



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
December 2, 2008
7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: William Barnette, President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Judy Doesschate
Dan Egan
Melissa Mackey
Dr. Eva Joseph
Bill Hogan
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Linda Rudnick
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Jeffrey Honeywell

ABSENT: Mark Barth
Wayne Morris

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 7:15 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

- Following the reception for Mr. Barnette, Dr. Joseph extended her gratitude for the leadership Mr. Barnette has provided to the district, particularly this past year. The agenda this evening includes discussion regarding the Strategic Plan implementation. This is just one example of significant work that has been developed through the collaboration of the district, the community and parents in setting a direction for the district.
- Linda Rudnick, newly appointed Assistant for Elementary Education, was welcomed to her first board meeting as a member of the cabinet.
- A schedule of the holiday concerts is available to board members and the public. Everyone is encouraged to attend.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Joanne McElroy Moore addressed the board regarding middle school enrollment.
2. John Rosensweig addressed the board regarding middle school enrollment.
3. Leo Levy addressed the board regarding Mr. Barnette's departure from the board and his service to the District.
4. John Amidon addressed the board regarding Mr. Barnette's departure from the board and his service to the District.
5. Ginny Farrell addressed the board regarding middle school enrollment.
6. Marlon Anderson addressed the board regarding the political environment in the City of Albany.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Ocasio Willson spoke about new leadership on the board and in the high school. Students at Albany High School are in the process of reactivating the Student Government. Hopefully, it will be up and running by the end of this school year. Ocasio also noted there have been positive steps toward improving student safety at Albany High School.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Strategic Plan Implementation

Dr. Joseph advised, following the board adoption of the Strategic Plan, the district is in the process of copying the document for broader distribution. The document is accessible on the district website in its entirety. The next phase in the Strategic Planning process is the implementation of the plan. Cabinet members have recently participated in a full-day workshop with the Soar Point consultants to develop an implementation schedule. Strategic Planning also drives the district budget planning. Tied into that process are the district academic goals and objectives that will drive budget planning. On January 15, 2009, the board will be provided with an overview of achievements and student performance data. Dr. Joseph reviewed the implementation schedule, developed by district personnel, that identifies strategies and action plans to be implemented in a given year; identifies resources allocated to the plan; identified the manager and staff assigned to the plan timeline and completion. The implications for the implementation schedule decisions include urgency, manageability, resources and congruence with ongoing work and how critical this is to student achievement. The next steps in the process are for the district to identify who will be responsible for and have authority to implement action plans; engage parents and community partners in shared roles and responsibilities in implementing the work, establish a facilitated implementation process with administrators, faculty and staff, parent and community participants, conduct training on implementation practices and to incorporate strategic budgeting, and annual update of the strategic plan as part of the implementation process.

- In the next stage would we be attaching more specific information, dollar amounts, etc.?

Yes. The implementation process is developing that work plan. The members of the cabinet will be looking at the work plan and identifying who is best able to take the leadership role in each part of the implementation plan. Through the implementation training, staff would learn how to elaborate on that plan and earmark resources.

- It appears that the elementary or middle school orientations wouldn't necessarily need a facilitated process. What is the relationship between board members in terms of engaging the community? How do we work together to bring the plan to fruition?

The board has been an integral part of the process in developing the direction. The role of the board at this juncture is making decisions relative to what to do first based on the criteria. The district will need some guidance from the board relative to the elements of the process that are unfamiliar to the district.

- I don't know how much we need our consultants. There are a few things like communication that I would like to see some planning in the next year. The costs associated with consultant fees in these times of tough fiscal circumstances and the difficulty that we have had in getting the full complement of people to attend a whole day seminar, minimally my recommendation would be to not attempt to do that for implementation. Rather, deal with it through some sort of round table meeting, etc.

The consultants have worked with the action teams throughout the year. The kind of guidance that was provided was essential to the development of the strategic plan. The facilitators were a piece of the glue that kept the process moving forward and helped the district ultimately have such a quality product. There are some elements of the implementation schedule, including some of the exercises that we went through and the guidance with the work they did, that were extremely helpfully in making decisions and working through a collaborative process.

- The tasks described in the contract appear to be management tasks. I'm not sure that we should spend \$26,000 to do that. Consultants have a great role in developing strategy, but when it's time to execute it, it seems to me that we can probably do that without consultants.

Perhaps there is some way to re-define the costs. In the past, the district has relied on the consultants in terms of engaging parents and the community in a meaningful work product. Conceptually, when they talk about the negotiated work agreements and the memoranda of agreements, for that kind of thing, an outside facilitator is an important part of the process. Facilitation is an important process. A non-stakeholder facilitator really brings a level of focus. Their purpose is not to define the product, but to get you to an outcome. I think that was a critical role of the consultant through this process. Their job is to push us to get the outcomes we wanted. With implementation, that does bring a value in assisting the district to achieve the desired outcomes. Also, during times of financial difficulty, you don't want to have the strategic planning costs eliminated because that plan guides the district to move forward.

Middle School Enrollment

Earlier this year, the board charged the superintendent with developing a process to begin a dialogue of middle school enrollment. A committee of stakeholders was formed and that process has moved forward. Dr. Joseph acknowledged the work of the committee, which is a real testimony to how important this work is. There was to be a recommendation to the board at this meeting with the time period December 2, 2008 – January 15, 2009 earmarked for the committee to review its recommendations and refine them as necessary, coming back to the board on January 15, 2009 with a refined recommendation for board discussion.

Dr. Diggs thanked the members of the committee, along with Michelle Bridgewater and Gregory Jones, who assisted in facilitating the process. The purpose of the committee was to generate a recommendation for the enrollment policy that will be adopted by the Board of Education for enrolling Hackett Middle School, Myers Middle School and the middle school program at North Albany Academy in 2009-2010, phasing out Philip Livingston as a middle school.

Dr. Diggs reviewed the reasons why it was necessary to consider a new enrollment model, which include declining enrollment throughout the district as a result of charter schools, the end of the Myers lottery with this school year, the completion of Hackett, Myers and North Albany renovations and the declining enrollment at Livingston.

Members of the committee gave a presentation on two separate recommendations: a feeder system and a random school assignment (lottery) system. Dr. Diggs noted the committee assembled on October 1, 2008 and continued to meet weekly. Committee members Lisa Angerame and Veronica Horne described the feeder system. Feeder schools for both Hackett Middle School and Myers Middle School were identified. Equity and diversity would be achieved through academics, gender, ethnicity and economics. Edith Leet and Mark Mishler described the random school assignment system, including the characteristics, advantages and preference of a random school assignment system.

- How will each plan support the Strategic Plan in terms of parental and community involvement, both at the elementary and middle school level?

As supporters of the feeder system, we think that children being comfortable with where they are going to school, maintaining friendships developed through elementary school is what item #5 refers to. Item #4 states we will always seek to involve effected students, etc. The stakeholders in this decision need a stronger voice, as laid out in the Strategic Plan. The random school assignment group sees the entire City as a community. The neighborhood is an important part, but not a supreme part of a child's development. We see the expansion of the community to the entire City as a positive way to create cohesiveness, to lessen tensions between neighborhoods and reduce conflicts based on people from different areas of the City not really understanding each other. We see this as an opportunity for children to see that they all worthy of respect and able to live together in a constructive, positive environment. The people in the school, parents and children, will create a community around that school that will draw people into supporting it.

- What would happen if the schools are even in terms of achievement scores and Myers would not be able to make AYP because of a decline in student preparation?

Under No Child Left Behind there is parental choice. If a parent has a child who is in a school that is considered a SINI that parent has the right to request the child be transferred to a school that is performing satisfactorily. The district worked with SED to determine a percentage, which was developed as a result of collaboration with SED when the lottery system was established for Myers. Another part is also thinking about the program plans for the middle schools. If the district demonstrates a commitment to creating enough change at the school, the district could apply to have the SINI designation removed. That is a piece of the work as well.

- If the current designation at Hackett were to be changed would Supplemental Education Services still be available to the students at Hackett?

No. However that does not mean that individual needs would not be addressed.

- How were the demographics related to ELA scores, gender, ethnicity, etc.?

That information came from the school report card.

- How will these models affect transportation costs?

The affect on transportation in Albany is unknown. Additional review of transportation costs is needed.

- Would the open enrollment be impacted by the feeder system?

The open enrollment would not be affected by the feeder system. The school a student is attending at a given date would determine the middle school placement. This assumes that open enrollment remains the same.

Dr. Joseph noted that two options have been presented this evening. One important part of this discussion is feedback from the board, asking questions and identifying concerns. The other part is feedback from parents. Direction to the committee to solicit feedback from parents is in order. Understanding the importance of this matter and that there two options under consideration, getting feedback would be an excellent assist in giving the board some additional information. The district has earmarked from December 2, 2008 to January 15, 2009 as a time span to take feedback from the board this evening, together with additional feedback from parents and community and for the committee to come back with a refined recommendation to the board on January 15, 2009 for discussion with approval scheduled for February 3, 2009. The district would also be looking for guidance from the committee regarding a timeline for the final decision.

Board members were supportive of the committee going forward to garner additional feedback from the parents and members of the community, which would be presented to the board at the round table meeting in January 2009. If board members or the public have additional questions they can forward them to the Superintendent and they will be passed on to the committee members. This will be a discussion item on the January 15, 2009 board meeting agenda.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent Items were presented for approval as follows: Proceedings of Meetings (November 5, 2008 and November 20, 2008), Resignations, Discontinuance of Employment, Leave of Absence, Transfers, Appointments (Civil Service, Coaching 2008-09, Itinerant Substitute Teachers 2008-09, Miscellaneous, Other Appointments and Emergency Conditional Appointments); Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000; Budget Transfers over \$10,000; Bid Award/RFP's; Budget Appropriation Status Report; Revenue Status Report; Real Property Tax Adjustments; Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund; Vendor/Consultant Contracts & Special Projects; **Tutorial Services** (Education Inc.; Hope House; Stony Lodge Hospital); **Special Education Services** (All Language Translations; Cobb Memorial School); **Staff Development** (Pearson; The Reading & Writing Project Network, LLC (Columbia University)); The Reading & Writing Project Network, LLC (Columbia University); **Adult Continuing Education Services** (Mr. Hershell

Allen; Ms. Sandra Gonzalez; Mr. Earl Jones; Ms. Rebecca Jones; Ms. Marianne Marchesi; Mr. John Schoonbeck; Mr. Barry Swire; **IDEA Flow Through Funds** (Achievements; Advanced Therapy; AMC - Communication Disorders; Beginnings; Child Program and Family Resources; Crossroads; Early Childhood Learning - Circle of Friends; Early Childhood Ed Center; Spotted Zebra; Unity Sunshine; Whispering Pines; Wildwood School; Achievement Academy; Albany Community Charter School; Albany Preparatory School; Anderson School; Brighter Choice for Boys; Brighter Choice for Girls; Center for Disability Services; Cobb Memorial; Devereux; Hillcrest Education Center; Kipp Tech Valley; Kolburne School; LaSalle Institute; New Covenant Charter School; Northeast Parent & Child; Oak Hill School; Parson's; St. Anne's Institute; St. Catherine's; St. Colman's; UCP of Utica; Vanderheyden Hall; **Other Services**; Jill Fahey Marketing Communications; **Emergency Conditional Appointments** (Food Service Substitutes; Miscellaneous 2008-09 (Club Advisors, Albany High Evening School, Abrookin Extended Day, Lunch Aide, Tutors – School Based-Title I 008-09, Coaching – Fall 2008-09, Remove and Replace. Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve the Routine Consent Items. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change Orders

A resolution to approve change orders for Hackett Middle School, New Scotland Elementary School (School 19), Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology and Giffen Memorial Elementary School was presented for approval. Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the resolutions. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Information Item Related to the Facilities Project

Minority & Women Business Enterprises (MWBE) Report

In the absence of Mr. Grey, this item was tabled to the January meeting.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Policy #2250 Board Committees

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers advised the district has a contract with the New York State School Boards Association to review, revise and create new policies that are essential to board governance. Policy #2250 Board Committees combines two existing policies. It is not a required policy. It is a policy that codifies board action on matters that are exclusively within the board's discretion. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers outlined the policy that defines those committees established by the board. The policy addresses how committees are formulated and how vacancies on the committee are filled. It also provides guidelines. The policy establishes the non-voting student representative that currently sits on the board. The policy committee has reviewed this policy as well as cabinet members and counsel. This policy does not reflect the board committees, i.e. policy, audit and facilities.

ACTION ITEM

Policy #2410 Policy Development, Adoption, Implementation and Review

Policy #2410 Policy Development, Adoption, Implementation and Review, was presented for approval. Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve the policy. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Audit Committee met earlier this week and discussed the financial reports. Mr. Hogan brought the issue of contract approval by the board and the possibility of streamlining the process. The committee is still in the process of determining a more efficient way of bringing contracts forward for board review and approval.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Ms. Doesschate asked if other board members are interested in having a discussion as a future agenda item related to the vacant space at the school presently housing Arbor Hill and TOAST students, based on the comments of parents regarding classroom space in that building. Dr. Joseph advised this issue has been reviewed and dialogue continues with those parents who have expressed concerns. The principals of these two schools have indicated that students have settled in. The particular room that has been mentioned as a possibility for addition classroom space is being utilized on a regular basis by staff. At this point in time the district is reluctant to move students yet one more time through this transition. Dr. Joseph continues to follow the situation. Ms. Mackey suggested that this information could be addressed in the Superintendent's Report to publicly respond to public comments previously made at board meetings.

Adjournment

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Egan seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.