



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
February 4, 2010
7:00 p.m.
Albany High School

PRESENT: Dan Egan, President
Judy Doesschate, Vice President
Rose Brandon, Secretary
Barbara Gaffuri
Melissa Mackey
Wayne Morris

Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Jeffrey Honeywell
Tresa Diggs
Bill Hogan
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Linda Rudnick

ABSENT: None

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance.
- Members of the audience were welcomed and thanked for taking the time to attend the meeting.
- The Mission Statement was read.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT.

Williams Andrews, Chair of the Elks Americanism Essay Contest introduced two of several winners of the essay contest, Isabella Cabuhat and Sofia Lesko. Students were asked to submit essays on the **American Dream, What Is It?** Ms. McNally, a district teacher, gave a brief overview of the collaboration between the Elks and the school district in this endeavor. Isabella and Sofia read their essays to those present.

Students Owen Daniels and Matthew Wu spoke in recognition of David Weiss, the Soccer Coach who won the Section II Coach of the Year Award. Mr. Weiss has served as the Albany High School Soccer Coach for the last three years. In that time he has led the team to its first sectional semi-final finish in 25 years and an undefeated regular season and daytime conference title. Congratulations to Mr. Weiss for his outstanding work.

Dr. Colucciello noted this evening's agenda includes information regarding the budget for the 2010-2011 school year. The district is facing over \$10 million in cuts. Today's economy calls for devastating cuts. The district has no choice. The board's responsibility is to bring forth a budget the community can support on May 18th. The district will do the best that it can for all students. Dr. Colucciello noted this will be a very difficult year for all school districts in New York State. There is the possibility of some light at the end of the tunnel, depending upon the legislature.

BOARD CANDIDATES

The district has received six letters of interest toward filling the vacant seat on the board as a result of the resignation of Dr. Mark Barth. The following candidates were given the opportunity to address the board in consideration of filling this seat:

1. Jennifer Hower
2. Susan Kushner
3. Edith Leet
4. James Lembo
5. Vincent Portirio
6. Barry Walston

The board will discuss the next steps in the process and advise the candidates accordingly.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Heather Spezburgh addressed the board regarding the Pre-K lottery, requesting that sibling preference be provided for her twin boys in the lottery process to allow for both children to attend the same school.
2. James Davis addressed the board regarding cultural differences of students that must be considered in educating students.
3. Annmarie Lippitt addressed the board regarding the impact music and art have on student performance and motivation.
4. Michael Karp addressed the board regarding the possible elimination of modified sports, noting that sports activities builds character.
5. Marlon Anderson addressed the board relative to the impact of Charter Schools on the district. Schools are the barometer of the City. The district must restore respect to Albany High School.
6. Frank Commisso addressed the board regarding rumors relative to closing Eagle Point Elementary School. Students in that school travels long distances from the Washington Avenue Extension area would be forced to travel longer distances to get to another school in Albany.
7. Alexandra Streznewski addressed the board, urging the administration to look beyond short the short term to the long term, educating the whole students with more than core subjects.
8. Alejandra Marriaga addressed the board regarding budget cuts, urging the district not to eliminate music programs
9. Alberto Marriaga addressed the board, speaking about how music has effected his education.
10. Belen Marriaga addressed the board, asking that the music programs continue in the schools.
11. Brian Steinmuller addressed the board regarding the rumors relative to closing Eagle Point Elementary, urging the district not to close the school. This school is the pillar of the community.

12. Ginnie Farrell addressed the board in support of continuing the Reading Recovery Program, noting how it has helped her son.

13. Donna Young addressed the board in support of the music programs. Her son is enthusiastically learning how to play the trumpet. Playing his trumpet has become a reward for him.

14. Grace Nichols addressed the board regarding opportunities to partner with other non-profit entities to continue enrichment programs for students.

15. Kristen Bonds addressed the board regarding the Pre-K lottery, requesting sibling preference for her children at Montessori Magnet School.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Ms. Addison spoke about the loss experienced by the student body as a result of the unfortunate passing of Ms. Kipkin. Ms. Kipkin was a very well respected teacher. Ms. Addison also spoke about the internal reconstruction of Albany High School and the importance of having students in the planning process. Students should have a voice. Ms. Addison spoke about disruptive students who impede the opportunity for learning by those students who want to learn. Teachers can't teach with the distraction.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change Orders

Change orders for Arbor Hill Elementary School, Giffen Memorial Elementary School and Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology were presented for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve change orders as presented. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Mr. McMordie provided clarification on a number of items.

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

Motion passed.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Routine Consent Items were presented as follow: Proceedings of Meetings (January 4, 2010 and January 21, 2010); Appointments (Civil Service, Regular Substitutes, Itinerant Substitute Teachers 2009-2010, Miscellaneous; Tutors 2009-2010; Coaching 2009-2010; Leave of Absence; Transfers, Resignation/Retirements; Positions Vacated, Correction; Agreement ACSD & Michelle Rodriquez; Field Trips, Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000; Budget Transfers over \$10,000; Revenue Status Report-12/31/09; Appropriation Status report-12/31/09; Real Property Tax Adjustments; Bid Award; Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund; Disposal of Assets; Health Services Contract (East Greenbush Common School District, Lansingburgh Central School District; Authorization to Enter Into Contracts; Committee on Special Education; Subcommittee on Special Education; Committee on Pre-School Special Education; Resolution to Appoint Board of Registration for the May Vote; Resolution to Approve Appraisal Services; Resolution to

Approve Public Hearing. Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion Passed.

ACTION ITEM

Pre-K Plan

Ms. Rudnick provided background information on the Pre-K enrollment plan. The following resolution was presented for approval.

UNIVERSAL PREKINDERGARTEN LOTTERY

WHEREAS, the State Education Department in its May Coordinated Monitoring Review Report to the City School District of Albany declared that the District has not established a method of random selection, but rather enrolls children on a first come-first serve basis for Universal Prekindergarten (UPK) in District schools and at the Community Based Organization (CBO) sites; and

WHEREAS, the State Education Department has stated that the District must establish a method for the random selection (lottery) of all UPK students at all sites or have its UPK application and proposed budget disapproved for the 2010-11 school year for failure to comply; and

WHEREAS the City School District of Albany of Albany has sought input and advisement from an internal team of administrators and teaching professionals as well as a number of parents and families from across the District on matters related to UPK enrollment procedures related to the new lottery system; and

WHEREAS, the Superintendent and the Board have fully considered the findings and conducted their own review

NOW THEREFORE, IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED, the City School District of Albany shall use a random selection process (lottery) for the selection of students for entry into all District UPK programs housed either in District Schools or at Community Based Organizations sites who shall then be enrolled in schools and programs in accordance with the District's UPK Enrollment plan annexed hereto.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion. Mrs. Rudnick noted the board is asked to approve the resolution to conduct a random lottery for the Universal Pre-K Program for the 2010-2011 school year. A yes vote on this resolution will satisfy the district's obligation to establish a process that affords all families opportunity and access to the 591 seats in the districts Pre-K programs, both in the district schools and community based organization sites. Along with the resolution is a clearly defined enrollment plan that details the manner in which those 591 seats will be assigned. The enrollment plan will include sibling preference, neighborhood preference and open enrollment. The resolution and plan are being presented with consideration of comments from the public at the last meeting.

- Does the plan included consideration of twins?

If one twin is chosen for the lottery, the second twin will automatically be included in the lottery in consideration of not separating twins into two different schools.

- Thank you to Mrs. Rudnick and the board in developing this plan. Mr. Egan noted Ms. Mackey was instrumental in separating the resolution and the enrollment plan.

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

Motion passed.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

2010-2011 Budget Development

Dr. Colucciello and Mr. Hogan gave a very comprehensive presentation on the budget development process along with budget work papers showing projected budget deficit, budget reductions that will be included in the 1st draft budget and other possible cuts. Also included in the presentation was a listing of instructional decisions that need to be made, projected reduction in funding related to grant funding and necessary staffing additions. Taking into consideration the cost drivers, sources of revenue, budget reductions identified to date, and additional staffing costs, the district will need to make additional budget reductions of approximately \$10 million. The board will be presented the first draft budget at the March 4, 2010 board meeting. The district will continue to look into additional reductions as the process continues. Mr. Hogan noted the current budget is \$3 million less than it was a year ago. The district also eliminated 113 positions with continued instructions almost in tact. This is near impossible to do in two consecutive years.

A lengthy discussion followed regarding transportation of Pre-K students, student input in discussions related to the success of various programs and the reconstruction of Albany High School, class size, staff reductions, health insurance options, professional development programs, the impact the budget will have on sports programs as well as music, the summer curriculum program and the Reading Recovery Program. Board members asked for a presentation on the Reading Recovery Program and financial information related to the closing of New Covenant Charter School in terms of the net impact this would have on the district's budget. It was noted that there are a number of moving parts to this discussion that are not known. i.e. state budget. Dr. Colucciello noted the district will continue with this process. The first draft budget is scheduled to be presented at the March 4th board meeting.

Charter School Transition Plan

Mr. Lesko and Ms. Gaines-Harrell provided the board with a review of the Charter Schools Transition Plan that focuses on capacity, family choice, state-of-the-art facilities, programs, district achievement, serving the needs of all students and welcoming families to district schools. The district is well prepared to provide a smooth transition to students and families enrolling in the district from charter schools. Return families to the district, and families choosing Albany's public schools for the first time will find a strengthened and improving school system offering strong educational programs for all students. The district will continue to highlight programs in the district to these groups. The district has high quality options throughout the City for the students at New Covenant. All options will be available.

Discussion followed in terms of the number of students from the Arbor Hill enrollment zone and how many the district would be able to place in Arbor Hill. Information will be forwarded to principals in other district schools that would take charter school students.

Dr. Colucciello advised this transition plan will help every student who transfers into the district. This is a plan for transitioning any student to the district.

Harlem Children's Zone – Baby Institute

Dr. Robert Malerba and Ms. Nolene Smith, members of the Family Education Alliance, provided an overview of the Baby Institute, modeled after the Harlem Children's Zone, providing support to parents in the development of happy, healthy children who are ready for success. Included in the presentation was a description of the target audience. The program will run from February 27, 2010 to April 24, 2010 on Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at Giffen Elementary School. Transportation will be provided by Trinity Institution. The program will be facilitated by Ellen Cooper of Cornell's Cooperative Extension. Volunteers will sit in for training to run future classes. The district is providing the location and the cost of a custodian in the building during the program. The curriculum will include early brain development, child development, building positive self-esteem and discipline in young children, parenting styles and the impact of temperament on parenting methods, helping young children express and manage anger and teaching social problem solving skills to young children. A short video was presented that demonstrates the importance of interaction between parents and infants.

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers noted this presentation is an opportunity to present to the board the continuum of the Harlem Children's Zone Model. The \$1,600 will cover the cost of having someone on site for coverage of the building and the maintenance staff to open and close the building. This is a part of the Strategic Plan for which the district has designated funds that have already been approved.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

The Alternative Education Think Tank did meet this week. Information on the four programs has been gathered. The group is presently reviewing that information.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Ms. Mackey noted it is important to look at the entirety of the district in terms of the enrollment zones. A draft of the present attendance zones will be forwarded to board members. There are streets that have been added since 2006, the last time the zones were defined.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Morris made a motion to adjourn into Executive Session for discussion of particular personnel. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Mr. Egan advised the board would not be reconvening in public this evening. Meeting was adjourned at 10:45 p.m.