

PRESS RELEASE

**RCSO UNIONS CHALLENGE THE DISTRICT'S PROJECTED BUDGET DEFICIT**

All four unions, representing Rochester City School District's approximately 6000 employees, Association of Supervisors and Administrators of Rochester (ASAR), Board of Education Non-Teaching Employees (BENTE), Rochester Association of Paraprofessionals (RAP) and Rochester Teachers Association (RTA), have issued a joint open letter to the RCSO Board of Education urging the school board to reject the District's projected \$117M to \$199M budget deficit for the 2020-2021 school year. The unions allege that the District grossly inflated its shortfall by departing from accepted accounting practices and precedents and thus misrepresented its financial status.

The analysis of the Rochester City School District's latest financial status was conducted by fiscal experts from the New York State United Teachers (NYSUT) and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME). Summary documents are attached. Based on what is known from the District's own budget information, the unions' fiscal experts concluded that the projected deficit is actually \$17M - not \$199M as the district announced on October 20th.

"Our Rochester City Schools families, staff and stakeholders do not have much trust in the financial picture the District keeps presenting to us," said RAP President Angie Rivera. "For reasons unbeknownst to us," said BENTE President Dan DiClemente, "the administration seems determined to inflate the deficit as a way to justify the dismissal of 300 employees while simultaneously setting the stage for additional layoffs." ASAR President Tim Cliby noted: "It is the responsibility of the CFO to report financials accurately and responsibly. The Board's responsibility is to seek sound and unambiguous financial reporting. The District has failed on both counts, either by design or by flawed accounting practices, thus wreaking havoc in an already tense school year." Based on the information provided, the Supervisors and Administrators Association of New York State (SAANYS) is in full agreement with the AFSCME and NYSUT analysis, he added. RTA President Adam Urbanski called the District's projections "a manufactured crisis."

Presidents of the four unions met with RCSO Superintendent Lesli Myers-Small and RCSO Chief Financial Officer Carleen Pierce prior to issuing the joint open letter to the RCSO Board of Education today.