



DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Judge Steven Rhodes
Transition Manager



Fisher Building – 14th Floor
3011 W. Grand Boulevard
Detroit, MI 48202-2710

Phone: (313) 870-3772
Fax: (313) 870-3726
www.detroitk12.org

DPS Transition Manager Judge Steven Rhodes' Responses to Questions from the Detroit Board of Education & Community Members from the May 18, 2016 Board Meeting

- 1) The new hockey arena is tax-exempt and there is a lawsuit to fight that determination. Did you know that? What will happen to the funding that was earmarked for DPS previously from these funds?

I was not aware of that lawsuit.

We believe that the State will reimburse the 18 mil operating millage, but not the 13 mil capital improvement millage.

- 2) Drew Transition Center receives allocations from the Wayne RESA, but students are being moved from the building (not clear on when) because the District is not allowing Drew to use the funds for teachers as they were intended. Why?

During the summer, ASD students at DREW may qualify for (ESY) Extended School Year Program which is funded by RESA-ACT 18. There are ESY procedures and guidelines used to determine which students participate. This is also based on the (IEP) Individual Educational Plan of the student. The ESY standards and guidance states that the IEP team is obligated to consider ESY services for students when addressing regression and recoupment of skills. Presently there are 20 students that may qualify for the ESY program which lasts for 5 weeks and will be located at Jerry L. White school this summer. The program dates are: July 12, 2016 to August 4, 2016 from 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.; Tuesday - Thursday.

- 3) Davis Aerospace is a sore spot with the board; all of the school's materials were dumped into another building. And they have lost their license (certification)? It would take four to five years to get it back. In addition, they have taken the curriculum from Davis Aerospace and given it to DeVos in Grand Rapids. What is the District going to do to get Davis back to the stature it once held? How are you working to get the certification back? Why did we give the curriculum away?

The loss of the Davis Aerospace certification was due to the relocation of the facility, and the fact that the new location had not been retrofitted in advance of the move to meet FAA standards. Davis Aerospace and Detroit Public Schools staff are working diligently with the staff from the FAA, MIAT (Michigan Institute of Aviation and Technology), and the Davis Aerospace Aviation Technical Advisory Board, to correlate the proper adjustments needed for the physical plant and the curriculum to reinstate the program's certification status.

The Office of College and Career Readiness has requested a copy of the former curriculum from one of the long-standing Advisory Board members and they have agreed to assist us in updating the curriculum to meet current industry standards. All of these are steps in the right direction to ensuring the success of this program. This will take time to complete. However, with the collaborative effort of all of the stakeholders, it is an achievable endeavor.

- 4) Camp Burt Shirley is used every year for our students. The previous Emergency Manager gave a \$2M, multi-year contract to Detroit Rescue Mission to operate the camp. Is DPS now going to have to pay \$50K a year for our kids to use a camp that is supposed to be dedicated to them? Does the District still own the property?

Detroit Public Schools still owns Camp Burt Shurly, located at 15100 Goodband Road in Gregory, Michigan.

In 2015, Detroit Public Schools contracted with the Detroit Rescue Mission Ministries (DRMM) to provide operations, management and programming at the camp for 8 weeks for summer camp. During the off-season, DRMM manages and maintains the property, including ground services at the camp (mowing and plowing of the grounds and any other non-capital repairs). Any use of the camp during the off-season is considered revenue generating opportunities that are to be split equally between DRMM and DPS. The total contract not-to-exceed (NTE) amount is \$2,500,000 for 5 years or NTE \$500,000 annually. Title 1, Part A Grant funds are used to pay for eligible students who attend the camp during the 8 weeks of summer camp programming.

- 5) Every school district is supposed to have an audit. When was the last audit done for DPS?

The District's last audit was for the fiscal year ending on June 30, 2015. It was completed October 31, 2015. Follow the link below to Audited Financial Statements:

http://detroitk12.org/data/finance/transparency_reporting/

- 6) DPS has given a \$2M contract to Detroit Parent Network. Why are we continuing to fund an organization that has clearly failed in the duties that have been given to them?

The District's contract with Detroit Parent Network expires on June 30, 2016. We are negotiating a new contract with DPN to continue the successful parent teacher home visit program. Detroit Parent Network will no longer lead the parent engagement work for DPS.

- 7) How much revenue has the District collected from the TV Radio station that the district owns and leases to Detroit Public Television?

The District has received \$900,006.35 from the contract and operating agreement with DPTV WRCJ-90.9FM since 2009:

<i>FY2009</i>	<i>\$124,713.35</i>
<i>FY2010</i>	<i>\$160,049.91</i>
<i>FY2011</i>	<i>\$146,381.85</i>
<i>FY2012</i>	<i>\$151,022.90</i>
<i>FY2013</i>	<i>\$158,002.68</i>
<i>FY2014</i>	<i><u>\$159,835.66</u></i>
<i>Total</i>	<i>\$900,006.35</i>

- 8) Where are we with the collection of the \$28M from the Aramark lawsuit (filed by previous Supt. Connie Calloway)?

We are unaware of this lawsuit.

- 9) Why doesn't the Board have funding for a Board Secretary? We run the risk of being out of compliance without one.

The Board does have funding for this position. Because of the imminent departure of the existing Board Secretary, I have discussed with Board President Davis a process for the Board to select a replacement as promptly as possible.

- 10) My next question is about the EAA, when is the District going to take back the schools?

The current plan is for the EAA schools to return to DPS in September 2017. That process will be complex and will require a significant commitment of planning and resources. The challenges to be addressed include labor relations, teacher qualifications, budgeting, school building allocation, financial implications and central office administration. These challenges will be among those faced shortly after the transition of DPS back to local control.

- 11) Based on the contract that the District has with the EAA for the schools, there is a threshold number under which the schools automatically revert back to the District. What are those thresholds and are any of the EAA schools underneath these levels? If they are, when will the District take them back?

See answer to question 10.

- 12) The Board has asked to have the EAA schools returned back to the District. Will you bring those schools back to the District?

See answer to question 10.

- 13) Based on the data, DPS fared better academically when they were under local control. The data suggests the Board did a better job. Why don't you transition the new district over to the current Board (the legislation has it returning to a newly created Board)? Why can't you return the District to local control now?

Returning DPS to local control is in the best interest of the students of DPS and the residents of the City of Detroit. Governor Snyder asked me to lead the process of transitioning DPS back to local control under pending legislation that he and his administration support in the Michigan Legislature. I agreed to do that and remain committed to that process as promptly as feasible.

I support an orderly, feasible, and practical process that both maximizes the opportunity for the success of public education in Detroit and takes into account the views of everyone in the State of Michigan that cares about public education in Detroit. Under our State Constitution, the Legislature bears ultimate responsibility for the education of our children, and the means by which that responsibility is met. Like all citizens of this state, I am obligated to respect that constitutional responsibility and authority.

- 14) Can you have your Superintendent or a representative from your office attend the Board's meetings to get updates and information so we can understand decisions being made? Will you attend the Board's meetings on a regular basis?

I plan to attend the Board's future meetings, as my schedule allows, along with Superintendent Meriweather and the senior staff.

- 15) PA 436 states the Board is supposed to sign off on any payments over \$50,000. However, that is not happening with legal settlements that the District is entering into. Why is this happening? How are things getting to the judgement levy without our approval?

Broadly stated, PA 436 does require me to submit to the Board many types of transactions in excess of \$50,000. Under the law, when this is done, the Board then has the opportunity to formulate an alternative proposal that would yield substantially the same financial result and better serve DPS's interest.

The settlement of a claim against DPS is not among those that PA 436 requires me to submit to the Board. The Legislature properly determined that for transactions involving the settlement of claims, allowing the Board the opportunity to formulate an alternative proposal would be futile and unnecessary because it is highly unlikely that the claimant will agree to an alternative proposal that is better for DPS.

I do not know how or why prior claims were paid through the judgment levy process. The legislation pending in the Michigan Legislature will provide the resources for DPS to pay all claims against it. I do not plan to use the judgment levy process at all.

- 16) The Board, as the District's duly elected and representative body is supposed to make policy for the District. Right now we are not. As of today who is making policy for the District?

Under PA 436, I make policy for DPS. In doing that, I am committed to hearing from those who may be affected by my decisions and encourage their full participation.

- 17) The audit committee of the Board put into place a number of policies that would help prevent some of the theft and corruption that has come out lately. The Board is asking you to put those policies back into place that they implemented in 2007. Will you do this?

After I take a bit of time to study those policies, I will either implement them or explain to the Board why they are not feasible at this time.

- 18) Will Judge Rhodes provide us with his email and cell number?

Yes. At the Board meeting, my staff gave to each Board member my business card with this information.

- 19) The Board is in the process of suing the state for \$2B for the bond money that went in the buildings that are no longer operated by DPS. Would you like to join in the lawsuit?

It is not in the best interest of DPS, for me or DPS, to join in this lawsuit. We need to focus all of our time and resources on our goals. These goals are (1) creating the best possible and most attractive academic opportunities for our students that we can; (2) smoothly and efficiently transitioning

public education in Detroit back to local control under legislation that may be enacted; and (3) creating the best possible opportunity for success for Detroit's new school district.

20) Will you support a forensic audit for the District? Specifically looking at Contracts.

I neither support nor oppose a forensic audit. DPS's books are public records. Anyone may examine them at their own expense. DPS has no funds to pay for a forensic audit.

21) When Roy Roberts was EM in 2010, Gov. Snyder and his people did an audit. That report was never released to the public. Will you release it?

I would agree to the release of any DPS audit, but we are unaware of this one.

22) The Board alerted Judge Rhodes to the next board meeting, June 9, and told him that the Board meetings are held on the second Thursday of each month.

I plan to attend the Board's future meetings, as my schedule allows, along with Superintendent Meriweather and the senior staff.

23) Previous EMs have told us that we cannot hold an election for officers without their approval or permission. Will you allow the Board to hold an election to elect new officers?

Yes.

24) Some Board members have terms that run through 2017 and 2019, why would you elect a new Board when terms still exist for members on this duly elected Board?

This is a matter for the State Legislature and the Governor to determine.

25) Why does Judge Rhodes support the DEC? The Board should have broader power in making school opening and closing decisions.

I support the DEC because it will provide a responsible, accountable and objective mechanism to promote high-quality, accessible education in all schools in Detroit, both charter and DPS.

26) When will the District restore arts and music programming to Spain?

DPS's Director of Fine Arts is fully aware of the arts and music staffing issue at Spain, and is working diligently to resolve them for the fall of 2017. As a clarification, there is funding to support the position, however, we need

qualified candidates to apply and continued coordination between our Talent Division and the Office of Fine Arts relative to the correct placement of individuals based on their expertise (i.e. Spain needs a string teacher, so someone with a band background would not be ideal). The District is committed to working collaboratively to restore Spain's music and arts program.

27) What is the latest update on lead and copper testing in our schools?

The Department of Environmental Health and Safety at DPS began testing the water in schools for lead and copper during the week of spring break in March 2016. To date, all schools have been initially screened; sampling water at three points 1) a frequently used drinking fountain, 2) drinking fountain or water cooler in the teachers' lounge and 3) preparation sink in the kitchen. Elevated levels of lead or copper has been discovered in 22 of the school district's 93 school buildings.

The school district is preparing mitigation plans for the 22 schools that will be reviewed by the City of Detroit Health Department. The school district is also preparing a Drinking Water Management Plan for each school that will comprise the results of the testing, along with a new policy its Operations Department will use to ensure the water lines in schools are flushed for 1-2 minutes the first day of each week and after a long period of non-use following breaks and summer session.

Presently, the water at drinking fountains and preparation sinks where the elevated levels of lead or copper have been detected have been shut-off and bottled water is being provided. The sample results indicate the elevated levels are localized and not systemic.