



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

August 5, 2008

7:00 p.m.

### Albany High School

**PRESENT:** William Barnette, President  
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary  
Dr. Mark Barth  
Melissa Mackey  
Wayne Morris

Dr. Eva Joseph  
Bill Hogan  
Linda Jackson-Chalmers

**ABSENT:** Judy Doesschate

#### **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.
- Mission Statement was read.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- Following the discovery of additional asbestos abatement needed at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology (TOAST) during the construction process, the district has made the decision to move TOAST students to swing space for the entire 2008-09 school year. The project was immediately halted by the Department of Labor. First and foremost the main concern was about the safety and well being of our students and our staff. It was with the unanimous support and agreement of the Board of Education that the district would move forward to move the students into swing space for the year. The school, for the most part will be housed at the former Philip Schuyler Elementary School site on North Lake Avenue, between Washington and Western Avenue. Arbor Hill Elementary School is already getting set up to be in swing space at the same location so it will be a shared facility. Fortunately, the principals, Mr. Tim Fowler and Mrs. Rozalyn Gaines-Farrell have developed a great partnership and collaboration and have been working every diligently to create a strong and effective instructional environment for the opening of school. Because this move is being conducted within a short couple of weeks, it is with tremendous gratitude and appreciation to the principals, faculty and staff, virtually every department and most especially our parents and community who have come together on very short notice to help the district build an effective plan to begin in the fall. The cooperation has been outstanding. The next step in the construction process to obtain clearance from the Department of Labor to resume the renovations to that facility. The construction project will go forward during this entire year and will stay on the same time line, rather than having work performed during the summers and having a second shift crew to do the construction. Students will be moved back into the building in September 2009.
- The Ribbon Cutting Ceremony at Hackett Middle School is scheduled for Wednesday, August 27, 2008 at 4:00 p.m. Board members will have the opportunity to tour the facility prior to that date. Everyone is invited to the ribbon cutting ceremony. The district is very excited about the completion of that project.

- The district continues to move forward with the Strategic Planning Process. It is with great appreciation to the co-leaders of the action teams. There are seven action teams. One for each strategy defined in the development of the Strategic Direction that was completed last November. The full strategic team will be meeting tomorrow for a full day with four of the action teams to hear their action plan. Another day is scheduled for September to hear the remaining three plans. The district will then be coming forward to the community with that information.
- There are a number of appointments on the agenda this evening. Mr. Daniel Stilson was introduced as the Instructional Supervisor for the K-12 Science Program. Ms. Sanchez-Gayle was introduced as the Assistant Principal of Philip Livingston Magnet Academy. Ms. Darlene King was introduced as the Chair of the Committee on Special Education. Also, Mr. Douglas (Scott) Bojanich will be appointed as Interim House Principal at Albany High School.
- Is there an update on the bus loop at Giffen? That information will come back to the Facilities Committee.
- There have been concerns related to the swing space. If there are things that are being noticed, the district is open to those comments in an effort to insure the students have a safe and healthy environment for learning in the next school year.
- Do we have a sense of how many students from Arbor Hill and TOAST that will be in the building? There will be just over 800. The specific number has not yet been established.
- A special note of gratitude, to echo previous remarks, to Ms. April Bacon, the PTA President, who really stepped up to make sure that she was in constant communication with Dr. Joseph and Mr. Fowler and quickly brought concern to the district and also communicated back to the parents in a very efficient way.

#### **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. Marlin Anderson addressed the board relative to the Philip Livingston School building.
2. Michelle Birnbaum addressed the board relative to the dress code.
3. Alex Streznewski addressed the board relative to space issues at the swing site building.

#### **INFORMATION ITEM**

##### **Contract for Excellence**

Dr. Joseph advised a comprehensive presentation on the Contract for Excellence was given during the public hearing preceding the meeting. Everything that was presented has been approved by the State Education Department and is well aligned with the expectation. The on-line application that the district has to complete for August 15<sup>th</sup> is far more involved than the summary plan that is on the website. The templates are fairly well in-depth and include a significant amount of additional information. The Contract for Excellence is a piece of all that the district is doing in terms of moving forward. The Board of Education does not have to formally approve or adopt the Contract for Excellence. The requirements are that the district must post the Contract on-line and the public has an opportunity for and that a public hearing is held. However, this will not appear on any future agenda for formal approval. The district has maintained a close liaison with the State Education Department and the liaison will be working with the district prior to the final submission to be sure all is in order.

- Please clarify that the district is permitted to include some of the NUA activities in the contract and that is held accountable. The Contract for Excellence requires that the district is given some latitude with using 25% of the allocation of additional aid to support existing programs. Things that have already been put in place i.e. the addition of one additional literacy coach. The district was required to be very specific with 75% of the Contract for Excellence allocations for new or expanded programs. The district has already approved the amount that will be spent on the NUA. We have already approved the contract. The Contract for Excellence is the new portion, expanding efforts at the high school and the high school is in the accountability status, as well as some support for existing programs not to exceed the full amount of the NUA contract. The Contract for Excellence does not go beyond what was in the budget proposal. It's everything that was in the budget that meets the criteria for the Contract for Excellence that the district has to define.
- When we said we were entering into a contract with NUA for \$1 million. Is this additional money on top of that \$1 million? It is included in the \$1 million.
- Is there a difference now that will be used for something else or is it already allocated in the budget in anticipation of getting the Contract for Excellence? Yes. It was already allocated. During the budget planning process, the district did not know how much money was specific to the Contract for Excellence. The dollar amount for the district in the Contract for Excellence was not verified until the first week in July. The district needed to have that in the budget because the budget approval occurred well before the Contract for Excellence deadline. During the budget development the board was presented a listing of all of the new and expanded initiatives with a reassurance that regardless of the amount targeted for the Contract for Excellence the district would be in good shape.
- I have to say while I appreciate that and have a better understanding that the district had some initiatives that qualified for the Contract for Excellence, but if those were in mind for the Contract for Excellence, is that really in consultation with the community if the district has already identified ideas for the Contract for Excellence and now the money is being used for programs, etc. that have already been decided. It doesn't necessarily fit with the spirit of the Contract for Excellence and that there would be a public dialogue of it. I feel disadvantaged in this conversation because there was information that the board members received this evening and there was not sufficient time for the necessary review. Every element that is in the presentation this evening is in the narrative. Everything that has been put forward in the Contract for Excellence was part of the budget building process and a part of those dialogues. Some of the larger items have emanated from conversations with building level teams, shared decision making teams and the Comprehensive District Education Planning Committee. There are a number of committees that contribute through their improvement planning to the budget development process and these recommendations came to directly from that. This is the first year the district has qualified for the Contract. Last year the district did not qualify. This year the district did qualify but the amount the district qualified for the Contract is nowhere near the state aid increase that the district realized. So, it's a very small amount. We will look to year to incorporate some of the elements and address some of the questions and concerns that have come forward.

- The total amount of the allocation for the Contract for Excellence is \$1,778,221. Is that correct? It's \$2.3 million. As we do the budget coding will the expenditures be coded to NUA. Those expenses will be coded against the Contract for Excellence funding. So, of that \$2 million contract with NUA, the revenue source will be made up of funding sources in the budget and \$190,000 will be coded to NUA. The Contract for Excellence will subsidize \$200,000 of the \$1 million NUA contract.
- How will we measure the results of what the district is doing with the Contract for Excellence funds and do we have to measure that and we have to provide outcomes at the end of this year? We have to complete the online application, which is very much developed and comprehensive.

This item will not come before the board again. The district will be working diligently to provide the online submission by the deadline. If the online website becomes available to the public, the district will notify the public via the website.

#### **ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS**

Routine Consent Items were presented for approval as follows: Proceedings of Meetings June 3, 2008, June 19, 2008, July 1, 2008 and July 22, 2008; Resignations, Leaves of Absence, Abolish Position, Creation of Position, Transfers, Appointments (Administrative Appointments, Interim Administrative Appointment, Civil Service, Coaching/ Fall 2008-09, Food Service Summer Employees 2008-09, Intramural Program 2007-08, Itinerant Substitutes, Miscellaneous, Probationary, Summer School 2008, Tutors 2008-09 and Emergency Conditional Appointments); Treasurer's Report, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Revenue Status Report, Appropriation Status Report, Real Property Tax Adjustments, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, Bid Awards, Bid Award for Hackett Middle School Communication Equipment, Bid award for Stained Glass Windows, New York Power Authority Resolution, Health Services Contracts (East Greenbush School District, Watervliet School District, North Colonie School District), Membership Dues New York State Association of Small City School Districts 08-09 (NYSASCSD), Contracts for Grants and Special Projects (University of Albany); Contracts (Albany County Chapter of NYSARC, Albany-Schoharie-Schenectady-Saratoga BOCES, Devereux Foundation, Jose Lopez, New York & National Association for Sport and Physical Education, Purinton & Morris, CPA's, Questar III, Sawchuk Brown Associates, Wildwood Summer Extension Program, Resolution to Accept IBM Donation, Committee on Special Education, Subcommittee on Special Education, Committee on Pre-School Special Education. Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the Routine Consent Items. Dr. Barth 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**

Change orders for Hackett Middle School and New Scotland Elementary School (School 19) were presented for approval. Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve the change orders. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

## **ACTION ITEMS**

### **Code of Conduct Policy #5300**

The revised Code of Conduct Policy was presented for approval. Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the policy. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. The revised policy for 2007-08 presented problems in terms of acceptable clothing for various grades. The policy was again reviewed with input from the City Council PTA and parents. That revised policy is presented for approval.

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

Motion passed.

### **Extracurricular Activity Policy # 5290**

The Extracurricular Activity Policy was presented for approval. Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve the policy. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The board voted 4 ayes, 0 nays and 1 abstention. Dr. Barth abstained.

Motion passed.

### **Philip Livingston Magnet Academy (PLMA) Corrective Action Plan**

The PLMA Corrective Action Plan was presented for approval. Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the plan. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. This plan will be submitted to the State Education Department following board approval.

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

Motion passed.

## **DISCUSSION ITEMS**

### **Comprehensive Educational Plans (CEP) for Philip Livingston Magnet Academy and Hackett Middle School**

Dr. Joseph noted the Principals of these two schools have worked together to develop a joint presentation. Members of the Building Leadership Team from these two schools were introduced. These plans are a State Education Department requirement. Building Leadership Teams spent a week in training and developing the Comprehensive Education Plans presented this evening. Many elements of the plans were a collaborative effort. Many were shared, discussed and brought forth from both leadership teams to be as strong as they can be. The Board of Education heard a joint presentation from Mr. Giglio and Mr. Newman, along with the members of the Building Leadership Teams. The presentation included Academic Achievement, Safe and Orderly Environment, Effective Communication, Family and Community Involvement, Student Voices/Student Government and Student and Staff Wellness. Final plans will be brought forward to the Board of Education separately for approval on September 2, 2008.

- Is there something in place for students who might be suspended or absent treated the same way by teachers through the lesson plans and associated support? We are trying to be proactive with parent communication through phone calls and meetings. There were also a number of home visits to engage parents and to let them know the overall goal is to keep students in class. The expectation is that each teacher will be providing the days work for students who are not in class through the full service school.
- Will both buildings be in sequence? Implementations will be the same or similar. There are some specific things at each school and separate program. The end results are anticipated to be the same and overall goals are similar.
- Can someone give me an example of using culturally relevant teaching in Math? An example is the music of M&M to teach perimeter. The kids know the beat and part of the lesson is that some people go on the outside. That teaches them perimeter.
- Have we investigated the possibility of having integration go further so that 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade teachers can actually meet with and interact with 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> grade teachers so that we can continue that trajectory into the high school? Those conversations have already started. This is the second year that the high school has offered opportunities for middle school staff and staff has participated in integration day and professional development at the high school.
- Given the differences in the two schools. There is a different environment and a different culture. I'm concerned about the plans being identical. How about including faculty surveys to the mix? How do you go deeper to do the work you have to do to capitalize on the human capital that you have? The real-time, meaningful data and feedback is what we are all about. The hub of that is the BLT and the spokes are the faculty. The monitoring pieces are also opportunities for feedback for the faculty to give to the BLT. It's a constant feedback both for instruction and for the leadership team. Student feedback is a part of the monthly "town hall" meetings. The general goals are the same. The way each goes about having actual student meetings might look a little different. Consistency is also very important.
- How closely are we working with the administrators at Myers Middle School in anticipation of upcoming changes? Monthly ongoing dialogue with the middle level task force and the middle level principal's meeting where the plans were shared.
- You should consider a presentation like this for parent and student orientation. It's very impressive when we stand up and talk about what the data shows us, where our strengths are, where our weaknesses are and we talk to students and parents about what we are going to do about them. It's a very action oriented approach. It's not about what is going to happen, rather what we are going to do. I agree that we need to be looking at consistency with all three middle schools and the middle level system relative to the future.
- Where are we with the policy that teachers call parents twice a year? Has that been implemented? Calls are being made to parents, along with contacts by email and meetings, newsletters, home visits, etc.
- Would Myers CEP look similar? In terms of the middle level system there are a couple of mechanisms in place. The district continues to generate that consistency for Myers and also North Albany Academy. The middle level education task force was one ongoing monthly dialogue where strategies were developed, discussed and that consistency was established for some essential components.
- How do you know how well the essential elements are being practiced? What kind of objective measure do you have that. Perception surveys can serve that purpose.

- The portal system was implemented at the high school last year. At that time it was envisioned that this would be implemented district wide. Implementation at the middle school level is targeted for October.
- Are the 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> grade math teachers in routine dialogue with the high school math teachers? Not at this time. That is one of the objectives for this year to make sure that the framework is in place for those conversations to happen.

### **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

The Audit Committee met and reviewed issues related to the Controller's Audit. A draft is not expected for at least a few months, based on the rigorous review process by the Controller's Office.

### **BOARD MEMBER ITEMS**

Board members made several requests for consideration as future agenda items:

- Middle school enrollment and feeder schools
- Posting draft board meeting agendas on the website
- High school restructure
- Bus transportation at the high school
- District volunteer program

Items will be taken into consideration as the board officers develop future agendas.

### **Adjournment**

Mr. Morris made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 10:35.