



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 4, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

**PRESENT:** Dan Egan, President  
Judy Doesschate, Vice President  
Rose Brandon, Secretary  
Barbara Gaffuri  
Edith Leet  
Melissa Mackey  
Wayne Morris  
Linda Rudnick

Dr. Raymond Colucciello  
Jeffrey Honeywell  
Tresa Diggs  
Bill Hogan  
Linda Jackson-Chalmers

**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.

### **Oath of Office:**

Mr. Honeywell, School Attorney administered the Oath of Office to Mrs. Edith Leet, newly appointed board member.

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

Bryan Cady, Director of the Marching Band presented a brief video showing a performance by the Winter Guard, which is part of the Albany High School Marching Band. Amanda Marshall, Director of the Winter Guard and members of the team, Bess Zafran and Morgan Heyward, spoke about the positive experiences they have had as part of this ensemble, learning team work, dedication, sportsmanship and character building as they compete all across New York State. The program also brings together students from different schools within the district, affording them an opportunity to get to know each other.

Dr. McCalla and Ms. Pastecki gave a brief presentation on the Albany High School restructuring plan. Dr. McCalla advised the group has been meeting consistently for several months, reviewing previous presentations on the high school restructuring process. Dr. McCalla reviewed a number of items the group reached consensus related to creating smaller learning communities, offering the same basic core classes with varying electives, academic supports, researched based curriculum supports, professional development and campus level sports, music, clubs and after school programs. Public forums are scheduled for March 9<sup>th</sup> at North Albany Academy, March 10<sup>th</sup> at the Albany Housing Authority and March 15<sup>th</sup> at Myers Middle School. These meetings are for the purpose of hearing the reaction of parents and community members to the recommendations. All members of the public are encouraged to attend. Dr. Colucciello advised the district will apply for the Federal Magnet School Assistance (MSAP) grant.

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers advised the Baby Institute held its first meeting last Saturday, February 29<sup>th</sup> at Giffen Elementary School. Ten parents with their children attended. This is the maximum capacity for the program. Ellen Cooper of the Cooperative Extension conducted the program. The curriculum was excellent and members of the Key Club provided babysitting services. The program will continue for the next 8 weeks. Members of the Family Education Alliance were commended for their efforts in developing this program.

Relative to the budget, Dr. Colucciello advised these are difficult times for the district as well as other districts in the State. A joint news conference held this morning by a number of educational organizations talking about what lies ahead for schools in New York State. The Governor's proposal will be devastating for the district. Budget reductions will be presented later this evening indicating Tier I and Tier II reductions. It is expected that all of Tier I will remain as written. Additional review of Tier II will take place as the district develops the budget.

### **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

Student representative was absent. There was no report.

### **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

1. Janay Scott addressed the board regarding the importance of the lessons the School Nurse Teachers has taught in her school, i.e. personal boundaries & self- confidence.
2. Elenyary Nieves addressed the board regarding the special programs the School Nurse Teachers provide for students, i.e. fitness & nutrition.
3. Stephen Chamberlain addressed the board regarding staff reduction and the ripple effect that they have on students. He also spoke about the opportunities of the IBO program that has brought national recognition to Albany High School.
4. Joanne Meagher addressed the board regarding the integral part the School Nurse Teacher plays in a student's education. It takes a School Nurse Teacher to appreciate the child as an individual, a member of the classroom and a member of the community, promoting knowledge, attitude and health behaviors that can insure wellness that can last a lifetime.
5. Bess Zafran addressed the board regarding the School Nurse Teachers in the district and their part in dealing with sexual abuse on physical abuse experienced by a number of the students in the district. School Nurse Teachers discuss issues with students that they would not have with their parents.
6. Regina McCormack addressed the board regarding the School Nurse Teachers who provide such an important foundation in maintaining healthy attitudes in their lives. School Nurse Teachers are the driving force behind the health education of our students.
7. Marie Campbell addressed the board regarding the School Nurse Teachers and their role in educating students about puberty and health issues. They also provide students a safe haven for discussing issues they might not feel comfortable discussing with their parents.
8. Solomon Chang, a former student in the district spoke about the influence of the School Nurse Teacher in his decision to enter the healthcare field as an adult and become an advocate for public health.

9. Jacklyn Follain, a student at the School of Public Health spoke about the issues of childhood obesity and the importance of students learning good nutrition, taught by the School Nurse Teachers in our schools.
10. Regina Pakosz, a School Nurse Teacher in the district spoke about the impact of eliminating these positions on the students. It is not in the best interest of the students to eliminate these positions. Ms. Pakosz highlighted extensive programs provided by the School Nurse Teachers, along with their participation on various committees and professional development of staff members in responding to health issues of students. These are the services that attract parents to our schools.
11. Sara Dallas addressed the board regarding the IBO program in our schools. This program is a necessity for student success. It is designed to educate the whole student, intellectually, emotionally, personally and socially.
12. Mary Sloan addressed the board regarding the School Nurse Teachers and the vital role they play as an essential component for students at risk. At risk children are educated on important health issues by School Nurse Teachers.
13. Chris Harrington, a firefighter in the City of Albany, spoke about his childhood as a student in the district and the things he was taught as a youngster with asthma. Today, he brings that knowledge forward to the children he sees as he responds to emergency medical calls to asthmatic children in the community.
14. Linda Gilchrist spoke about the experiences of the School Nurse Teachers with students who have been abused and how students are taught to report abuse. Ms. Gilchrist also spoke about how important it is to educate children about personal safety. Classroom teachers do not want to be involved in reporting child abuse.
15. Leif Engstrom addressed the board regarding the Reading Recovery Program and how important this program is to parents who do not have resources to provide individual instruction for their children.
16. Josh Farrell addressed the board regarding the teaching assistant positions and how important they are to the Montessori Magnet School program.
17. Ginnie Farrell addressed the board regarding the teaching assistant position at Montessori Magnet School. This program is an amazing opportunity for students. The district needs to support the program. Students at Montessori spoke in favor of keeping teaching assistants at Montessori.
18. Catina Movodares, a member of the Melrose Neighborhood Association presented a resolution approved by the members of the Association, urging the district to maintain Eagle Point Elementary School as a neighborhood school.
19. Dr. Cheryl Frye addressed the board in support of the School Nurse Teachers. School Nurses Teachers are uniquely qualified. They provide knowledge, training, growth and development and skilled based training which are essential to life skills of decision, goal setting and stress management.
20. Alex Streznewski addressed the board regarding the need for Music and Art as well as foreign language as an integral part of a student's education experience. In considering budget cuts, please consider the goal to educate students to be life long learners and responsible citizens. Education is not only about the ELA, 4<sup>th</sup> Grade Math and Science tests.

21. Donna Young addressed the board regarding the importance of the School Nurse Teachers in educating young students about personal safety, health and sexuality. Parents depend on our Nurse Teachers to do some of the teaching in the areas of safety, health, human sexuality, HIV and sexual abuse prevention. This is an essential program that supplements what parents teach the children.

22. Anne Marie Lippett addressed the board regarding the music and sports programs in elementary school. These students get to know each going into the high school level. The district should be growing these programs, not cutting. All these special programs keep people here in the Albany Schools.

23. Anton Konev addressed the board in support of the School Nurse Teachers, specifically because of the long-term implications cuts would have on the students. National statistics indicate 1 in 4 girls and 1 in 6 boys are sexually abused in the United States at an average age of 9. School Nurse Teachers are trained to detect this abuse. Regarding the high school reorganization the district should look nationally for programs that present creative ideas on how to make improvements in the high school.

Mr. Egan introduced Dr. Fiona Thompson who is on the agenda this evening for appointment as the School Volunteer Coordinator, a position the district has been looking to fill for a long time. Mr. Egan congratulated and welcomed Dr. Thompson.

Mr. Egan also noted a conference is scheduled to take place this weekend in New York City to be hosted by Queen Latifah. The conference will be focusing on a Celebration of Teaching and Learning in 2010, a panel discussion on school, communities and families. Two of the five panel student members are from Albany High School. Former student representative Ocasio Willson, now a student at Vassar and Maya Carrasquillo, who is presently a senior at Albany High School will be part of the discussion panel along with two students from the Bronx and one from Brooklyn. Congratulations to both of these fine students.

## **FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT**

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

#### **Approval of Change Orders**

Change orders for Arbor Hill Elementary School, Giffen Memorial Elementary School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology were presented for approval. Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve change orders as presented. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

## **INFORMATION ITEM**

### **Reading Recovery Program**

Ms. Linda Rudnick reviewed a fact sheet regarding the Reading Recovery Program in the district. The cost is \$7,300 per student for a 12- 20 week, one-on-one program. Current affiliation and training fees to NYU are \$65,000. Short term success has been realized in the program. However, long term numbers indicate that the average percentage of Reading Recovery students passing State ELA tests in Grades 3-5 is 26% and 24% of AIS students passing State ELA tests in Grades 3-5. Additionally, 44% of students trained in Reading Recovery have left the district. Based on these numbers, the recommendation is to discontinue the program, which would result in a savings of \$397,800. Currently, the district has a research-based reading program with an intensive intervention component, designed to supplement classroom reading instruction with specific skills lessons.

**ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS**

Routine Consent Items were presented as follow: Proceedings of Meetings (February 4, 2010, February 10, 2010); Appointments (Civil Service, Miscellaneous); Transfers; Resignations; Field Trip; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000; Budget Transfers over \$10,000; Revenue Status Report- 01/31/10; Appropriation Status report- 01/31/10; Real Property Tax Adjustments; Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund; Health Services Contract (Scotia-Glenville Central School District, South Colonie Central School District); Authorization to Enter Into Contracts; Committee on Special Education; Subcommittee on Special Education; Committee on Pre-School Special Education; Resolution to Approve Superintendent Appointment and Contract; Resolution to Approve Donations; Resolution to Close Philip Livingston Magnet Academy; Resolution to Approve Contract to Sell 43 Second Avenue; School District Vote Resolutions (Budget Vote/Voting Locations, Voter Registration, School Vote Canvass, Public Hearing & Budget Notice, Appointment of Inspectors). Ms. Mackey set aside the Resolution to Close Philip Livingston Magnet Academy. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval of Routine Consent Items, absent the item set aside. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

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

Motion Passed.

Ms. Mackey requested that the resolution be read into the minutes of the meeting.

**APPROVAL OF CLOSURE OF  
PHILIP LIVINGSTON MAGNET ACADEMY  
315 Northern Boulevard**

**WHEREAS**, the Albany City School District, as part of the reorganization of its school programs, has consolidated its middle school programs; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education has determined that in the best interests of the District, and in accordance with its long range plan, it will operate fewer facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, as part of the consolidation of its middle school programs, the number of middle school buildings has been reduced from three (3) buildings to (2) buildings; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Education has determined that the certain District buildings are no longer of use or value to the District;

**BASED UPON THE FOREGOING, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED**, that the Philip Livingston School Building will be permanently closed effective June 30, 2010.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve the Resolution to Close Philip Livingston Magnet Academy. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The board voted 5 ayes, 0 nays and 2 abstentions.

Ms. Mackey & Mrs. Brandon abstained.

Motion passed.

## DISCUSSION ITEMS

### 2010-2011 Budget Development

Dr. Colucciello and Mr. Hogan presented information related to the 2010-2011 budget. Challenges include the loss of state aid, the uncertainty of legislative aid, the growth in charter schools (increased costs), rising costs of pensions, health insurance and other benefits, scheduled increases in labor contracts, all of which total \$19.6 million. Dr. Colucciello noted the budget for last year decreased \$3 million with staff reductions of 113 positions. Dr. Colucciello continued with a number of unknown issues that affect the budget including a reduction in state aid, determination on New Covenant Charter School, labor contract relief, retirement legislation, federal stimulus and the passage of the NYS budget. Dr. Colucciello noted that New York State is one of 16 states that are eligible for Race To The Top Funds. However, these funds are specifically geared for standards, not for jobs. It will not impact the budget.

Mr. Hogan reviewed the budget outlook. First draft budget amount is \$208,567,219, which represents a 2.32% increase, \$4.7 million and 9.42% tax levy increase. This figure includes the items listed in the Tier I reductions. A zero increase budget stands at 4.84% tax levy increase. An additional \$6.7 million in reductions are necessary in order to reach the goal of a 2.95% tax levy increase. Mr. Hogan reviewed the items reflected in Tier I reductions. Total reductions amount to \$19.6 million, which still leaves a budget deficit of \$6.7 million. Additionally, the first draft budget assumes that the use of reserves would be increased by \$5.008 million to \$9.2 million. Planned staff reductions total 100.8 positions. Mr. Hogan noted the probability of additional funding is less than it has ever been in history for school districts in New York State. The district will need to make additional reductions of \$6.7 million in this budget. Reductions slated for Tier II were reviewed. The goal is to develop a budget that the community will support.

- If the Legislature approves the early retirement would these positions be in addition to the 100.8 positions being eliminated in the budget?

Those positions would be filled with those who are placed on the preferred list when possible in terms of expertise, i.e. certification.

- There are still costs in this incentive in terms of buy-out figures.
- Is there a specific program identified to replace the Nova Net program?

The district has investigated two other similar programs that would reduce the costs significantly and provide the same services.

- Does the \$4.3 million figure for pensions, health insurance and other benefits include the increased employee contributions?

Yes. That savings is approximately \$500,000. Further investigation will take place.

- Does the staff reduction figure include figures indicated with program eliminations? That figure is all inclusive of instructional changes.

- What is the real impact of staff reductions?

The district will be bringing this information in deeper analysis.

- Is there consideration of raising the tax rate this year to allow the district to be at a better situation with the budget next year?
- What kind of assistance will be provided in those areas where staff reductions are taking place?
- Is it possible to provide a comparison of the fund balance in other districts?
- Is there consideration of pooling resources with other districts?

Discussion continued with mention of a number of items that board members asked for additional consideration, i.e. tuition reimbursement, savings in supplies, postage, tutoring, professional development and specific consideration and investigation of closing elementary schools and the impact of that on the budget. Priorities and goals need to line up with the budget. What is the impact on the districts educational goals? Additional discussion is scheduled at the March 18<sup>th</sup> round table meeting. Dr. Colucciello noted that discussion of the school attendance zones will be scheduled on the March 18<sup>th</sup> agenda. Information will be provided to board members prior to the meeting.

### **Policy Review**

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers presented the following policies for review. These policies were reviewed by the Policy Committee.

**1120 School District Records** – This is a revision of the current policy, which is a required policy that requires the district to rules and regulations pertaining to the availability of records and procedures to be followed in obtaining those records. Reference to the FERPA has been included in the policy. This policy replaces policy #1030.

**1120R School District Records Regulations** – This identifies the Records Management Officer as the Assistant Superintendent for Business and the Fiscal Officer is the Internal Auditor. Language related to computer access codes was updated to align with the FOIL statute.

**1530 Smoking and Other Tobacco Use on School Premises** – This is a revision of an existing policy revised at the recommendation of Nancy Jones at BOCES, along with the NYSSBA policy consultant.

**1722 Research Procedures** – No major changes. Comment made relative to reciprocity in terms of the district receiving information gathered in research involving students and/or district practices. This could be a consideration in developing particular projects.

**1723 Senior Citizens and Continuing Education** – Age eligibility has been updated to 65.

**1741 Home Instruction** – This is a new policy which follows Education Law for students who are being educated at home.

**1900 Parental Involvement** – This policy was recently approved by the Board. There are no additional changes.

**1925 Interpreters for Hearing Impaired Parents** – No changes.

Policies will be presented on March 18<sup>th</sup> for approval.

### **2010-2011 School Calendar**

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers presented the draft calendar for review. The calendar is developed from the approved BOCES calendar. The calendar was then reviewed by the members of the cabinet and recommendations were brought forward to the Calendar Committee. Final recommendations are sent to the board for approval. This calendar indicates the Superintendent's Conference Day on September 1, 2010. Classes are scheduled to start on September 7, 2010. This allows for three days of instruction the first week of school. Three additional recess days were then added to the calendar, 11/24, 12/22 & 23. The calendar is 184 days with 180 days of school according to the contract and 178 days of instruction. Discussion followed relative to scheduling days prior to Labor Day and the schedule for board meeting during recess in March and April. Board meetings will be scheduled on March 3 – 17 – 31 and April 14 and May 5. A suggestion was made to change the important dates to the top of the page, indicating the first day of school.

## **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Alternative Education**

Ms. Mackey advised the Alternative Education meeting was held earlier this week. Discussion centered on the Harriet Gibbons data. A report will be submitted to the larger group and then to the Board.

### **Audit Committee**

The Audit Committee met with Megan Daly of the Department of development and Planning for the City of Albany related to the 485-a Real Property Tax program and the participation of the district in this program. Information will be forthcoming to the board regarding this issue.

Mrs. Gaffuri encouraged people to attend the Spring Concerts are coming up in the near future.

## **BOARD MEMBER ITEMS**

None

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 10:55 p.m.