



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

August 4, 2009

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Barbara Gaffuri, President
Melissa Mackey, Vice President
Judy Doesschate, Secretary
Dr. Mark Barth
Rose Brandon
Wayne Morris

Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Bill Hogan
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Linda Rudnick
Jay Girvin, Esq.

EXCUSED: Daniel Egan

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.
- The Mission Statement was read.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Dr. Colucciello, Interim Superintendent presented the board with a review of school visits, meetings with district leaders and community leaders he has participated in these past weeks.
- Review of items that will be the focus of the district during the next few months and those that will be addressed during the next several weeks in preparation for the opening of the 2009-2010 school year were presented.
- The focus of the Interim Superintendent has been on staffing and looking at ways to open schools in a safe and orderly fashion.
- The Strategic Plan has been reviewed and is considered to be one of the finest in the region. It will provide this board and future boards with a map of what should be done for students.
- Preparation for opening of schools will continue. The Interim Superintendent will tour the district to ascertain that all buildings have been prepared for opening day.
- It was also noted that schedules have been mailed to parents for the coming school year as scheduled.
- Student achievement is the district's most important mission.
- Thank you publicly to Dr. Eva Joseph, who began her new job earlier this week, for the way she left the district. She worked hard to make certain there would be a smooth transition.
- This evening the board will be act on the appointment of Mr. Michael Paolino as the Principal of William S. Hackett Middle School as recommended by the Interim Superintendent. Mr. Paolino has been a teacher and administrator in Voorheesville, Watervliet and also Doyle Middle School in Troy. Mr. Paolino was introduced to those present.
- District staff and board members will be investigating the Harlem Children's Zone project in the near future.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Dave Decker addressed the board on behalf of the Family Education Alliance, an Albany City grassroots organization dedicated to helping every child reach their educational potential and to bringing the nationally acclaimed Harlem Children's Zone model of community and educational revitalization to the City of Albany.
2. Lolisa McLaughlin addressed the board on behalf of the Community Coalition to Prevent Violence, which is made up of members of community faith based organizations, politicians, educators and a number of grassroots organizations, requesting the board and the district work together to implement Harlem Children's Zone programs in our schools.
3. Robert Malerba addressed the board regarding different initiatives to close the achievement gap. There are a number of things developing in the community related to this issue. Dr. Malerba urged the board to consider calling the think tank the think tank for closing the achievement gap and for alternative education. There are very much interlocked.
4. James Davis addressed the board introducing the Game Tight Management & Youth Empowerment, a non-profit organization based in Albany that is geared and designed to help bring change during the sensitive transformation state that is taking place at this time with inner city kids in Albany.

INFORMATION ITEM

Strategic Plan Strategy 2/Action Plan 2.3

Board members heard a comprehensive presentation on the Alternative Education Think Tank related to result statement 2.3 of the district's Strategic Plan. The Think Tank committee is being formed to evaluate existing alternative educational programs and to research new and innovative ideas. Evaluation will specifically focus on the academic success of students, curriculum offerings, rigor of programs, facilities and cost effectiveness. Finally, the committee will be asked to determine which programs will be returned or modified and if new models should be implemented. A listing of potential membership on the committee was presented for consideration. The listing includes district administrators, faculty, community leaders, and members of community organizations, educational leaders and parents of alternative education students. The board was asked to provide suggestions related to the listing and to determine the leadership selection process of the committee. A time line was presented that included meetings in September and November with a final report in January to allow for budgetary considerations as the district moves forward in developing the 2010-2011 school budget. The board is being asked for input on the committee membership, the leadership selection and the timeline.

- The charge of the committee is to evaluate. I would be interested in a presentation on the academic success of students in alternative placement. The charge be sharpened a bit to allow for review of what the district already knows about the program based on history and data.
- I think the timeline is ambitious and at the same time you can lose your focus if you don't have a tight timeframe. I like the idea of their being a deliverable in advance of the budget

discussions so the board can start talking about doing something next year that is different from what the district has been doing.

- The list of representatives seems right, although I am concerned about the size of the group. When the Strategic Planning Team was formed the district was advised to keep the number at a maximum of 25 and with that there were experts who facilitated the process and directed the work. It may be possible to have some of the work done in committees with some of those people being brought in for specific purposes. Because this is such a large group, I think that the leader should be selected in advance of the first committee meeting. I would like to see someone who actually has experience running a board or a company. Perhaps a faculty from the School of Social Work at the College of St. Rose or SUNY Albany.
- We need to make sure that the members of the committee have sufficient background information, specifically the presentation that was given to the board in March that addressed each of the alternative education programs with specific data. The membership list needs to be reduced based on specifically what each person can bring to the table in this discussion. I think the leader needs to be identified prior to the full group meeting. This person should have the commitment and dedication to follow through with this project.
- I agree that we need to have a leader in place beforehand. I do believe that this leader needs to be someone outside of the district because I do believe that the issues about race are going to come up. The achievement gap is about closing the gap between minority and non-minority students. That is something that we need to be aware of. I am concerned about such a large number of people. Particularly, because the list includes only two parents and two community members, a total of four people who are not directly either tied to the district or who are from community agencies. The thing that is often missed is what the actual experience has been like. If the list is going to be reduced we should bring in more parents. As much information that can be provided to the membership beforehand would be helpful. The charge should include some latitude to allow the members of the committee the opportunity to think outside the box.
- I did make a suggestion for either a pediatrician or a child psychologist. They deal with many of our students. The leader could be significant in making the group productive. This is a step in the right direction. I'm okay with the timeline. When the district developed the shared decision making team a job description was presented and people were asked to submit letters that were reviewed building by building. That might be one approach.

Following discussion relative to leadership options board members were in consensus that a recommendation for leadership should be brought to the board by the Interim Superintendent. The board will make the final decision. Membership can remain the same with the expectation that the group could make a decision to branch out into committees. Board members were okay with the time line.

Discussion related to the definition of the charge will be continued at the August 20, 2009 board meeting.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent Items were presented as follows: Proceedings of Meetings, July 7, 2009; Appointments (Administrative Appointment, Probationary Appointments, Regular Substitutes, Part-time Teachers, Civil Service, Itinerant Substitute Teachers 2008-2009, Miscellaneous); Resignations; Transfers; Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report; Revenue Status Report 6/30/09, Appropriation Status report 6/30/09, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund; Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Real Property Tax Adjustments; Award of Bids; Bid Award for Disposal of AV and Computer Equipment; Disposal of Assets; NYSSBA Membership Dues, authorization to Enter Into Contracts; Durham School Services Contract 2009-2010.

It was noted that Emergency Conditional Appointments are also included under Routine Consent. Motion to amend the agenda to include this item was made by Ms. Mackey and seconded by Ms. Doesschate.

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

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve routine consent items including Emergency Conditional Appointments. Dr. Barth seconded the motion.

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

Mrs. Gaffuri introduced and extended congratulations to Mr. Michael Paolino, newly appointed Principal of William S. Hackett Middle School to those present.

FACILITIES PROJECT

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change Orders

Change orders for William S. Hackett Middle School, Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology, Giffen Memorial Elementary School and Arbor Hill Elementary School were presented for approval. Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval. Dr. Barth seconded the motion.

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

Contract Award for Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology (TOAST)

Resolution to approve Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment for TOAST was presented for approval. Mr. Morris made a motion for approval. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

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

Contract Award for Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology

Resolution to approve Project management and installation services pertaining to Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment for TOAST was presented for approval.

Dr. Barth made a motion for approval. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. The board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Comprehensive Education Plans (CEP's)

Principals and/or Principals and Teacher Teams from the three schools, Giffen Memorial Elementary, William S. Hackett Middle School and North Albany Academy presented information related to their CEP plans. For the past two months, principals and their administrative and support teams have been crafting their planning documents that need to be on file with SED on August 31, 2009. All three schools presenting this evening are required to have CEP plans on file with SED because of test performance in English Language Arts (ELA). Hackett Middle School made their AYP for the first time in six years. If Hackett makes their AYP next year 2009-2010 in ELA they will come off the SINI list and Hackett will become a school in good standing. Both Giffen and North Albany Academy entered SINI status year one for ELA just for one sub-group, Special Education students. This past year both Giffen Memorial and North Albany Academy, like Hackett made their AYP. If in 2009-2010 they make their AYP, they will also become schools in good standing.

- Is it correct that the incoming 6th, 7th and 8th graders have the same assignment over the summer to read a book or two? What is the plan of the school on the first day, the first week?

The summer reading assignment is taken into the ELA classroom, discussed and analyzed, being the first piece of literature that students talk about. However, that is not something that we talk about the first week. We are concerned about bringing together groups of students who have not been together before, making it a home for everyone. Projects are developed based on those summer readings.

Giffen

- The school quality review took place at the end of the school year? Mrs. Fantroy-Ford, from those findings, did anything jump out at you or a persistent issue that hadn't been resolved from the time you were there at Giffen?

No. Looking at the data staff and I were able to identify structures that were in place during my previous leadership in the school that need to be put back in place for the academic achievement of students.

North Albany Academy

- Both Giffen and North Albany mentioned using perception surveys. I think they are valuable, particularly when you stick to it year after year so you can look at trends. They become benchmarks and baselines.
- How do you see the relationship between simple and disruptive behaviors and the achievement of students with disabilities?

If you were to look at sub-sets of the discipline, high numbers were not from Special Education. They're behaviors were not necessarily interfering with their academic achievement. It is the instructional piece and the day to day assessment and instruction.

Board Standing Committees

A draft schedule was presented to board members from September through December. The listing and membership will be reviewed again in January. It was noted that the September 8th meeting for the Policy Committee is not convenient for Mrs. Doesschate. Members of the Policy Committee agreed to reschedule their meeting to September 10th. Also, the Audit Committee schedule for August 31st is not convenient for Ms. Mackey. If Mr. Egan is available the committee will go forward on that date absent Ms. Mackey. The Facilities Committee will be moved to 5:00 p.m. on August 26th to accommodate other meetings scheduled for that date. A revised schedule will be distributed to board members.

Board Member Item Listing

Dr. Colucciello asked board members to prioritize board member items in assist staff in concentration of efforts between now and December 31, 2009. Ms. Doesschate advised her priorities are Volunteerism, High School Restructuring, Alternative Education Think Tank, Harlem Children's Zone, Foreign Language Program. Dr. Barth noted there are some items that are in motion. One item Ribbon Cutting Ceremony that was geared toward bringing in graduates at school opening ceremonies. There is a ribbon cutting on September 12th for Giffen Memorial Elementary School. The idea is to do our best to invite alumni to that ceremony. CDTA is also in motion. Dr. Barth's choices are High School Restructuring, School Counseling, Foreign Language Program and Community Television. Mrs. Brandon choices are High School Restructuring, CDTA, which is underway, the Think Tank and also the Budget Committee, Harlem Children's Zone, the Foreign Language Program and the District's Music Program. Mr. Morris chose the Budget Committee, the Harlem Children's Zone, Foreign Language Program, Extended Day Program, the Think Tank, Volunteerism and High School Restructuring.

Mr. Morris also noted he would like research on the district expanding transportation services in the district. Ms. Mackey chose the Think Tank, the Foreign Language Program and the Harlem Children's Zone as her top choices. Ms. Mackey advised she would like to see a presentation on the Music Program, but not necessarily at this time. Mrs. Gaffuri chose the High School Restructuring, the Think Tank, the Harlem Children's Zone, and the Foreign Language Program. Mrs. Gaffuri noted she would also like to pursue the transportation issue. Ms. Mackey also included the American School Counselors Association. Mrs. Gaffuri also added the American School Counselors Association. A revised listing will be distributed to board members.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

No reports

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Mrs. Gaffuri requested that the district again look at uniforms for students, noting that one of the reasons parents choose Charter Schools is based on cost savings and convenience of school uniforms. Discussion followed related to the fact that based on previous discussions, the issue of school uniforms would be address on a school by school basis and that funding school uniforms for public school students is not permitted with taxpayer funds. Other avenues of funding would need to be developed for those students/parents who are not able to afford uniforms. Also, SED advises that the district can not require school uniforms. There were no other board members interested in pursuing this item at this time.

Adjournment

Dr. Barth made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 p.m.