



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
August 21, 2008
7:00 p.m.

Eagle Point Elementary School

PRESENT: William Barnette, President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Judy Doesschate
Melissa Mackey
Wayne Morris

Dr. Eva Joseph
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Bill Hogan

ABSENT: Dr. Mark Barth

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.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to change the agenda to move item 6 to item 3. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted 5-0 to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Welcome Dr. Tresa Diggs, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education.
- The Hackett Middle School Ribbon Cutting Ceremony is scheduled for next week, Wednesday, August 27th at 4:00 p.m. All are invited to attend this celebration and tour this beautiful facility.
- The 2008-09 School Calendar is also in the mail to the community. The calendar features Champions for the district. The Champion Campaign will continue with other champions highlighted throughout the year.
- Preparations are taking place for opening day. The convocation is scheduled for September 2nd. The keynote speaker is Dr. Janice Jackson, a Harvard Professor and also on the Board of Directors for the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education and the Deputy Secretary for Education for the United States Department of Education.
- Both Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology and Arbor Hill Elementary School will open on time. Hats off to the Operations and Maintenance Department, under the guidance of Tony Catalfamo for the incredible effort in getting locations ready for the opening of school. There may be a request to have a Superintendent's Conference Day on September 3rd for those two schools. Mr. Fowler and Ms. Gaines-Harrell, along with Dr. Diggs are working to insure that parents are duly notified.

The District Mission Statement was read.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Marlon Anderson addressed the Board regarding the image of the district and the delay in filling the vacant position on the Board.

ACTION ITEM

Approval of the 2008-09 Tax Warrant

The 2008-09 Tax Warrant was presented for board action. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Mr. Hogan provided information for the tax warrant. The recommendation is that the school tax levy be set in accordance with the adopted budget in the amount of \$100,561,391, up from \$98,116,752 from 2007-08. The recommended tax levy increase is 2.49%. This is the amount approved by the voters in May. The calculated tax rate is \$16.29 per thousand for homestead and \$24.53 per thousand for non-homestead. Estimated tax bill for a property assessed at \$100,000 is \$1,629.79 without STAR; \$1,040.46 with Basic STAR and \$513.55 with Enhanced STAR.

- Is there flexibility in the apportionment of the tax rates? The flexibility is that there is a graduated scale. Over time the goal in Albany is to get the non-homestead rate and the homestead rate to be equal. The district is recommending that the minimal amount to the homestead this year. If the district adopted a higher tax rate the impact would be greater to the local residents.

The board voted 5-0 to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Comprehensive Education Plans

The Comprehensive Education Plans for Philip Livingston Magnet Academy and Hackett Middle School were presented for approval. Dr. Joseph noted these are the same plans that were presented at the last meeting. There are no revisions to the plans, They are being presented in the same form that they were previously submitted to the board. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted 5-0 to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

INFORMATION ITEM

Strategic Plan

Dr. Joseph provided an update on the Strategic Plan. The district is in the action planning stage of the Strategic Plan. There are seven action teams, one for each of the strategies that were adopted as part of the Strategic Direction. Changes in the team leadership include Michelle Bridgewater replacing Dr. Joseph Dragone. Michelle is working with Cathy Corbo as co-leaders. Also, Dr. Tresa Diggs replacing Jackie Carrese for the high school team. Dr. Diggs is working with Maxine Fantroy-Ford. A full-day meeting took place on August 6th, reviewing draft plans from four strategy teams. Engaging Parents & Families; Insuring Educational, Emotional, Physical Safety Well-Being of our Students; Improving Education in Grades 6-8 and the fourth strategy, Using All Assessment Data to Drive Rigorous Instruction.

Rocco Rainone and Marilyn Gounaris of Soar Point have been retained as the facilitators through this process. They have been tremendous in terms of providing guidance with a very ambitious agenda for the strategic teams. Their expressed sentiments to the action planning team members, and continually to the superintendent are that this is some of the best work they have seen. They continue to be impressed with the level of commitment of the action planning team members, which include administrators, teachers, community members and parents.

The four plans that were presented were very well received. The process of review was one very impressive, objective and honored everyone's feedback. Each of the planning teams are currently in the process of considering the feedback that was given at the meeting. Revised plans will be brought forward in a finalized format. The remaining three teams will present their plans to the consultants on September 18th and on Friday, September 26th the entire Strategic Planning Team will meet again for review of those draft action plans; Access and Re-design All Aspects of the High School; Develop and Implement More Effective Communication, Student Access to All School Education and Program Activities.

Dr. Joseph suggested that the Board devote the round table meeting on October 16, 2008 for a full review of the strategic plan, with adoption scheduled for November 5th. This would allow for consideration of some aspects of implementation for this year and considering action plan strategies for next year's budget development.

Dr. Joseph also reviewed the implementation phase of the project, noting that the district may chose to contract with Soar Point for this process. More information will be forthcoming.

- How would the process work if the board chose to adopt five of the seven action plans? Additional discussion with the facilitators is needed to address this question. The consultants have stated that the board has been involved in the process. With a number of people who were unable to make the review meeting on August 6th, there may be a need discuss this possibility in terms of the integrity of the process.
- We had some discussions at the meeting and some of the plans were going back for revisions. Is it possible that since the board members had already seen those presented that the board members could get an early look at those again so that at least on those four the board could provide feedback as whether or not that meets the concerns that were raised? Dr. Joseph advised she would ask the question.

Dr. Joseph noted that the assumption was that if everyone had been present on August 6th, then board members questions and concerns would have been vetted as part of the team process that took place that day. The absences present a different issue, which will be discussed with the consultants.

Mr. Barnette clarified that the board is in agreement to designate the entire round table meeting on October 16th to review the entire strategic Plan.

- There is no check to determine whether or not concerns addressed at the review on August 6th have been addressed by the teams. There was very specific feedback so that there was no room for misinterpretation about the guidance that the Strategic Team presented. Members were asked to be specific about the language they use in replacing language in the document.
- Each one of the discussion groups did not review all four of the action plans. Not every single members of the Strategic Team commented in writing on every single plan presented. I don't know that we really completed the process in that way.
- Perhaps there might be the opportunity built into the agenda on September 26th to raise additional concerns if that information is shared with everyone.

Dr. Joseph will discuss this with the consultants.

- Consensus recommendations are coming to the board on the 16th from the Strategic Team. If there is time on the 26th, the team can review all seven action plans. The district needs to remain true to the expectations of the action team leaders.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent items including Creation of Position, Resignation Rescinded; Contracts (Susan Snide and NovaNET Service Proposal) were presented for approval. Mr. Morris made a motion for approval. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

The board voted 5-0 to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Item Related to the Facilities Project

Bid Award for Window Treatments at New Scotland Elementary School & Giffen Memorial Elementary School

Mr. Barnette presented the bid award for approval. Mr. Morris made a motion for approval. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. In response to a question from the board, Mr. McMordie confirmed that this project is still within budget. Mr. McMordie also explained that the difference in pricing for the two schools is due to the size of the windows and the number of windows. There is more square footage at Giffen Memorial Elementary School.

The board voted 5-0 to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Mr. Barnette congratulated everyone involved in the district on the 2008-09 School Calendar and the Champion Program. Dr. Joseph noted the Champions Campaign is something that the district has worked in terms of community relations. Sawchuk Brown did the profiles. There are more champions who will be highlighted throughout the year. The district also received support from Key Bank, Turner Broadcasting and the Times Union.

Adjournment

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m.