



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
September 17, 2009
7:00 p.m.

Montessori Magnet School

PRESENT: Barbara Gaffuri, President
Melissa Mackey, Vice President (9:45)
Judy Doesschate, J.D., Secretary
Dr. Mark Barth
Rose Brandon
Daniel Egan
Wayne Morris

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

EXCUSED: 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.
- A moment of silence was held in memory of Mary Havern, a former employee of the district for 22 years and for Mariyama Diallo Sulemana, a former student at Arbor Hill Elementary School, who passed away as a result of an accident earlier this summer.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Albany High School has been recognized as one of the top 1,500 U.S. High Schools, and second in the Capital Region, in the annual *Newsweek/Washington Post* rankings, which measure students in advanced courses. This is something that the District should be very proud of, to be identified throughout the nation at this level. It is to the credit to this board and the staff. Congratulations to Albany High School on this recognition.
- Opening day on September 8th was very successful. Special thanks to the administrative staff and teaching staff. By 9:30 a.m. instruction was going on in the classrooms throughout the district. Buses for the most part were on time, students were fed, and lunch rooms were in order. It was a proud day. Thank you to all staff.
- Board members have received a chart indicating the closing data relative to enrollment on June 26, 2009 and figures for September 11, 2009. There is fluctuation in the failed to enter category. The district continues to enroll students. The district expects these figures to be more consistent by next week. Cabinet members have been closely monitoring class loads and more than likely there will be some changes. It may be necessary to consolidate some classrooms.

- There have been some concerns expressed relative to construction items, particularly at Giffen Elementary School. The district will be addressing these concerns, including cleanliness of all buildings in the district. There were many things that the district wanted to have included in these construction projects that were not possible due to cost.
- A chart indicating the current status of all Charter Schools in the district was reviewed, including those currently in the application process. A public hearing was conducted earlier this evening. There are presently nine charter schools operating in Albany. Three new charter schools have been approved to open in 2010-11. Pending final approval from the Board of Regents, 4 of the current operating charter schools are also scheduled to have their charters reviewed for renewal during the next year. In response to an article in the *Times Union* regarding charter schools, it was noted that the district held a public hearing on June 9, 2009, during which time comments from 23 individuals were received. Written comments were forward to each entity involved in the approval process. The public is welcome to present comments regarding charter school application renewal or revision at any time during the approval process. To date, no applications for new charter schools or requests to alter charters at existing schools have been refused. No limits have been placed on enrollment numbers, although three of the charter schools currently operating in Albany have applied for and received permission to amend their original charter to lower their enrollment capacity. Additionally, to date, despite several comments by a number of individuals, no application has been modified or turned down.
- Relative to the work that has gone into the Strategic Plan, future board meeting agendas will include updates on each of the seven strategies. There is excellent direction in the plan related to the district's Vision for Tomorrow.

Dr. Barth made a motion to amend the agenda to include under discussion an item on community outreach related to the superintendent search. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Kathryn Bamberger addressed the board regarding an amendment to the transportation policy to allow for transportation of Pre-K Dual Language Pre-K students on a space available basis on a trial basis for the duration of the 2009-2010 school year. The Dual Language program is similar to the Magnet Program and thus should be eligible for transportation under the same rules.
2. Jim Lembo introduced the officers of the City Council PTA. Co-Presidents, Alex Streznewski and Esther Thornton; Co-Vice Presidents, Jim Lembo and Gulcan Yalniz; Secretary, Marilyn Bernard, Treasurer, Cheryl Cahill. Mr. Lembo also advised the district has received a grant award from Target in the amount of \$1,600, resulting from a grant request written by Alex Streznewski. Mr. Lembo advised the district is now being challenged to establish a matching fund program. These monies will be used to support the Delaware Community after school reading program. Mr. Lembo noted that the district should be looking at expanding the Dual Language Program and that transportation should never be a factor that limits access to any program in the district. The program attracts students from across the City and transportation should be provided at all grade levels.

3. Marlon Anderson addressed the board regarding the lack of attendance at the charter school public hearing earlier this evening. Mr. Anderson encouraged board members to attend the public meetings.
4. Bert Malerba addressed the board regarding the positive comments he is hearing about Dr. McCalla, Principal at Albany High School and the publication "Leading for Equity".

INFORMATION ITEM

Update on H1N1

Terry Nord provided a comprehensive overview of the district's efforts, in collaboration with the Albany County Health Department in addressing the threat of H1N1 in the district. Ms. Nord advised the district is well poised to deal with the influenza and any health crisis in the district. Planning for influenza has been on-going for the last three years. In addition to the Albany County Health Department, guidance has also been forthcoming through the New York State Health Department, the New York Education Department, Center for Disease Control, and Dr. Jay Kravitz, the district's Medical Director. Updates are transmitted as they are released.

Ms. Nord discussed Pandemic Planning and Current Guidance and Mitigation Strategies. Ms. Nord advised the district will keep the public informed of the measures that need to be taken. The district will be in constant communication with the State and County Health Departments. The plan balances the need to control the spread of influenza with the need to minimize the impact on the educational process and the entire community. The emphasis is on prevention and mitigation in the school setting. Communications will be going home with students. The district is prepared to partner and use district schools as a site for vaccine clinics for students and families.

Copies of the Pandemic Influenza Emergency Response Plan were made available to those present. The district will also be reporting to the Health Department on a daily basis the number of absences, both staff and students, and those absences related to illness and the number of students that are dismissed on a day-to-day basis, particularly those with flu-like symptoms. That will enable the Health Department to better guide the district with its decision in terms of increased dismissals or increased time that students need to stay home. Informational poster from the State Health Department are up in all restrooms in the schools stressing proper hand washing. The district expects that the educational efforts in reinforcement of hand washing, respiratory etiquette, staying home when ill and encouraging families to consult with primary care physicians regarding the flu vaccine will assist in keeping students well.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent Items were presented as follows: Appointments (Appointment with Tenure, Probationary, Teaching Assistants, Resolution for Tenure Teacher, miscellaneous, Itinerant Substitutes 2009-2010, Retired School Nurse Substitutes, Substitute Hall Monitors); Transfers; Resignation/Retirement. (Listing attached). Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve Routine Consent items as presented. Mr. Egan seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Community Television

Mr. Cioffi presented a review of the presentation made to the board by the Albany Community Television (ACT) in August. ACT is a volunteer program, run by three volunteers. ACT created this site to fill a need for public information and the lack of negotiations between the City of Albany and Time Warner. Those negotiations are still on-going. The district is involved with those negotiations as the educational part of the Public Educational & Governmental (PEG) Grant. ACT was an inexpensive program, which started with a camera, a tripod, internet access and software and allowed broadcasts to be posted on the web and internet. All recordings from ACT are in their native form. There is no editing. Mr. Cioffi reviewed the steps that need to be taken to implement this program, should the board decide to go forward, indicating the pros and cons of implementation. The cost will involve the purchase of approximately \$700 in equipment.

- I would advocate going forward with this. The district could edit the video prior to giving to ACT for posting. I would suggest the video be edited into separate files based on agenda items. A blog should be accompanying this so that people are able to comment on what they are seeing. That should be moderated. I think this would be very educational for students who might be interested in editing, etc.
- There is an opportunity for this to be an educational component. I'm interested in the hits on the site to determine if this is providing a service.
- Contents of a blog would have to be monitored. I'm in favor of authorizing the expenditure of money for the purchase of the equipment and putting Mr. Cioffi in charge and looking at these different options.

Discussion followed relative to how the taping would be set up and the need for someone to oversee the project. There was general agreement among board members to go forward in providing this to the public, keeping the process simple to start. Additional information will need to be clarified prior to moving forward.

Nolene Smith urged the board to involve students in this project, including students who are not presently involved in activities.

Maya Batiste suggested the possibility of editing the tape as the meeting is being taped.

The board is in agreement to move ahead and purchase the equipment necessary to tape board meetings. Mr. Cioffi will tape the next meeting.

Resolution to Support Partnership with the College of St. Rose

Following up on a presentation that was provided to the board regarding a partnership between the College of St. Rose and Pine Hills Elementary School, a resolution to continue to support the continued growth, development and expansion of the Professional Development School Program developed between Pine Hills Elementary School and the College of St. Rose was presented for discussion.

**Professional Development School Program
College of St. Rose**

WHEREAS, the City School District of Albany through the Pine Hills Elementary School has collaborated with the College of St. Rose to establish a Professional Development School Program involving the Pine Hills Elementary School and College of St. Rose since 2006; and,

WHEREAS, Professional Development Schools involve a partnership between a public school and a college or university designed to improve the education of students attending both learning institutions and to enhance the professional development opportunities for faculty and staff at both institutions; and,

WHEREAS, the College of St. Rose is a respected college providing post-secondary educational opportunities for individuals in the areas of teaching and school administration as well as an important neighbor in the Pine Hills Elementary School community; and,

WHEREAS, the Professional Development School program developed and implemented between the College of St. Rose and the Pine Hills Elementary School has already resulted in tangible educational benefits for School District students attending the Pine Hills Elementary School and tangible benefits to the School District faculty and staff resulting from additional professional development and collaboration with the faculty at the College of St. Rose; and,

WHEREAS, an informational presentation to the Board of Education at its meeting of September 1, 2009 highlighted not only the program's past accomplishments but its vast future potential for students and staff of the School District and the College of St. Rose all without any additional costs being incurred by the School District.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, that the Board of Education hereby expresses its formal support and approval of the Professional Development School program developed between the Pine Hills Elementary School and the College of St. Rose. The Board further expresses its support and approval for the continued growth, development, and expansion of the program at the Pine Hills Elementary School and encourages the expansion of the Professional Development School concept beyond the current partners to other schools within the School District.

This item will be presented under routine consent for approval at the next board meeting.

CDTA Swiper Cards

In response to a request to investigate the possibility of the district arranging for a discounted Swiper Card for student's that are not eligible for district transportation under board policy. These students live within the 1.5 mile boundary of the school they attend and are not eligible for district transportation. The district has met with CDTA. They are willing to extend a discount based on volume, with a minimum of 250 Swiper Cards sold each month at a 15% discount. If 250 cards are not sold in any given month, the district would responsible for paying the balance due at 100%. Also, the district transportation policy specifically states the 1.5 mile threshold. In order to offer this type of program, in the event the district became financially responsible for part of these costs because the volume of sales did not meet the 250 minimum, it would require a board policy change. Upon review by Jeff Honeywell, he advises there are special rules with transportation. Not only would the board have to change policy, also, the district would be required to hold a public vote to change the perimeters for transportation in the district.

- Is there a possibility that CDTA would allow the district to try this for one month to determine whether or not there is sufficient interest?

The approach with CDTA was to try this on a trial basis for one year. The response from CDTA was no. If the district could determine how many students are presently paying full price for Swiper Cards it would be easier to discuss a discounted program. This proposal, a 31 day pass (15% discount) would result in a savings of \$97.00 over the course of the school year for a family of four. CDTA has specifically state that this program would strictly for students. The expectation would be that the district would administer the program morally, ethically and to the intent of the program.

Following additional Mr. Hogan advised he would continue discussion with CDTA to determine whether or not there are possibilities to provide a discounted program to those students who travel on public transportation within the 1.5 mile boundary for a one-month experiment. It was noted that communication would be necessary so that people understand this would be a one-month trial. A suggestion was made to band together with other school districts in this discussion and to talk to elected officials about CDTA providing direct discounts to students.

Board Meeting Format

The Board of Education has been discussing the issue of getting the board meeting packets in a timely manner to allow for sufficient review prior to board meetings. A suggestion being brought forward is to change board meetings to be held consistently on Thursdays, the first and third Thursdays, the business meeting remaining as the first meeting of the month and the round table as the second meeting of the month, with the possibility of including necessary business items at that meeting. This change would take effect in January. In checking the 2009-2010 school calendar, no major conflicts have been identified as a result of this change. The goals would be to have the board approve this change and to begin publicizing this so that the public is well informed when this new format begins in January.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to suspend the rules to allow the board to act on this item at this meeting. Dr. Barth seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the change in format for the 2010 board meeting schedule moving the first meeting of the month to the first Thursday of the month. The Board Clerk is directed to to draw up a proposed calendar with the dates in accordance with this change. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Counsel will be consulted regarding the possibility of the board approving the 2010 board meeting schedule at this time, due to the fact that board membership will remain the same through 2010. Based on a positive response, the 2010 board meeting schedule will be brought to the board for approval at the next meeting.

Ms. Mackey left at 9:45 p.m.

Parental Involvement Policy #1900

As a result of the recent comprehensive review of the district's Title I Program and the district's compliance to its mandates and regulations it was found that the current Parental Involvement Policy, revised in 2006 needed to be changed to articulate the district's need to partner with local agencies to deliver academic services. Additional language was added to the policy to address that need. The additions further articulate the types of activities that could be undertaken to improve student achievement as it relates to parent involvement. The Policy Committee has reviewed these changes, along with counsel. The policy is presented this evening for discussion.

Dr. Barth noted the policy was previously written as a Title I Parental Involvement Policy. Members of the Policy Committee, in consultation and input from counsel agreed to make this a comprehensive Parental Involvement Policy, district level policy, including compliance with Title I Program. With no further discussion, the policy will be brought forward at the next meeting for approval.

Community Outreach for the Superintendent Search

The district is currently in the process of getting input from stakeholders regarding the superintendent search in terms of priorities, what kind of qualities the district is looking for in this position. The search firm has been meeting with individuals to compile that information that will be used in the future as the firm interviews candidates that have submitted resumes for the position. On October 6, 2009 Hazard, Young & Attea will present to the board the results of community input. Individual meetings and several community forums have taken place. The attendance was low and as such the board is recommending that an additional forum be scheduled on September 30th to allow for additional community input. Members of the community are welcome to complete a leadership profile assessment. The document is available on line. Additional information on the community forum will be on the website.

Mr. Lembo noted he attended a forum at Delaware Community School, commenting that the consultant noted he had spoken to a number of community leaders and had heard the comments of many individuals. Mr. Lembo advised that if this session is costing additional money, it may not be worth additional costs. It was noted that the session will not cost additional money.

Dr. Malerba advised the leadership profile has been made available on the website. Is it possible to distribute the form to all parents? It was noted that this has already been distributed to all parents.

ACTION ITEM

Comprehensive Education Plans (CEP's)

Comprehensive Education Plans for Hackett Middle School, Giffen Memorial School and North Albany Academy were presented for approval. Presentations related to these plans were given at the August meeting by the Principals. On September 4th documents were forwarded to the board for their review. Principals are available this evening to answer questions related to their plans. Dr. Barth made a motion to accept the CEP's as presented. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Doesschate noted that at a workshop next week with NYSSBA consultants, the board will continue discussion related to the process of policy review. The district has contracted with NYSSBA to provide direction in finalizing the board procedural manual and a plan of action to finalize the revision of the district's policy manual.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

On Wednesday, September 23, 2009 from 3:30 – 5:00 p.m. at Hackett Middle School a professional development program will be presented to staff related to the Harlem Children's Zone. A community presentation is scheduled for 6:00 p.m. at Giffen Memorial Elementary School.

Adjournment

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