

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

February 15, 2007

7:00 p.m.

Eagle Point Elementary School

PRESENT: Teneka Frost, President
William Barnette, Vice President
Wayne Morris, Secretary
Mark Barth
Judy Doesschate
Barbara Gaffuri

Dr. Eva Joseph
Terry White
Dr. Joseph Dragone
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Kathy Wolverton

Absent/Excused: Jackie Jenkins-Cox
Kathleen Wetmore

Call to Order:

Ms. Frost called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. Ms. Frost welcomed the members of the audience and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joseph acknowledged the efforts of Mr. Catalfamo and the operations and maintenance staff for their hard work in clearing the school properties during the recent snowstorm. Dr. Joseph noted with the two snow days earlier this week, two days would be eliminated from the Memorial Day weekend. School will be in session on Thursday, May 24, 2007 and Tuesday, May 29, 2007. Dr. Joseph advised district schools would be closed next week for the winter recess. District offices will be closed on Monday, February 19, 2007, for the President's Day holiday.

Dr. Joseph advised the agenda includes a presentation, focusing on budget planning and presentation of proposals and initial concepts on middle school and high school restructuring. Dr. Joseph noted the district is very enthusiastic about the proposal that is being put forward for the first time for the board's consideration, looking forward to discussions as the district moves forward with restructuring.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Robert Reilly offered congratulations for the positive facilities plan referenda vote.
2. Bernadette Phillips addressed the board regarding neighborhood schools and a 6th grade program at Eagle Point Elementary School.

INFORMATION ITEM

Middle School and High School Planning

Dr. Joseph noted there are well-known challenges the district has in the middle school and high school programs and the district has set forward some very distinct goals. One, eliminating the achievement gap and second, the district knows that it needs to be very ambitious in terms of improving achievement at the middle and high school levels. Dr. Joseph noted those are big changes and the district has been thinking very boldly, thinking about wide-scaled change.

Dr. Joseph advised this is the first of a number of discussions relative to about the middle schools and high schools. The district needs to start to provide a concept proposal to work from to generate discussions, which is the intent of this evening's presentation. Dr. Joseph continued with a problem statement, remedy, advantages and other aspects of planning. Dr. Joseph also noted that throughout these discussions, the district is laying the groundwork for planning to occur from this point forward through the 2007-2008 school year. Dr. Joseph advised the concept to be presented this evening addresses elements of organization, instruction, accountability and innovation. Dr. Joseph proceeded with the presentation of Holistic Program Planning, complete re-engineering needs to impact all aspects of school operations, including staffing and enrollment to focus on strengthened academic programs, innovative instructional practices, student support programs and opportunities, school-family-community relationships and embedded professional growth opportunities.

Dr. Joseph advised enrollment figures call for two small middle schools and a K-8 program in the district, which allows a unique opportunity to innovatively re-engineer programs to provide two premier Magnet choices for middle level education. Proposed Magnet Themes are Humanities and Fine Arts and Research Science Technology with all program aspects to be developed from the ground floor. Both schools will be based on offering Pre-AP opportunities to all students. Dr. Joseph advised Hackett Middle School is presently in swing space and in September 08 will enter a fully reconstructed school, which allows an opportunity to develop and implement a new middle level program. Dr. Joseph advised Dr. Dragone would be presenting information about re-engineering the program for two small middle schools for 08-09, Myers and Hackett as potentially Magnet Schools in order to more ambitiously achieve a successful result for our middle school students. For the high school, the re-engineering concept centers on the development of small learning communities as academies that would include capitalizing and expanding on this year's development of the Nano High Partnership with UAlbany College of Nano Scale Science & Engineering as a starting place. Dr. Joseph noted the possibility of the Philip Livingston building being utilized as a site for this academy. Dr. Joseph advised there are many other variables that support the development of a broad-based plan that targets comprehensive prospective regarding the middle schools and high schools.

Dr. Joseph advised collaboration is most important as the district works through this process, bringing parents, community, faculty and staff and program partners into the concept development. Dr. Joseph advised meetings with faculty and staff members have been scheduled. Also, community groups have been invited to an information session on February 26th at Myers Middle School.

Dr. Dragone advised having two middle schools in the program creates the opportunity of having two premier Magnet programs, Humanities and Fine Arts and Research Science and Technology. Dr. Dragone reviewed current successful practices and other programs and practices to build leverage for strengthening the middle school program. Dr. Dragone continued the presentation defining cornerstones to re-engineering to leverage student achievement through development (professional growth), design (curriculum and instructional) and delivery. Dr. Dragone advised the program is holistic, involving the entire program. Dr. Dragone reviewed the middle school concept with two Magnet schools, proposed themes routed in professional growth, development, strong curricular design and strong pedagogical and instructional practices.

Dr. Dragone reviewed the purpose of this holistic facility and program planning is to focus on organizational, programmatic and instructional perspectives to offer broader, more durable preparation for high education and career development and the goals of the program, which include higher academic achievement for all students with a 100% four-year graduation rate and the elimination of the achievement gap. The approach is to set up academies at Albany High School and Philip Livingston based on career clusters and student thematic interest, applying the programmatic concepts of design, delivery and development. Dr. Dragone gave a detailed review of the proposed program at Philip Livingston through the creation of an “Academy of Nanoscale Science and Engineering” with the principles of the “Nano Constellation” as the thread for all coursework through collaboration with the College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering at UAlbany. Dr. Dragone also presented a potential program pathway and concluded his presentation with a project phasing schedule and 15 critical components for the implementation of career clusters.

Following discussion, Dr. Joseph advised continued discussion of this item would be scheduled on the next agenda for additional discussion.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2007-2008 Budget Development Program

Dr. Joseph advised in terms of a starting place in developing a budget, it is very helpful to identify specific strategies the district has in place and what things the district is looking toward for next year. Dr. Joseph noted it really is an educational plan that is supported by budgetary resources. Dr. Joseph advised the budget goals drive objectives and in order to accomplish the objectives there are program that will be continued for next year as well as new initiatives. The difficult part comes with the actual cost of programs and services and the bottom line in terms of budget. At this point Dr. Joseph presented the budget goals identified and the programs that the district has in terms of sustaining and what is identified as new program initiatives, always thinking about fiscal responsibility. Dr. Joseph reviewed the budget goals and the current program strategies and new initiatives that would support each of those goals. Dr. Joseph also noted other considerations such as unfunded mandates, charter schools and uncontrollable costs, i.e. health care, debt service, energy, transportation, tax certioraris, employee/teacher retirement.

Public Comment

Bill Davis addressed the board relative to offering parenting classes through the district's adult education program.

Voting Locations

Dr. Joseph presented the listing of voting locations for the May 2007 budget vote, noting that a more comprehensive discussion on this issue would take place for the 2008 school vote. Dr. Joseph advised the board would be acting on this item at the next meeting.

Following discussion related to future voting locations, a suggestion was made to form an ad hoc committee to address this issue. Ms. Frost asked if board members are interested in serving on this committee. Dr. Barth offered to serve. Ms. Doesschate recommended that community members be invited to serve on this committee. Ms. Teneka advised the board would follow up on this issue. Locations for the May 2007 vote will be presented at the next meeting for action.

Policy Review

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers presented Policy #6900 Sale and Disposal of School Property for discussion. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers noted this is a required policy that emanates from the Audit Committee. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers noted a review of similar policies from other school districts along with the sample policy provided by NYSSBA were part of the development of this particular policy. Upon review by the Policy Committee there were adjustments recommended that are indicated in bold text. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers also noted the policy was also reviewed by counsel. Following discussion, Ms. Frost advised the policy would be presented at the next meeting for action.

2007-2008 School Calendar

Ms. Frost presented the 2007-2008 School Calendar. Dr. Joseph advised the district has a committee in place that reviews the school calendar annually. Dr. Joseph noted the calendar reflects a Superintendent's Conference in March next year that will coincide with the National Urban Alliance Conference, scheduled to take place locally. Dr. Joseph advised that by designating a Superintendent's Conference Day, all teachers would be able to attend this conference. Ms. Jackson-Chalmers advised this calendar mirrors past calendars. The school year appears to be longer, going almost to the end of June. The challenge was to make sure that the allotted contractual days in the calendar, taking into consideration staff development, superintendent's conference days, maintaining the parent-teacher conference day that was so successful this year, with the additional days due to leap year and a holiday that falls on a weekend. Following discussion a suggestion was made that a longer school year should be discussed in preparation for contract negotiations with bargaining units.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to extend the discussion for five minutes. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to extend the discussion.

Following discussion as to the contents of this particular school calendar schedule, Dr. Joseph clarified that this calendar is the school operations calendar. A second calendar, events and activities calendar that is developed during the summer would contain some of the information being brought forward this evening, i.e. registration dates, open houses, etc. Ms. Frost advised this item would be placed on the next agenda for action.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

None

Adjournment

Mr. Barnette made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board