



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 3, 2011

7:00 p.m.

### Albany High School

**PRESENT:** Mrs. Rose Brandon  
Mr. Dan Egan  
Mrs. Barbara Gaffuri  
Ms. Felicia Green  
Mrs. Edith Leet  
Ms. Melissa Mackey  
Ms. Alexandra Streznewski  
Dr. Raymond Colucciello  
Mr. Jeffrey Honeywell  
Dr. Tresa Diggs  
Mr. William F. Hogan  
Ms. Linda Jackson-Chalmers  
Ms. Linda Rudnick  
Mr. Ken Cioffi

**ABSENT:** None

#### **Call to Order:**

Board Counsel, Jeffrey Honeywell, called the meeting to order at 7:05 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **Selection of Chair Pro-Tem**

Mr. Honeywell called for a motion to appoint the Board counsel as the Chair Pro-Tem for the meeting. Upon motion by Mrs. Gaffuri and second by Mr. Egan, the Board voted unanimously (7-0) to appoint Mr. Honeywell Chair Pro-Tem.

#### **Board of Education Elections**

At the general meeting held on November 2, 2010, Alexandra Streznewski and Felicia Green were elected to four-year terms from January 1, 2011 through December 31, 2014. Edith Leet was elected to a three-year term from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2013.

#### **Administration of the Oath of Office to newly elected Board Member**

Mr. Honeywell proceeded to administer the Oath of Office to Ms. Green, and Mrs. Leet. Mr. Robert Reilly administered the Oath of Office to Ms. Streznewski.

#### **Election of Officers for the 2011 Calendar Year**

Mr. Honeywell called for nominations for the office of President of the Board of Education. Mrs. Gaffuri nominated Ms. Mackey for the office of President. Ms. Mackey accepted the nomination. Ms. Streznewski nominated Mr. Egan for the office of President. Mr. Egan accepted the nomination. Nominations were declared closed.

The Board voted 2 votes for Melissa Mackey, 4 votes for Dan Egan and 1 abstention.

Ms. Green abstained.

Mr. Honeywell declared Dan Egan President of the Board of Education.

Mr. Egan called for nominations for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education. Mr. Egan nominated Dr. Brandon for the office of Vice President. Dr. Brandon accepted the nomination. Ms. Green nominated Ms. Mackey for the office of Vice President. Ms. Mackey declined the nomination. Nominations were declared closed.

The Board voted 6 ayes and 1 abstention. Ms. Mackey abstained.

Mr. Egan declared Dr. Brandon Vice President of the Board of Education.

Mr. Egan called for nominations for the office of Secretary of the Board of Education. Dr. Brandon nominated Mrs. Gaffuri for the office of Secretary. Mrs. Gaffuri accepted the nomination. Nominations were declared closed.

The Board voted 7 ayes for Mrs. Gaffuri.

Mr. Egan declared Mrs. Gaffuri Secretary of the Board of Education.

### **Board Member Statements**

Each board member presented comments related to their gratitude to those who helped them through the election process. They also expressed gratitude to the community for the work they have been able to accomplish this past year, looking forward to the future in terms of closing the achievement gap, raising graduation rates, raising the standard of living for all children and proving the best possible education for every student in the District with equity in education, improving safety in the schools and raising the morale of staff and students. Along with the staff and the Board, we ask the community to do their part by committing to a good education for every child.

### **Appointment of Officers**

1. Clerk of the Board – Catherine Cutting
2. District Treasurer – Tishawn Terry-Garcia
3. Tax Collector – Christine DeWitt
4. Extra Classroom Treasurer – Christine DeWitt
5. Internal Claims Auditor – Joseph Ferrandino
6. Internal Auditor - Questar III BOCES

### **Other Appointments**

1. Purchasing Agent – William F. Hogan
2. Records Access Officer – William F. Hogan
3. Asbestos Local Education Agency (LEA) Designee – Anthony Catalfamo
4. Independent Auditing Firm – The Bonadio Group
5. Board Counsel – Girvin & Ferlazzo
6. District Physician – Jay Kravitz, M.D.

### **Designations**

1. Official Bank Depository – Key Bank, N.A.
2. Official Newspapers – Times Union & Daily Gazette

### **Authorizations**

1. The Board of Education authorizes the Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, to certify employee payrolls.
2. The Board of Education authorizes the Assistant Superintendent for Secondary Education, to approve conferences, conventions and workshop attendance for the 2010 calendar year.
3. The Board of Education authorizes the Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, to approve property tax refunds and tax roll adjustments up to \$2,500 either mandated by court order or directed by the County of Albany Real Property Tax Service. (The Board of Education will be notified of all refunds and adjustments approved during the preceding month pursuant to this authorization at each regular Board meeting.)

4. The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools, to approve budget transfers up to \$10,000. (The Board of Education will be given a report of all such transfers pursuant to this authorization at each regular Board meeting. Transfers over \$10,000 will require Board approval.)
5. The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools and, as necessary, the President of the Board of Education to execute grant applications.
6. The Board of Education authorizes the President of the Board to approve all overnight, out of state and out of country field trips.
7. The Board of Education authorizes the reimbursement of pre-approved transportation expenses for the 2010 calendar year at the current allowable IRS mileage reimbursement rate through December 30, 2010.
8. The Board of Education authorizes the District Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, and the Central Treasurer of the Extra Classroom Activity Fund as individuals designated to sign checks.
9. The Board of Education authorizes the use of corporate credit cards for the following individuals:

William F. Hogan – Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs

**Bondings**

The Board of Education approves the blanket bond in the amount of \$1,000,000 for all District employees.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve Appointments (Officers, Other Appointments, Designations, Authorizations and Bonding). Dr. Brandon seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

**SUPERINTENDENT’S REPORT**

Dr. Colucciello noted there was no Superintendent Report.

**STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

The Student Representative was absent and therefore there was no report.

**OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

Dr. Malerba addressed the Board relative to the formation of a Pre-K Task Force, urging the Board to begin the formation of this task force. Dr. Malerba expressed his concern regarding poor representation in the Citywide PTA and on the High School Restructuring Committee.

Mr. Lembo, President of the Citywide PTA congratulated the newly elected Board members and asked that all decisions made by Board members come with education first.

Ms. Kittle addressed the Board regarding the Board meeting date of March 17<sup>th</sup>. A meeting on St. Patrick’s Day would preclude some members of the community from attending the meeting.

## **FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT**

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

#### **Change Order – Arbor Hill Elementary School**

Mr. Hogan presented a change order for Arbor Hill Elementary School related to additional bond costs on change order work. Ms. Streznewski made a motion to approve the change order. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

## **INFORMATION**

### **Elementary School Progress Reports**

Mrs. Rudnick, Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education provided the Board a very comprehensive overview of the Elementary School Progress Reports including School Profiles, Initial Supports Implemented, Reading Progress, Attendance, Enrichment, Professional Development, Parent and Community Involvement, Building Leadership Team/Instructional Support Team Efforts, School Status in the New York State Accountability System with Interventions and Additional Strategies.

- Were there Teaching Assistants in those classes that were struggling?

There are Teaching Assistants working in Special Education classrooms. There are few, if any, Teaching Assistants in the General Education classrooms.

- Can we determine progress from September to December or are the December figures necessary to make that determination?

Each student has a folder that reflects their progress. December will be used as a baseline.

- Specific to the enrichment programs, is there a waiting list of students who are interested in participating in music due to a lack of instruments?

We have recently purchased violins. The District does take donations and any extra money is used for string instruments in the elementary level. There have also been cuts in music teachers, however, teachers are teaching more students.

- Regarding parent and community involvement. Some schools have a reputation of not being very friendly to parents at all. Is there any training planned for everyone on customer service and how to relate to parents from a different cultural background?

The North Albany Building Leadership Team is working on developing a survey – one for students and one for parents to address issues in the school concern the environment, academic rigor, and school safety. Customer service information was also presented at a recent Elementary Principals meeting.

- Is there any reason why particular classes have such different needs?

There are several variables that make it hard to fully define the disparity, i.e. self-contained special education classrooms. There are also ESL students who show as below level.

- What about churches and retirement community as volunteers might be more stable than college students who have recesses, etc. in addition to colleges, etc.?

College students provide benefits to the volunteer and the student.

- When a student is reading below grade level and the parent comes to get the student's report card what is the teacher doing?

Identify the problems, phonic, fluency. Go to benchmark assessment, speak with the classroom teacher, look at academic intervention based on deficits, offer after school tutoring, on-line programs.

- Is there a specific number for the Instructional Support Team for each building?

The structuring of the Instructional Support Team is based on the school and their creativity in providing these services.

- What will the Personal Education Profile include?

Academic, Social, Demographic Information, the student's Family Information so the student's information can be accessed by future teachers as the students travels around the District.

### **ROUTINE CONSENT**

Mr. Egan presented the following Routine Consent Items for approval: Proceedings of Meetings (November 18, 2010 and December 2, 2010); Appointments (Probationary Appointments, Miscellaneous, Stipends, Civil Service, and Tutors 2010-2011); Leaves of Absence; Transfers; Termination; Creation of Positions, Correction; Substitutes; Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000; Budget Transfers over \$10,000; Budget Appropriation Status Report; Revenue Status Report; Extra Classroom Activity Report; Tax Collector's Report; Real Property Tax Adjustments; Field Trips; Authorization to Enter into Contracts (see attached schedule); Resolution to Approve Donation; Disposal of Assets; Board Meeting Schedule 2011; School Liaisons 2011.

Mrs. Leet made a motion to accept Routine Consent Items, absent those set aside. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Mrs. Leet asked to set aside the proceedings of November 18, 2010. Ms. Green asked to set aside proceedings of December 2, 2010. Ms. Mackey asked to set aside Field Trips. Ms. Streznewski asked to set aside Authorization to Enter Into Contracts.

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

Motion passed.

Mr. Egan recognized the appointment of Ms. Tina Phan as the Purchasing Agent for the District.

Mrs. Leet made a motion to accept the proceedings of November 18, 2010. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Mrs. Leet requested an addition on page 4 in the middle school progress reports the addition of a bullet reflecting the question, does graduation from your middle school mean that the student is prepared to do 9<sup>th</sup> grade work. The principal's answered no, which led to the suggestion for the need of a promotion policy and standards. Corrections will be made to the proceedings.

The Board voted 6 ayes to approve the proceedings with stated changes, and 1 abstention.

Ms. Streznewski abstained.

Motion passed.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to accept the proceedings of December 2, 2010. Dr. Brandon seconded the motion. Ms. Green noted on page 4 under board committees, Ms. Green noted she did not say, with no voting power. The item will read, following discussion, Ms. Green offered to attend the meetings as an observer. Ms. Leet also volunteered to attend as an observer. Observers at these meetings do not have voting power. Corrections will be made to the proceedings.

The Board voted 6 ayes to approve the proceedings with stated changes, and 1 abstention.

Ms. Streznewski abstained.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve field trips. Ms. Streznewski seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey noted that there will be two field trips in February for high school students. One will be to France, Berlin and Prague for 25 students. There is no fundraising to offset the cost of this trip. Total cost is \$1,675 per person. The second trip is to the International Hair Show in Atlanta, GA. for 10-12 students at a cost of \$800 per person. Fundraising will take place to offset the total cost of the trip. Ms. Mackey noted that in terms of the JIT report stating that the District has a school within a school and that the disparities identified are not further entrenched by this new restructuring. Is the District further entrenching these differences? One group is going to Atlanta for a hair show and the other is going to Europe for two weeks. With the number of students in the District who qualify for free and reduced price lunch, and no fundraising being done to offset the trip to Europe, was this really an option for all the high school students in the District? Moving forward when we have these opportunities to offer students, they should be offered to all eligible students. If that means the District has to partner with community groups in order for all students to have equal opportunities. A suggestion was made to have the Policy Committee review field trips and fundraising.

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

Motion passed.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to accept Authorization to Enter Into Contracts. Dr. Brandon seconded the motion. There was confusion related to a contract that was not listed on the cover sheet for this item. Following discussion it was determined that an unrelated document was included incorrectly. The vote went forward based on the contracts listed on the cover sheet only. Ms. Mackey requested that the Wilson Elser contract be set aside.

The Board voted unanimously (7 - 0) to approve the motion,  
absent the item set aside.

Motion passed.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to accept the Wilson Elser contract. Mr. Egan seconded the motion. Following discussion related to forthcoming information regarding this contract, Mrs. Gaffuri amended the motion to table action on the contract and following discussion, add an action item to act on this item. Mr. Egan agreed.

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

Motion passed.

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Legislative Agenda**

Board members expressed concern related to what will be the gain to the District in spending this money on consultants when the District has had to cut staff. The consultants have provided the District exposure with Legislators. It is important to have access to the Legislators to bring the issues the District is facing forward. It was also noted that individual Legislators are not able to have all the information they need to be educated on the issues. Legislators often times look to these consultants when they want to be educated about a particular issue. Contracting with these consultants provides the District with an opportunity to be heard by Legislators. Discussion continued with discussion of the expense involved. A suggestion was made to go forward, focused on seeking additional revenues from the State through the efforts of the consultants. Ms. Streznewski made a motion to accept the contract as presented under Routine Consent. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The Board voted 6 ayes and 1 abstention. Ms. Mackey abstained.

Motion passed.

### **Board Committee Schedule**

This schedule was presented for final review prior to posting this schedule on the website. Mrs. Gaffuri advised the Policy Committee is short a Board member. Ms. Green volunteered to serve. The location for the Curriculum Committee and the Building and Grounds under the Facilities Committee will be forwarded to the Board members. A question was presented relative to additional Board members participating in the agenda setting meetings. Following a brief discussion it was noted that Board members have the opportunity to present issues for consideration on each agenda prior to the agenda setting meeting. Again, more than three Board members would create a regular meeting, subject to the Open Meeting Law. Another suggestion was made to invite an additional Board member to join in these meetings when one of the officers is unable to attend. This will be set up on a rotating basis. The Clerk of the Board will be responsible for the logistics involved.

### **Policy Review**

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers presented the following policies for review by the Board:

- 4321 Equal Participation for Students with Disabilities
- 4321.1 Opportunity to Participate in Pre-School Programs
- 4321.3 Provision of Appropriate Special Education and Related Services
- 4321.5 Implementation of School-wide Approaches
- 4321.6 Declassification of Students with Disabilities
- 4321.7 Impartial Hearing officer Selection and Compensation
- 4321.8 Instructional Materials in Alternative Formats

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers noted these policies have been reviewed by the administrative staff in the Special Education Department along with an attorney from Girvin & Ferlazzo. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers recommended that the policies be reviewed. Final version of the policies will be presented at the next meeting for approval.

### **Level IV Recognition**

Board members had a discussion related to the process of recognizing those students who scored Level 4 on their ELA's (in excess of 700 students). Initially the plan was to have these students attend a series of Board meetings where they would be awarded certificates. In discussion with school principals it was noted that individual schools recognize these students. Following discussion it was agreed that because of the number of students, the presentation would take place at their home schools in the presence of the school's student body. When possible the School Liaison and any other Board members who are available would be in attendance. A standard letter of invitation will be developed, along with a schedule of these presentations. Board members will be provided this information.

### **Board Committee Reports**

The Alternative Education Subcommittees met on 12/20/10 as a joint meeting. Individual committees have met several times before to review their accomplishments. The Safe Schools Committee has been looking at the Code of Conduct Policy, looking at suspension. The large group will meet on Monday January 10<sup>th</sup>. The role of this committee in the High School Restructuring will be discussed.

**Board Member Items**

Discussion about proposed curriculum specifically for each of the academies was brought up. At this point the course offering is not clear to parents. Following discussion this will be a part of the presentation at the February 3, 2011 meeting.

The development of a District wide Wish List, soliciting funds and or items specific areas in the schools; i.e. musical instruments, art supplies, etc. was proposed.

District wide training for support staff relative to cultural sensitivity, customer service and how District staff can be more welcoming. The District will look into this in developing professional development.

Protocol when an individual Board member is invited to meet with Legislators. The most productive way is to meet in some kind of coordinated way in consultation with the government affairs consultant.

Accounting of the total amount of Title I funds and what schools these funds are going to. Consideration of better use of that money as the Board looks into the budget. Consider how better to use that money.

Provide a draft month-to-month schedule of Board agendas to Board Members.

Revisit Strategic Plan – is it still relevant.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Ms. Mackey made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Streznewski seconded the motion. The Board adjourned at 10:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine L. Cutting  
Clerk of the Board