

Board pauses on big decision

E. Irondequoit delays Urban-Suburban vote

JUSTIN MURPHY

STAFF WRITER

The East Irondequoit school board Tuesday tabled a vote on joining the Urban- Suburban program but protested the notion it has not been sufficiently transparent about the process.

The idea was first discussed publicly at the board's Jan. 26 meeting, three weeks after a district spokesman said the district was not considering joining.

The district website has no information about the program and there were no public hearings. But school board president Kim Lasher noted the discussion and resolution were included in board agendas and minutes and said she takes offense at the suggestion the board's process has been faulty.

"This board tries to be very transparent in everything we discuss and consider for our community," she said. "I would almost say we pride ourselves on it. ... The point we're trying to make is, this wasn't a rushed decision."

The board will hear residents' comments then vote on the proposal at its next meeting, scheduled for March 17. Although they tabled the vote, the board members Tuesday expressed strong support for adopting the program.

Four residents who spoke at the meeting disagreed with her and called for more information before a decision is made.

"I would think that before voting on such an important issue, you would want to know what the community is feeling," Gina DiGiovanni said. "I'm neither in favor nor against this program, and the reason is that I haven't been informed."

The Spencerport school district has been roiled by its debate over the program. Scores of residents have spoken at two public hearings in advance of a decision to be made later this month.

East Rochester, Hilton and Webster are also considering adopting Urban-Suburban. The first two have scheduled public hearings — one took place Tuesday night in Hilton — and Webster is extending its decision process to next year so it has time to gather input.

Superintendent Susan Allen said the district would likely take in up to 36 Rochester students next year, half at the middle school and half at the high school. The goal will be to fill empty

See VOTE, Page 4A

Article Continued Below

[See VOTE on Page A04](#)

Vote

Continued from Page 3A

seats in some of its International Baccalaureate classes.

East Irondequoit already has the highest percentage of minority students of any suburban district in Monroe County, at 43 percent. The Urban- Suburban program allows minority Rochester students to attend suburban schools if they are selected through a competitive application process; nearly 600 students currently participate.

East Irondequoit would be the eighth suburban district to participate in Urban-Suburban, and the first in more than a decade. Brighton, Brockport, Penfield, Pittsford and West Irondequoit signed up in the 1960s and Fairport joined them in 2003.

JMURPHY7@DemocratandChronicle.com [Twitter.com/CitizenMurphy](https://twitter.com/CitizenMurphy)

Powered by TECNAVIA

Copyright © 2015 Democrat and Chronicle 02/11/2015