



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
June 3, 2008
7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: William Barnette, President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Dr. Mark Barth
Judy Doesschate
Melissa Mackey

Dr. Eva Joseph
Dr. Joseph Dragone
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
James Matthews

ABSENT: Wayne Morris

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 7:10 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- There was a moment of silence in memory of Kathina Thomas, a student at Sheridan Preparatory Academy who was fatally wounded last week.
- Members of the audience were welcomed and thanked for taking the time to attend the meeting.
- Mission Statement was read.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

- Gratitude was expressed to the faculty and staff in support of Kathina's family during this very difficult time.
- Friday evening, June 6th an evening of jazz is schedule at Giffen Memorial Elementary School at 6 p.m. featuring Shaakir. The program is free to the public.
- Two appointments are on the agenda this evening for approval. Principal at Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology, Mr. Timothy Fowler and Principal at Montessori Magnet School, Kenneth Lein.
- Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education is also being appointed this evening, Dr. Tresa Diggs. Dr. Diggs will commence her employment with the district on August 1, 2008.

Mr. Honeywell noted a correction related to the appointment to fill the board vacancy. The person filling the vacancy will serve through December 30, 2008. Mr. Honeywell apologized for the misinformation previously provided.

The board has had discussion in Executive Session relative to the vacancy and has not yet reached a decision.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Ms. Rouse was not present. There was no report.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Beverly Padgett read a statement on behalf of Oceana Morris regarding out of school suspensions.
2. Beverly Padgett addressed the board relative to out of school suspensions.
3. Felicia Greene addressed the board regarding the board vacancy.
4. Patricia Stewart addressed the board regarding school suspensions.
5. Debra Brown-Johnson addressed the board regarding parent concerns regarding the process of Superintendent Hearings and the message being presented to parents and the SURR review at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.
6. Nolene Smith addressed the board regarding Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.
7. Jillina Baxter addressed the board regarding suspensions in the schools.

School counsel interrupted the public comment several times to caution speakers about discussing personal information in a public forum and the possible consequences of those actions. Also, that the appeal process is a formal letter to the superintendent. Speaking in a public forum does not constitute a formal appeal.

8. Beverly Padgett spoke again relative to the suspension process.
9. Jim Lembo addressed the board in support of the current leadership at Delaware Community School.
10. Marlin Anderson addressed the board regarding the public perception of the district.
11. Edith Leet addressed the board relative to the vacant board seat.
12. Maria Alfonso addressed the board relative to the vacant board seat.
13. Barbara Smith addressed the board regarding the earlier start time for classes and concerns about Philip Livingston Magnet Academy.

INFORMATION ITEM

Diversity Council

The Board of Education heard a comprehensive report on the Albany Diversity Council. A review of the steps that were taken to create a culturally responsive learning community was presented to the board. Members of the Diversity Council presented seven principles that were developed for building a learning community. (1) Children are affirmed in their cultural connections; (2) Teachers are personally inviting; (3) Classroom is physically inviting; (4) Students are reinforced for academic development; (5) Changes are made to accommodate culture are essential to learning; (6) Classroom is managed with firm consistent, loving control; and (7) Interactions stress collectively as well as individually. Strategies of each principle were also reviewed.

- How long have people been going out to the different schools and what level of implementation do you feel there is? This was started this year, giving staff a taste of what this is about. What is competent teaching? This will be followed with other types of professional development in the years to come.

The superintendent noted the district has made some gains and has accomplished very important elements such as acknowledging the things that we need to do from a very honest, eyes wide open perspective to change the nature of what happens in the classrooms and the engagement and relationship with all students.

- Frustration was noted relative to this process just beginning in terms of disseminating this strategy. This has been an ongoing issue. The district cannot afford to have anyone teaching our children who has not embraced an approach of cultural competence. If someone is hired and a professional development plan toward cultural competence is initiated, if they are lacking in their ability to begin to demonstrate mastery of that, the district needs to help them find another place to be.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent Items were presented for approval as follows:

Proceedings of Meetings April 1, 2008, April 10, 2008, April 24, 2008, May 6, 2008, May 15, 2008, May 20, 2008 Vote Canvass; Resignations, Terminations, Abolish of Position, Creation of Position, Leave of Absence, Appointments (Administrative Appointments, Tutors, Tenure Appointments and Emergency Conditional Appointments), Attendance at Conferences; Management Confidential Employee Contracts; District Policy Regarding Unemployment Insurance; Treasurer's Report, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Appropriation Status Report – 4/30/08, Real Property Tax Adjustments, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, Bid Awards, Bid Award for Hackett Middle School Security; Approval of Wal-Mart Foundation to Delaware Community School and Abrookin Vocational and Technical Center; Contracts (National Alliance for Effective Education); Committee on Special Education, Subcommittee on Special Education and Committee on Pre-School Special Education.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve Routine Consent Items. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

A request was made to set aside Administrative Appointments.

Dr. Barth made a motion to table Proceedings of Meetings for 4/1, 4/10, 4/24, 5/6, 5/15 pending additional review. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the May 20, 2008 Canvass of Vote proceedings. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion. Mr. Barnette noted the information related to the Albany Public Library was not addressed during the official canvass and should be eliminated from these proceedings.

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

Motion passed.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve Administrative Appointments. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion. Mr. Timothy Fowler is being appointed to the position of Principal at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy and Mr. Kenneth Lein is being appointed to the position of Principal at Montessori Magnet School.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the National Urban Alliance for Effective Education Contract. Dr. Barth seconded the motion.

Concern was noted relative to the amount of the contract, the level of participation in the high school, the lack of concrete evidence that the district is seeing the kinds of outcomes anticipated from this program and the lack of evaluation of this program. A very lengthy discussion followed relative to the lack of the presence of the full board at this meeting, the concerns previously expressed, the fact that training has been scheduled with the expectation that this contract would be approved this evening. The item was placed under Routine Consent based on presentations that were made to the board previously with no indication that there were additional concerns regarding approval. Discussion included the fact that this is a scaffolding process with evaluation anticipated during the coming year. It was also noted that this contract is a large piece of the professional training monies in the 2008-2009 budget approved by the voters. Following additional discussion, Mrs Gaffuri made a motion to table the item. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

The board voted 3 in favor (Mrs. Gaffuri, Mr. Barnette and Ms. Mackey)
and 2 nays (Ms. Doesschate and Dr. Barth).
Motion did not carry.

Following a second round of discussion, Ms. Doesschate withdrew the original motion for approval of the contract. Dr. Barth agreed to the withdrawal of the motion. There is no vote needed. Given the opportunity for additional clarification and development of the contract, the item will be presented at the next meeting for approval.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change Orders

Change orders for Hackett Middle School and New Scotland Elementary School (School 19) were presented for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the change orders. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Furniture, Fixtures & Equipment for New Scotland Elementary School

The board was presented a resolution to award the bid for project management and installation of furniture, fixtures and equipment for the New Scotland Elementary project to Accent Commercial Furniture. Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Mr. McMordie advised this contract is for the management of these items. Also included in the bid is furniture not available from state contract. The balance of furniture will be purchased through the state contract purchasing system.

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

ACTION ITEMS

Administrative Appointment

The following resolution was presented for approval:

Appointment of Assistant Superintendent For Elementary Education

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Dr. Tresa Diggs is appointed to the position of Assistant Superintendent for Elementary Education for the period of August 1, 2008 through June 30, 2011 and the President of the Board of Education is authorized to execute the appropriate employment agreement with Dr. Diggs. Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve the resolution. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Middle School Math & Algebra Textbook Adoption

The following resolution was presented for approval:

Math & Algebra Textbook Adoption

BE IT RESOLVED that, the Board of Education of the City School District of Albany authorizes the adoption of the following Math & Algebra Textbooks recommended by the review committee:

Prentice Hall Mathematics, Courses 1, 2 & 3, New York Edition

Prentice Hall Mathematics Integrated Algebra, New York Edition

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the resolution. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

- A request for an explanation of the textbook for Geometry. The district will be piloting a series of textbooks for Geometry that will assist in making a choice that aligns with the current core curriculum that is before the district from the State Education Department. The current textbook will be used in conjunction with pilot programs. The district is also seeking other materials that will provide better alignment than the current text to avoid supplementing the current text.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Academic Intervention Services Plan (AIS)

The following resolution was presented for approval:

Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Plan

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the City School District of Albany hereby approves the Academic Intervention Services (AIS) Plan as presented to the Board of Education on May 15, 2008. Dr. Barth made a motion to approve the resolution. Mrs. Gaffuri Doesschate seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

Final Vote Canvass

The final vote canvass, certified by the Board Clerk was presented for approval. Ms Doesschate made a motion to approve the final vote canvass. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

Discussion followed relative to the confusion voters experienced due to the problems involving the post cards informing affected voters that their voting locations had been changed. The vendor was given specific direction that these post cards were to be mailed the week before the vote. The post cards were not mailed, causing confusion for those voters. The vendor offered apologies. However, given that the mistake was discovered the day of the vote, there was little that could be done to rectify the situation. The vendor took full responsibility in terms of this mishap being their responsibility.

The board voted unanimously (5-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Audit Committee met and discussed ongoing audits. The committee received updated information. The IRS audit has been completed. The initial estimate of charges against the district in terms of additional taxes to be paid was in excess of \$2 million. The figure was reduced to \$89,000, due to the efforts of the personnel in the business office.

The Office of the State Controller's Audit is ongoing. A meeting is scheduled later this week for an update of their review. This was not the exit interview. This audit is expected to go on for some time.

The committee also discussed the bonding that the district will be doing for the BANS and permanent bonding in the future.

The Audit also talked about looking at internal controls to make certain that the district has procedures in place to avoid the issues identified in the IRS audit in the future.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Based on earlier discussions this evening, a request for information related to professional development at the high school level was requested as a future agenda item. Board members were in agreement with the request.

Based on information the board received during public comment, a request for information/discussion related to the SURR Report for Philip Livingston Magnet Academy; update of plans for the alternative education (TOPS) Program that was built in the approved budget and information on the suspension process were also requested for a future agenda. An additional request was made to have the suspension process provided in written form for discussion. Board members were in agreement with the request.

Public comment earlier this evening also included a request for information related to the Contract for Excellence and the opportunity for public input. The superintendent advised plans are still in development and will be shared with the board and community as soon as plans are finalized. Board members were in agreement with the request.

Public comment has also included the start time and the busing situation at the high school. A request for these items to be placed on a future agenda for discussion was also made. The superintendent advised the district is locked in to the new start times based on completed schedule planning. A request that these two items go together as a future agenda item was made. Board members were in agreement with the request.

Adjournment

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.