



## PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

June 17, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Thomas O'Brien Academy of Science & Technology

**PRESENT:** Dan Egan, President  
Judy Doesschate, Vice President  
Rose Brandon, Secretary  
Barbara Gaffuri  
Edith Leet  
Melissa Mackey  
Wayne Morris  
Dr. Raymond Colucciello  
Dr. 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.

Mr. Egan requested a moment of silence in memory of Michael Colucci, a senior at Albany High School who passed away earlier this week and also for Ward DeWitt, a former Board member who also passed away earlier this week.

Mr. Egan called for a motion to amend the agenda to eliminate the NYS Association of Small City School Districts litigation invoice and to include the following resolutions: Resolution to Approve Participation in the Governor's Retirement Incentive Part A Resolution to Approve Participation in the Governor's Retirement Incentive Part B Resolution to Approve Transfer of Employee Retirement Funds under Routine Consent. Motion was made by Ms. Doesschate and seconded by Mrs. Gaffuri.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Dr. Colucciello announced that for the third time in five years, Albany High School has been recognized as one of the top American high schools, and second in the Capital Region, in annual rankings that measure students taking advance coursework. The 2010 *Newsweek/Washington Post* list includes Albany High at 976 nationally, up 136 spots from a year ago. This is the school's highest ranking ever. This recognition of positive achievement emphasizes some of the core strengths we have built upon in our important work. Recognition was also extended to the staff at Albany High and the parents who support the school.

Mr. Fowler, Principal at TOAST introduced faculty members Laurie Ellis, Steven Costello, and Alice Florance, and volunteer Brandon Milonovich, who have worked with students to bring this program forward. Students Kelly Streznewski and Vanessa Wilkins gave a demonstration of the SCRATCH Program at TOAST, using the state-of-the-art technology. SCRATCH is presented in partnership with The College of St. Rose in designing and implementing an eight-week pilot computer program that allows students to create and share projects collaboratively. Students are very excited about this program and they are anxious to participate. Mr. Fowler noted this is a free program that can be downloaded from the Internet.

### **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT**

There were no speakers.

### **ROUTINE CONSENT**

Mr. Egan presented the following Routine Consent items for approval: Appointments (Miscellaneous, Civil Service); Retirements and Resignations; Correction; Bid Awards, Budget Transfers under \$10,000, Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Resolution to Accept Donation at Albany High School, Authorization to Enter Into Contract, Capital Area School Development Association Membership Dues; Resolution to Approve Participation in the Governor's Retirement Incentive Part A Resolution to Approve Participation in the Governor's Retirement Incentive Part B Resolution to Approve Transfer of Employee Retirement Funds.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve routine consent items. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Mrs. Brandon asked that appointments be set aside.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve routine consent items absent the item set aside.  
Motion passed.

Ms. Doesschate made a motion to approve appointments. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Mrs. Brandon asked why stipend amounts are different. This is a group of people who provide support to classroom teachers. The differences in the stipend amounts are shared positions. The building administrator is the chair of the team overseeing these positions. The team works with teachers and students to address behavior issues in the classroom in an effort to reduce alternative placement.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve routine consent items absent the item set aside.  
Motion passed.

### **INFORMATION**

Cathy Fahey and Arnelle Ullrich gave a presentation to the Board regarding the Albany Community Afterschool Network (ACAN), also Jerry Spicer who oversees the Kid by Kid Program, and Lynn Siebert, who is with the Childcare Coordinating Council. This is a collaborative effort geared to middle school aged youth. This program came about following a series of incidents of increased youth violence and killings. Members of the Albany Common Council and the Commissioner of City Youth and Workforce Services applied to the National League of Cities' Institute for Youth Education and Families for a technical assistance grant entitled "City Leaders Supporting Afterschool and A New Day for Learning" to create a seamless system of out-of-school programming in the City of Albany.

The grant is a four-year grant of \$200,000. A key aspect of the grant is to work jointly with city, school, county, and community service providers to improve afterschool and out-of-school programming for middle school youth. The presentation included a listing of the participating organizations, the Mission Statement, and goals and objectives. ACAN's mission is compatible with that of Afterschool Works, NY, which is a statewide advocacy organization with an office in the City of Albany. Afterschool Works has agreed to act as a host organization enabling ACAN to accept financial contributions and share their office space. Goals include securing adequate financial resources and transportation for youth to attend out-of-school programming opportunities.

Programs are chosen based on innovation, learning enrichment, social and emotional development and more. They are the Robotics program at North Albany Academy, Career Building by M.O.D.E.L. in all 3 middle schools, Sisterhood by Youth Empowerment Services in all 3 middle schools, Junior Project Success by Hispanic Outreach Services at Hackett Middle School, Virtual Learning Program in all 3 middle schools, YMCA – Rest, Exercise, Activity and Diet at North Albany, Healthy Images by Girls, Inc. at all 3 middle schools, and Games, Skills, and Activities by Boys and Girls Club at Hackett Middle School. RFP's have already been sent out for fall 2010-11 programs.

- How are organizations able to access the RFPs?

RFPs are available on line with a return date of the end of June.

- Have we given any thought to providing programs on a rotating basis?

Yes, we are looking to provide those opportunities to students who want to participate in programs throughout the year and those who prefer to participate in a ten-week program.

- Programs are scheduled from 3-5 p.m. Are there programs that go to 6 p.m.?

Most programs go to 5 p.m. due to transportation issues.

- Are these programs first come, first served?

For some programs there are limitations on the number of students who can participate. The programs do accept all students when possible. Students are also offered other programs that can accept additional students.

- Has there been any analysis of students who may not have the direction to participate in programs or teams of staff working directly with targeted students who would benefit from these types of programs?

A marketing campaign will be developed to make these activities attractive to youth. Also, outreach meetings take place throughout the city promoting these programs. There are conversations with school principals regarding specific services for students.

- What is the group doing in terms of transportation?

We are working with the Grants Office to secure funds for transportation. There are organizations that donate transportation. We will continue to seek these opportunities. There is an ACAN subcommittee working on transportation, which is a significant challenge. There are funds available for transportation.

- Are there any before-school programs through this effort?

Not at this time. The group is looking at that possibility.

- Has there been consideration of volunteers working with these programs.

The group has had discussions with the Volunteer Coordinator.

- Keep in mind those middle school aged-students who are still in elementary school.

Other children will be able to participate in some programs.

### **Summer School Programs**

Mrs. Rudnick gave an overview of Elementary Summer School – Literacy Links, which is an intensive reading and writing program designed to target the literacy needs of primary students who are farthest from meeting grade-level standards. The program is available to general education, special education, and ESL students, targeting on grades 1 through 3. Staff will be provided two full days of training. Assessments 1 and 2 will be repeated at the end of the program to measure growth. The program will be offered in 11 school sites Monday 7/12 through Friday 8/6 from 8:30 a.m. -12:30 p.m. This program is funded through the Title I ARRA Grant. All data collected will be shared with the students' incoming teachers in the fall and parents will receive a full report.

Dr. Tresa Diggs gave an overview of the middle level-summer school program. This is a five week program from July 6 through August 6 at Hackett Middle School from 8:30 – 11:30 a.m. each day. Course offerings are 6<sup>th</sup> grade instruction in ELA, math, social studies and science; 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grade English, math, science and social studies and special education for all grades. Students will be dropped from the program with three unexcused absences and/or on the fourth time they are late.

The Albany High School program will take place on the third floor of Albany High School from 8:00 a.m. -11:59 a.m. with three periods Monday – Thursday July 5 through August 16. Students will be able to take 3 classes this year as opposed to 2 offered last year. Dr. Diggs reviewed the class offerings, staffing needs, anticipated out-of-District students who will be participating, and program costs. Out-of-District students pay \$375.00 per course and \$25 for each Regents Exam. Students in the District pay a registration fee of \$3.00. The primary objectives of the program are to remediate credit for a course that is required for graduation, to provide students with an opportunity to strengthen academic areas; and to increase the number of students passing the New York State Regents Examination. Regents Exams will be given Tuesday, August 17 through Thursday, August 19. A full report will be provided including goals, enrollment figures, attendance rates, academic outcomes, staffing, actual costs, and recommendations for 2011.

- How is the day structured for middle school students?

They will have three periods per day.

- Will they all have the opportunity to take 3 classes?

They will all take 3 classes.

- How are classes determined?

Classes are determined based on classes the student failed throughout the year. If a student is failing more than one course, there is a deficiency and that student is recommended for summer school. Students who fail one course do not go to summer school. Courses are based on need and counselor input. These are basically the courses students need for graduation.

- Is the health course a new course?

The health course requires more seat time because it would be a new course for the student.

### **Alternative Education Think Tank Report**

Dr. Diggs began the presentation with the history of the Think Tank, which was organized in September 2009 to review the District's alternative education programs and to make recommendations to the Board for change. A group of very dedicated individuals, including representatives from different agencies, community members, and staff members came together. Ms. Mackey noted each subcommittee provided a written report. Those reports were reviewed by the entire Think Tank. The Think Tank then brainstormed approximately 33 recommendations for consideration, which were then categorized by topic and date of completion. A final report will be written and submitted to the Board of Education in July. There are a number of recommendations that appear under more than one heading.

Ms. Mackey reviewed charts indicating the overlapping recommendations in the following categories: Academics, Accountability & Evaluation, Community Involvement, Prevention, Professional Development, and Program Re-Design. Ms. Mackey provided rationales for each recommendation, indicating where each one overlaps in more than one area. Additional comments were also offered by Dr. Malerba. A total of 12 recommendations are recommended for completion in September.

Dr. Colucciello noted that cabinet members will need to review these recommendations from a cost prospective. There are also recommendations that do not involve costs.

- Where does technology come into these recommendations?

It's a best practices piece. This goes along with available resources and discussion of equal resources. Next year, Smart Boards will be available in the alternative education programs.

- When will Personalized Education Plans (PEP) be developed, when the student is placed in an alternative education program?

There is not yet a specific plan. Ideally every student should have a PEP as they start moving through the District so that, deficiencies can be identified early, and those students can get the services they need to be successful.

- Students in Alternative Education Programs should have the same resources available to them that every other student in the District has. The District needs to identify issues and provide resources to help students achieve. This is everyone's responsibility to insure that all students have the resources to succeed.
- Looking back at the cohorts, there were a number of issues identified such as transition, and absenteeism. The PEP could be the tool for tracking that kind of information.

Dr. Colucciello noted this is a timely report relative to restructuring work at the high school. Also, a number of volunteers gave a tremendous amount of time in putting this report together.

- The single most important recommendation is to place this project under one responsible leader. Emphasizing evaluation of the program is very important. Compliments to the members of the Think Tank.

## **ACTION**

### **Technology Plan**

Mr. Egan presented the Technology Plan for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

### **Social Studies Textbook**

The Pearson Scott/Foresman Social Studies Textbook Series – Grades K-5 was presented for approval. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

### **Policy Approval**

Policy 0115.1 Bullying Prevention was presented for approval. Mr. Morris made a motion to approve policies as presented. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion.

Motion passed.

## **DISCUSSION**

### **Policy Review**

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers presented policy #5300 Code of Conduct for discussion. The Code of Conduct task force met twice to accommodate as many stakeholders as possible to review the policy. The Code was reviewed in its entirety with particular focus on revisions previously approved, i.e., dress code and measures for student responsibility. Participants were asked to complete a survey asking if there was any aspect of the Code of Conduct Policy they felt needed revision and whether or not they felt that the District is upholding the provisions of the policy. Most agreed that the Code was being followed appropriately. The consensus of the group was that there was no need for additional code but that there is a need for increased enforcement of the provisions of the policy. Therefore, the recommendation is that the policy does not require major changes other than the recommendation that community involvement be included in the policy and the inclusion of other categories in the Notice of Discrimination. The Policy Committee is also recommending that the Bullying Prevention Policy that was approved this evening be inserted in the larger Code of Conduct Policy and printed in the smaller book preceding the Penalties title. A public hearing is required because this inclusion of the Bullying Policy is a major change. The hearing is scheduled for July 1, 2010, prior to the Board meeting.

- Violations in the Code of Conduct lead students into the alternative education programs. Is there a possibility that the Board would be able to discuss the application of the penalties for violations stated in the policy?

There has been discussion related to how consequences for poor behavior develops into a profile of a student in alternative education. Perhaps with the Alternative Education Think Tank and the review of student violations can explain this.

- Does the Athletic Code of Conduct have to be reviewed on an annual basis?  
It should be reviewed periodically.

## **BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS**

### **Charter School Committee**

Ms. Doesschate noted that there has been conversation relative to gaining access to students and parents of New Covenant. Student records will be released tomorrow morning. The last included discussion regarding the lack of cooperation from the administration of New Covenant and the Charter Schools Institute. The group spoke about mobile registration where the District will go to the student's home to copy documentation. The District will continue to work to reach out to recruit these students. One of the goals for next year is to expand the membership of this committee.

### **BOARD MEMBER ITEMS**

Mrs. Gaffuri advised she attended the performances at the high school of the orchestra and the chorus. All the performances were excellent. The chorus introduced a song and invited alumni to sing the song with the chorus. This will be an annual part of the show each year.

Mrs. Leet noted she signed up for the School News Network, which is a wonderful service.

Ms. Doesschate advised she attended an event at RPI regarding a statewide initiative identified as Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). At this meeting there were many presentations and cross dialogue regarding several initiatives, specifically in Ballston Spa, that engage industry. If Board members are interested in more information, the website is [nystem.net](http://nystem.net). There will be grant opportunities regarding this education initiative. Mr. Baldwin of Tech Valley High School suggested the members of the high school restructuring committee and the alternative education Think Tank tour Tech Valley. Also, employees of the Wadsworth Center will do presentations in the classrooms. Ms. Doesschate encouraged the District to consider these opportunities.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business, Ms. Mackey made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 10:15 p.m.