

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

December 6, 2005

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

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

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

Absent: Minsoo Lee

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 introduced Jackie Jenkins Cox, Board Member elect. Mr. Brown advised Ms. Cox would be joining the Board in January. Mr. Brown welcomed the members of the audience and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joseph congratulated the middle school Robotics Teams who participated in the first Lego League Robotics Tournament, the "Ocean Odyssey Challenge" at RPI on Saturday, December 3, 2005. North Albany Academy's team took home first prize in Robot Design, Myers Middle School students took third in the same category and Philip Livingston took home first place for Performance.

Albany High School students visited UAlbany for Early Glimpse of College Life as part of the Educational Alliance between the City School District of Albany and UAlbany, the portion titled Albany High School-UAlbany Alliance for Young Talent. Dr. Joseph noted Friday, December 2, 2005, began the first phase of all Grade 9 students taking a trip to the UAlbany campus for an early glimpse of college life. The half-day session includes an orientation program, a campus tour, lunch in the Indian Quad Cafeteria and a student panel discussion. Dr. Joseph noted all 9th grade students will have the opportunity to participate in the program this year.

Dr. Joseph advised she would be working with the principals of School 16 and School 18 to develop their school naming committees. The District will be looking in the process to find a quality way to solicit community input in these decisions.

Dr. Joseph advised the middle school enrollment and swing space plan for 2006-2007 had been scheduled for presentation before December 1st. Dr. Joseph advised there are a number of details to this issue and the District is being very deliberate to insure that the first priority is academic programs for students. Dr. Joseph advised the District is getting very close to putting a plan in place. A meeting with the principals is scheduled for later this week for discussion, finding time to vet it with parents, PTA's and the communities to get some feedback and then bringing it forward to the Board at the January roundtable meeting.

Dr. Joseph advised the District had been anticipating a vote on the high school referendum at this meeting. Dr. Joseph noted she has had discussion with Board Members and wanted to assure the community that the District is not missing a beat. The District has recognized that the December 6 deadline is a date the District established, not as a legal requirement, but one that would allow the most time between approval and the May 2006 vote. Dr. Joseph noted there is a considerable number of priorities the District is considering in terms of addressing some of the structural elements and the orderliness of Albany High School to generate a safe and orderly climate. Dr. Joseph noted for the time being, the District has postponed the decision on the referendum.

Dr. Joseph introduced the new Instructional Supervisor for Mathematics K-12, Mrs. Doreen Quinlan. Dr. Joseph advised Mrs. Quinlan brings a tremendous amount of strength and energy to the District and the District is very enthusiastic about Mrs. Quinlan filling this very important position.

Dr. Joseph also advised the ribbon cutting ceremony is scheduled to take place at Eagle Point Elementary School, the former School 27, on Thursday, December 15th, from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. The ceremony will include a tour of the school. Dr. Joseph advised the building is a beautiful facility.

Dr. Joseph also encouraged those present to attend the high school production of *The Skin of Our Teeth*. Performances are scheduled on Friday December 9th & 10th and Saturday December 11th. Dr. Joseph advised performances of the production took place last Saturday and Sunday with very positive feedback.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. Bill Ritchie, President of APSTA, addressed the Board relative the APSTA membership's commitment to working with all stakeholders on the issues of school safety.
2. Larry Frank, Co-President of the City Council PTA addressed the Board regarding the swing space plan and the Charter Schools Committee Meeting on December 12th at 10:00 a.m.
3. Debra Brown Grant addressed the Board on behalf of Anne Pope, President of the NAACP, relative to safety issues and concerns in the District.

INFORMATION

Dr. Joseph advised Mr. Ken Cioffi, Director of Special Education, had put together information for the Board. Dr. Joseph advised the Board Officers, in the agenda setting meeting have focused on topics that the District can provide updated information on educational components as it begins the budget process.

Mr. Cioffi gave a presentation on the Special Education program, focusing on achieving academic success and closing the gap between general education and special education. Mr. Cioffi gave a general program overview of special education student numbers, along with Charter School numbers, a comparison of 4th grade students with disabilities level 3 and 4, ELA and Math scores from 2002-2005. Also included in the presentation were similar comparisons for 8th grade students. Mr. Cioffi noted a significant increase in the scores over the past few years.

Mr. Cioffi spoke about staff development opportunities, which include training for instructional support teams, literacy training for middle school and elementary school teachers, embedded math staff development in integrated middle school classrooms through the College of St. Rose, teaching assistant training, revised therapeutic crisis intervention and Math Trailblazer training for self contained and integrated classroom teachers. Mr. Cioffi advised with the restructuring of the middle schools programs across the schools have been balanced with standard curriculum and standard textbooks and materials. Mr. Cioffi also spoke about development of the 405 Plan with more comprehensive data analysis, identification of root cause and areas to be addressed relative to over representation of minority populations, high rates of classifications and low rate for declassification. Mr. Cioffi spoke of other initiatives including curriculum maps for all special education teachers, partnerships with institutions of higher learning and new programs for unique populations.

Mr. Cioffi noted the District provides a full continuum of services, which includes resource room services provided for students within the classroom and pulling them out to support them in their academic subject areas. The District also provides consultant teacher services, which are similar resource room services, but are used on the middle and high school levels for student. There are integrated services where students with disabilities are in general education classes and supported by a teacher and a teaching assistant within the course of the school day. These services are provided on all levels, elementary, middle school and high school. There are self-contained classrooms for students with various disabilities on all levels. Mr. Cioffi advised the District has piloted new programs for students in the autism spectrum.

Finally, Mr. Cioffi advised the District has updates its data collection and IEP program to a web-based program. All of the teachers have been trained, as well as clerical staff and in September all the teachers, with an individual access code, will be able to access student IEPs at the individual school sites through the web. Mr. Cioffi advised this system is connected directly to the State Education Department (SED), which allows transmission of student reports directly to SED.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Brown presented the following Routine Consent Items for approval. Proceedings of Meetings; November 1, 2005, November 17, 2005; Membership Dues-New York State School Boards Association (NYSSBA) Membership 2006 dues in the amount of \$9,257; Resignations; Leaves of Absence; Transfers; Appointments; Administrative Appointments-Probationary Appointments, Regular Substitutes, Miscellaneous, Coaching, Civil Service, Emergency Conditional Appointments, Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, 2005-06 Budget Transfers under \$10,000, 2005-2006 Budget Transfers over \$10,000; Budget Status Report 7/1/05 – 6/30/06; Real Property Tax Adjustments; RFP – Athletic Training Services; Contracts – Wellcare on Behalf of Blue Cross, Rose & Kiernan; Contracts for Grants and Special Projects – (UPK Contracts) Albany County Opportunity, Inc. (Head Start), Albany Jewish Community Center, Albany County Opportunity, Inc. (Head Start), (SES Contracts) Adirondack Tutoring Services, LLC (Club Z!, Babbage Net School, Inc., Boys and Girls Clubs of Albany; Memoranda of Understanding (Gear Up) Capital Region Sponsor-Scholar, Inc., College of St. Rose, Commission of Independent Colleges and Universities, Research Foundation of SUNYA, Center for Innovations on Career Development; Research Foundation of SUNYA, Liberty Partnership Programs, Research Foundation of SUNYA, School of Education, Research Foundation of SUNYA, The Career Development Center and Sefcu. Ms. Frost made a motion to approve Routine Consent Items as listed. Mrs.

Gaffuri seconded the motion. Mr. Barnette asked to set aside the Adirondack Tutoring Services, LLC (Club Z!) Contract. Ms. Fahy asked to table proceedings from November 17, 2005, Budget Transfers under \$10,000 and the three UPK contracts (Albany County Opportunity, Inc. (Head Start), Albany Jewish Community Center and Boys and Girls Club of Albany). Ms. Doesschate asked to set aside proceedings from November 1, 2005 and the Budget Status Report 7/1/05 – 6/30/05.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the Routine Consent Items absent those set aside.

Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve proceedings from November 1, 2005. Ms. Fahy seconded the motion.

The Board voted 6 ayes and 1 abstention. Ms. Doesschate abstained.

Ms. Fahy made a motion to approve Budget Transfers under \$10,000. Mrs. Kushner seconded the motion. Following discussion Mr. Brown called a vote on the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the Budget Status Report 7/1/05 – 6/30/06. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Following discussion Mr. Brown called a vote on the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Ms. Fahy made a motion to approve the UPK contracts as follows: UPK contracts (Albany County Opportunity, Inc. (Head Start), Albany Jewish Community Center and Boys and Girls Club of Albany). Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Following discussion, Mr. Brown called a vote on the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the Adirondack Tutoring Services, LLC (Club Z) contract. Ms. Fahy seconded the motion. Following an extensive discussion, Mr. Brown called a vote.

The Board voted 6 ayes and 1 nay. Mr. Barnette was opposed.

Ms. Fahy made a motion to authorize the Superintendent to seek a waiver via the State Education Department (SED) to enable the Albany City Schools to provide supplemental education services. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Discussion followed relative to the need for additional information before moving forward with this motion. Ms. Fahy advised suggestions by board members could be taken as a friendly amendment to authorize the Superintendent to prepare a draft letter to SED requesting a waiver to allow the District to provide these services. Discussion focused again on the need for additional information at which time Ms. Fahy withdrew the motion.

Motion was withdrawn with no action.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Change Orders

Mr. Brown presented the following change orders for approval. Stephen & Harriet Myers Middle School, Schuyler Achievement Academy, Montessori Magnet Academy, North Albany Academy & Eagle Point Elementary School, School 18, Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology. Ms. Kushner made a motion to approve the change orders. Ms. Fahy seconded the motion. Mr. Gifford noted the volume of change orders is larger than normal due to the fact that the District was engaged in building four schools and renovating two others through this past summer. It is the end of the year for contractors and they are in the process of closing out the year. Most importantly, it is important that the District finalize budgets as it goes forward with budget discussions for the remainder of the facilities project.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Final Environmental Impact Statement (High School and Athletic Master Plan)

Mr. Gifford advised this is the concluding step of the Environmental Impact Statement process the District has taken for two primary proposed projects, the athletic master plan for the District and the renovations and expansions to the high school. The Board initially doing the SEQR approximately nine months ago, followed by a Draft Environmental Impact Statement. A public hearing was held, no comments have been received relative to the document and the Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) was presented to the Board at the last Board Meeting. The FEIS was very short based on the fact that there were no comments or concerns received as a result of the public hearing and the public comment period. Mr. Gifford advised this evening the Board is being asked to approve the document this evening as the final step in the process. Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the following resolution.

RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Albany City School District ("Board") is considering to undertake a potential project ("the Project") consisting of (i) renovations and additions to the existing Albany High School campus, including the addition four, two story, wings to the west side of the existing school building, the addition of new gymnasium and theater facilities, and new athletic field and facilities, (ii) the renovation and construction of new athletic fields at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, including new seating facilities, and (iii) the renovation of athletic fields at the William Hackett Middle School ("the Project")("the Project"); and

WHEREAS, the State Environmental Quality Review Act ("SEQRA") and the regulations thereunder require the Board to undertake a review of the potential environmental impacts, if any, associated with the project before approving same; and

WHEREAS,, the Board classified the Project as a Type I action within the meaning of 6 NYCRR Section 617.4, and expressed its desire to act as lead agency for the purposes of conducting coordinated environmental review; and

WHEREAS, the Board adopted lead agency status and issued a positive declaration for the proposed project pursuant to SEQRA; and

WHEREAS, a preliminary Draft Environmental Impact Statement was submitted to the Board and accepted as complete on September 21, 2005; and

WHEREAS, on October 6, 2005, a public hearing concerning the proposed action was conducted; and

WHEREAS, public comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement were accepted by the Board from the date of the acceptance of the Draft Environmental Impact Statement through October 24, 2005; and

WHEREAS, by Resolution adopted November 19, 2005, the Board accepted as complete the Final Environmental Impact Statement prepared with respect to the Project; and

WHEREAS, the Board has received and reviewed a proposed written Findings Statement prepared with respect to the Project;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Board hereby approves, adopts, and issues the written Findings Statement attached hereto within the meaning of 6 NYCRR Section 617.11, and directs that said Findings Statement be filed as required by law.

Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Budget & Educational Planning Committee (BEPC)

The Board had a lengthy discussion related to the BEPC Committee in terms of membership, charge, scope and purpose of the committee. Following discussion, Ms. Fahy made a motion to forward this item to the Audit Committee to develop a draft proposal including membership, function and scope of the committee to be brought back to the Board for additional discussion. Ms. Frost seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Fahy advised the Intergovernmental Committee is scheduling a meeting later this week to discuss a press event next week to address the Charter School issue.

Ms. Kushner advised the Audit Committee met last week to review in great detail the rollover budget. The committee recommended several adjustments to the budget relative to charter schools and utility tax based on usage. Mrs. Gaffuri noted the committee was concerned about the increased use of cell phones in the District.

Mr. Barnette advised the Policy Committee met on December 5, 2005. The committee had three items on the agenda. Mr. Barnette advised the committee discussed the revised Compact for Learning policy and also a sample policy provided by NYSSBA. Mr. Barnette advised both policies would be reviewed by district staff members initially involved in the development of this policy. Mr. Barnette noted the second item discussed was an item referred to the Committee by the Board Officers related to a National School Board's Conference Council of Urban Boards of Education (CUBE) Seminar. Following discussion the committee agreed that pending further review it would be appropriate to have a presentation at a future roundtable relative to the benefits, costs, etc. of the District's participation. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers also gave the committee an update related to the NYSSBA policy review process.

Ms. Fahy advised the Facilities Committee did not meet.

The Academic Committee was postponed because of the Education Week activities.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Mrs. Gaffuri noted the activities planned by the Booster Club for the first annual recognition of Scholar Athlete, graduates from Albany High School who participated in sports throughout their college experience, was very well done. Mrs. Gaffuri advised the plaques presented by the Board of Education were beautiful and she is hopeful that this will become an annual event. Mrs. Gaffuri advised the Booster Club, particularly Bernie Mulligan, is doing a great job boosting the District.

Mr. Barnette advised he attended the induction for the National Honor Society. Mr. Barnette noted the Board Student Representative Minsoo Lee was one of the recipients. Mr. Barnette encouraged people to attend the Dinner.

Mr. Barnette also spoke about the warmth experienced by those who attended the Thanksgiving Family Dinner at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy. Mr. Barnette noted there were over 300 families present.

Ms. Fahy noted previously she recommended to the Board that the Board do recognitions, at least once a month, recognizing outstanding employees and/or volunteers in terms of what they have done. Ms. Fahy advised she would circulate information relative to recognizing employees, volunteers and students to Board members for their consideration. Mr. Barnette suggested an annual volunteer recognition dinner as part of the consideration. Mr. Barnette also suggested this issue be referred to the policy committee for their consideration.

Ms. Kushner suggested an annual Distinguished Alumni Award to be presented by the District.

Mr. Brown advised the Black History Month Contest is under way with 268 contestants, with significant entries by students in Albany, particularly 3rd to 5th students. Thirty contestants out of 38 entries in this category are from Albany.

Adjournment

Ms. Kushner made a motion to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board