



CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ALBANY

July 7, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Stephen and Harriet Myers Middle School

PRESENT: Dan Egan, President
Rose Brandon, Vice President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Felicia Green
Edith Leet
Melissa Mackey
Alexandra Streznewski
Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Jeff Honeywell
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Bill Hogan
Ken Cioffi
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Linda Rudnick

ABSENT: None

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.

Mr. Egan made a motion to amend the agenda to approve contract extensions for 3 senior administrators for a period of 1 year. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

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

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

Mr. Lesko introduced Prof. Paul Murray, a former Board member, and faculty member at Siena College organized a trip, along with John Harris, involving 4 students from Albany High School and 7 students from Siena College. The group travelled to Birmingham Alabama, on to Montgomery, Selma, and Jackson. At each stop they not only visited places where history was made, they also had the opportunity to meet the Freedom Riders in person who were celebrating the 50th anniversary of the original Freedom Ride. Christina Grave, Mada Gray, Catherine and Lashandra spoke about how inspiring the trip was to each of them.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

The following people addressed the Board regarding charter school payments, stating that charter school students are being deprived of programs due to a lack of funds. They also spoke about the successes they are seeing in the charter school student's academics.

Eric Bowen	Nilsa Velilla	Denise Walker
Jaron Brown	Vanessa Threatte	Shateik Merritt
Demetra Brown	Yvonne Collier	Gwendolyn Quickly
Darryl Williams	Fidelia Rodriquez	Joseph Salu
Dr. Victor Lancaster Collier		

Rosemary Koonce and Lisa White addressed the Board relative to teacher transfers, asking that the Board reconsider a recent transfer from Abrookin.

FACILITIES PROJECT

Change Order

Mr. Hogan presented a change order for the Albany High School Project. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the change order. Dr. Brandon seconded the motion. Mr. Greg Coque of CSArch advised this work was presented for bids with no response. The work is now being presented as a change order with BPI to do the work. The estimate was between \$15,000 and \$20,000 and it came in at \$12,995.00.

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

Motion passed.

INFORMATION

Tech Update & Replacement Cycle

Mr. Mark Place of the Technology Department gave a comprehensive presentation on the progression of the Tech Department, the current status and future expectation of the department. Mr. Place reviewed the structure and responsibilities of the department. Mr. Place also presented a replacement plan. In order for the District to move forward and implement the replacement cycle correctly, a new budget line of \$450,000 needs to be established in addition to the regular technology budget. This figure represents replacing current equipment. There is no increase in the amount of technology equipment. The replacement cycle shown goes through the 2020-2021 school year with replacement every 10 years for elementary school and 8 years for secondary schools, Project Lead the Way every 4 years and District offices every 5 years. Mr. Cioffi noted the District is looking at results of improved technology has on student achievement.

- The \$450,000 proposal is one quarter of the tax cap that is now in place. Taking into consideration the staffing that is presently grant funded, the tax cap percentage goes to one half. I would look for options in terms the high and the low of this proposal. What is the education return on investment for these electronics?

The District might consider putting this out as a bond. The variation in equipment is the result of grant funding for some schools. As the state and federal government is requiring more and more, stretching out replacement will make this almost impossible. The proposal reflects real dollar numbers. The District is evaluating student achievement to determine the impact of integration of technology in the classrooms.

- How often do students work on computers? How is the District distributing Netbooks and laptop computers? There should be equity across the board in terms of access to computers. Implementation should be carried out with equal opportunity for everyone.

Every computer in the District has the same software. Training was provided for staff with the new suite. Instructional technologists work directly with teachers.

- Replacement rotation should focus on student achievement.

The rotation schedule is based on the logistics of upgrading computers.

- We have to make sure our students are computer literate as colleges are requiring students to have computer knowledge.

- Prices seem similar to retail prices. The District should be able to get better pricing. What about new technology? How will that be incorporated in the plan? Are there grants or donations that would fund this equipment?

Disjointed equipment does not work. Different types and brands of computers causes more work in terms of upkeep of the equipment. The District has chosen one model that is interchangeable.

- Compare cost to other Districts. Need to look at achievement in those classes that use computers and those that do not use computers on a regular basis. The missing piece is the link with teachers. There needs to be a connector to assist teachers in using the equipment effectively.

Without the Magnet Grant there would be no one working directly with teachers. The department continues to work in terms of staffing and needs in the District. The department is now at max in terms of what can be done with the present number of people.

HIGH SCHOOL REPORT

Mr. Egan suggested, in the interest of time, given the fact that the report was distributed to Board members prior to the report that the Board go directly to questions.

- Are we in good standing with scheduling?

Yes. The District is on track. Mr. Place asked if the mailing in August could be eliminated. Final data, with schedules changing every day, mailing this early would cause confusion. Following discussion it was agreed that a notice would be sent out indicating that final schedules would be mailed on August 26, 2011.

- Are first period absences in core classes? Can that be sorted by Albany High and Abrookin? The report shows every class and every student grades 9-12. Presently the information is not sorted. Mr. Panetta noted that the attendance rate increased by 3.3%.

- What are we doing to recruit for Abrookin?

Recruitment will look different as the group moves forward.

- Are the students taking fashion design required to buy their own supplies? There are concerns that there is equity throughout the program. Perhaps older students could make something for the younger students. The interaction between grades would be very helpful.
- Can we start school later to avoid the absences in the first period?

The issue that comes up is sports and the conflicts. The District is looking at different programming to address these absences.

- What is the status of summer camp enrollment?

Theme camp is approximately 15 in each camp and 41 students in the UAlbany program, which has already started. The Museum camp starts on Monday.

- Will the public be allowed to tour the building at the ribbon cutting?

Yes, the public will be able to tour.

- Have we thought about having a motivational speaker for each academy the first day of school to start building communities that starts friendly competition?
- I'd like to see an on-track report, identifying students who are on track to graduate. Data needs to be available early in the year to get those students who are not on track the help they need to succeed.
- What is the plan for administrators to do walk-throughs and evaluation? We need to start AVID earlier next year. Data analysis of AIS students during the summer. What were the outcomes with APEX? What is the follow-up to reports that are presented to the Board? All students should be permitted to take Gym on-line?

The APEX numbers are being reviewed. There was a significant decrease in the number of students who failed more than one course. A new data base manager works at the high school. The breakdown of data needs further discussion. Walk-throughs are important. There are programs available to record walk-through data that can be analyzed.

- There are still a number of classes that are under enrolled at Abrookin. Do you expect this to fluctuate from these numbers?

The numbers have increased closer to the caps. Counselors will be looking at these numbers to determine whether or not the classes will be collapsed.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent Items were presented as follow: Appointments (Administrators, Civil Service, Stipends, Miscellaneous, Summer School, Tutors, Itinerant Substitutes); Transfers, Leaves of absence; Resignation; Create Position; Abolish Position; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000; Budget Transfers over \$10,000; Revenue Status Report-05/31/11; Appropriation Status Report-05/31/11; Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund; Real Property Tax Adjustments; Disposal of Assets; Appointment of Officer (Deputy Treasurer); RFP Award (Jill Fahey Marketing Communications); Approval of Food Rate Increase; Hourly Rates for Support Staff Substitutes; Substitute Teachers, Substitute Teaching Assistants & Tutors; K-12 Student Accident Insurance Plan Application and Authorization to Enter Into Contracts. Also included are the 3 administrator contract extension to June 30, 2012 (Ms. Jackson-Chalmers, Ms. Rudnick and Dr. Diggs) Ms. Streznewski made a motion for approval. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

DISCUSSION

Grading Policy

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers noted at the May roundtable the Albany High School Building Leadership Team provided a report which examined the current grading system and the effect it has on the Albany High School students, with comparisons of other school districts. The policy presented this evening is the result of the committee's recommendation made in May. The policy is still a work in progress. It is being brought forward to the Board because the recommendations are drastic and Board input is being requested at this juncture.

Mr. Amodeo and Mr. Benson reviewed the impact of the new system. The policy reflects the recommendations made in the spring. The policy is also written to be easily understood by the public. A clause was also added to allow students to make up work. The building principal can make grade changes, reporting that to the cabinets with an explanation. Policies will be distributed to parents. Teachers will be using the electronic grading through Power School which will allow teachers to view student grades in a timely manner.

- What are some of the contractual issues involved in administrators changing a student's grade? 6th grade should be consistent throughout the District.

That is no contract language on any of this. Under Education Law, the building principal, then the superintendent and ultimately, the Board of Education have the ability to change the grade given by a teacher. This happens very rarely.

- Formative assessment should not be included in the grade. The Summative should include more than just one big test. Homework should be provided a grade.
- Homework needs to be evaluated.
- Parents and students will need to be informed relative to the changes in grading so they understand the process.

The committee will continue its work so that the policy is in place for September 1, 2011.

ACTION ITEM

Policy Approval

The Board of Education will act on approval of the following policies:

- 4750 Promotion and Retention of Students
- 6110 Budget Planning
- 6110R Budget Planning Regulations
- 6256 Fund Balance
- 6600 Fiscal Accounting and Reporting
- 5300 Code of Conduct

Ms. Streznewski made a motion for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Phase II of Alt Ed is meeting on July 11, 2011.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Future agenda items:

- District Attendance Policy
- Review of assessments and Regent scores
- Evening program at the high school and how it fits into the high school restructuring
- Look at trimesters or semesters to allow students to restart in January with redirection
- Biennial review of Shared Decision Plan (to establish a committee and develop training)

Summer reading list needs to be updated.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Streznewski made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned 11:35 p.m.