



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

April 15, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Judy Doesschate, Vice President Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Rose Brandon, Secretary Tresa Diggs
Barbara Gaffuri Bill Hogan
Edith Leet Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Melissa Mackey Linda Rudnick
Wayne Morris

ABSENT: Dan Egan, President

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. by Ms. Doesschate. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Members of the audience were welcomed and thanked for taking the time to attend the meeting. Ms. Doesschate noted Mr. Egan was out of town this evening.
- The Mission Statement was read.

Ms. Doesschate requested a motion to amend the agenda to add to routine consent authorization for the superintendent to enter into a contract with CS Arch to perform needed architectural services for renovations at Albany High School, associated with the upcoming May 18, 2010 referendum, the amount not to exceed \$35,000. Motion was made by Mrs. Gaffuri and seconded by Mr. Morris.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Colucciello thanked the members of the Board for providing the District direction with the approval of the 2010-2011 budget at the April 13, 2010 meeting. This budget will be presented to the community for their approval. The District is anxiously waiting for information from the Legislature to determine additional funds for the District to provide relief to the taxpayers.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Marlon Anderson addressed the Board regarding the approval of the budget. Mr. Anderson encouraged the District to make all efforts to insure public approval of the budget and that the District continues its commitment toward excellence.

2. Sue Bartle addressed the Board regarding the budget. Ms. Bartle expressed her gratitude to the administrators and cabinet members who agreed to a salary freeze in order to close the budget gap. Ms. Bartle advised she would be working on the "Yes" vote campaign. The public

needs to be educated regarding the referendum for renovations to Albany High School at no additional cost to the taxpayers.

3. Robert Fullem addressed the Board regarding the budget. Mr. Fullem expressed his gratitude to Board members who do this work for nothing, and also to the administrators and cabinet members for agreeing to freeze their salaries.

4. Jim Lembo thanked everyone in the front for approving the budget. Mr. Lembo asked that the District continue to negotiation with the other bargaining units relative to a pay freeze.

5. Nolene Smith addressed the Board to say thank you to the Board for allowing the Superintendent to guide the District to where it needs to be. Ms. Smith also extended thanks to the administrators and cabinet members for agreeing to a pay freeze. Ms. Smith advised she will be supporting the budget this year, knowing that everyone worked hard for all the children in the District.

6. Bert Malerba addressed the Board noting the loss of a number of teachers and staff, acknowledging the difficulty in making these hard decisions. Thank you to the administrators and cabinet members for agreeing to a pay freeze. Thank you to the community organization that promoted the successful Pre-K application process. Thank you to the superintendent and staff for the successful budget process.

INFORMATION ITEMS

Alternative Education Think Tank

Dr. Colucciello introduced Ray Schimmer, Chief Executive Officer of Parsons Child & Family Center, who is also serving as the chairperson for the Alternative Education Think Tank for the District in cooperation with Dr. Diggs. Mr. Schimmer gave a very comprehensive overview of the work of the Think Tank. The Alternative Ed programs were not designed as a whole. The 14 components developed over time in respond to one crisis or another. The committee developed a mission statement, a vision statement and a set of goals. The committee will be evaluating each program and conduct a qualitative assessment by interviewing stakeholders and compare what is presently being done in the district with best practices on the national level. Mr. Schimmer described the three sub-committees of the group, which consists of a cohort study, a stakeholder survey and literature & practices committee. At the completion of the sub-committee work, two additional committees, a needs assessment and a group that will write up the recommendations that will presented to the Board. A tentative date for presenting a report to the Board is August, which is subject to change. Mr. Schimmer noted that alternative education has to be understood in the context of the entire district.

Mr. Shimmer presented classification grids, indicating the services and their functions. The committee will continues its work, keeping in mind recent developments such as the designation of Albany High School, the proposal to extend Harriett Gibbons for an additional year and the closing of the charter school and the return of students to the District that have an effect on the District in general. Mr. Schimmer noted that the students in these programs are no less students of the District.

- In addition to statistics in the cohort study, will you be interviewing the students in the cohort for their input?

We will look into doing that.

- With the State requirement that students graduate in 4 years, how does this full-time multiple year option relate to that requirement?

A lot of kids and parents perceive the alternative education programs as negative, especially because 6 of the programs are disciplinary. If you go back to the purer definition of alternative education, it becomes a question of identifying the learning styles of these students to adjust presentation to these students that will allow them to learn. The group will make recommendations for changes in practice in the regular education may eliminate the need for students to be taken out of that environment. The effect of alternative education should be to make it easier for these students to graduate in that four-year time.

- When will the needs assessments take place?

Once the committees finish their work a general discussion will take place relative to what needs need to be addressed and how.

- What is the target date for initial recommendations of the committee?

The committee is hoping to have a complete overhaul or have strong recommendations that would be implemented for September. Dr. Colucciello stressed the need for patience in this process. The longer the committee works, the better it gets. The data will give a better product. The cost per students will be paramount.

Nolene Smith, a member of the committee stated that given the information that is being brought forward in this process, the district has to do something by September.

Bert Malerba advised his personal vision is that the 15 items identified as best practices by the literature committee should be reviewed to determine the extent of implementation. We want to embed best practices from Pre-K through grade 12 in regular for prevention purposes to decrease the number of students in alternative education programs.

Attendance Zones

Mr. Ken Cioffi gave a comprehensive presentation on the attendance zones with a brief history of the attendance zones. When the Magnet schools were created (ASH, TOAST & Montessori), some of the school zones were absorbed into other schools. Zones were originally created to balance the enrollment in to Hackett and Livingston. Mr. Cioffi reviewed individual school zones in the district for each of the nine neighborhood elementary schools. Before any changes are made, the District needs to look at some of the inconsistencies that currently exist in the attendance zones. This would mean drastic shifts of students.

School enrollment and capacity were also reviewed, as well as streets in questions, which are small areas that are assigned to three schools based on parental preference. Capacities are based on what the schools were built for according to the facilities project, which was K-5. Pre-K's have been added. Magnet school enrollment and capacity were also presented.

Things to be considered are whether the SAA and SPA Zones are correct; changes in streets that are assigned to two schools; whether to change or keep the streets in question; whether or not students will be permitted to remain in schools after moving out of an attendance zone; middle school feeder patterns, and new and border streets.

The next steps are to meet with building principals to gather input on attendance zones in terms of student safety crossing busy streets; check enrollment zones for each elementary student in each building; whether or not to convene a committee to study attendance zones; modify borders if necessary based on enrollment balance, proximity and safety, and lastly to develop a written policy.

- Safety should be a priority. Principal's input is very important. Recommendation of a committee would be supported.
- Keeping kids in schools where they start would provide stability. Attendance zones for students in magnet schools would be helpful. A committee is the way to approach the issue. Safety issues related to crossing main thoroughfares is a big issue. Also, the possibility of partnering with bus routes.

The District is looking at bussing with Durham.

Mr. Morris offered to serve on the committee to work on attendance zones.

- Will you have the same problem of balance enrollment between schools if zones are redistributed?

That will have to be reviewed based on the different elements. One solution might be swing zones. For budgetary reasons the District has to look at everything.

- How often should this be evaluated?

Evaluation should take place annually. There are shifts all the time. One new multi-unit apartment house could increase enrollment by 30 students.

Mayra Batista noted there are a number of soft issues that cause parents to choose charter schools rather than district schools. For example, developing activities that bring parents into the schools that build the community.

Dr. Colucciello suggested that the District wait until the charter enrollment, magnet school lottery and Pre-K. The Board will then have additional data to make decisions. Dr. Colucciello suggested the charge for the committee be developed by administration and forwarded to Board members for their input. Following discussion it was agreed that additional information would be provided to the Board in July. Additionally, the Board could discuss the structure of the committee that would be presented in May.

Albany High School Restructuring

Dr. McCalla and Ronnie Pastecki gave an update on the high school restructuring. Ms. Pastecki provided information related to the submission of the Federal Magnet Grant application. The committee has met regularly since December. Goals have been established; restructuring the high school into 4 small learning communities with a specific descriptions for each; supports to increase academic rigor were reviewed, along with a timeline with the submission of the grant application on May 3, 2010, notification of awards sometime in August, 2010-2011 would be a year of planning with full implementation in 2011-2012. Ms. Pastecki also presented the Voluntary Desegregation Plan that is required to be submitted with the grant. This document only goes into effect if the District receives the grant. During a recent trip to Washington for technical assistance racial isolation by providing scaffolding services. The document has been reviewed by the Office of Civil Rights and the Office of Innovation.

- Is Abrookin part of the plan?

Abrookin is part of the master schedule and it will be included in this plan.

- How many students and how deeply were they involved in this planning?

There were 100 students invited to participate and 20 attended the meetings.

- Do you plan to have students involved throughout the planning year?

Yes.

- How would Harriett Gibbons and any other alternative program come into this plan?

The Magnet Grant enrollment has to be a lottery, which effects the alternative education population. For the purposes of this grant the Harriett Gibbons program stands alone.

Dr. McCalla noted it is important that an integration process is developed.

- What physical changes would be necessary?

This would be part of the operational piece in the 2nd phase, where staff would look at the curriculum to determine physical needs. A subcommittee will be formed to look at the physical needs.

- One area that is paramount is reading. No matter what academy there is, the overriding problem is the reading. Reading has to be the focus through the higher grades as the District looks at restructuring. Students have to be able to read.

The process of identifying issues through diagnostics is being developed for early intervention of students coming into the high school is provided.

- Was any thought given to the fact that the District presently has Magnet themes and perhaps those themes should be extended to the higher grades?

Students were surveyed relative to their interest in pursuing the Magnet themes in high school and their response was that this was too elementary. They really wanted the more generic theme.

- Creating four separate learning environments with specific clubs after school might further separate students rather than keeping them together as an all-over group. Students from any house would have the opportunity to join any after school activity. All students would have access.
- I'm concerned about the capacity of 600 students. That would be the maximum number.
- The populous of the committee does not reflect the students. The District needs to bring students into the mix on this committee.

ROUTINE CONSENT

Routine Consent items were presented as follows: Appointments; 2010 Desegregation Plan; Resolution to Approve CS Arch Contract.

CS ARCH ALBANY HIGH SCHOOL

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Superintendent of Schools is authorized to enter into a contract with CS Arch to perform needed architectural services for the renovations of Albany High School associated with the upcoming May 18, 2010 referendum in an amount not to exceed \$35,000.

Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the motion. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

DISCUSSION

Policy Review

Policy #1500 Use of Facilities was presented by Ms. Jackson-Chalmers for review. A brief review of the policy was presented as follows: (1) access to facilities while in use for school purposes will be permitted; (2) requests will be allocated using a priority listing; (3) access is permitted only where admission is free or proceeds are expended for educational purposes; (4) permits will be issued by the District Program Coordinator; (5) applicants must agree to pay fees accordingly; (6) fees and deposits will be paid to the District Business Office; (7) no meetings sponsored by political organizations shall be permitted unless authorized by a vote of the Board of Education, pursuant to NYS Education Law §414; (8) applicants whose request is denied may appeal to the Superintendent, and if denied, may appeal to the Board of Education; (9) all persons using District facilities shall comply with the Code of Conduct; (10) any person who violates the public order will be subject to ejection or recession of authorization to remain on District property; (11) the Board of Education reserves the right to amend this policy at any time in the future. This information is provided to those interested in using District facilities by the District Program Coordinator.

Following discussion a suggestion was made to include the following information regarding changes to this policy as #12. In the event the District is under a Contingency Budget, special rules will apply regarding fees for use. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers reviewed the regulations related to this policy.

- We talk about how schools are looked as community centers. I understand a policy and procedure, but this seems to be cumbersome. If that organization would want to come in on several occasions, do they need to go through this process each time they are using the facility? Do we want to encourage different group to use the facility at the same time to share expenses. I understand the process, but are we making it difficult for smaller organizations? The application process is simple. It does allow for identifying multiple dates. The policy needs to be specific to protect the district. The Program Coordinator will personally process the application. The application is on line, along with a synopsis of the process and contact information.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Policy Committee met, the 2000-300 Series was returned to the NYSSBA consultant to coordinate the policies. Financial policies will be reviewed by Mr. Hogan and the Audit Committee prior to going to the Policy Committee. Also, the Code of Conduct Policy was distributed to the Board for their review. The Code of Conduct Committee will meet within the next weeks to review and make recommendations for changes, etc. Final policy will be presented in June for final review and approval in time for printing for the 2010-2011 school year.

Ron Lesko noted the Charter School Committee met this week. Primary conversation focused on the next steps for the transition plan. The group is planning to meet with New Covenant to arrange an event for the New Covenant families to hear about transitioning into the Albany schools. District leadership will meet to discuss all the opportunities that will be presented to the students and parents.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Mrs. Gaffuri advised April 29th & 30th *Into the Woods* will be presented at Albany High, Spring Concerts are scheduled through May and June, along with sporting events. Mrs. Gaffuri encouraged people to attending these events.

Mrs. Leet advised she wanted to make Shared Decision Making the way we do business in the District at the school level and district level. She would welcome anyone who is interested in working on this. This will be deferred to the Policy Committee.

Ms. Doesschate noted her appreciation for all the information that is being made available for Board members, that keeps Board members informed as they make decisions.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cutting