



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 5, 2008
7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Teneka Frost, President
William Barnette, Vice President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Dr. Mark Barth
Judy Doesschate
Melissa Mackey
Wayne Morris

Dr. Eva. Joseph
Dr. Joseph Dragone
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
James Matthews

ABSENT: None

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. Ms. Frost asked for a moment of silence in memory of the untimely deaths of Bobby Jones, a custodian at North Albany Academy and Keynon Hankins, a student at Albany High School.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Acknowledging the tragedy that happened last week, the district's crisis response team was present at Albany High School to assist students in dealing with the death of Keynon Hankins.
- The State Department of Education (SED) will be announcing that Philip Livingston Magnet Academy has been placed on the School Under Registration Review (SURR). While students test scores have increased significantly, they did not reach their target scores. The district will continue to collaborate with SED to develop improvement strategies. A review team identified by SED will visit the schools, conduct interviews, observe operations and instruction and make recommendations. As part of the Strategic Planning Process, a specific plan will be developed for action across the district to improve assessment scores.
- Information regarding enrollment projections does not mean the district is currently looking at closing schools. There have been no formal discussions or decisions on this issue. Parents and community members would be invite to participate in this kind of conversation.
- Congratulation to Angelena, Student Representative, on receiving the first place recipient of the Siena Courage Award, which was presented to Ms. Rouse at a reception at Siena College in January honoring youth in the Capital Region. She was also recognized at the college's annual Martin Luther King and Coretta Scott King Lecture Series Event.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Bud Pape addressed the board regarding school safety.
2. Laurie Bebb addressed the board regarding alternative education programs.
3. Jim Lembo addressed the board regarding concerns at Delaware Community School.
4. Megan Ferry addressed the board regarding concerns at Delaware Community School.
5. Donna Young addressed the board regarding concerns at Delaware Community School.
6. Mia Battista addressed the board regarding customer service throughout the district.
7. Holly Klein addressed the board regarding a playground at Delaware Community School.

8. Larry Sloman addressed the board regarding alternative education programs.
9. Michael Karp addressed the board regarding alternative education programs.
10. Sonya Emery addressed the board regarding the calendar schedule as it applies to APSUE members.
11. Marlon Anderson addressed the board regarding the PLMA being placed on the SURR list by SED.
12. Alex Streznewski addressed the board regarding the reasons parents choose Albany schools.
13. Amy Holterman addressed the board regarding school violence.
14. Bridget Dolan addressed the board regarding the calendar schedule as it applies to APSUE members.
15. Zachary Klein addressed the board regarding a playground at Delaware Community School.

Ms. Frost noted there is a contract grievance procedure that needs to be followed regarding the school calendar issue mentioned earlier during public comment.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Student representative, Angelena Rouse expressed appreciation to Dr. Dragone for allowing Angelena to participate on the committee to develop an Extracurricular Activity Policy, describing academic and behavioral standards for students in the district. Ms. Rouse also noted that as the district focuses on new policies related to student I.D. badges, etc. old policies should not be forgotten, i.e. proper use of staircases, wearing hoodies, using cell phones.

INFORMATION ITEM

Pre-Kindergarten Program Presentation

Dr. Joseph introduced Ms. Linda Rudnick, Director of Instruction, who has been overseeing the district pre-kindergarten program in terms of operation, program planning and assisting the district in making decisions relative to program expansion. Dr. Joseph advised this is a perfect opportunity as the district continues to think about budget development to look at the program as it currently is structured, think about what opportunities may be before the district and have an opportunity for board members to ask questions.

Ms. Rudnick presented an overview of the Pre-K program, noting that currently the district has 30 Pre-K classrooms, 21 in district schools and 9 in 6 program sites. Current enrollment is 496 students, which is an increase of 28 students for 2007-2008. The State Education Department has provided the district a grant of \$1,954,090 for current Pre-K programs based on BEDS numbers. The funding sources are used in support of the Pre-K program. Grant funds can be used for professional salaries, program components, professional development, administrative support services, materials and supplies, transportation services and leasing expenses. Students are provided with health services and screenings for vision, hearing and speech. Students are provided breakfast and lunch daily. Students in the Magnet School programs are provided transportation. Ms. Rudnick noted that there is the potential for increasing enrollment from 496 to 640 for the 2008-2009 school year at a cost to the district of \$256,320. Ms. Rudnick noted that by law charter schools are not permitted to have Pre-K programs. This becomes a distinctive choice for families in the district. Ms. Rudnick also noted that 55% of students who were enrolled in the district's Pre-K program scored 95% or better in the kindergarten testing, which is a real testimony to the quality of the program.

- What percentage of Pre-K students remain in district schools. This information will be forwarded to board members. Track students to determine numbers.
- Are all Pre-K programs in the district full-day sessions? Yes
- State funds cover half-day Pre-K. The district Pre-K programs are funded by Magnet aid and Universal Pre-K aid. There is a substantial general budget amount allocated for the districts Pre-K program, which is how the district is able to accomplish this level of service. Funds available for Pre-K do not support the cost calculation for full-day programs.
- Do we have parents that want half-day? The commitment made to parents is that the district would provide a full-day program. Parents by choice enroll in district programs because it is a full-day program. Some programs have wrap-around programs where students are in school before school starts, during the course of the day and after school. There were half-day programs at one time and the push was for the full-day program. Currently there is no option for half-day.
- How does the district define the cost of \$15,000 for on-site programs? Based on inventory items, including furnishing, materials and supplies.
- Explain the philosophy behind enrollment in terms of enrollment in their home schools as opposed to having to switch schools when entering kindergarten. The Magnet Pre-K is enrolled through the lottery. TOAST has the Universal Pre-K program that is an agency program. Four at Montessori, one at TOAST and one at ASH, which is by lottery. Transportation is an issue in parents having to take the child to a school other than their neighborhood school. If children were transported to the school of their choice and there was room in that particular school that is a win-win situation.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Ms. Frost presented the Routine Consent Items, including Proceedings of Meetings, January 3, 2008 and January 17, 2008; Resignations/Retirements; Vacated Position, Abolish of Positions, Creation of Positions, Leave of Absence; Transfers; Appointments (Administrative Appointments, Probationary Appointment, Regular Substitute, Miscellaneous, Albany Evening Night School, Continuing Education, Grant Funded Employees, Tutors, Itinerant Substitutes, Civil Service, Civil Service Permanent, Tenure and Emergency Conditional Appointments); Attendance at Conferences, Resolution to Appoint the Board of Registration for the May vote, Joy Morrow Roe Award, Touhey TALENT Loan Program, Advanced Therapy Contract for Speech Teacher; Treasurer's Report, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Budget Status Report – 12/31/07, Real Property Tax Adjustments, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, Bid Awards; Committee on Special Education, Subcommittee on Special Education, Committee on Pre-School Special Education; Contract for Grants and Special Projects (Society of Manufacturing Engineers Education Foundation) and Membership Dues (Capital District School Boards Association (CAPSBA)).

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve Routine Consent Items as presented. Dr. Barth seconded the motion. Ms. Doeschate asked that the Budget Status Report and Bid Awards be set aside. Mr. Barnette asked that the Committee on Special Education items be set aside.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the Budget Status Report. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion. Following discussion regarding property tax refunds, covered by reserve funds, Ms. Frost called the question.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the Bid Awards. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Ms. Doesschate questioned amounts of roofing repair and air-conditioning exceeding the amount of prevailing wages. Mr. Matthew advised the bids have been rolled over for an additional year as all vendors have provided satisfactory service. Mr. Matthews advised if the district were to re-bid, the dollars amounts would be higher than previous amounts. Mr. Barnette also noted a contactor listed is incorrectly listed as a minority enterprise. Correction will be made.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the Special Education Committee items. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Mr. Barnette advised he would be abstaining on these items because he is not satisfied that he has sufficient information regarding recommendations of these committees and henceforth he will be abstaining on this vote.

The board voted 6-0-1 to approve the motion. Mr. Barnette abstained.

Motion passed.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change orders

Ms. Frost presented change orders for Delaware Community School, Hackett Middle School and School 19 for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the change orders. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed

Resolution to Amend Technology Contract

Ms. Frost presented the resolution to amend the technology contract for cabling at School 19. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. In response to a question as to why this is not being handled as a routine change order, Mr. Gifford advised this is a soft cost item that is not part of the original construction contracts.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed

Resolution to Approve Design Development for Arbor Hill Elementary School

Ms. Frost presented the resolution to approve Design Development for the renovation of Arbor Hill Elementary School. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the resolution. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion.

- How realistic is it to expect that the State Education Department (SED) will approve the renovations given the enrollment figures. The district has received agreement with SED regarding the balance of the plan as the district did the referendum for Excel Aid for that portion. SED does not have a policy regarding charter school enrollment and how it is dealt with in facility plans.
- Is it possible to use the empty space for a different purpose? Other uses are being investigated.
- What kind of flexibility does the district have for future use of the empty space? There are partition walls. The structure is not being changed. This will be a very successful space as a school.
- The issue of the bridge, which supports the school, needs to be reviewed. The use of the bridge will be investigated to determine usage for students attending the school, along with other options for coming and going to school. Currently there is no budget to deal with the bridge renovation. The facilities team will continue to work with the City to evaluate this structure and present an independent report to the superintendent along with recommendations.

Dr. Joseph advised in conversations with Ms. Gaines-Harrell and Mr. Catalfamo, a decision has been made to move students into swing space in September, which works better in terms of capacity to move.

The board voted unanimously (6-0-1) to approve the resolution. Ms. Doesschate abstained.
Motion passed.

ACTION ITEM

Strategic Planning Action Team Co-Leader

Ms. Frost presented the appointment of Ms. Debora Brown-Johnson as a co-leader for Strategy #7 of the district Strategic Planning Process. Dr. Barth made a motion for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Dr. Joseph indicated co-leaders met last week. Training will take place on February 12th & 13th for co-leaders. The action teams, to the extent that they have been developed, members will have the opportunity to attend the training as well. Co-leaders are comfortable to complete identification of action team members following the training if needed. It was noted that if someone is unable to attend the training, that would not exclude them from participation as a team member. Also, meetings would be open for additional community involvement at certain areas in the process.

The board voted unanimously (6-0-1) to approve the resolution. Ms. Doesschate abstained.
Motion passed.

As a side note, Dr. Joseph advised board members received a brochure on the Aspen Institute that features Shakira Hudson, a student at Albany High School last year. Ms. Hudson participated in the Scholars Program at the Aspen Institute this past summer.

DISCUSSION ITEM

2008-2009 Budget Development

Dr. Joseph gave a presentation on goals and objectives for the 2008-2009 budget. Dr. Joseph noted the board received a considerable amount of progress information, which hopefully answered some of the questions that came forward when looking at the draft goals in terms of why they remain priorities and how we make the connection. Dr. Joseph advised she would like to move through this presentation in terms of defining the process so that we stay focused on how we get to that ending, which is our adopted budget. Dr. Joseph noted the Vision and Mission is the basis for driving the goals. This is standard recipe used in a number of planning efforts. From the goals performance objectives are derived. Much of which board members heard on January 17th. Then we talk about our resources, which are the budget.

Dr. Joseph advised the Mission indicated in the report is the one developed as part of the Strategic Planning Process. The Vision is also driven by a board resolution adopted in October 2006, which still stands, that we will close (eliminate) the achievement gap. Dr. Joseph reviewed performance objectives defined during the Strategic Planning Process and performance objectives related to testing, improvements in ELA & Math, graduation, attendance, drop out and suspension rates. Dr. Joseph reviewed ELA results for 2005-06 and 2006-07. Performance indices for Philip Livingston Magnet Academy in Math and ELA were reviewed, along with the 2008-09 budget goals. Dr. Joseph noted the next discussion would include elaborating on very specific goals into what the program strategies are. That discussion will include performance objectives and strategies that the district will be building for next year that will then support the goals. Following that, the draft budget with resources to support those objectives and program strategies will be presented.

- What is the SURR process? Dr. Joseph noted she has served on three SURR teams in New York City. The team serves a purpose. The team consists of people who are not familiar with the school who come into the school as a team of educators and lend their expertise with the expert eyes to seeing things perhaps from a more objective perspective. They conduct an in-depth review of data information and spend three very comprehensive days at the school on site and then provide a summary report of recommendations. The process will include a meeting with the faculty and staff at the school to tell them what to expect. The district will assist with scheduling interviews, etc. They will arrive early, stay the whole day, most likely until late. They work as a team. They work at night to pull their own data together. They will review a lot of data about the school. At the end of the three days, they will spend a portion of time generating some general feedback. Faculty and staff will be invited to an exit interview and then they will spend some time writing a report post visit. That report will come to the district and will contain recommendations for the district that can be considered in developing the comprehensive education plan for the school as the building team generates that report. From that technical assistance what they hope to accomplish recommendations that come from a different perspective, new ideas that might strengthen what the district is already doing as a way of supporting gains or growth that have not yet materialized at a satisfactory level.

- As the board goes through the 2008-2009 budget process the discussion about Arbor Hill should include discussion of excess space. The dialogue was really about unused classroom space in the district buildings. As the board looks at developing the budget, it would be helpful if the board had an analysis of the current school buildings that have unused space. Future dialogue could include how that space could be used for non-classroom services, administration, maintenance, etc. That might open revenues to support the education plan.
- Can this information be available in 30 days? The spaces can be identified in that time period. The appropriate use and the utility costs, renovation costs based on the level of technology needed, along with other related cost figures would take longer to determine. Dr. Joseph requested information be presented at the March round table meeting to accommodate the first draft budget due on March 4th.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Barnette advised the Policy Committee is scheduled to meet next week. The members of the committee have received the draft of the Code of Conduct for Extracurricular Activities as an expansion of the Code of Conduct for Student Athletes. That process is moving forward.

Mr. Morris advised the Audit Committee met last week to discuss the Controller's Audit. Ms. Doesschate requested that new members of the Audit Committee receive the guidelines developed by the committee.

- What is the status of the Controller's Audit? Mr. Matthews advised the district has presented data to the Controller's Office. However, they have not yet started the on-site audit.
- Will the Audit Committee be included in the Opening Conference? Notice will be forwarded to the members of the Board of Education.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Ms. Frost advised she would not be available for the March 4, 2008 Board Meeting. Mr. Barnette will conduct the meeting on this date.

Ms. Doesschate advised she would not be available for the April 1, 2008 Board Meeting.

Adjournment

Dr. Barth made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.