



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

October 6, 2009

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Barbara Gaffuri, President
Melissa Mackey, Vice President
Judy Doesschate, J.D. Secretary
Dr. Mark Barth
Daniel Egan
Wayne Morris

Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Bill Hogan
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Linda Rudnick
Jeff Honeywell (School Counsel)

EXCUSED: Rose Brandon

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.
- The Mission Statement was read.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Welcome Dr. Jay Kravitz, School Physician will be presenting updated information on H1N1 and the preparations taking place in the district to address this issue.
- Student Representative, Shalonda Addison was introduced to the Board of Education.
- Dan Stilson, Science Supervisor, introduced Linda Carey, a Living Environment Teacher at Albany High who posted classroom material needs for her class on Donor's Choice. Ms. Carey received approval for four projects, including an LCD projector, a computer, a set of ten DVD's related to relationship between the organ systems of the body and a set of poster boards, sharpies, pencils, etc. for making posters. Ms. Carey explained programs students are working on as a result of these donations from Donor's Choice and information about Donor's Choice and matching donations from other entities such as the Gates Foundation.
- Regarding class balancing, the district is in the process of class merging. The district is in the final stages of completing this process.
- The district has been experiencing some student issues in the Delaware corridor, where a number of students travel at the end of the school day. There are about 11 schools that are dismissed in this area at 3:30 each day, involving approximately 3,000 students. District staff including Ted Cook, Willie Hughes and Michael Paolino, are working in collaboration with the Albany Police Department on resolving this issue. Mr. Cook reviewed the process.
- Board meetings will be taped during the next meeting on October 15th as a pilot.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Marlon Anderson addressed the board regarding the continuing Charter School issue in Albany. In New York City there is a cap on Charter Schools. It's time for the community in Albany to step up and pursue a cap on Charter Schools in Albany. Mr. Anderson will be initiating a petition that will be distributed throughout the City to cap Charter Schools.
2. Mary Beth Fowler addressed the board regarding the issue of dismissal in the Delaware corridor. Ms. Fowler was pleased to hear that the district is diligently working toward resolving the issue.

INFORMATION ITEM

Update on H1N1

Dr. Jay Kravitz presented background information related to the H1N1 Virus. The Swine Flu Virus has been around for some time. Currently, the first cases were reported in March of 2009 in Mexico. The first reported case in the United States was in April 2009. Since that time there have been over 27,000 cases and 550 deaths. The mortality rate in the United States is approximately under 4%. Dr. Kravitz reviewed symptoms, duration and the period of time the disease is contagious. People are infective one day before symptoms appear and seven days after symptoms appear. The major concern is that children are very susceptible to this disease. Dr. Kravitz reviewed the recommended preventive measures, treatment for those who become infected and the district's plan should closing schools become necessary. In cooperation with the Albany County Department of Health, the New York State Department of Health, led by the Center for Disease Control staff, students and families are being educated about the virus. A principal's letter is being developed to further disseminate information relative to dealing with a child that is ill in the home. This information will be going home with students.

- What is the district doing in terms of encouraging parents to have children vaccinated? The district is working with the Albany County Department of Health. In the near future, they will identify clinics when the vaccine is available.

Superintendent Search

Mr. O'Rourke, Associate with Hazard, Young & Attea Search Firm, along with Deborah Raizes, presented an update on the superintendent search process. Several community forums have taken place in the district, along with 175 survey returns. A total of 92 interviews have taken place with staff, administrators, faculty, students, parents, community people and elected officials looking for the strength, the issues facing the district and the characteristics people would be looking for in the next superintendent. The entire report will be available on the website. This is a very enthusiastic community, very much invested in the success of every student and the school district. The challenges are in some respects monumental and face every urban situation throughout the country, doing more with less, declining resources. Mr. O'Rourke reviewed the qualities people indicated they would like to see in this person. The person needs to be open, accessible, well versed in the latest educational trend, but more than anything else, needs to be a source of communication, a receptive communicator.

Strategic Plan Implementation

Members of the cabinet provide updates to the Strategic Plan, A Vision to Tomorrow, related to goals accomplished and goals underway. Information included a standardized orientation program for all schools, parental participation in school governance, on-line report cards for teacher access, and bi-weekly updates for parents, the volunteer program in the district, the Think Tank is currently being developed with a Core Management Team, contents of the middle school orientation program, the enrollment committee, outreach and communications efforts, the dissemination of information throughout the community, community meetings, collaborative learning cycles that use data to drive learning and instruction, assessments for all levels, glossary of terms for every term used in the accountability system, power point presentations on data and using assessments (timeline and training are still under discussion).

- How will the district assess where programs are going, looking at individual students, in using data for the alternative education.

That will be addressed when developing the district wide data warehouse. The district is in discussion with vendors to integrate this information into Power School.

- Is Power School able to handle this?

The focus is to utilize a variety of programs that link to Power School to allow for access to all the programs through the student management system. The district is presently investigating this approach.

- Are parents aware of the Parent Portal program? What percent of teachers and parents are using the program?

It is being used by high school parents to check schedules. Information to the middle and high school parents has been distributed. When report cards are available at the elementary, access information will be sent to parents.

- I would appreciate updated information in writing with future presentations. When will information be provided relative to the 2009-2010 year progress?

Next steps with timelines will be provided with the next presentation.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Class Size Balancing

The Board of Education was provided a report on the class size balancing process currently underway in the district. The presentation included Enrollment Data, Elementary Grade Plan, Middle School Plan, Staffing and Financial Impact. Assistant Superintendents for Elementary and Secondary Education have been monitoring this process. The Board will be asked to approve staff reduction of 7 teaching positions. All 7 of the teachers have accepted other positions in the district. Dr. Coluciello advised projections for next year indicate there will be several hundred seats available. This will be a major concern as the district moves forward in the budget development process for next year.

Board Member Roles

On occasion the district is asked to provide board members to participate in outside committees, i.e. Albany Fund for Education, Gun Violence Task Force. Board members decided that Mr. Egan would be the designated board member on the Albany Fund for Education and Melissa Mackey would serve on the Gun Violence Task Force. Subsequently, board members received concerns as to whether or not it is appropriate for board members to be serving on the Albany Fund for Education based on the flow of money between the two. Part of the discussion included

the need for a formal resolution to designate board members to these positions and how information from these committees would be brought back to this board. Discussion followed relative to the role of board members. A suggestion was made that board members would present periodic reports on these outside entities as appropriate. Mr. Honeywell advised there is no conflict with a board member who serves on outside boards. Individual board members have no authority to bind the board of the school district, absent the board affirmatively by resolution delegating that authority to the board member.

Policy Review Procedures

The district has contracted with the New York State School Boards Association to guide the district in its policy review process. At the last Policy Committee meeting there was discussion on the policy review procedure. In light of recommendations from Ms. Linda Bakst, Policy Analyst with NYSSBA recommended that the policies under review be distributed electronically to all board members two weeks prior to the policy committee meeting to provide input prior to discussion by the members off the committee. Policies will be presented to board members categorically. A schedule of the approval process was distributed to board members for their review. Dr Barth, Chair of the Policy Committee presented his recommendations for the policy review process for consideration. Preference was indicated for the process established by the NYSSBA consultant. Following discussion the process recommended by NYSSBA will be followed as a start to the review process.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent Items were presented as follow: Proceedings of Meetings, September 1, 2009, September 10, 2009, September 17, 2009; Appointments (Probationary Appointments, Teaching Assistants, Civil Service, Regular Substitutes, Sponsor-A-Scholar Coordinator, Miscellaneous) Itinerant Substitute Teachers 2009-2010, Transfers, Position Vacated, Resignations/Retirement/Terminations; Leaves of Absence; Abolishment of Positions; Corrections; Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report; Revenue Status Report 08/31/09, Revenue Status Report 07/01/08 – 06/30/09, Appropriation Status Report 07/01/08 – 06/30/09 & 07/01/09 - 08/31/09, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Real Property Tax Adjustments; Authorization to Enter Into Contracts; 2010 Board Meeting Schedule, Resolution to Support Partnership with the College of St. Rose, Resolution to Approve Charter School Public Hearing, Out of State Field Trips.

Ms. Doesschate set aside the minutes of September 1, 2009 based on her absence at that meeting. Ms. Mackey set aside the minutes of September 17, 2009 for a correction on the location of the meeting indicated in the minutes. Mrs. Gaffuri set aside appointments.

Mr. Egan made a motion to approve routine consent items absent those set aside. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Proceedings of September 1, 2009 were presented for approval. Ms. Mackey made a motion for approval. Mr. Egan seconded the motion.

The board voted (5-0-1) to approve the motion.

Ms. Doesschate abstained.

Motion passed.

Proceedings of September 17, 2009 were presented for approval with the location change. Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval of proceedings as amended. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Appointments were presented for approval. Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval. Dr. Barth seconded the motion. Mrs. Gaffuri advised she would be abstaining on this motion based on the fact that her daughter is on the appointment list. Ms. Mackey also noted a relative on the listing.

The board voted 5-0-1 to approve the motion.

Mrs. Gaffuri abstained.

Motion passed.

FACILITIES PROJECT

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change Orders

Change orders for Stephen & Harriet Myers Middle School, Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology, Arbor Hill Elementary School were presented for approval. Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve change orders. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

ACTION ITEMS

Parent Involvement Policy #1900

Policy #1900 Parent Involvement Policy was presented for approval. Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Board Committee Reports

Audit Committee met earlier this week with the auditors to review the financial statements for 2008-2009. There were a few issues identified. Overall, they presented an unqualified opinion, which is a vote of confidence in the staff.

Board Member Items

Ms. Doesschate requested a presentation on open enrollment for Pre-K. The majority of the board indicated they are interested in having this item brought forward on a future agenda as an information item.

Adjournment

Dr. Barth made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m.