



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

Albany High School

PRESENT: William Barnette, President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Dr. Mark Barth
Judy Doesschate
Melissa Mackey
Wayne Morris
Dr. Eva Joseph
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Bill Hogan
Linda Jackson-Chalmers

ABSENT: None

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Members of the audience were welcomed and thanked for taking the time to attend the meeting.
- Mission Statement was read.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- The Middle School Enrollment Committee is being developed. There has been significant response in regard to participation on this committee. Membership of 30 participants has been developed to insure broad based representation with parents, community members, teachers, support staff and administrators. Notices of the first meeting were mailed this date. Dr. Diggs will be facilitating that committee. Mr. Barnette thanked Dr. Joseph for expeditiously getting this information on the website. It appeared the day after the schedule was shared with the board.
- The board will be reviewing the Action Plans for the Strategic Plan at the October 16th Round Table Meeting at Sheridan Preparatory Academy. The board will hear presentations. Co-leaders from the seven action teams will be an integral part of that presentation. The specific structure is being developed with the facilitators, Marilyn Gounaris and Rocco Rainone. This will be an excellent opportunity for community members to hear first hand the direction that is being set forth in response to the Strategic Direction that was approved by the board last December.

In terms of the scheduling issue investigation, Dr. Joseph noted the district has continued to follow-up on the high school scheduling report. Board members have been provided a report as requested. The report contains a brief description of how the 2008-09 scheduling process was planned to occur, what was expected, a description of what went wrong in the process and, most importantly, a very specific action plan moving forward. The district is well aware of the failure to produce the schedules for the students at Albany High School before or on the first day of school that delayed the start of school until Monday, September 8th.

The investigation conducted by Dr. Diggs indicated there was no single individual cause for the failure, but rather it was a series of missed deadlines and the lack of one primary manager and supervisor taking responsibility for the completion of the total job.

In terms of the factors related to the problem, there was the lack of a structured management under one key leader, the lack of a clearly defined scheduling team that met on a regular basis to regulate its progress and move toward the deadline. Some key deadlines were missed that resulted in delays in the process and shortened the required time so necessary for critical tasks that occur toward the end of the scheduling process. Very important information about the Albany High School scheduling process was not carried over from one former scheduling team to another or it was not communicated to new personnel involved in the scheduling process which effected the decision making along the lines and there was a lack of adequate training in the schedule development process and in Power School itself for some key personnel.

The district is appreciative of the secondary level of expertise and experience in schedule development in assisting in the development of the action plan moving forward that Dr. Diggs has been able to provide. The corrective actions that have been developed and will be taken to insure an effective scheduling process for next year and all the years that follow are essential. They are indicative of the things that did not happen and are so important in this process:

1. A new structure of oversight has been created. A district administrator has been assigned to mentor the high school administration this coming year 2008-09 in completing the successful scheduling process with the intent that it will be turned over to the high school administration in the next school year and they will have the assumed responsibility for moving forward. The assigned district administrator is Dr. Diggs. A meeting was held this date to begin to plan the process for scheduling 2009-2010. The authority for scheduling will be centralized to the Albany High School Principals' office and the direct oversight for that process and how these next steps evolve will rest there. A purposeful scheduling committee will be established, specific job descriptions including roles and responsibilities will be developed for the membership.

Representation with vital institutional memory must exist on the scheduling committee. Albany High School's programmer/scheduler will be part of the committee to insure that that person receives all information related to the schedule build process. Unexpected or anticipated gaps in membership must be filled immediately. An implementation team will be established which will exist as the core team of the scheduling committee and that will be established to manage the responsibility for developing the master schedule on time. This core team will have a higher level of expertise and will be more closely related to the scheduling process itself. The team will meet weekly at the critical time from the end of school in June 2009 until the beginning of school in September 2009 to track progress on building the schedule. The team's work will be maintained and disseminated to the larger committee's members and the high school administrative team. A scheduling procedure with actions, dates, and responsible parties identified will be formalized and aligned with Power School's recommendations. The district has had lengthy discussions with the Power School, President for Pearson, and has talked at length about appropriate and adequate training. Power Schools is working with the district to provide technical assistance to be sure that an adequate program is developed.

2. Appropriate and adequate training will be provided for new employees, employees who move into new positions, and current employees involved in the scheduling process. Power School representatives will provide technical assistance in developing an appropriate and adequate training program to take place this school year. New members of the core implementation team will receive appropriate training for their positions and responsibilities, technical support and guidance from Power School will be integral to the scheduling process.

3. Effective communication procedures will be established by the high school administration, so that changes in administrative procedures, such as a new bell schedule, will be widely and effectively disseminated.

Each of the above-stated recommendations must be fully acknowledged and implemented in order to improve and reform a process that will deliver schedules to students before school begins each and every year, hereafter. It is imperative to yield this result, one that will honor our students' meaningful participation in school and assure the confidence of them, their parents, and the community at large in the quality of service and programs offered at Albany High School and within the City School District of Albany.

Given that board members have just received this report this evening, Mr. Barnette suggested that questions could be raised at a future date. Copies of the report are available to the public by contacting the superintendent's office.

- Have all student schedules been reviewed by guidance counselors to insure that there are not gaps in the schedules? What is the status of that review?

Dr. Diggs advised that schedules have been reviewed.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Daniel McGinn addressed the board relative to marketing the course offerings and activities taking place in the middle schools and the high school.
2. Yvette Alfonso addressed the board relative to general education issues.
3. Leah Golby addressed the board relative to transportation issues.
4. Brenda Brooks addressed the board relative to issues at Giffen Memorial Elementary School.
5. Jen Pratico, Nancy Nemeth & April Bacon thanked the board for approving the TOAST expanded renovations.
6. Douglas Bullock addressed the board regarding the scheduling problems at Albany High School.
7. Nolene Smith addressed the board relative to the scheduling problems at Albany High School and the transition at Giffen Memorial Elementary School.
8. Beverly Padgett addressed the board relative to suspensions and the law.
9. Alex Streznewski thanked the board for approving the TOAST expanded renovations.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent Items were presented for approval as follows: Resignations, Transfers, Appointments (Interim Administrative Appointments, Civil Service, Coaching, Itinerant Substitute Teachers 08-09, Miscellaneous, Probationary, Regular Substitutes, Homebound and Emergency Conditional Appointments); Treasurer's Report, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Bid Awards/RFP's, Budget Appropriation Status Report 8/31/08, Revenue Budget Status Report 8/31/08, Real Property Tax Adjustments, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, Supplemental Educational Services (ARTPARTNERS/ "Tsehaya & Co." Inc., Reigning Life Church, Sylvan Learning Center); Universal Pre-K Services (Albany Community Partnership (Head Start), Albany Jewish Community Center, Arbor Park Child Care Center, Inc., Boys and Girls Club of Albany); Special Education Services (Children's Neurological Services, Cobb Memorial, Kidscare, Langan School, Dr. Clifford Passen, St. Catherine's Center for Children, Service Connections, Inc., Wildwood School); Miscellaneous (Hess Corporation, Integrys Energy Services of New York, Inc., University of Albany-Downtown Campus (Parking), Douglas Woodard); Committee on Special Education, Subcommittee on Special Education and Committee on Pre-School Special Education. Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the Routine Consent Items. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Item Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change Orders

Change orders for Hackett Middle School and New Scotland Elementary School (School 19), and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology were presented for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the change orders. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Resolution to Approve the Revised Facilities Project Budget

The following resolution was presented for approval:

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the City School District of Albany approves the Revised Facilities Project Budget Summary, dated October 7, 2008, having total voter-approved amount of \$204,240,000 and which, among other things, reflects the reallocation of \$4,500,000 budget funds to the Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology (TOAST) projects. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the resolution. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Budget Development Calendar

The draft 2008-2009 Budget Development Calendar was presented for discussion. Mr. Hogan advised the schedule includes an extra meeting on April 9. Consideration will be given to the fact that there are religious holidays during that week, which may require rescheduling the April 9th date. Discussion followed relative to the schedule in terms of moving up the dates toward completing the process. Based on information from the Governor's Office it appears that information relative to state aid will be forthcoming in adequate time to develop the final budget.

A suggestion was made to start the process earlier. Mr. Hogan advised that the majority of meetings are scheduled within the board schedule. Moving up the schedule would then require additional meetings. Discussion also included the rollover budget, with a suggestion that the district work toward a zero growth budget as a guiding principle. The rollover budget is used as a tool, a gauge, in developing the budget. A request was made that assessment data on the various programs be made available to board members during the budget development process, implementation of the Strategic Plan be a part of the consideration and the community is involved in discussions during the process. This item will be presented for approval at the November 5th board meeting.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Audit Committee met last week. Mr. Hogan gave a review of various financial reports to the members of the committee. Members received a manual on the grant administration procedures and responsibilities.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Dr. Barth requested that future agenda items include a presentation on transportation relative to services provided by CDTA services and costs and a separate item to discussion reduction in the mileage requirement for the provision of transportation services by Durham.

Dr. Barth also requested a discussion relative to the possibility of splitting the class times at Albany High School into two shift to alleviate the crowded conditions at dismissal time be placed on a future board agenda.

Ms. Mackey requested a review of the suspension program be placed on a future agenda that includes data such as the number of suspensions, the length of time and kinds of violations for suspension and a comprehensive review of what is happening relative to the suspension program.

Ms. Doesschate requested the board discuss a policy on volunteerism at a future board meeting. Mr. Barnette noted that the Policy Committee has started discussion relative to this item.

Mrs. Gaffuri requested the board be provided a presentation on how the district discipline policy is being enforced district-wide.

Adjournment

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 8:50 p.m.