calendar days prior to the budget hearing.
 - Should the commissioner or her designee request additional information, the board of education shall promptly provide such information within three business days of such request.
- Required Reports:
 - The district will provide quarterly reports to the monitor and annual reports to the commissioner and the Board of Regents concerning the academic, fiscal, and operational status of the district as follows:
 - February 15, 2021 for the period from October 1, 2020 to December 31, 2020;
 - May 15, 2021 for the period from January 1, 2021 to March 31, 2021;
 - August 15, 2021 for the period from July 1, 2021 to June 30, 2021 which will incorporate the quarterly report for that period.
 - The monitor will provide semi-annual reports to the commissioner, who will provide them to the Board of Regents, the Governor, and the Legislature. Semi-annual reports shall include all the contracts that the district entered into throughout the year. These reports are due to the commissioner as follows:
 - March 15, 2021 for the period from July 1 – December 31 and
 - September 15, 2021 for the period from January 1 – June 30,
 - Annual Plan Updates
 - The monitor will work with the district to annually update the academic and fiscal plans. Additional information and guidelines about how this process will proceed going forward will be provided by the department later this school year.

Please note that with the approval of these plans, the state monitor has the authority to:

- Recommend cost saving measures including, but not limited to, shared service agreements, that the board of education must consider by vote of a resolution at the next scheduled meeting of the board,
- Notify the board of education and the commissioner in writing when the district is deemed by the monitor to be violating an element of the plans. Within twenty days of such notice, the commissioner will determine whether the district is in violation of any of the elements of the plan as reported by the monitor and if warranted, will order the district to comply immediately with the plan and remedy any such violation. The district must suspend all actions related to the reported violation of the plan pending a determination by the commissioner

The fiscal plan that has been jointly submitted by the monitor and district acknowledges the likelihood that out-year budgets cannot be balanced, as required by law, without reductions in expenditures and/or increases in revenue. At our next quarterly meeting, we will expect the district to submit its contingency proposals for addressing any potential budget deficits that could occur in the 2020-21 and/or 2021-22 school years.

If you have any questions regarding your role and responsibilities in implementing the district's plans, please contact Deputy Commissioner Kim Wilkins.

We congratulate you on the progress to date and look forward to working with you as the process proceeds.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Betty A. Rosa", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Betty A. Rosa
Interim Commissioner

cc: Van Henri White
Shelley Jallow
John D'Agati
Kim Wilkins