

# **PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION**

**March 7, 2006**

**7:00 p.m.**

**Albany High School**

**PRESENT:** Edward Brown, President  
Teneka Frost, Vice President  
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary  
William Barnette  
Judy Doesschate  
Susan Kushner (11:30 p.m.)

Dr. Eva Joseph  
Jeffrey Honeywell  
Terrance White  
Joseph Dragone  
Kathleen Wetmore  
Linda Jackson-Chalmers

**Excused:** Jackie Jenkins-Cox

## **Call to Order:**

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:15 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Brown welcomed the members of the audience and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting.

## **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Joseph highlighted the agenda for the meeting with respect to the budget development process. Dr. Joseph noted the district is currently engaged in budget development and as such there are a number of important issues before the Board for discussion as the district moves forward with the 2006-2007 budget development process.

## **STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT**

The student representative was not present. There was no report.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

1. Deborah Brown-Grant addressed the Board relative to the alternative educational plan.
2. Sandra Graham addressed the Board relative to the safe school initiatives.
3. Janice Mwapaga addressed the Board relative to the alternative educational plan.
4. Anne Pope addressed the Board relative to the alternative educational plan.
5. Veronica Lewis addressed the Board relative to Reality Check, a smoking prevention program that works to eliminate cigarette advertisements in periodicals distributed in schools.
6. Muhammad Abdullah addressed the Board relative to student safety issues and parental involvement.
7. Bob Fullam addressed the Board relative to school safety.
8. Carolyn Keefe addressed the Board relative to swing space.
9. Bea Landers addressed the Board relative to metal detectors.
10. Mark Mishler addressed the Board relative to school safety.
11. Leroy Graham addressed the Board relative to the alternative education plan.

**ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS**

Mr. Brown presented Routine Consent Items including Proceedings of Meetings for February 7, 2006 and February 16, 2006, Retirements/Resignations, Terminations, Leaves of Absence, Transfers, Appointments (Regular Substitutes, Part-time, Miscellaneous, Coaching (Winter 2005-2006), Civil Service, Emergency Conditional Appointments), Attendance at Conferences, Treasurer's Report, Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Budget Status Report, Real Property Tax Adjustments, Extracurricular Activity Clubs, Committee on Special Education, Subcommittee on Special Education, Committee on Pre-K Special Education, Resolution to Appoint Inspectors for the School Budget Vote, Resolution for Voter Registration Date, Resolution to Approve Date for the Public Hearing and Budget Notice, Resolution for Budget Vote Canvass and Contracts for Grants (Harbridge Consulting Group). Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the routine consent items as listed. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

Mr. Barnette set aside Coaching Appointments, Budget Transfers under \$10,000 and Extracurricular Activity Clubs. Ms. Frost set aside Terminations. Ms. Kushner set aside Contracts.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve routine consent items absent those set aside.

Ms. Frost made a motion to approve terminations. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion.

The Board voted 5 ayes and 1 abstention to approve the motion.

Ms. Frost abstained.

Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the coaching appointments. Ms. Frost seconded the motion.

The Board voted 5 ayes and 1 abstention to approve coaching appointments.

Mr. Barnette abstained.

Mr. Brown presented Budget Transfers Under \$10,000. Following discussion relative to upkeep of uniforms for security staff, Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve Budget Transfers Under \$10,000. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Brown presented the Extracurricular Activity Club listing for approval. Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Following discussion Mr. Barnette asked that the list of terminated clubs be removed from the motion. Ms. Doesschate accepted a friendly amendment to table the terminated clubs pending additional information.

The Board voted 5 ayes and 1 opposed to approve the motion as amended.

Mr. Brown presented the Harbridge Consulting Group Contract for approval. Ms. Kushner made a motion to approve the contract. Ms. Frost seconded the motion. Following discussion Mr. Brown called the vote.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

**INFORMATION ITEM**

**Lottery Process**

Dr. Joseph advised this item is being presented at the Board's request. The district has conducted lotteries for the Magnet Schools for a number of years. The lottery for middle school enrollment was implemented last year that applied to North Albany Academy and Myers Middle School. Mr. White advised Mr. Joseph White, the district's lottery consultant previously discussed the lottery process for the middle schools with the Board in terms of how the lottery is structured. Mr. White presented a comprehensive review of the lottery process for middle school enrollment, which included the parameters that were used in the process, demographic information, attendance zone, sibling preference information and outreach efforts. Following discussion a suggestion was made to post lottery information on the district website.

**FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT**

**Action Items Related to the Facilities Project**

**Approval of Change Orders**

Dr. Joseph presented change orders for Myers Middle School, Montessori Magnet Academy, North Albany Academy, School 16, School 18 and Schuyler Achievement Academy for approval. Mr. Barnette made a motion for approval. Ms. Kushner seconded the motion.

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

**YMCA Easement**

Mr. Brown presented a resolution to approve easements for the sidewalks at North Albany Academy. Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the resolution. Ms. Kushner seconded the motion. Following discussion the YMCA Easement will be revised to include a hold harmless clause. Mr. Brown called the vote on the motion, which will include the hold harmless clause.

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

**Furniture Fixtures and Equipment (FF&E) Bids for School 16 and School 18.**

Mr. Brown presented the resolution to approve resolution to award bids for furniture, fixtures and equipment. Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the resolution for School 18. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

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

Mr. Gifford noted the figure for the School 16 bid award was not received in time for this evening's meeting. Therefore, Mr. Gifford requested that this item be tabled pending additional information.

**ACTION ITEMS**

**Alternate Education Program**

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the Alternative Education Program being presented this evening for approval. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion. Dr. Joseph advised staff has been working very diligently to insure that many of the questions presented by board members have been answered. The district sees this plan as a new opportunity for alternative education for students in terms of opportunity fulfillment as opposed to consequence. It is a new endeavor that is being wholeheartedly embraced by UAlbany at this juncture with respect to the Educational Alliance and the adoption of Albany High and recognizing the success of our students here, seeing it as their civic responsibility to assist the district with its efforts to provide more successful opportunities for students and helping the district to develop and work through a number of variables related to the program.

Dr. Joseph advised in consideration of this program the district looked at doing something different that held a higher level of expectation, taking advantage of the collaborations the district has with universities and colleges in the area. The program is geared for students, who have not had a successful experience in the present high school setting, who would benefit from individualized attention, rather than an alternative in some of the existing sights, to a program that has some exclusivity to it. Dr. Joseph noted the district has maintained a level of high expectation, doing something different and providing an opportunity for students who have not traditionally experienced success in our school environment. Dr. Joseph noted the district is looking forward to this endeavor and the potential it provides for alternatives for student for whom the traditional program doesn't provide the necessary support to address other issues that they bring to school that sometimes get in the way of learning.

Dr. Joseph advised the district has received a very positive response in discussing this alternative to parents. The district continues to work with the university partners to be sure that it is a quality program that will address learning needs as opposed to traditional alternatives.

Mr. Dragone described the program which would create two satellite school experiences in locations outside of the district facilities that would provide 5.5 hours of academic programs that focuses on meeting the state learning standards, social work with an incentive and motivation component, career coaching, access to academic and related facilities such as the library, athletic facilities and other student enrichment opportunities. Staffing of these programs would include attendance officer. Students would have available guidance counselor support, technological support, transportation, food service, parent aides and interaction with the higher education community such as graduate students, faculty members and staff. Mr. Dragone also addressed parental involvement and the criteria involved in selecting students who would be participating in this program. Following a lengthy discussion, Mr. Brown called for a vote on the motion.

The Board voted (5 ayes, 0 nays and 1 abstention) to approve the motion.

Mr. Barnette abstained based on the number of unanswered questions.

### **DISCUSSION ITEM**

#### **2006-2007 Budget Development**

Dr. Joseph advised the Board would receive information related to the development of the budget. Dr. Joseph advised the Board would be receiving a recap of the budget initiatives with a connection to the cost estimates. Dr. Joseph noted as the district moves toward preparing the draft budget, the board needs to keep in mind that every increase has an impact in terms of building the budget. Dr. Joseph advised the district would continue to look at programs that may not be as efficient or effective as they need to be as a means of determining programs that will remain in the budget and new programs that will be added.

Ms. Wetmore reviewed a listing of new initiatives, followed by a review of the costs connected to these initiatives, individually listed as core strategies, expanded strategies and enhanced strategies as they relate to the goals. Total cost of these initiatives is approximately \$1.6 million.

Ms. Wetmore also presented a listing of non-negotiable and/or mandated costs indicating and increase of \$19 million, which is 51.62% of the budget. Ms. Wetmore presented a cost comparison for charter schools for 2003-04, 2004-05 2005-06 and projected 2006-07. Charter school costs to the district, with full enrollment is estimated at \$18.2 million for 2006-07 compared to \$9.4 for 2005-06. Transportation is anticipated to increase approximately \$500,000 with the addition of 4 buses to the service. Ms. Wetmore also reviewed the retirement buyout costs totaling \$1.9 million.

Following discussion, Mr. Brown advised budget discussions would continue at the next meeting. Dr. Joseph advised discussion of these topics would be continue as the board reviews the draft budget. Dr. Joseph also encouraged board members to forward questions and concerns to staff prior to the next board meeting.

### **Resolution Regarding the Adoption of a 2006 Legislative Agenda**

Ms. Doesschate presented a resolution to approve a legislative agenda for the district related to items the district is seeking legislative support. The legislative agenda highlights the numerous challenges the district has that are unique to Albany in terms of the overall impact of charter schools, the comparatively low building aid and the fact that Albany has so much tax exempt land, all of which have a combined significant affect on the amount of state aid the district receives. Ms. Doesschate advised the resolution and agenda have been reviewed by the members of the Intergovernmental Committee. The goal of this document would be to use this specifically as items that the district would be looking to lobby for, as the superintendent and staff have done in the past, to look to obtain the support of the community in bringing this to the attention of the Legislature and the Governor's Office and also getting other organizations to help support legislative changes. Ms. Doesschate noted it is important to educate the public in general about the challenges the district is facing, especially the impact of charter schools on the school budget.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to adopt the resolution. Mrs. Kushner seconded the motion. Following discussion Mr. Brown called the vote.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the resolution.

Ms. Kushner left the meeting at 11:30 p.m.

## **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Audit Committee**

Ms. Frost advised the Audit Committee met and discussed the Budget & Educational Planning in terms of how this committee would function. Following discussion the Audit Committee agreed to keep the BEPC Committee, with a change in the structure for maximum utilization in addressing budget issues. Ms. Frost advised the plan is to keep the three members and assign them a task of examining charter school enrollment trends, with Ms. Wetmore, that would help the district better identify budget implications for this year. The members would be asked to do a quick turn-around in order to have them report to the Board at the March 16<sup>th</sup> meeting relative to their findings. Long term, following this year's budget cycle, the membership would be reviewed along with the charge to the committee.

Mrs. Gaffuri noted the Audit Committee also discussed the interaction of the Internal Auditor with the Board. Recommendation is that a district-wide risk assessment should be presented in July following the budget, looking at any significant changes from the outfall of the budget. The second report would be presented following the audit report in October, possibly mid-year.

**BOARD MEMBER ITEMS**

Ms. Doesschate advised she attended celebrations at Myers Middle School and Sheridan Preparatory Academy that were both wonderful celebrations that included parents and teachers.

Mr. Barnette thanked Ms. Wetmore, who worked with Mr. Barnette's office to secure donations of furniture and equipment for the district estimated at a value of \$8,000.

Mr. Brown advised he also attended Myers and as the school liaison. Mr. Brown also noted he attended the celebration at School 18.

Mr. Brown advised he received a letter from Alan Chartock, President and CEO of WAMC Northeast Public Radio, complimenting students at Albany High School who recently won the WAMC Youth Media Project Student Town Meeting. Mr. Brown advised he would pass on the letter to fellow Board Members.

**Adjournment**

There being no further business, Ms. Doesschate made a motion to convene into Executive Session to discuss particular personnel. Ms. Frost seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 11:55 p.m. Mr. Brown advised the Board would not be reconvening in public session.

Catherine L. Cutting  
Clerk of the Board