

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

October 2, 2007

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Teneka Frost, President
Wayne Morris, Secretary
Dr. Mark Barth
Barbara Gaffuri
Jackie Jenkins-Cox

Dr. Eva Joseph
Jeffrey Honeywell
Dr. Joseph Dragone
Linda Jackson-Chalmers

ABSENT: William Barnette, Vice President
Judy Doesschate

Call to Order:

Ms. Frost called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Frost welcomed the members of the audience and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting. Mr. Barnette and Ms Doesschate were absent due to out-of-town business.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- The kick-off for the Albany High Learning Center took place earlier today. The program is a tutoring and mentoring program supported by a \$15,000 grant from The Community Foundation for the Capital Region's Standish Family Fund.
- The Learning Center was born out of a partnership with the University of Albany Alliance for Young Talent. More than 50 UAlbany students have signed up to participate as tutors and mentors for about 300 Albany High School students during the 2007-2008 school year. This program, which started out as a pilot program last year, is now a permanent resource at Albany High. James Anderson, UAlbany vice president for student success was present at today's kick-off.
- The annual Teach Out would take place later this month. Professors from UAlbany, with Albany High School faculty and staff. All cabinet members will also be teaching.
- Gear-Up kick-off will take place later this week for the third year. The cohort that began as 7th graders are now 9th graders. The reception includes a family dinner at Albany High from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Angelena Rouse, student representative to the Board of Education spoke about the success of the new dress code and the no cell phone policy. Implementation has been more successful than anticipated. Faculty and staff are consistent in their approach of zero tolerance. Everyone is working together to ensure that the dress code is adhered to. Also, when students do not have their ID cards they are given detention. Those in the media are requested to focus on the good things that are happening at Albany High such as the induction to the National Honor Society.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Michelle Birnbaum addressed the board regarding parenting and environmental classes.
2. Lisa Ternullo addressed the board regarding landscaping issues around Myers Middle School and public use of the swimming pool.
3. Marlon Anderson addressed the board regarding community issues.

INFORMATION ITEM

Strategic Planning

- The strategic planning process is an all-inclusive process in terms of not just moving forward with the district in isolation, but rather insure that stakeholders are brought into the discussions with the district. Following a significant amount of background work in identifying potential consultants and processes, the district has come to a point of agreement that SoarPoint Associates will be working with the district as consultants through this process. They are certified in the Cambridge method, which is renowned and validated method of strategic planning. They have been guiding the district in terms of preparation for this process. A presentation by SoarPoint Associates is schedule for the next board meeting to discuss expectations and how the process works, moving forward to an action plan.
- The district has confirmed November 29, 30 and December 1, 2007, Thursday (12:00 p.m.-8 p.m.), Friday and Saturday (8 a.m.- 4 p.m.) as the three recommended days for the strategic planning process to occur. The membership composition will include the Board of Education, District Administrators and also a number of community members. The district is currently in the process of providing documents to SoarPoint that would give them the best profile of the district, formal reports, data and a number of documents that they have requested so that they can become familiar with the Albany School District and the issues that face it. The board reviewed a draft listing of titles that should be on the committee as the district starts to think about transferring those titles to specific individuals that can be invited to participate. The intent of the board and administration is to have this process transparent, engaging and with great integrity.
- Board members discussed the composition of the planning team in terms of the areas that should be represented and dual roles members could play. The board reached consensus regarding the composition of the planning team, not necessarily individuals. The board reached consensus in using the template presented by the superintendent. The next step in the process is to select those individuals and to invite them to participate. Additional membership opportunities will be available as the plan goes forward and action plan teams are identified.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Ms. Frost presented the Routine consent Items, including Proceedings of Meeting, September 4, 2007 and September 20, 2007; Resignations, Positions Vacated, Leave of Absence, Transfers, Appointments (Probationary, Regular Substitutes, Part-time Teacher, Miscellaneous, Coaching Fall 2007, Civil Service, Civil Service Permanent, Attendance at Conferences, Treasurer's Report, Budget Status Report, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Bid Awards, Real Property Tax Adjustments, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, Committee on Special Education, Subcommittee on Special Education, Committee on Pre-School Special Education,

Contracts for Grants and Special Projects (Alternatives Unlimited, Capital Region Sponsor-A-Scholar, Inc., The Commission on Independent Colleges and Universities, Research Foundation SUNY, William Saffady, Information Management Specialist, Criminal Investigations, LLC, University at Albany, Memorandum of Agreement (APSUE). Mrs. Jenkins-Cox asked that proceedings of September 4, 2007 be set aside. Ms. Frost asked that the Research Foundation SUNY grant be set aside.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion absent those items set aside.
Motion passed.

Ms. Frost presented the proceedings of September 4, 2007 for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Dr. Barth seconded the motion. Mrs. Jenkins-Cox advised the first sentence on the second page incorrectly indicates that Mr. Barnette made the motion. Motion was actually made by Mr. Morris and seconded by Mrs. Jenkins-Cox.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the proceedings as corrected.
Motion passed.

Ms. Frost presented the Research Foundation SUNY contract for approval. Dr. Barth made a motion for approval. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Following a brief discussion, Ms. Frost called the vote.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Change Orders

Ms. Frost presented change orders for the Hackett Middle School project. Ms. Jenkins-Cox made a motion for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

SEQRA Resolution for TOAST and Giffen Memorial

Ms. Frost presented SEQRA Resolutions for the TOAST and Giffen projects. Mr. Morris made a motion for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

Policy #5280 Code of Conduct for Student Athletes

Ms. Frost advised the board has decided to table this action to allow for additional discussion.

- This policy appears to have some sense of overreach and concerns about the feasibility and enforceability, creating complications for the district. Specifically, if the student is present where there is alcohol, the student is culpable, which leads to snitching, etc.

- This policy has been presented as a policy that the “Big 10” schools have that the district has to catch up with a policy that has been widely embraced. Counsel has advised there is good case law that supports an athletic eligibility policy. What is our intention here? The policy seems more like a gotcha than a help you. The bond between the coaches and the athletes is a real bond. It goes beyond what the student-teacher relationship is. It becomes family during the term of the season. There are transgressions and vulnerabilities of our athletes that they need tough love and they need that kind of firmness of hand.
- Discussion continued relative to the enforceability of the policy, emphasis on assistance and extending the tenets of the policy to other extra curricular activities and the differences in consequences for this policy compared to the Code of Conduct Policy recently approved by the board. Kathleen Ryan, Director of Athletics, joined in the discussion regarding the benefits of having this policy in place in taking the subjectivity out of enforcing rules with equal consequences for similar infractions. Ms. Ryan also noted that consequences do not restrict the student from practices or attending sport events. The student is not permitted to participate in the games.

Ms. Frost advised the time for this item expired. Ms. Jenkins-Cox made a motion to extend the time by 10 minutes. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

- Ms. Ryan noted the purpose of the policy is to resolve issues that come up at the appropriate level. Ms. Ryan advised she has used this policy in other districts very successfully. Treating everyone equitably. It also gives teachers and coaches an opportunity to educate students. Dr. Joseph noted the policy reinforces what the expectations are for those students representing the district in sporting events and beyond the borders of the school. It also reinforces the fact that there is not anything in the Code of Conduct that we find unacceptable that isn't actual illegal.

Ms. Frost advised the time for this item expired. Ms. Jenkins-Cox made a motion to extend the time for an additional 10 minutes. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

- Dr. Joseph noted student athletes take on a level of responsibility for themselves and their teammates. Student athletes are generally very proud of being part of a team and take that representation very seriously. Coaches are also focused on strength of character with student athletes. Having a Code of Conduct clearly defines what is expected of student athletes. The policy reinforces the character building and the expectations of responsibility towards their team in terms of what is not acceptable and the consequences that go along with unacceptable behavior.
- This policy would be placed on the round table agenda for action. Discussion continued and a suggestion was made to bring this policy back to the Policy Committee.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Morris advised the Audit Committee met. The next meeting is scheduled for October 29, 2007. The agenda will focus on procedures related to the internal auditor position.

Dr. Barth advised the ad-hoc committee on voting locations met. Members are doing an analysis of voter participation in the May budget votes by ward and district. The group will now go forward in consultation with representatives of the City Council to discuss particular problems. The group will then proceed with recommendations to the board.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

None

Adjournment

Dr. Barth made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board