

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 27, 2006

Arbor Hill Elementary School

7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Edward Brown, President
Teneka Frost, Vice President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
William Barnette (left at 10pm)
Judy Doesschate

Dr. Eva Joseph
Terrance White
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Joseph Dragone
Kathleen Wetmore

ABSENT: Susan Kushner
Jackie Jenkins-Cox

Call to Order:

Mr. Brown the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Barnette requested a moment of silence in memory of Kenneth Wilcox, a highly decorated city detective on the Albany Police Department who passed away earlier this week.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joseph acknowledged Dr. Brian Perkins from the Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE), who is schedule to give a presentation later in the evening.

Dr. Joseph advised today she participated as a recipient on behalf of the school district in the Martin Luther King Conference hosted by the Governor each year with respect to violence prevention. Dr. Joseph noted the district is once again the recipient of a large number of books, all through the efforts of the state agencies that come together to collect books for students. Dr. Joseph advised 13,000 books have been collected this year by 37 state agencies. The Martin Luther King Foundation sponsored the book drive through the Office of General Services. The campaign started in January and concluded at the end of March. Dr. Joseph noted the district is always so pleased to receive these books. Dr. Joseph mentioned that Hannaford Market also sponsors this program.

Dr. Joseph also noted that the students at St. Sophia had a community service project and they collected books and also conducted a recycling project and with those proceeds made a donation of \$300 to the literacy book drive. This is the third year in a row that the district has received books through this effort.

Dr. Joseph noted there is an Abrookin scholarship that has been established through the Abrookin Advisory Council. Local trade unions, along with a number of individuals have donated more than \$2,000 toward a scholarship or a graduating Abrookin senior who has demonstrated good effort and best attendance. Dr. Joseph publicly thanked the donors.

Dr. Joseph advised that tomorrow is Arbor Day and Mayor Jennings will be at North Albany Academy. The Home Depot Foundation has a ten city nationwide campaign for donating trees. One hundred trees have been donated to the North Albany Academy surrounding area. Trees will be planted tomorrow by students as they learn how to plant, water and feed trees.

Gear-Up night is this coming Tuesday, May 2, 2006 for all grade 7 students and their families.

Dr. Joseph presented the video “Think Breakfast” educational initiative, filmed at Albany School of Humanities (ASH). The commercial was sponsored by the State Education Department in an effort to increase breakfast consumption in New York’s children, enabling them to succeed in the classroom. The video aired through the month of March on radio and TV. Students and staff at ASH participated in the video.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Stanley Axelrod addressed the board relative to stained glass windows at Philip Schuyler Elementary School.

INFORMATION ITEM

Dr. Brian Perkins, Chair of the Council of Urban Boards of Education, an affiliate of the National School Boards Association gave a very comprehensive presentation on the services available to school district through CUBE. The purpose of CUBE is to address the unique local level needs of school board members serving the largest cities in the United States.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Information Items Related to the Facilities Project

MWBE Report

Windell Gray gave a report on the Minority and Women Owned Business participation in the facilities project. Mr. Gray indicated the EEO achieved total goal is 17.64% compared to the goal of 20% and the MWBE achieved goal is 16.89% of the 20% goal. Mr. Gray also distributed a listing of Albany area MBE/MWBE & EEO goals for comparison with the district goals. Mr. Gray advised these goals are set by state agencies. Mr. Gray defined a number of initiatives he is pursuing in increasing participation. Mr. Gray also noted a construction management training course was developed with high participation to assist construction companies in meeting their MBE/MWBE participation levels. Mr. Gray advised graduation from the training course is scheduled for Tuesday, May 9 from 6 – 9 p.m. at 112 State Street. Mr. Gray advised efforts would continue to increase participation numbers through the facilities project construction.

Presentation of the School 19 Design

Dr. Joseph advised the board has received a draft resolution for their consideration for the School 19 design development and construction documents to be submitted the State Education Department in order to secure the building permits for the project. Mr. Gifford introduced Paul Scoville and Andy Neubauer of Collins & Scoville, the architects of the project gave a comprehensive presentation on the design of School 19. Following discussion, Mr. Gifford advised approval of the resolution will be placed on the May 2, 2006 board agenda.

School Budget Notice

Dr. Joseph advised the School Budget Notice the board members received in preparation for this evening's meeting was based on all of the State aid that the district felt could count on up until the time that when the district adopted the 2006-2007 budget on April 10. Dr. Joseph advised that the district received information today that the \$1.5 million for Magnet aid had been included in the override of the Governor's vetoes and the district could count on those funds as well. Ms. Wetmore advised the budget notice previously distributed to board members did not include the assumption of the additional \$1.5 in Magnet aid. The revised budget notice distributed this evening has been changed to reflect the change.

Ms. Wetmore advised the budget amount remains at \$169,965,932. The change is reflected in the estimated property tax levy, which is reduced by \$1.5 million in anticipation of receipt of the Magnet funds. The reduction in the total budget would occur in July when the board adopts an amendment to the budget to reduce the general fund by \$1.5 million and the district would then move \$1.5 million in expenses to the special aid fund. The difference between the adjusted budget and a contingency budget is now \$101,972. Ms. Wetmore discussed items that would be affected should the district be required to go to a contingency budget; student supplies, equipment and salary increases for certain employees. Mr. Barnette noted it is critical that the voters receive information relative to the implications of a contingency budget in terms of how the district is permitted to spend funds. Discussion followed relative to information that should be included in this notice. Review of any additional information, would be reviewed by counsel, prior to any changes. Dr. Joseph also reviewed the various forums for communicating budget information to the public in the upcoming weeks prior to the budget vote.

Swing Space for School 19

Dr. Joseph noted the swing space plan originally defined allowed for swing space to be shared by both elementary and middle school students at the same location. Experience as the district moves through the construction process indicates that this is not the best situation for students. Dr. Joseph also noted that there is no one single space for the students in School 19 to be housed as School 19 goes through its renovation. This means that the students at 19 would have to be split. As such, Dr. Joseph advised the district is recommending that the renovation of School 19 be delayed until July 1, 2007 from January 1, 2007. This allows the district a better opportunity to identify two viable sites for students that will benefit both students and parents through the renovation process. This would then delay the completion of the project until January 2009, when students would return to School 19. Costs associated with adjusting the schedule are anticipated to amount at approximately \$667,000, which works within the contingencies for the project. Mr. Gifford noted that final costs would be dependent on the results of the bidding on the project. Dr. Joseph noted the change in schedule requires board approval. Following discussion, Mr. Brown noted the board would act on the change in schedule at the May 2, 2006 board meeting.

Building Condition Survey

Dr. Joseph advised the Facilities Committee met earlier this week and had a very comprehensive review and discussion relative to the Building Condition Survey. Dr. Joseph noted a point was made that clarification is necessary that this is a different process than the facilities master plan and the benefit the district has experienced from the facilities master plan is reflected in this survey. Dr. Joseph advised she has provided board members a memo, which summarizes information relative to the survey. The district is required to complete the Building Condition Survey every five years. The last survey was in 2000 and this is the second time the district has conducted the survey. The findings of the report reflect the progress the district has made with respect to the quality of its facilities. Dr. Joseph noted that there are a number of schools, because they have been renovated, replaced or constructed in the last five years that are exempt from the Building Condition Survey review, along with schools that are presently under construction or plan to be constructed. Dr. Joseph noted that the unsatisfactory rating does not require immediate capital investment to maintain occupancy. This information should be considered a guide for future planning and capital projects.

Mr. Gifford advised the survey is an inventory of critical components in the buildings to be looked at. The survey is very much a tool for master planning for districts to evaluate. Mr. Gifford gave a presentation on information that was included in the survey and the status of various school buildings. Mr. Gifford advised that a significant amount of projects noted in the 2000 survey were completed in the facilities project. Andy Neubauer from Collins & Scoville reviewed the specifics of the survey.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Academic Committee

Ms. Doesschate advised the Academic Committee met earlier this week. The primary issue the committee discussed is identifying priorities. The committee members have developed a laundry list of items that the committee might consider. Ms. Doesschate advised the goal for the next meeting is to identify two or three priorities that the committee will focus on.

Policy Committee

Mr. Brown advised the Policy Committee planned to present the seven policies reviewed by the committee at this meeting. Because the agenda was too full, the policies have been rescheduled for discussion at the 5-18-06 meeting with approval scheduled for the June 6 meeting. Mr. Brown advised in order to stay on track and complete the full district policy review within the recommended period of 18 months, the board will need to follow a systematic process that includes a continuous review and adoption of policies. The committee is recommending the following process. The Policy Committee reviews and revises policies submitted by NYSSBA at its monthly meeting. Final drafts of revised or new policies would be placed on the roundtable meeting agenda for discussion by the full board. Additional revisions would be made and policies would then be placed on the regular meeting agenda for approval.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Frost made a motion to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board