

9th district joins Urban-Suburban

E. Irondequoit school board OKs change

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The East Irondequoit school board voted Tuesday — a month later than it originally planned — to join the Urban-Suburban program, becoming the ninth participating school district. The vote was unanimous with no discussion. The district will recruit 36 students to be split between middle school and high school starting in the fall. It apparently will be the first Monroe County district to welcome high school upperclassmen from the city. Until now, only students entering grades 1-9 have been eligible to participate, but East Irondequoit officials said they have tentative permission to take in 11th- and 12th-graders.

“We think this will have a benefit to the students who (come here) as well as the students we already have,” Superintendent Susan Allen said.

East Irondequoit was one of four districts actively considering joining the 50-year-old voluntary integration program for the 2015-16 school year. The others — Spencerport, East Rochester and Hilton — all had several opportunities to share information with residents and solicit their opinions.

The East Irondequoit board planned to vote to adopt the program Feb. 10, but postponed the decision in the face of criticism it had not made sufficient allowance for public input. It then held a public informational event Feb. 24.

Unlike in Spencerport, there was little controversy on the topic in East Irondequoit except over the board's deliberation process. The East Irondequoit Teachers Association also endorsed the program.

The district already has 43 percent minority students, the greatest percentage of any suburban district. It was interested in bringing in Rochester

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students to prop up enrollment in some of its advanced courses, including the International Baccalaureate program.

Minority Rochester students attend suburban schools through a competitive application process. Nearly 600 participate this year in seven districts, and hundreds more apply but are not chosen.

The Rochester School District sends along its per-pupil state funding and also buses the students, so suburban districts face no added costs. East Irondequoit is planning for about \$95,000 in related state funding for 2015-16.

East Rochester will likely vote on joining Urban-Suburban March 24; Hilton's next board meeting is the same night.

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