

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 19, 2006

Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology

7:00 P.M.

PRESENT: Edward Brown, President
Teneka Frost, Vice President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Judy Doesschate
Jackie Jenkins-Cox
Susan Kushner
Dr. Eva Joseph
Terrance White
Kathleen Wetmore
Joseph Dragone
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Chris Langois - Counsel

ABSENT: William Barnette

Call to Order:

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joseph announced the formation of a Youth Safety Task Force Initiative, in conjunction with the Albany Police Department, which will include school administrators, teachers, parents and numerous community leaders. The task force will work on developing initiatives to aggressively improve safety in and around City schools and stop the growth of gangs. The Task Force will address ways that police and school administrators, with other community groups, can influence young people both in and outside schools to deter behavior resulting in incidents of violence. The Task Force will also evaluate means to strengthen the school district's existing program to curb gang activity and to reduce the potential for growth in gangs, both inside and outside of schools. The Task Force will be co-chaired by Dr. Joseph and Chief of Police James Tuffey. Dr. Joseph noted she is delighted that this Task Force will be coming together and that she has received an overwhelmingly enthusiastic response from the leaders in the community that have been approached to participate on this Task Force. Dr. Joseph noted the Task Force would be meeting sometime within the next several weeks to collaborate and find solutions and a greater level of understanding of doing the best we can for the youth of our community.

Dr. Joseph also noted that at each school site, each school should have its own school safety committee. Dr. Joseph noted it is critical that there be principal and teacher collaboration so that the real voice of the school can be heard. Dr. Joseph noted as those committees are formed, via direction from her, in terms of how they solicit their membership, there should also be consideration to include parents, other staff members and students as well. Dr. Joseph noted she met with the APSTA Executive Council and talked with some teachers about their concerns about school safety. Dr. Joseph noted, based on the sign-up sheet this evening, there are a number of teachers present this evening that want to talk to the topic of school safety. Dr. Joseph noted it is important that the district start to think, in each school, about what can be done to sustain a safe and orderly environment.

Dr. Joseph advised a second important topic of discussion this evening is the swing space for Hackett Middle School. Dr. Joseph acknowledged that this is a very important conversation and that any solution needs to be thoughtful, deliberate and carefully viewed and implemented. Dr. Joseph noted Mr. Dragone and Mr. White have done a tremendous outreach effort, garnering feedback. Dr. Joseph acknowledged that the questions that may come about as a result of this conversation and presentation is very important in terms of insuring that we are being responsive in moving forward with yet another aspect of our facilities plan.

Dr. Joseph noted the district started the year off with a bang in terms of coming back to school, acknowledging all of the State assessments that occurred during this month. Last week, this week and on through the end of January students are participating in the 3 through 8 English Language Arts assessments, the first time for the New York State Assessments. The last week of January is devoted to Regents. It is a very important time for all students and staff. It is the opportunity for us to demonstrate that we have a productive educational program for our students.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Leslie Kellam addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
2. Mark Mishler addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
3. Bernie Huss addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
4. Jan Parmalee addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
5. Al Salinero addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
6. Donna Potterfield addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
7. Todd Benton addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
8. Laura Ha addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
9. Nolene Smith addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
10. Mario Arthur addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.
11. David Petersen addressed the Board relative to the swing space plan.

Mr. Brown advised public comments for non-agenda items would be permitted later in the meeting. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to extend the public comment period for an additional 30 minutes to accommodate those in the audience who wish to speak on school safety. Ms. Kushner seconded the motion.

The Board voted 5 ayes and 1 opposed. Mr. Brown was opposed.

The following individuals spoke on school safety.

1. Bill Ritchie
2. Mary Duggan
3. Nancy Mosceo
4. Larry Sloman
5. Lia Farrington
6. Jennifer Justice
7. Marie Taber

Mr. Brown called for a motion to amend the agenda to include an action item for approval of a resolution on Eminent Domain. Ms. Doesschate made a motion to amend the agenda. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Item Related to the Facilities Plan

Resolution on Eminent Domain

Mr. Brown called for a motion to approve the resolution seeking eminent domain for property adjacent to Philip Livingston Magnet Academy. Ms. Frost made a motion for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Mr. Brown read the following resolution:

RESOLUTION

Eminent Domain

WHEREAS, the Board of Education of the Albany City School District (“Board”) wishes to acquire an interest in certain real property located adjacent to the existing Philip Livingston Magnet Academy and commonly known as 600, 604, 608 and 612 N. Manning Boulevard, City and County of Albany, for development and use for educational purposes; and

WHEREAS, Education Law Sections 2511 and 2512 require that the District undertake certain steps prior to acquiring and designating property for education use, whether by purchase or by eminent domain;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby directs the Superintendent, in conjunction with the District’s counsel, to initiate those steps required under law and necessary for the Board to acquire an interest in the subject property, including the submission of the proposed designation of the site to the Albany City Planning Commission for its recommendation, engaging the owner of the properties in negotiations for its purchase, and such other steps as may otherwise be necessary.

Following a lengthy discussion, Mr. Brown called the vote.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Mr. Brown advised the chair would entertain a motion to move the Information Item, #5 on the agenda to #3. Ms. Kushner made a motion to amend the agenda. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

INFORMATION ITEM

Swing Space Plan for Hackett Middle School

Dr. Joseph advised the board would hear a presentation on the swing space plan for Hackett Middle School. Dr. Joseph noted to parents and community residents present that the district appreciates their support as it moves through the implementation project. Dr. Joseph noted the district is aware that it has not been without some bumps and bruises. Everyone has stayed the course and this has been certainly a difficult challenge for us. Dr. Joseph noted that while the district had planned to house two schools accommodated at Philip Schuyler, it became apparent that Hackett would not fit in Schuyler with School 16, and then with the acceleration of the facilities project, it was difficult with School 19 as well. Dr. Joseph noted the district weighed many, many variables and many schemes and options and tried to find what the district felt met the goal in terms of sustaining programs for our students. Dr. Joseph noted Mr. White and Mr. Dragone have made a yeoman’s effort to get out to every PTA in the community to garner

feedback. Dr. Joseph re-emphasized that as the district starts to put this option forward, the concerns and comments expressed this evening have been heard and the district will continue to consider those as part of the deliberation. Dr. Joseph noted there would be no decision on this issue this evening.

Mr. White began his presentation by noting the changes in the facilities plan from the original plan and assumptions such as keeping middle school students separate from elementary students during the swing space; maintaining program integrity; keeping 8th grade stable; phasing out Philip Livingston as a middle school and phasing in Pre K – 8 buildings as needed. Mr. White reviewed the timeline for 2006, 2007 and 2008 relative to the need for swing space and the present interim middle school student redistribution plan along with present middle school enrollment. Mr. White also reviewed the considerations for swing space plan development indicating the pros and cons, recommendations for swing space for 2006-2007 and 2007-2008 and the recommended middle school configuration for 2008-2009. Based on discussions with the various PTA groups, Mr. White reviewed the pros and cons and questions from the community relative to the recommended plan. Following discussion, Mr. Brown advised this item would be placed on the February 7, 2006 agenda for additional discussion and possible action.

Mrs. Gaffuri and Ms. Kushner left the meeting at 10:00 p.m.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Discussion Item Related to the Facilities Project

Collins & Scoville Architects Agreement

Pike Heery Contract Revision

Mr. Gifford advised the Collins & Scoville agreement contained an agreed upon schedule of pricing and fees based on a sliding scale relative to the value of construction. The District had some previous work authorized by the Board on the School 19 project, like all projects in the beginning of the plan, along with program studies. In this particular case, most of the work in the program studies applied directly to the contract drawing process and the District is getting a credit for that amount in the work. Armlin & Damon has negotiated this contract, which falls within the 9.25%. It's actually less than that on the schedule. It is a very standard type of agreement.

Mr. Gifford advised the Pike Heery agreement goes back to very early in the plan, prior to Mr. Gifford's arrival, helping to prepare the referendum items. The District entered into an agreement within approximately four months of Mr. Gifford's arrival in early 2003, based on the schedules and budgets that the District approved through the referendum process. Like all the consultant agreements, i.e. Armlin & Damon, Pike Heery, it is a service provider. The facilities staff is few in number with much of the work provided by consultants on an as needed basis. The District assigns personnel to the jobs. Mr. Gifford noted the District assigns specific responsibilities for them and then the District budgets to the job. Mr. Gifford advised as the District has revisited the plan, reshaped the budgets and reshaped the schedules, the scope of jobs has increased. The proposal before the Board this evening is a modification to the existing contract, including detail relative to revised schedules, the increase in the original scope of work and adjustments to staff. Mr. Gifford advised the increase of \$296,000 includes management services for the completion of the construction of Schools 16, 18 and the renovation of School 19, repairs at TOAST and Giffen. Mr. Gifford advised the completion of these projects is scheduled for September 2008. Mr. Brown advised these two contracts would be presented on February 7, 2006 for approval.

MWBE Report

Mr. Wendell Gray reviewed the EEO and MBE/MWBE Summary Report for January 2006 is actually the workforce participation of minority and women. The District goal is 10% for each of these groups. Mr. Grey advised the average total is 14.05% minority and 2.93% women. Mr. Grey advised he continues to work with the unions to employ more women in the union. The total goal is 20%. Presently that figure is 16.98%. Mr. Grey advised the MBE/MWBE enterprise figures and 8.29% for minority and 8.60% for women, which is slightly below the District goal of 10% for each. The total goal is 20% with the present average at 16.89%. Mr. Grey advised these figures are expected to increase as the construction of School 16 and School 18 continue. Mr. Grey advised he would be meeting with contractors, along with Mr. Gifford to work with them in an attempt to increase these goals. Mr. Grey also noted there has been an increase in MBE/MWBE contractors attending pre-bid meetings, indicating an increased interest in participation.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

Parent Compact Policy

Dr. Joseph presented the revised Parent Compact Policy (Title I Parental Involvement Policy # 1900). Dr. Joseph advised this policy is required as part of the legislation that garners funds that come to the District through Title I. The District is required to have a compact with parents, which guides a level of parental involvement in the Title I planning process for schools that are targeted for Title I. Dr. Joseph advised the Policy Committee has reviewed the policy, which has also been developed in collaboration with the policy service provided by NYSSBA and Ms. Garrah, Director of Instruction, who oversees the Title I Grant. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers noted the major components of the policy include statement that describe how the District will involve parents on both the school and District level in being involved in their child's education. The policy also describes how the District will provide the coordination, technical assistance and other support necessary to assist parents in participating in the process. The policy also includes how the District would conduct an annual evaluation of the content in collaboration with parents. Following discussion Ms. Jackson-Chalmers requested that suggestions for changes be directed to her attention. Approval of this policy will be on the February 7, 2006 agenda.

Voting Locations

Board of Registration

Dr. Joseph advised as part of the planning process for the budget vote in May, the Board is required to approve a number of resolutions. This evening the Board of Registration membership and the voting locations are being presented for discussion. Ms. Cutting advised the approval of the Board of Registration is one step in the process. Ms. Cutting noted with the new schools up and running, the District has been able to eliminate a number of non-school sites for the coming vote, i.e. Sheridan Prep, North Albany, Montessori and Eagle Point. Discussion followed relative to a change in the voting location for the 1st Ward. Ms. Cutting will explore that possibility prior to the voting locations being presented to the Board for approval. Ms. Doesschate also offered a number of suggestions to encourage people to vote, possibly a tour of the new schools as people come in to vote and the possibility of signing up volunteers for the Gear Up Program. Dr. Joseph advised these suggestions would be explored with cabinet members and principals.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Brown advised the Academic Committee did not meet. Ms. Doesschate advised the Intergovernmental Committee met. However, there is nothing to report at this time.

Mr. Brown advised the Policy Committee. The agenda included the Parent Involvement Policy, the role of the School Liaisons, which is to become familiar with assigned schools and whenever possible attend school events and activities. By focusing on two or three schools each member will gain a deeper relationship with the assigned school and community. However, the Committee recommends that the schools extend, as they do presently, invitations for school activities to all Board Members, with the understanding that the liaison will likely be attending these events. Mr. Brown distributed a draft letter from Board Members to the school principals identifying the school liaison. Mr. Brown asked board members to review the letter. Mr. Brown advised the members of the committee continue in the process of policy review with NYSSBA and make recommendations to the Board for approval. The policy review process is anticipated to span from January 2006 to June 2007 in three separate sections.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Ms. Doesschate noted there are a number of significant issues in the Governor's budget proposal in terms of cap on school budgets. Bond votes would be required to go to voters once a year on the school budget vote in May. There is also a provision that would not allow a re-vote, which means if the school budget is not passed on the first vote, the District does not have an opportunity to conduct a second vote and the District would go to contingency. The Governor is proposing \$6 million be allocated for the development of charter schools, with special emphasis on technology and science.

Ms. Frost suggested that at a future board meeting, prior to budget discussions, the Board talk about alternative education and funding for alternative education.

Mr. Brown noted he was present at TOAST for the Martin Luther King celebration, which was well attended by the community.

Mr. Brown noted in his capacity as Co-Chair of the Black History Contest, the winners have been announced. They will be featured on TV during the month of February. Mr. Brown advised 8 of the 28 winners are from the Albany School District. Mr. Brown shared the list of winners, along with a listing of the dates when these spots will be on television.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Frost made a motion to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board