



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

February 14, 2008

7:00 p.m.

Eagle Point Elementary School

PRESENT:

Teneka Frost, President	Dr. Eva Joseph
William Barnette, Vice President	Dr. Joseph Dragone
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary	James Mathews
Dr. Mark Barth	Linda Jackson Chalmers
Judy Doesschate (left at 10:30 p.m.)	
Melissa Mackey	
Wayne Morris	

Absent/Excused:

None

Call to Order:

Ms. Frost called the meeting to order at 7:40 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 introduced Faith Ann Takes and Dr. Vlad Dopogolov, President and Vice President respectively of Mildred Elley. Dr. Joseph advised the board would be hearing information regarding a collaborative effort between the district and Mildred Elley this evening.

- Board members received a copy of the book "We Beat the Street". The book was chosen by the Diversity Council as the district book read. Reaction from staff about the activity and the book selection has been very positive. APSUE has committed to providing 100 copies for the district, which will be distributed to the schools. Thank you to Nancy Viggiani and the APSUE Unit for that contribution and the Diversity Council.
- Playgrounds were not provided for within the budget for the construction projects for the new and newly reconstructed schools. Securing playgrounds has taken different forms at different schools throughout the project. Based on information, the district will be looking at how playgrounds have evolved and how they have been financed. Discussions with principals of the schools wanting playgrounds will take place to determine what kinds of assistance and support can be provided in that endeavor before they begin fund raising.
- Strategic Planning – yesterday and the day before, action team training took place. The action teams are not fully formed. There are still opportunities for participation. Recommendations for potential members will be provided to the co-leaders to insure there is quality representation on those teams. At the end of the two days the group did some

reflection in terms of where do we go from here. One of the things that came forward was the question of whether or not there could be intermittent times built in to provide information to the community. The consultants will be thinking of that and offering some suggestions for communicating progress in the process as the district moves along. Dates were also established as checkpoints for the work. The full strategic planning team will meet with the action team members on August 6, 2008. This is a tentative date for a full day workshop. That information will be forwarded to the full strategic planning team to avoid conflicts. The district newsletter recently mailed to households in the district contains comprehensive information about the strategic plan.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Bill Davis addressed the board relative to the importance of Eagle Point Elementary School in the community.
2. Jim Lembo addressed the board relative comments at the last board meeting relative to the Delaware Community School.
3. Christina Wiley addressed the board relative to the importance of Eagle Point Elementary School in the community.

INFORMATION ITEM

Extended Day/School Violence Prevention (ESD/SVP) Program Project

Dr. Joseph advised the extended day/school violence prevention programs have been funded for a number of year with federal funds, close to a half million dollars and it has been the understanding of the district that as of June 30, 2008, funding will be discontinued. Dr. Dragone advised the district is proceeding with budget planning based on funding being discontinued. The grant does provide funding for after school program. There have been additional funds carried over from the Century 21 Grant that are also expected to discontinue. Dr. Dragone reviewed a listing of 2007-2008 programs funded by these monies. Other related expenses include student I.D. badges; visitor badges and Americorps grant matching funds. Cost of programs for 2007-08 is \$546,690. Anticipated funds for 2008-2009 are \$624,002, which is an increase of \$77,312, including the \$20,000 Americorps Match. Dr. Dragone spoke about collaboration with higher education, Ms. Faith Ann Takes, President and Vlad Dopogolov of Empire Education, Mildred Elley and Austin School of Spa Technology spoke about opportunities offered by Mildred Elley and a partnership with Austin's School of Spa Technology providing a cosmetology program whereby students will be able to acquire credits toward state licensure.

- Is there a day component to this program? The program is not built as a day program for underclassmen. Students are either older student, not having met minimum credit requirements or upperclassmen.
- Is the recommendation to pick up all these programs? The recommendation will be that the district incur the cost of the extracurricular programs that are listed if the are to be continued.
- Have evaluations of these programs been conducted? Ongoing evaluation takes place.
- Are there circumstances where students who are interested in these programs would be barred from participation, i.e. behavior problems? The program focuses on students who are close to graduation and may need additional credits in order to graduate.
- Will students who participate in these programs be prepared to go on to other academic careers if they so choose? Yes. Graduation requirements do not change.
- Are these funds being discontinued due to poor outcome? Funding is term limited. Discontinued funding is not based on performance.

- What led to the decision to not continue this pool of funds available to New York State? Is this information available? This will be investigated.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

School Safety

Dr. Joseph introduced Ted Cook and Maxine Fantroy-Ford to assist in presenting information on School Safety in the district. Mr. Cook advised he continues to insure the security and a safe environment for children to learn with the focus primarily on the high school. As goes the high school, so goes the district. We are working toward being more proactive and prepared.

Collectively, the district has started to turn things around at the high school. Identification cards for all students and staff have been implemented. Students who do not have an I.D. card will not be allowed into the building. At this point there is 98% compliance with this initiative. Hall monitors, faculty and staff have been asked to be more engaging with students in terms of checking passes, eliminating loitering in the halls and establishing a quiet environment for learning. Utilizing resources by having an increased number of monitors in the cafeteria has reduced incidents during lunch periods. Meetings with the student body have taken place asking for cooperation. Letters were sent to parents advising them of what the district is trying to accomplish and what changes were taking place, asking for their cooperation also. The list of substitutes for hall monitors has been increased to accommodate daily absences. Security and safety is the responsibility of everyone.

- A meeting of PTSA brought forward issues regarding the disorderly environment that remains at the high school and the issue of suspended students coming back into school. How can the board assist in supporting needs at the high school? Hall monitors are no longer permitted to take lunch breaks during the lunch periods to insure appropriate coverage in the cafeteria. Post assignments have also been shifted during lunch times. We are working toward having mandatory post coverage to monitor video cameras. Also, hall monitors assist students back through the stairways from the cafeteria to avoid loitering in the stairways.

Dr. Joseph noted in terms of the response to students who present continuous disruptive or unruly behavior, it is essential that everyone is on the same page. The district, over the past few weeks has been having meetings. Discussion centered around the problems in terms of students individually and then when it comes to alternative for special types of program placements, it has to be student by student with the individual circumstances considered. Discussion also included the need for a transitional meeting or review during that period of time that emanates from the hearing when the student is suspended, to determine the problems the student is having and what is an appropriate placement. Ms. Ferlazzo has redefined the referral process.

- Cell phone use continues involving staff and students. Also, staff is not wearing uniforms. The district is in the process of insuring that everyone has the proper uniform. Substitutes will have armbands to identify them as security personnel. All hall monitors in all schools will have uniforms. Cell phone use by personnel and students needs to be monitored more closely.
- Do we have a group of students at the high school that despite all efforts they continue to present significant disruption to students that are there working to get their education? The concerns about needs that students might have or what is creating the environment are issues the district has to seriously address.
- Are students sent home when they forget their I.D.? Temporary badges were given out every day for the same students at times. Suspensions were implemented as the practice continued. Presently, the numbers are smaller.

Ms. Frost noted follow-up discussion on these issues will take in terms of services to students and looking at specialized needs and what the district is doing to meet those needs.

Additional public comment included the need for immediate intervention. Dr. Joseph noted that typically the suspension for fighting or any other type of disruptive behavior is one to five days. The district worked on increasing the capacity to five weeks it is an extended suspension with tutorial services after school for students, two different sights, ALC and Harriet Gibbons, providing the opportunity to relieve the high school of some of the disruptive and unruly students for an extended period of time to reduce some of the activity in the high school and at the same time give opportunity to sort through what the student's needs might be.

2008-2009 Budget Objectives and Strategies

Dr. Joseph gave a comprehensive review of programs and specific strategies as they relate to the budget goals established by the board, what is new, and other considerations, such as unfunded mandates, charter schools and uncontrollable costs.

- Has there been any discussion related to offering a Lacrosse Team at the high school. Dr. Joseph will discuss this with Ms. Ryan.
- What is the anticipated state funding? The district is expecting an increase. The exact amount will be presented with the first draft budget.

Ms. Frost advised budget development discussions would continue at future meetings.

Albany High School Local Assistance Plan

Ms. Frost presented the Albany High School Local Assistance Plan for discussion. Dr. Dragone advised Albany High School is a School Requiring Academic Progress (SRAP) based on performance of Students with Disabilities in ELA and Math. Ms. Fantroy-Ford, Mr. Bojanich and Mr. Kuntz gave a comprehensive review of the plan with an overview of goals and plans for moving the high school forward, addressing some of the needs of the students and refining some of the academic programs. Benchmark information and information related to AIS and remediation services will be presented in future budget discussions.

- Is there a reason for the high retention figures between 9th & 10th grade? It is not necessarily leaving, but a percentage of who might be moving through according to credit, what grade they are in. The figure represents various reasons for the decrease.
- In response to issues in the Math program. Mr. Dragone advised there were increased summer school classes for Math with the Math A Program. The move to Algebra is expected to resolve those issues. There will be budget items related to the implementation, including a Math text for Algebra and calculator costs. Dr. Dragone advised the district is required to supply calculators for all students during testing.
- What was the source of the 2976 figure for students in high school? This figure is representative of all students at the high school level.
- Has there been any thought in terms of configurations of spaces throughout the district? The group discussed current facilities and what could be done with those structures.

Voting Locations

Ms. Frost advised there has been an issue over time related to voter access to the district voting locations for the school vote. Last year the board convened an ad hoc committee to study this issue. The committee included Dr. Barth, Catherine Cutting, Kathy Wolverton and Teneka Frost. The group presented information and statistics relative to voter trends to the Common Council and asked for suggestions in changing the boundaries of the voting locations to accommodate voters. By law the district is permitted to change its voting locations by dividing defined election districts. Individual districts cannot be divided.

Ms. Cutting advised the intention going forward was to continue with the current number of 18 voting locations and to redefine the boundaries of the school election districts to facilitate voter access. Following the presentation to the Common Council, recommendations were reviewed and changes are being recommended for approval by the board. Changes will take place in 8 of the 18 voting locations. To accommodate increased numbers of voters additional inspectors and/or voting machines will be assigned to those locations.

St. Teresa's School has been secured to replace School 19 during renovations and at the recommendation of Mr. Calsolaro; the City Parks & Recreation Building will replace the former Montessori school building in the First Ward. Ms. Cutting outlined the voting locations on a map, indicating the location boundaries in various colors. Ms. Cutting advised the district is looking into how this information will be presented to the public to insure that everyone affected by these changes receives appropriate notification. Ms. Frost advised this item would be on the March 4th agenda for action.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

None

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

None

Adjournment

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 10:45 p.m.