



**PROCEEDINGS OF THE  
BOARD OF EDUCATION  
February 3, 2009  
7:00 p.m.**

**Albany High School**

**PRESENT:** Barbara Gaffuri, President  
Melissa Mackey, Vice President  
Judy Doesschate, Secretary  
Dr. Mark Barth  
Rose Brandon  
Daniel Egan  
Wayne Morris  
Dr. Eva Joseph  
Dr. Tresa Diggs  
Bill Hogan  
Linda Jackson-Chalmers  
Linda Rudnick

**ABSENT:** None

**Call to Order:**

- Meeting was called to order at 7:00 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.
- The Mission Statement was read.
- Congratulations to Ariel Hellwitz, student at Albany High School, who has been chosen as a recipient of the prestigious Albany Pro Musica apprentice program. Ariel is one of twelve students recently selected through a rigorous competition application process. On Saturday, March 28<sup>th</sup> the apprentices will perform with Albany Pro Musica at the Troy Savings Bank Music Hall.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- A celebration of the inauguration of President Barack Obama is scheduled for Wednesday, February 11, 2009 beginning at 6:30 p.m. at Myers Middle School with an Art Show and a reception. The program will run from 7:00 to 8:30 p.m. Everyone is encouraged to attend this celebration.
- At the invitation of Congressman Paul Tonko, Dr. Joseph attended a round table discussion last week. Those attending were mayors, town supervisors and other elected officials. Congressman Tonko gave a briefing regarding the federal stimulus package/economic recovery package and the implications for cities, towns and villages. A significant portion of the stimulus package is directed toward specific programs and opportunities for education. Dr. Joseph expressed concern that if the dollars are specifically earmarked for very specific functions and are tied to mandates or certain criteria, it would not necessarily provide relief from state aid cuts. The understanding is that some portion of that stimulus package has been earmarked specifically in terms of the general aid to schools. There are no details at this point in time.

This evening the board will be discussing very important information regarding the 2009-2010 budget development. Absent those details there will be no projections as to how the stimulus package will affect the District's budget. Hopefully, more details will be provided as the District moves through the budget development process.

- The board will be approving an administrative transfer request. Dr. Joseph met with faculty and staff both at Giffen Memorial Elementary School and Albany High School regarding this assignment. The transfer assignment is for Mrs. Maxine Fantroy-Ford to the position of Principal at Giffen Memorial Elementary School. Mrs. Ford has been fully committed to her leadership role at Albany High School. She also has great affinity for Giffen School and has maintained a close connection to that school and is well aware of the difficulty the district has had in stabilizing leadership at Giffen. The continued success at Giffen has remained important to Mrs. Ford and she has requested a transfer to the Principal vacancy. Her assignment will be effective July 1, 2009. The district has been able to honor that request. A full search for a new Principal of Albany High School will begin immediately and the goal is to have someone appointed to that position July 1, 2009. Information regarding the search process will be forwarded to board members. Dr. Joseph acknowledged Mrs. Ford and the work she has done at Albany High.
- Dr. Diggs continues to guide and supervise the scheduling process at Albany High School. It continues to be area of focus at weekly cabinet meetings. At this point the scheduling team has met all of the goals on its timeline. Last week the pre-build for developing the master schedule took place. The process is on track and on schedule. Specific questions from board members can be directed to Dr. Diggs.
- Recognition was extended to the Philip Livingston community, faculty and staff, parents and families and most especially the students for their commitment through the middle school enrollment development process. In 2001 the renovation of Philip Livingston Magnet Academy as a middle school was as important a project as every other school in the District. Dr. Joseph noted the District has always known that the plan needed to be flexible as the years would pass in the project and the District committed to that flexibility, but, it is doubtful that the District anticipated in 2001 the level of impact Charter Schools would have on declining enrollment and the fact that the District would actually be confronted with having to close a school. Circumstances beyond the control of the District have brought the District along the path of some very difficult decision-making about the school facilities. The toughest one of all is the prospect of eventually closing Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.

The decision before the board this evening is about how to best afford and make available to every student in the middle school program here in Albany, the advantage of attending of what we have as outstanding state-of-the-art facilities both at Hackett Middle School, Myers Middle School and North Albany Academy. That is the decision before the board this evening. Once the board has determined an enrollment plan for the two middle schools, the next order of business is a formal resolution adopted by the board to not use Philip Livingston as a middle school next year.

Philip Livingston Magnet Academy first opened as a middle school in 1932. As we approach the end of the year that warrants some celebration as we move past using it as a middle school. Discussions have already started regarding what might best be planned. The future plans for the building known as Philip Livingston Magnet Academy have yet to be determined.

### **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. Maureen Courtney-John addressed the board regarding middle school enrollment, urging board members to keep in place the neighborhood preference.
2. Josh Farrell addressed the board regarding middle school enrollment, strongly opposing the random lottery model for student enrollment based on the fundamental premise underlying the system. This system does give equality. It does not insure fairness. It only insures the elimination involvement in the process. This system would also negatively affect the social networks for parents and students.
3. Joanne McElroy-Moore addressed the board regarding middle school enrollment, offering a compromise to the options by using the 1.5 mile radius around each of the buildings as the neighborhood zone. Anyone outside that zone would be randomly assigned to middle schools. At the same time add to the definition currently in place under open enrollment that the district has the right through open enrollment to assign students to achieve academic balance at all buildings in the District.
4. John Rosensweig addressed the board regarding middle school enrollment in favor of neighborhood preference, referring to petitions signed by individuals residing within the neighborhood zone of Myers Middle School and distributed to board members. Mr. Rosensweig thanked the District for providing venues throughout the City for parents to receive information on the middle school enrollment options.
5. Robert Malerba addressed the board regarding the use of task forces based on the success of the middle school enrollment task force, allowing increased public input and participation in addressing issues.

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Ocasio Willson spoke about how students reacted to the inauguration ceremonies, making unruly students accountable for their actions during the ceremony. Ocasio advised students in the high school are participating in the Going Green Movement, spearheaded by the Key Club. Some of the activities include students signing pledges to minimize their usage of energy and water. Students have started a recycling rally with recycling boxes throughout the building, encouraging faculty and students to deposit cans and bottles. Students will also be asked to sign advocacy letters to Senator Schumer and Secretary Ken Thorn to protect the Hummingbird by reducing carbon emissions, etc. Later this week Grace Nichol will address students at lunch times about wildlife.

### **ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS**

Routine Consent Items were presented as follows: Proceedings of Meetings, January 5, 2009 and January 15, 2009; Resignations/Retirements; Leave of Absence; Transfers; Appointments (Civil Service, Itinerant Substitute Teachers 2008-2009, Miscellaneous, Probationary Appointments Tenure and Emergency Conditional Appointments); Attendance at Conferences, Resolution to Appoint the Board of Registration for the May vote; Resolution to Approve Donations,

Resolution to Replace Exterior Doors at Albany High School (Declaration Necessity and Approve Funding, SEQRA Resolution to Declare Lead Agency and Approve CS Arch to provide Architect/Engineering Services); Treasurer's Report, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Revenue Status Report – 12/31/08, Appropriation Status report 12/31/08, 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; Authorization to Enter Into Contracts (Adult Continuing Education Services, Abrookin EMS Program, Physical Education for ALC Students, Administrative – mandated), Transportation Study.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve Routine Consent Items as presented. Dr. Barth seconded the motion. Mr. Egan asked that the proceedings of January 15, 2009 be set aside.

The board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion absent the item set aside.

Motion passed.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the January 15, 2009 proceedings. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Mr. Egan expressed concern that comments from the public are incomplete in the proceedings. People take the time to attend meetings to speak and that should be represented in the proceedings. Following a brief discussion, board members agreed to have this discussion at the upcoming board workshop to determine how to proceed. The proceedings in question will go forward as presented.

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

Motion passed.

### **FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT**

#### **Action Items Related to the Facilities Project**

##### **Approval of Change orders**

Change orders for Hackett Middle School, New Scotland Elementary School, TOAST, and Giffen Memorial Elementary School were presented for approval. Mr. McMordie advised change orders for Hackett, New Scotland Elementary School and the TOAST & Giffen projects are relatively basic change orders. In response to a question from a board member regarding the science tables, Mr. McMordie advised the science tables would be reconfigured to accommodate seating for students on either side of the tables. A suggestion was made to have the science teachers review the tables to insure that they will work in the classroom. Also, the electrical outlets need to be reviewed. Any changes to the electrical outlets would come forward on another change order. Mr. Morris made a motion for approval. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

### **ACTION ITEM**

#### **Middle School Enrollment Plan**

Dr. Joseph advised there are two information items related to this issue. One is related to enrollment and verification. Mr. Armlin has been staying very close to the enrollment projections and has presented to the Middle School Enrollment Committee. There were some questions that board members had about actual figures that were being used. Mr. Armlin will be presenting information about the enrollment.

Also, there were questions at the last meeting, and ongoing questions from the committee itself about transportation. There was some expressed desire to have some simulation done. Mr. Hogan and Mr. Cioffi moved ahead with Joe Verrigni to work to develop simulations for transportation for both the random assignment and the feeder pattern. The District also sought the assistance of expertise of the software program, technical department of Versa Trans Solution and they have information about transportation that will be provided to the board.

Mr. Armlin noted district enrollment has become dependent on charter schools in the district. The relationship is inextricably linked. Charter schools have drawn exclusively from district enrollment and correspondingly district enrollment has dropped close to 10%. That will be reflected in middle school enrollment figures. The facilities plan was based on enrollment 650 students at Myers Middle School, 650 at Hackett Middle School and 150 students in grades 6 through 8 at North Albany Academy, a subtotal of approximately 1,450 students. Additional 6<sup>th</sup> grade capacity remains at both ASH and Giffen. There are other opportunities to supplement those 1,450 seats.

The enrollment projections for grade 6 through 8 shows that district enrollment is 1,516 students in the district, correspondingly 421 in charter schools (in four buildings) for a total combined count of 1,937 students. The predictability of enrollment in charter schools is incredibly difficult. Looking at the limited history and trends, approximately 81% of charter school capacity was being occupied historically. That 81% was used as a modeling process to go forward in looking at future charter school enrollment. This directly effects the enrollment in the 6-8 cohort as well as other cohorts. There has been a varying level of approval of the Charter Schools Institute regarding capacity. That makes it very difficult to do projections. Last year's enrollment, using 81% was very close. Going forward there has been expansion in those programs. The decision was made to use 75%, with an enrollment of 522 students. The current enrollment projected for 2009-2010 is approximately 1,980 students. The resulting student population is 1,464 students. Comparing that with the planned three-school scenario of 1,450 is very close, keeping in mind there are other opportunities by continuing 6<sup>th</sup> grade in Giffen and ASH as one example. The real challenge is the difficulty of understanding exactly where charter school enrollment will truly be. There is no way anyone could predict that with any level of accuracy. Mr. Armlin then reviewed charts showing enrollment projections based on capacity and individual schools currently and in the future.

- There is concern about the assumption given the fact that charter school enrollment has been steadily declining. There are a number of charter schools that are now increasing capacity to the original approved cap. There is a concern that the middle schools in the district will be overcrowded.

Mr. Hogan noted at the request of the board several simulations were conducted to determine the impact on transportation costs on a feeder vs. random assignment. The process captured all the current 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders. The district reduced the 6<sup>th</sup> graders at ASH and Giffen and then pulled from the data the 6<sup>th</sup> –8<sup>th</sup> graders of North Albany, which left the current 3<sup>rd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup> & 5<sup>th</sup> graders that would in three years be in the two middle schools.

Two simulations were run for the random assignment. The third database was a straight feeder system where students were based on the recommendations of the committee, specific schools fed into specific middle schools. All this information was loaded into the Versa Trans Software, which is the transportation system that designs the bus routes for the District. The District transports approximately 6,500 students to over 80 destinations every morning and evening. The end result indicates that there is no material difference in transportation, with the feeder system or a random assignment system. Mr. Hogan noted that the feeder schools are not true feeders with students from all over the District in the feeder schools.

- Did anyone look at the cumulative effect of random assignment – feeder assignment? Would there be less variability year to year using the feeder model than the three consecutive random assignments? That test was not conducted.

Proceeding to the action item on middle school enrollment, the Enrollment Committee was charged with presenting a recommendation to the board. They were not able to bring a recommendation on enrollment. They came forth with a recommendation on neighborhood preference. Mrs. Gaffuri noted the board is being asked to act on two items. The neighborhood preference, followed with a motion on the enrollment plan.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve a resolution regarding neighborhood preference. Mr. Egan seconded the motion. Discussion followed relative to students in the neighborhood zone of Philip Livingston Magnet School having preference. Wording of the resolution was changed to indicate this preference henceforth. This will allow the .5 mile neighborhood preference ongoing for the Philip Livingston neighborhood, along with Hackett Middle School and Myers Middle School. Mr. Morris was agreeable to the change in the resolution. Mr. Egan was also in favor. Neighborhood preference is determined by transportation based on the distance from the curb at the front entrance of the school building to the curb of the student's home by pathway. It was noted that the Enrollment Committee was not in favor of a neighborhood preference with either enrollment option.

Mr. Honeywell offered the following resolution that provides a neighborhood preference of .5 miles surrounding all three existing middle schools. Into the future, when there are only two middle schools to be fed, recognizing that the other resolution to be considered has a transition period for Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF THE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
OF ALBANY REGARDING MIDDLE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND  
NEIGHBORHOOD PREFERENCE**

Students enrolled in grades 6, 7 or 8 in the Albany City School District who live within .5 mile of a middle school shall be enrolled in that middle school if the parent or guardian requests such enrollment by the date specified by the district.

Students who reside within the .5 mile zone for Philip Livingston Magnet Academy shall be allowed choice preference for either William S. Hackett Middle School or Stephen & Harriet Myers Middle School.

Students who reside outside the .5 mile zone established for a middle school will attend the middle school identified for them in accordance with the resolution adopted by the Board of Education regarding middle school enrollment.

This neighborhood preference shall be implemented to be consistent with the resolution adopted by the Board regarding middle school enrollment after the Philip Livingston Magnet Academy transition from 2008-2009 to 2009-2010 is completed.

The board voted 6 ayes, 0 nays and 1 abstention. Mrs. Brandon abstained.

Motion passed.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve a second resolution regarding the middle school enrollment plan. Dr. Barth seconded the motion.

- Following a lengthy discussion relative to the enrollment projection figures and concern about overcrowding in the two middle schools, Dr. Joseph suggested that the administration review enrollment projection figures and carry the enrollment projection figures forward. The decision about the feeder schools could be delayed until the next meeting on February 12, 2009. This is a priority so that the District is confident about the actual schools themselves. The resolution could be moved forward absent the identification of the feeder schools. Dr. Joseph recommended that the board accept the resolution for the enrollment plan, feeder as opposed to random assignment and to reserve the decision about the specific feeders schools until the next meeting.

Mr. Egan made a motion to amend the motion with the board voting on the resolution with items 2 and 3 omitted, with the plan of finalizing the school assignments at the next meeting.

- Concern was expressed that the resolution is the recommendation that came forward from the Enrollment Committee. These were the feeder schools that were looked into and presented to the community. Some of the support around the feeder school system may in fact be tied to the particular recommendations that were made by the Committee and that if the school designations are changed, that support may be diminished by moving schools around. The recommendation was changed only because the numbers in real time did not balance out. Projections are looking into the future, which is uncertain. Final enrollment will not be known until those students enter the schools. Whatever the board decides is going to have to be revisited because the district is in uncharted territory.

Mr. Armlin of Armlin, Damon & McMordie, who has been working the enrollment figures, advised certainty is a difficult thing with regard to projections, especially with charter schools. The process used for evaluation makes sense. To model the specific feeder system with enrollment projections and looking at recent history and changes by school and by grade level will result in a more accurate understanding. Mr. Armlin recommended that this review should take place. From a facilities planning standpoint, setting aside enrollment, it is very important to have pressure relief values, should demographics change. It is important that whatever enrollment plan is approved, there needs to be the opportunity to be able to deal on an annual basis, changes that may occur from catchment area to catchment area. Mr. Armlin recommended that based on the information presented this evening, the enrollment projections should be brought forward before deciding on the schools.

Mr. Egan clarified that the change to the motion is Item #3 - bullets 2 and 3 should be omitted pending this study with the goal of filling them in next week. Ms. Mackey accepted the amendment to the motion. The resolution reads:

The resolution was presented as follows:

**RESOLUTION OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF  
THE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY  
REGARDING MIDDLE SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

WHEREAS, the Board of Education established a Middle School Enrollment Committee on September 18, 2008, comprised of a broad range of representatives from the District community consisting of administrators, teachers, support staff employees, parents, and community representatives; and,

WHEREAS, the Middle School Enrollment Committee devoted many hours of diligent work to the issue of how to determine middle school enrollment in the City of Albany School District in the future in order to best serve the needs of the students, families, and School District; and,

WHEREAS, the Middle School Enrollment Committee has, in addition to its own diligent work, conducted a number of community outreach forums to ensure maximum community and parent input to this important issue; and,

WHEREAS, the Middle School Enrollment Committee has submitted its findings to the Superintendent of Schools and Board of Education consisting of equally supported options described as either a random assignment system or feeder school system; and,

WHEREAS, the Superintendent and Board have fully considered the findings and conducted their own review,

**IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED:**

Effective July 1, 2009, students in grades 6, 7, and 8 shall be enrolled in schools within the Albany City School District in the following order of preference:

1. Students enrolled in Philip Livingston Magnet Academy (PLMA) during the 2008-09 school year shall be enrolled in a middle school program (William S. Hackett Middle School, Stephen & Harriett Myers Middle School, or North Albany Academy) requested by the student's parent or guardian. If insufficient space is available to accommodate all requested preferences, PLMA students with a sibling already enrolled in the requested school during 2009-10 year will be assigned first. Students enrolled in PLMA during the 2008-09 school year whose parents or guardians do not submit a written request by the date specified by the district shall be assigned to a middle school by the district.
2. Through the duration of this enrollment plan, students shall be enrolled in the same middle school as a sibling if the parent or guardian requests such enrollment by the date specified by the district.
3. Grade 5 students shall be assigned to a middle school program based upon the elementary school they were attending as of October 1 of their 5<sup>th</sup> grade year as follows:
  - Grade 5 students attending North Albany Academy shall be enrolled in North Albany Academy for grades 6, 7, and 8;
  - Students who were not attending an Albany City District School by October 1 of their grade 5 year shall be enrolled in a middle school program based upon the elementary school catchment area in which the student resides.
4. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the district shall assign students with disabilities, ESL students, and students enrolled in the Dual Language Program based upon program priorities, student needs and space availability.

5. If there is insufficient space to accommodate all requests within a preference category, priority shall be given based upon the date of the submitted requests for a preference.
6. Whenever all students within a preference category cannot be accommodated within a school's capacity, the District shall be responsible for assigning students to schools and programs to ensure that none of the district's schools exceed their established capacities.

The board voted 4 ayes, 1 nay and 2 abstentions.

Mrs. Gaffuri, Ms. Doesschate, Dr. Barth and Mr. Egan voted aye.

Mr. Morris voted nay. Ms. Mackey and Mrs. Brandon abstained.

Motion passed.

### **DISCUSSION ITEM**

#### **Strategic Plan Implementation Schedule**

Dr. Barth asked that this item be tabled.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to table the item.

#### **2009-2010 Budget Development**

Dr. Joseph noted this is an extremely difficult budget cycle. The District's approach to the development of the budget is different than previous years. The strategies for the 2009-2010 budget development are a focus on contraction, not expansion, looking at significant budget reductions. Focus on identifying and re-evaluating current educational programming and delivery of services, those that are essential (mandated or required), essential but not mandated and elective programs. Inform the public about the numerous specialty program opportunities available to students throughout the District. Recognize that some programs will have to be scaled back, or eliminated, but academic programming will continue to provide challenging opportunities to all students, provide additional support resources to those who need it, provide alternative programs for the non-traditional students and provide expanded programs before and after school.

Budget challenges in 2009-2010 are a loss in interest income: \$1.6 million, a net loss in State-aid: \$3 million, increase in labor and benefits costs \$10.2 million and an increase in Charter School costs: \$2.9 million. The preliminary budget, with a 6.64% increase results in a 20.62% increase in the tax levy. It was noted that the \$2.9 million of new expenses in Charter School costs is driving this budget, along with a major loss of revenue. A contingency budget with an increase of 4.21%, with reductions of \$8.7 million results in an increase in the tax levy of 15.64% and a zero increase budget with reductions of \$13.7 million results in an increase of 6.98% in the tax levy.

The presentation continued with an analysis of anticipated changes to the new budget in expenses and revenues, a review of trend analysis, professional development activities, re-evaluation of existing program, new initiatives funded with existing resources, a review of education programming at all levels and staff analysis. The budget development will move forward with the next steps with everything on the table. Unless circumstances change, deep cuts will have to occur and throughout the budget process, the goal will continue to be to provide a sound educational experience for all students.

Dr. Joseph noted the District is evaluating every service and every program for effectiveness and efficiency, being very, very strict with how the District is defining efficiency, knowing the level of reductions needed. Once that is complete, recommendations will be brought forward to the board, building the first draft budget. Dr. Joseph presented the district goals established by the Strategic Plan. We continue to say that our budget drives the District toward meeting its goals. Cabinet members defined specialty as well as large category programs, categorizing them into core strategies that are essential and mandated, expanded strategies that are essential but not mandated and elective strategies for the Elementary, Middle Level and Secondary and District level program. That hopefully will guide the District as it moves toward budget development.

- Will class sizes remain the same? Class size will be a consideration during the budget discussions.
- What is an example of items coming off budget? Some things are cyclical or regulatory items that occur once every other year or third year, i.e. training, building physical inspections.
- What would an increase similar to last year of 2.5% in terms of the budget amount? It would draw significantly. This year, under the contingency budget, the tax levy would increase 15.64%. By comparison, in year's past if a budget with a tax levy increase of 6%, and it was voted down, it would go to a contingency rate of 4%, which would be a reasonable tax increase.
- What is the cost of the district per student in charter schools? Tuition cost is approximately \$12,000 for 1,000 students. The District still provides some transportation, nursing, special education services. Calculations show that while it is said that the money follows the student, for every \$12,000 the District pays, realistically, the District only saves about 20%. The general formula is that for every 6 student that leave the District, that's the cost of a teacher. But, when 6 students exit the system, the District does not eliminate a teacher. The District would realize the cost of a teacher when 25 students leave and 50 students for a support person, 500 students to lose an administrator.
- What austerity measures have been implemented this year in anticipation of next year? Hopefully, one of the things on the table is getting creative about revenue options.
- Will the District realize savings with the closing of Philip Livingston? The District is looking at those savings. The building will not be shut down. The food commissary is located in the building. Thoughts have been what other programs could be put in that building, which would give the District the opportunity to close some others. The District has been looking into preliminary arrangements for releasing assets. Unfortunately, with the economy as it is, those possibilities have dwindled. The District will continue to pursue these possibilities. The District is looking at space efficiencies.
- Foreign language is not essential or mandated up to grade 8 in the State of New York. The District is obligated to offer two opportunities for acceleration at the middle school level. Often times to meet that mandate districts offer foreign language as one of those acceleration opportunities. The District will investigate offering accelerated Math or Science in response to that mandate.
- Pre-K or Kindergarten programs are not required in New York State. The District has committed to a strong early childhood education.

- Does the District receive special funding for the Magnet program? The District received \$3.5 million in state-aid through foundation aid, but it is targeted for Magnet schools. The District has a large portion of funding for the Magnet program in the general budget as well. The aid does not increase from year to year and as program costs increase, the general fund commitment become larger each year.
- Is the District obligated to provide transportation? In order for the District to change transportation policy it would require voter approval. Once the public has voted on a transportation policy, voter approval is needed to make any changes to that policy.

Information on the Pre-kindergarten Program will be presented to the Board. Board member feedback can be directed to Dr. Joseph. Information on the TOPS Program will also be forthcoming on a board agenda.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

Policy Committee Meeting has been changed from Tuesday, February 10, 2009 to Monday, February 9, 2009.

Audit Committee met and two Request for Proposals were solicited to hire two different types of CPA firms. One the external auditor, provided by Cusack & Company in past years and also an internal auditor as a CPA firm. In the past the District has hired a staff person to perform this function. Through the process of getting new proposals and the combination of outsourcing the District should save approximately \$170,000 plus over the next three years with these changes. Interviews will take on February 23. Recommendations will be brought forward to the Board to hire two CPA firms.

There is a need to reconvene the Ad Hoc Committee on Voting Locations to review changes in voting locations for the May 19, 2009 budget vote. With the changes in board membership it is necessary to appoint a new member to this committee. Ms. Mackey volunteered to join Dr. Barth, Dr. Joseph and Ms. Cutting as a member of the committee. A meeting will be scheduled.

Facility Subcommittee will meet on Wednesday, February 25, 2009 at 4:30 p.m. at Essex Street.

### **BOARD MEMBER ITEMS**

2009 State Issues Conference "Fighting for New York's Future" Sunday, March 1, 2009 3:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Monday, March 2, 2009 7:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. with a rally on the Capitol steps, Tuesday, March 3, 2009, Lobby Day. Dr. Joseph noted this is a workshop provided by NYSSBA to develop advocacy in this year's budget crisis. They will be sponsoring the participation of every District Superintendent and one Board Member free of charge. Mrs. Brandon will be attending.

### **Adjournment**

Ms. Mackey made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.