



CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY

October 6, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Dan Egan, President
Felicia Green
Edith Leet
Melissa Mackey
Alexandra Streznewski

Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Bill Hogan
Ken Cioffi
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Jeffrey Honeywell, Esq.

ABSENT: Rose Brandon, Vice President

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.

Mr. Lesko introduced Defny Gamboa, the club advisor of the Step Team at Pine Hills Elementary School. Ms. Gamboa advised that she, along with Dominique Luke founded the group during the 2009-2010 school year. Ms. Gamboa introduced the members of the team, Nevaeh Burton, Anni-Maxine Quaye, Ameiam Washington, Taezi Washington, Abigail Sitterly, Ayana Benett, Gianna Ford, Najah Thomas, Jermani Bailey, Supreme Webb. Stepping came to fruition when coal miners were not allowed to communicate with one another. The workers communicated with each other by creating coded sounds with different meanings, using foot stomping and hand clapping. The Step Team gave a demonstration of the Step Program they performed at various events last year, including the celebration at Krank Park in July. The Team has also entertained in other schools and community events.

Dr. McCalla introduced Amal Hechehouche and Wesley Pluviose-Philip, both seniors at Albany High School. These students will serve as Student Representatives to this Board meeting through this school year. Amal and Wesley are outstanding students, athletes, and community volunteers. They bring a great deal of enthusiasm and pride as students at the high school. We look forward to hearing from them at Board meetings.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Marlon Anderson spoke about the responsibility of the District to educate students and the responsibility of the City to address violence in the streets of Albany.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Amal Hechehouche and Wesley Pluviose-Philip briefly addressed the Board regarding how students are responding to the new academies. Initially, students were confused. Students are more comfortable with the teachers traveling to classes. Teachers are working closer together. The academies are giving students a structure, especially freshman and sophomores. School spirit appears to be increasing.

ACTION ITEMS

2010-2011 Financial Statements

Ms. Green made a motion to accept the 2010-2011 financial statements for the District. Ms. Streznewski seconded the motion. Mr. Hogan introduced Alan Walther, Partner at the Bonadio Accounting Group, the District's independent auditor. Mr. Walther advised his colleague, Emily Sanders met with the Audit Committee of the Board and reviewed the audit in detail. Mr. Walther noted the majority of the report is completed by the District. It is the role of the auditors to review the financial statements and give their opinion. They then provide the Independent Auditors' Report on pages 1 and 2; Report on internal control and compliance on pages 50 and 51; OMB Circular A-133 on pages 52 and 53; and the Schedule of findings and questioned costs on pages 57 and 58.

Mr. Walther noted the auditor's report issued was unqualified, the highest level of assurance that can be given. Compliance for major programs was also unqualified. There was one issue of non-compliance related to the District's unreserved, undesignated fund balance exceeding the 4% allowed in the NYS Real Property Tax Law. This issue has since been resolved. The financial statements present fairly the financial position of the City School District of Albany as of June 30, 2011. Mr. Walther reviewed figures on the General Fund balance sheet as well as the fund balance figures.

The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

Resolution to Approve the Sale of Property at 315 Northern Blvd.

Mr. Egan presented the following resolution:

SALE OF REAL PROPERTY 315 NORTHERN BLVD

WHEREAS, the Board of Education has previously closed the educational program at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy located at 315 Northern Boulevard, Albany, New York, and;

WHEREAS, the Board of Education declares the closing of the building effective July 1, 2010, and;

WHEREAS, the Board of Education hereby authorized the sale of the real property located at 315 Northern Boulevard, Albany, New York, in the amount no less than \$3,250,000, which was approved by public vote on May 17, 2011;

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the City School District of Albany hereby authorizes the sale of the real property owned by the District, known as the Philip Livingston Magnet Academy, in accordance with the terms of that agreement, and authorizes the President of the Board to execute any and all documents necessary to consummate such sale.

Ms. Streznewski made a motion to approve the resolution. Mrs. Leet seconded the motion. Mr. Hogan advised the motion is to sell the Philip Livingston Building for \$3,250,000, which is consistent with the amount the voters approved for the sale of this building. A real estate development company from Long Island is going to purchase the building and develop senior housing in the area. The sale is expected to take approximately one year to fifteen months, to close on the building with all the processes that need to occur. When completed, the property will eventually be placed back on the commercial tax base.

- Concern was expressed relative to selling the building when the District could possibly be facing space concerns.

The Board voted 4 ayes, 0 nays and 1 abstention. Ms. Mackey abstained.
Motion passed.

INFORMATION

Hackett Middle School, Giffen Elementary School & North Albany Academy

Mr. Paolino, Principal of Hackett Middle School, Ms. Maxine Fantroy-Ford, Principal of Giffen Elementary School and Ms. Leslie Buff, Principal of North Albany Academy, provided updated information related to ELA, Math and Regents Assessments for their schools. Included in the presentation were Safety & Security and Initiatives to Increase Student Proficiency at Hackett Middle School, CEP Strategies and Objectives for Giffen, and the Comprehension Education Action Plan and Student Survey Results at North Albany Academy.

- What have you seen in the first five weeks of the school year in terms of student performance and what have you done to address that?

Ms. Fantroy-Ford advised the school climate and culture is the initial start in getting student to work well together by accepting academic and social standards of behavior, creating a learning environment that challenges students.

Ms. Buff advised she met with AIS teachers this past week. Teachers are working with students in explaining their answers in more detail. There was a change in the schedule. Students are going to the same teachers every day. Teachers are seeing a difference. Homework is being done. AIS teachers see students every day. The 5th and 6th grades have been separated, with positive results in terms of behavior issues. There has been a 46% decrease in the number of referrals this year.

Mr. Paolino advised the teachers at Hackett believe that all students can achieve. Building confidence in the students has resulted in fewer behavioral issues. There is an overall change in the culture climate of the school, witnessed by representatives from the Center on Secondary School Redesign. The school is in the process of conducting interval benchmark assessments. AIS teachers are conducting diagnostic testing to determine the level of each student. The school is in the process of developing a self-directed instructional system, which is a daily and weekly program where data is being reviewed on a daily basis in order to provide feedback to teachers.

- When you talk about having students understand clearly what is expected of them and teachers knowing the expectations of what should be taught, is that the same as setting standards for promotion from one grade level to the next?

The proficiency target at Hackett is to identify for students expectations that are easy for students to understand. We want proficiency for all students along all content areas. Academically we want students to understand the content that is outlined in the common core standards. More importantly, we want students to be able to apply that in every day, real life situations. We want students to be outstanding young men and women. Students need to know how to act accordingly. Students need to build confidence.

At North Albany, teachers have high standards for students and students know those standards. How successful this is should be determined early in the year. Meetings with teachers are scheduled weekly so that we know those students are struggling and how they can be supported in meeting those standards with parents, AIS teachers, etc. Standards of expectation are articulated throughout the year at Giffen. Parents also need to understand these standards. Standards of practice are written and are contained in a binder.

Discussion continued regarding students involved in extra-curricular activities. After school programs at this point in the middle schools are not in full force at this time. They will begin in the next week. There was also a question about the use of volunteers. Each school has a volunteer program. Volunteers are screened to insure that they are appropriately placed in the buildings based on the needs of the students and the strengths of the volunteers. Volunteers are always welcome.

- We tend to see an increase in the Level 1's as students go into the higher grades. What are we going to do for the students that are slipping?

Once the needs of the students are identified, those students can be supported. Rapid feedback is important. Review methods of instruction. Hackett is working through professional development to increase student achievement. At North Academy, the RtI team reviews weekly data in order to identify appropriate interventions. With the use of Aimsweb, data is available much quicker. At Giffen professional development and common planning time allow for discussion of data analysis and necessary changes to support students through interactive technology and project based learning.

- What are you doing to pull in the other three-quarters of the population who are not doing well? How are you going to reach those parents to get them involved?

Hackett needs to identify the needs of students at Level 1-2, and build a plan around those needs to support these students.

DISCUSSION

New Course Offerings for 2012-2013

The following course offerings were presented for discussion and review:

- Public Speaking 1: Speech
- Public Speaking 2: Debate
- Contemporary Voices
- Ethnicity and Identity
- Introduction Business Management
- International Business Management

Dr. Diggs introduced Dr. McCalla and Cricket O'Dell who served as a member of the restructuring subcommittee for curriculum.

- Why was the course on Ethnicity and Identity assigned to the Citizenship Academy rather than the Leadership Academy?

The choice is based on where the particular course would fit within the academies in terms of the overall theme of the academies. The Citizenship Academy focuses on the role in our country. The choice depends on where the course will fit in the overall theme. As the United State becomes more global, this course will allow for effective conversation, communication, critical thinking, and preparation for the global community. This course could sit in either academy.

- What is the expectation for a student who attends one of the academies for four years?

Capstone level courses are in place in some of the academies. Other capstone courses will be available for each of the academies. A course catalog will be developed that defines the course available in each academy. There are theme coordinators and coaches who will develop a curriculum booklet to insure that students are well informed in making choices relative to which academy they would like to attend. Alignment of topics and courses is still under discussion.

Grade Configuration

Dr. Colucciello advised Board members have received information on the proposed charge and membership to this committee. Board members have responded with their comments. Dr. Colucciello noted the first item the committee will be looking at is enrollment. With the assistance of the Capital Region Planning Commission, the committee will look at the five-year projections for enrollment. Mr. Egan noted the goal is to raise achievement for those students who are most disadvantaged. Research indicates that grade configuration does not impact achievement. The number of transitions the student makes throughout their career is critical. The District needs to address the configuration of the 6th grades in the District to be consistent.

A suggestion was made that the committee should look at more than just logistically, which bodies should be sent to which schools to balance everything out for efficiency, group students for instruction to get the best achievement out of each student. Grade configuration includes looking at ungraded classes, split classes, and different ways to group students to meet their needs.

Mr. Jones suggested that several subcommittees should be developed, i.e. data collection committee that would look at transitions in the District and a program subcommittee that would include membership from instruction. The District needs to look at capacity which includes the infrastructure in the District.

Uniformity in the 6th grade is a significant issue. However, the space capacity in its present configuration does not allow for 6th grades to be moved into the middle schools. Board members were in agreement that the top priority for this committee is to resolve the 6th grade issue. There should be consistency throughout all grades. However, this is not the sole purpose of this committee. Any change that is made should be driven by data. The question is what data would be used. Cost considerations should also be included in the conversation. Uniform curriculum is very important.

Mr. Egan noted that the Mission Statement appears to be acceptable to Board members. Composition of the committee to include Board members has also been accepted. Additionally, the Board agreed that composition could be reduced with 2 middle school principals, 1 principal from a PreK-5 school, 1 from a PreK-6. Cameo appearances by administrative staff members will be scheduled as needed, i.e. Instruction, Transportation or Technology.

The Mission of the Committee is to determine the best grade configuration to provide effective, challenging, and equitable instruction for all students in the City School District of Albany in Kindergarten through Grade 8.

Policy Review

Mr. Egan presented the following policies for review, noting that these are financial policies that have previously been reviewed by the Audit Committee:

6000	Fiscal Management Goals	6680	Internal Audit Function
6030	Performance Bonds	6690	Audit Committee
6240	Investments	6700	Purchasing
6240R	Investment Regulations	6700R	Purchasing Regulations
6410	Authorized Signatures	6800	Payroll Procedures
6670	Petty Cash/Petty Cash Accounts	6900	Disposal of District Property

There was concern relative to the financial oversight of the Audit Committee in terms of financial statement review. Policy 6690 limits the responsibility of the Audit Committee. Following discussion a suggestion was made that a draft of this policy as Financial/Audit Committee Policy should be returned to the Audit Committee for addition discussion.. Mr. Hogan noted the policy is modeled from the State Comptroller's Office. Additionally, the District is audited by various agencies throughout the year. The policy will go back to the Audit Committee.

ROUTINE CONSENT

Mr. Egan presented routine consent items for approval. Proceedings of Meetings (September 1, 2011 and September 15, 2011); Appointments (Administrative, Probationary, Part-time Teacher Regular Substitutes, Miscellaneous, Summer 2011, 2011-2012, Tutors, Coaches, Itinerant Substitutes); Transfers; Leaves of Absence; Resignation; Corrections, Field Trips, Attendance at Conferences, Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000; Revenue Status Report; Appropriation Status Report; Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund; Property Tax Adjustments; Disposal of Assets; Resolution to Approve Donation and Authorization to Enter into Contracts (see attached schedule).

Mrs. Leet made a motion for approval. Ms. Streznewski seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey set aside Field Trips. Mrs. Leet set aside the appointment of Coaches.

The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion, absent those set aside.
Motion passed.

Mrs. Leet made a motion to approve the appointment of Coaches. Ms. Green seconded the motion. Mrs. Leet noted a line item for a Varsity Assistant Football for \$2,499.00 with no name indicated in the listing. It was determined that this was listed in error. The item is removed from the list.

The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion, omitting the aforementioned item.
Motion passed.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve Field Trips. Ms. Green seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey expressed her continued concern regarding the expense of field trips, for travel out of the Country, that are out of reach to economically disadvantaged students. Ms. Mackey suggested that the District look for sponsors interested in funding some of these trips for this population. The District needs to develop procedures and criteria for this type of fund raising.

Dr. McCalla noted the Building Leadership Team at Albany High School discussed this matter extensively, resulting in the establishment of a task force of five people, Chaired by Mrs. O'Dell representing Education First. This group will present a plan to enable these students to participate in these trips. Mrs. O'Dell spoke about Education First and their part in enabling students in this endeavor.

The Board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Facilities Committee met earlier this week. The group discussed change orders and long term plans possible for the high school. The TOAST Pavilion was also discussed. CSArch Architects have donated their services on this project.

Curriculum Committee met on 9/25. Ms. Green will be introduced as a new member to the Committee. Meeting dates were scheduled for the year. The Math program will be reviewed under the leadership of Ms. Mitchell. There are also two new parent members now on the Committee.

Alternative Education Think Tank will meet on 10/11. A new facilitator, Dr. Laura from UAlbany School of Social Welfare will serve in this position. She comes with experience as a social worker and she also holds a PhD. The ALC held an open house last week. There were 15 parents present for the event. This number is significantly higher than last year.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Mrs. Leet asked if a report on summer school and Regents results will be provided to the Board. Dr. Diggs advised this will be provided at the next Board meeting.

Where do we stand on scheduling a workshop? We are continuing to identify a date that is convenient for everyone. Mr. Egan advised the October 4, 2011 NYSSBA training is still available.

Mr. Egan reminded Board members to forward Grade Configuration and Goals suggestions to Ms. Cutting.

Adjournment

Ms. Mackey made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Leet seconded the motion. The Board adjourned at 10:20 p.m.