

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

September 22, 2005

Montessori Magnet School

7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Edward Brown, President
Susan Kushner, Vice President
Teneka Frost, Secretary
William Barnette
Patricia Fahy (8:00 p.m.)
Barbara Gaffuri
Dr. Eva Joseph
Terrance White
Kathleen Wetmore
Joseph Dragone
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Minsoo Lee, Student Representative
Kathy Wolverton, Counsel

ABSENT: None

Call to Order:

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Brown announced that annually the Board of Education is responsible for completing an evaluation of the Superintendent's performance evaluation. The Board has completed that task for the past year and while the details of this process are confidential, the Board is pleased to report that the Board has unanimously determined that Dr. Joseph has met all of the agreed upon goals and objectives in a satisfactory manner. The Board is pleased with this outcome and is now in the process of finalizing performance goals for the coming year.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joseph thanked the members of the Board of Education for the evaluation. Dr. Joseph advised she is privileged to be the Superintendent of the Albany Schools. Dr. Joseph noted the District has remarkable challenges and the District does remarkable work to meet those challenges.

Dr. Joseph congratulated the newly tenured teachers who were recognized this evening prior to this meeting. Dr. Joseph thanked the teachers for their commitment to the students.

Dr. Joseph noted that school safety has been a priority in the District these last several weeks and the Board will be discussing a Random Search Policy. Dr. Joseph noted this is one element in a broad spectrum of school safety procedures. Dr. Joseph noted the District has been working very closely with the State Education Department and the New and the New York Center for School Safety to develop a full assessment of the District's school safety protocol. This assessment will include focus groups with students, teachers, administrators, parents and community members. Dr. Joseph noted this is an excellent step forward for the District in terms of insuring that schools are safe environments. Dr. Joseph noted this issue has been a source of deliberation by the Board for a number of years.

Dr. Joseph noted the agenda includes the appointment of Ms. Vibetta Sanders as the Principal of School 16; and the appointment of Ms. Judith Collins to the position of Assistant Principal at Harriet Gibbons High School. Dr. Joseph introduced Ms. Sanders and Ms. Collins.

Dr. Joseph also noted the Readers to Leaders Program in the District has promoted strong reading. Over 1,800 students from the District participated in the Albany Public Library Summer Reading Program. Students who read at least 25 books were given the opportunity to compete for the grand prize of a Trek Bicycle. Four of the five winners are students of the Albany School District. Blade Boyd - Hackett Middle School Student; Alexandria Mohammed – School 16; Tamilyn Cogne – Myers Middle School and Joseph Sanchez – North Albany Academy. Dr. Joseph noted she would be attending the ceremony to award these prizes at the Albany Public Library on Friday, September 23, 2005.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. Carolyn Keefe, President of School 16 PTA addressed the Board relative administrative change in staff at School 16.
2. Maria Karandy addressed the Board relative to transition at School 16 and other District schools.
3. Esther Patterson addressed the Board relative to transition and security Philip Schuyler for School 16 students.
4. Noelene Smith addressed the Board relative to after school programs and how the most needy students can utilize those programs.
5. Mark Mishler, Co-President of the City Council PTA, addressed the Board relative to the Random Search Policy.
6. Michael O'Brien addressed the Board relative to the District's outdoor athletic facilities planning, considering renovation of Bleeker Stadium in a cooperative effort with the City.
7. Lolisa McLoughlin addressed the Board relative to an appointment to the vacancy on the Board.
8. Bill Jennings addressed the Board regarding the renovation of Bleeker Stadium.

Ms. Kushner made a motion to advance the discussion item on Random Search Policy for discussion before the information item to accommodate the members of the audience. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion).

ACTION ITEMS

Routine Consent Items

Mr. Brown presented routine consent items, Memorandum of Agreement for Safe Schools Principal and Appointment of School 16 Principal. Mr. Brown also noted an additional item under appointments to include the appointment of the Assistant Principal at Harriet Gibbons High School. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the routine consent items. Ms. Frost seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

Facilities Project

Guiding Principles on the High School Education Restructuring Plan

Dr. Joseph noted the Board received with the agenda a summation based on discussion at the last Board meeting about principles to guide the high school restructuring plan. Dr. Joseph noted these guiding principles are very important in insuring that the District stays on point with what the District wants to accomplish with the facilities project. Dr. Joseph noted these principles would guide the District as it restructures the high school educational program. Dr. Joseph noted Sue Robertson led a very comprehensive effort for input to assure that a large representation from a number of stakeholder groups. Mr. Gifford also reviewed the process. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the guiding principles. Ms. Frost seconded the motion.

The Board voted (6-0) unanimously to approve the motion.

Draft Environmental Impact Study for the High School Referendum

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve a resolution to approve the Draft Environmental Impact Study for the High School Referendum. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion. Dr. Joseph noted the approval of this resolution this evening begins the public comment period of thirty days. Dr. Joseph noted although the District is not required to have a public hearing on this document. However, there will be a public hearing on October 6, 2005 at 6:00 p.m. at Albany High School, prior to the Board Meeting. Public comments will be heard at this session. Dr. Joseph noted this document reflects revisions presented at the last Board meeting. Mr. Gifford reviewed the changes.

The Board voted (6-0) unanimously to approve the motion.

Eagle Point Elementary School (School 27) Furniture, Fixture and Equipment Bids

Mr. Brown presented a resolution to approve a contract for School 27 Furniture, Fixture and Equipment. Ms. Fahy made a motion to approve the resolution. Ms. Frost seconded the motion. Mr. Gifford noted the resolution was presented for discussion at the last Board meeting. At that time the dollar amount of the contract had not yet been finalized. Mr. Gifford advised the cost is \$22,442, for Accent Commercial Furniture to do the acquisition, installation, inventory and clean up of furniture at Eagle Point Elementary School. Mr. Gifford advised the furniture is being purchased through a State contract. Following discussion Mr. Barnette advised he would not be supporting this resolution based on the fact that this contract was not bid out.

Mr. Barnette made a motion to revise the language in the resolution be changed from “the most responsible proposal” to read “the only responsible proposal”. Ms. Fahy seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Mr. Brown presented the revised resolution for approval.

The Board voted 5 ayes and 1 nay. Mr. Barnette was opposed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Random Search Policy

Dr. Joseph advised the Policy Committee had the opportunity to review the draft policy on several occasions in preparation for presentation to the Board. Copies were distributed to Board members. Dr. Joseph noted this policy has been under deliberation for some time. Dr. Joseph noted this is one element of a comprehensive school safety program in the District. Dr. Joseph noted the Board is to be commended for its deliberations in recognizing that there were certain things that were not going to be implemented within the school setting in trying to insure that

whatever came forward as a random search policy was appropriate to the fact that it would be applied to a school setting and was least disruptive to the educational program. Dr. Joseph advised Ms. Wolverton of Girvin & Ferlazzo has worked with the District very closely on this policy and requested that she go through the components of the policy.

Ms. Wolverton defined two different documents. The first is the Board policy with regard to searches and the second is draft administrative regulations and procedures. Ms. Wolverton reviewed the policy, highlighting the fact that the policy authorizes different types of searches such as individualized student searches, desk or locker searches, automobile searches and metal detector screenings. Each one of those particular types of searches is discussed in the policy. Ms. Wolverton noted much of what is contained in this policy is already referenced in the District's Code of Conduct. Dr. Joseph noted that the District is working with the State Education Department Center for School Safety to guarantee that its process is transparent, random, fair and equitable. They will assist the District in the assessment to assure that whatever the District is implementing is done in an appropriate way.

Public Comments

1. Anne Pope addressed the Board relative to the Random Search Policy.
2. Jennifer Pickett addressed the Board relative to the Random Search Policy.
3. Nolene Smith addressed the Board relative to the Random Search Policy.
4. Janice Lapoga addressed the Board relative to the Random Search Policy.

Mr. Brown noted additional discussion would take place prior to approval of the policy. Mr. Brown advised the proposed policy would be posted on the website and the public will have the opportunity for comment.

INFORMATION ITEM

After School Programs

Mr. White advised the Board has expressed an interest in the after school programs/extended day programs. Mr. White introduced Mrs. Arnelle Ullrich, the Director of After School Programs. Mrs. Ullrich gave a comprehensive review of after school programs. Mrs. Ullrich spoke about safe environment, academic achievement, character building and positive self-image for students. Mrs. Ullrich addressed the key elements fostering effective and efficient extended day networks, tuition based programs, program enrollment, choice model implementation, continuing development, goals and how those goals can be achieved. Mrs. Ullrich also addressed funding challenges related to the provision of programs.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Education Specifications for the High School Restructuring

Mr. Gifford reviewed the various planning options that have taken place relative to options for restructuring of the high school. Mr. Gifford advised the high school referendum being developed for the high school takes a different approach to the other plans in that it is educationally based to increase graduation rates in the District. Mr. Gifford reviewed the process in defining the restructuring plan that is being proposed. Mr. Gifford advised the plan is the result of several workshops involving community stakeholders. Mr. Gifford advised the document goes through the high school room by room, with shared spaces and four separate houses, the theater complex and the gym complex. Also included are finishes, furniture, technology needed in each room.

Mr. Gifford advises this finished campus will be the one of the largest single campuses in New York State. Mr. Gifford advised that post referendum, this would be the document that will go forward in the design process. Following discussion, Mr. Brown advised the Education Specifications would be on the next agenda for approval.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Barnette advised the Policy Committee met earlier this week. The focused of discussion was the Random Search Policy. Ms. Gaffuri noted all three members were present at the meeting. No further report.

Ms. Fahy advised the there is no further report from the Facilities Committee. The Intergovernmental Committee has not met.

Mr. Brown advised there was a scheduling issue related to the Academic Committee. Meetings are now scheduled for the third Tuesday of each month.

Mr. Brown advised a comprehensive listing of committee meetings has been forwarded to all Board members. Meetings would be following this schedule.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

None

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Kushner made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Brown advised a second is not necessary to the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board for Mary Bryan