

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

September 6, 2005

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Edward H. Brown, Jr.
Susan Kushner
Teneka Frost
William Barnette
Patricia Fahy
Barbara Gaffuri

Dr. Eva Joseph
Jeffrey Honeywell
Terrance White
Joseph Dragone
Kathleen Wetmore
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Minsoo Lee

Absent: None

Call to Order:

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Brown welcomed the members of the audience and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting.

Mr. Brown commended the teaching staff, support staff and central administration for the preparation made for this academic year. Mr. Brown noted that there was an excellent administrative retreat, involving staff from the Assistant Principal level and up. Mr. Brown further noted that as Board President he had the honor to speak to the teaching staff earlier this morning at the Superintendent's Conference. Mr. Brown noted he is very proud of the excellent teaching staff and the support system of nurses, social workers and other professionals. Mr. Brown noted we are off to a good start and the Board has high expectations for our teaching staff. We expect much higher academic outcomes for our students for the 2005-2006 school year.

Mr. Brown noted the September Roundtable meeting has been rescheduled from September 15 to September 22nd.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joseph introduced and welcomed Ms. Kathleen Wetmore, Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs. Dr. Joseph extended thanks and appreciation to Mr. Robert Paquette for his work as Interim Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs. Dr. Joseph noted two appointments are on the agenda this evening. The first is for the Principal of Hackett Middle School. Dr. Joseph introduced Mr. Kenneth W. Newman. The second appointment is for Food Service Director. Dr. Joseph introduced Mr. J.W. Gayle. Dr. Joseph extended congratulations and good luck to both appointees.

Dr. Joseph noted the District has celebrated the opening of three new schools, which is very exciting for the District. Dr. Joseph congratulated the Board of Education for their hard work. Dr. Joseph noted a collection was conducted earlier this date at the Superintendent's Conference for the Katrina relief fund. The total collected was approximately \$4,000. Dr. Joseph thanked Mr. Ritchie, Ms. Viggiani and Mr. Spicer for coordinating the process. Dr. Joseph spoke about the message to staff this morning relative to relationships, personal interaction with students and the quality of teaching. Dr. Joseph advised Mr. Gary Howard gave a presentation to staff on diversity training. Dr. Joseph also spoke about recognizing the successes of the District. Dr. Joseph noted each school was presented a banner that says welcome to (the name of the school), which will be placed in the entry of each school. Dr. Joseph assured the Board that the District is ready to open our doors to our students.

Mr. Barnette confirmed that the reception for Tenured Teachers is scheduled for the September Roundtable meeting, which will take place on September 22, 2005 at the new Montessori Magnet School.

Board Members commended Dr. Joseph and District staff for their hard work in preparing for the opening of schools this year.

INTRODUCTION OF STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Dr. Joseph introduced and welcomed Minsoo Lee, a senior at Albany High School, who will be serving as the Student Representative to the Board of Education. Mr. Lee advised he has been a student in the District since kindergarten at School 16. Mr. Lee has also attended Livingston, Hackett and Albany High School. Mr. Lee advised he is really happy with the District and he looks forward to seeing more improvements.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. Larry Frank, Co-President of the City Council PTA addressed the Board relative to the completion of facilities plan, the academic plan and information related to the referendum.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Brown presented Routine Consent Items including Proceedings of Meetings for August 2, 2005 and August 18, 2005, Resignations, Abolish Position, Creation of Position, Termination, Leave of Absences, Transfers, Appointments (Administrative Appointment, Interim Administrative Appointments, Probationary Appointments, Regular Substitutes, Miscellaneous, Part-time Teachers, Itinerant Substitute Teachers, Adult Learning Center, Civil Service, Civil Service Permanent), Treasurer's Report, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, Award of Bid, 2004 Budget Transfers under \$10,000, 2004 Budget Transfers over \$10,000, 2005 Budget Transfers under \$10,000, 2005 Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Budget Status Report 7/1/04 – 6/30/05, Budget Status Report 7/1/05 – 6/30/06, Substitute Rate Changes, Real Property Tax Adjustments and Contracts for Grants and Special Projects (The Reading & Writing Project Network, LLC (Columbia University), Renaissance Educational Consultants and Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute). Ms. Fahy made a motion to approve Routine Consent Items. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

Mrs. Gaffuri requested that Itinerant Substitute Appointments under Appointments be set aside. Ms. Fahy requested that Transfers and 2004-2005 Budget Transfers over \$10,000 be set aside.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion absent the items to be set aside.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the Itinerant Substitute Teachers. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion. Following discussion Mr. Brown called for a vote on the motion.

The Board voted 5 ayes, 0 nays and 1 abstention. Mrs. Gaffuri abstained. Motion carried.

Ms. Fahy made a motion to approve Transfers. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Following discussion Mr. Brown called for a vote on the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Ms. Fahy made a motion to approve 2004-2005 Budget Transfers over \$10,000. Ms. Frost seconded the motion. Ms. Fahy requested that the following explanation be recorded in the proceedings of the meeting. The transfers included for Board approval total \$479,609. The majority of that amount is for a transfer to the budget code for Unclassified Expenses. That transfer of \$414,520 was necessary to book in accounting adjustments of receivables (bills sent out by the District) that may not ever be received. This audit requirement offsets those questionable revenues by showing an offset entry in the expense side of the general fund. If not done in this manner, the fund balance for the year would not show a realistic balance. The balance of the transfer, amounting to approximately \$34,580, relates to an error in reporting of school tax collections in 1998. At that time, an outside firm had been hired to collect school taxes and it was thought that more tax money was due the District. It has not ever been determined that in fact that this error occurred. Therefore the amount that had been carried as a receivable for many years has been written off. Following discussion Mr. Brown called for a vote on the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Election of Officers

Mr. Brown advised there is a vacancy created with the resignation of the President of the Board. Mr. Brown advised at this time Board Members would discuss filling the position of Vice President of the Board. Mr. Honeywell advised the statute does not require that there be a vice president. In the absence of the President, i.e. him being out of town, etc. it is the recommendation of counsel that the Board consider appointing a vice president to act automatically in his absence, not only for running meetings but also for executing documents on behalf of the School District. Following discussion, Mr. Brown called for a nomination for the position of Vice President of the Board of Education. Ms. Fahy nominated Ms. Kushner for Vice President. Mr. Brown called for a vote on the nomination.

The Board voted 5 ayes 0 opposed and 1 abstention.

Mr. Barnette noted he abstained based on his belief that filling this position is not necessary.

Mr. Brown extended congratulations to Ms. Kushner on her appointment.

Ms. Frost made a motion to address the vacancy in the Secretary position. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion. Mr. Brown called for a vote on the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Mr. Brown nominated Teneka Frost for the position of Secretary of the Board of Education. Mr. Brown called for a vote on the nomination.

The Board voted 5 ayes, 0 opposed and 1 abstention.

Mr. Barnette noted once again he abstained based on the fact that the responsibilities of the Secretary to the Board of Education are unclear.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Information Item Related to the Facilities Project

Minority and Women Owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) Monitoring Report

Mr. Wendell Gray reviewed the EEO and MBE/WBE Summary Report. Mr. Gray advised he has been able to work with the Youth Construction Initiative Project. A number of students have participated in the project in summer construction jobs in different disciplines. Also, there has been one person on staff to assist in the Built on Pride program. Mr. Gray reviewed the average total of Equal Employment Opportunity minority participation in the facilities project at 14.82% compared to the goal of 10% and Women Owned Business at 2.93% compared to the goal of 10%. Mr. Gray advised there a number of contractors who have not yet submitted monthly reports, which would increase the participation percentages. Mr. Gray noted a number of increased numbers. The average total for minority is 16.85% and women was 3.11% compared to a goal of 10% for each. Mr. Gray advised the total goal figures was 20% compared to an actual figure of 19.96%. Mr. Gray advised he continues to identify women owned businesses to participate in the project. Mr. Gray also reviewed the minority business enterprises and women business enterprises percentages. Mr. Gray advised average for the MWBE firms for the total project participation is 17.68% compared to a goal of 20%.

Following discussion Mr. Gifford advised that these percentages do not convert into actual dollars from the total project budget. Soft costs, architectural, attorney fees, finance fee, etc. need to be separated out from the total, which would be beyond the scope of Mr. Gray's contracted services. Mr. Gifford advised the goals presented are based on the provisions of the Project Labor Agreement relative to labor and minority enterprise participation.

Action Item Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change Orders

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve change orders as presented. Ms. Frost seconded the motion. Mr. Gifford advised Sheridan Preparatory Academy is the only project that is challenged in terms of remaining within budget. Presently there are excess funds in the other projects. Mr. Gifford advised that School 20 & 27 might also challenge the budget. Mr. Gifford also advised that the Board would be asked to approve additional funds, should they be needed. Following discussion Mr. Brown called for a vote.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Discussion Items Related to the Facilities Project

Guiding Principles on the High School Education Restructuring Plan

Dr. Joseph advised the Board has been provided the guiding principles for the high school restructuring. Dr. Joseph noted when the District developed the elementary and middle school plan, educational planning was a part of the process, which guided the vision for those schools. Dr. Joseph noted often times when it came to the decision-making, the District called on those basic tenets to guide decisions. Dr. Joseph noted at this juncture, with the amount of time and

work that has gone into planning the educational concept upon which the high school will be redesigned, that it is very important to transcribe all that the District has agreed to in terms of an educational concept into some simple guiding principles to continue to guide the work that is taking place.

Dr. Joseph noted the first principle is the design for the new and restructured Albany High School will be driven by educational objectives and a commitment to strong educational components. Dr. Joseph advised feedback from Board Members in terms of review and whether or not this confidently meets what the Board sees as items that have been reviewed and endorsed in the high school educational concept. At mention of new demographic information Mr. Gifford advised that this information is not expected to be ready until the beginning of October. Mr. Gifford advised this information has been delayed due to computer issues. Dr. Joseph noted an informational campaign related to the referendum would include these types of descriptors to identify to the community the need for the restructured facility. Dr. Joseph noted presentations to the public will be very clear relative to information about classes in each house, community access, etc. Comments and suggestions should be directed to the superintendent by Wednesday, September 14. This item will be presented for action at the next meeting on September 22.

Draft EIS for the High School Referendum

Dr. Joseph advised the Draft Environmental Impact Statement is being presented for review this evening, and would then be presented for adoption at the next meeting on September 22. The Board will have opportunity for continued review and comments through Wednesday, September 14 so that any questions or comments into the final statement that will be presented at that time. This would begin the thirty-day public comment period. A public hearing has been tentatively scheduled for the evening of October 6 at 6:00 p.m. prior to the Board meeting. Mr. Gifford advised a revised document would be presented at the next meeting taking into consideration comments and changes based on Board Members input and review by the facilities project staff. Mr. Gifford advised the project description comes from what the Board authorizes the facilities staff to do as lead agency such as inclusion of the Athletic Master Plan. Mr. Gifford noted before conclusion, the Board will be discussing the impact to surge space and the years required to complete the project and what will happen during that period of time. Mr. Gifford noted the Arbor Hill piece would be removed since that piece has already been processed through SEQRA. Dr. Joseph advised a meeting is scheduled next week to identify questions that need to be answered and the decisions that need to be made from this point forward in order to determine the scope of the referendum in 2006.

School 27 Furniture, Fixture and Equipment Bids

Mr. Gifford advised the Board previously granted authority to the facilities to negotiate with Accent Furniture to provide services on Montessori and School. Mr. Gifford advised the facilities team is now requesting Board approval to negotiate similarly with Accent Furniture for School 27 (Eagle Point Elementary School). Mr. Gifford advised due to the hectic pace of completing schools, it becomes increasingly difficult to secure furniture in a timely manner. Mr. Gifford advised this is not the authority to not bid furniture. The District buys furniture through a state contract. The majority of this contract is controlled by state contract. Mr. Gifford advised this involves negotiating with Accent to provide services such as ordering, developing purchase orders, receiving, opening, inspecting furniture, following up on defects, and actual installation and inventorying of furniture. Mr. Gifford advised the negotiated agreement would be presented to the Board at the next meeting for approval. Mr. Honeywell advised the contract is for professional services, which does not require a bidding process.

Ms. Fahy made a motion to suspend the Board Committee Reports and Board Member Items so that the Board could move into Executive Session. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Adjournment

Ms. Frost made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 9:15 p.m.

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board