



City School District of Albany
PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION
October 21, 2010
7:00 p.m.
Arbor Hill Elementary School

PRESENT: Dan Egan, President
Rose Brandon, Secretary
Barbara Gaffuri
Edith Leet
Melissa Mackey
Wayne Morris
Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Bill Hogan
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Linda Rudnick
Linda Jackson-Chalmers

ABSENT: None

Call to Order:

- Meeting was called to order at 7:10 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

Dr. Colucciello gave special recognition to members of the Board of Education in recognition of Board Member Recognition Week, October 25- 29, 2010. A proclamation from Governor Patterson was read to the Board members. Dr. Colucciello noted the sacrifices made by Board members in their efforts to make it better for the young people in the City of Albany. Dr. Colucciello asked those present to acknowledge these people with a standing ovation. Thank you to all Board members.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Shawn Bracebridge addressed the Board regarding students being bullied and assaulted in the schools. The culture and climate in the schools need to be changed to insure the safety and well-being of all students.
2. Barb Andrews addressed the Board regarding in-school suspension at the high school. Students are missing educational opportunities.
3. Donna Jones addressed the Board regarding the retention of students who come to school without their I.D. Badges. Students are kept out of class while their I.D. Badges are brought to school.
4. Barbara Walter addressed the Board regarding the retention of students who come to school with their I.D. Badges when substitute staff members do not have identification.
5. David Andrews addressed the Board regarding the issue of process students entering the building in the morning. Students are delayed in the process and they are getting detention as a result.
6. Noelene Smith addressed the Board regarding the Harlem Children's Zone. The program is now in the 6th week of the Baby Institute at Giffen. A number of high school students from Abrookin are providing baby-sitting services during this program. Ms. Smith noted she was sharing a feel-good moment.

ROUTINE CONSENT

The following Routine Consent items were presented for approval. Appointments (Probationary, Miscellaneous, Regular Substitutes); Leave of Absence; Bid Award; Field Trip and Authorization to Enter into Contracts. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Mr. Egan seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey asked that the Ski Club field trip be set aside for clarification.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve routine consent items,
absent the set aside.

Motion passed.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve the field trip. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey asked for clarification related to the funding of this activity, specifically whether the District provides funds for this activity. Mr. Hogan advised the students are responsible for the fees related to this club through fund raising and self-pay. There is no District to it.

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

Motion passed.

ACTION

2009-2010 Financial Statements

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to accept the 2009-2010 Financial Statements. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Mr. Hogan introduced Emily Kent from the Bonadio Group, the CPA group that conducted the audit. Ms. Kent gave a brief overview of the audit. There were no problems conducting the audit. There were no disagreements with management related to the audit and there were no corrected statements that were noted. There was an unqualified opinion on the financial statements, which is the highest opinion you can receive. There was no new accounting policies adopted this year. There were no internal control findings or significant deficiencies. There was one non-compliant issue related to the fund balance, which is not unique to this District. The District is over the 4% fund balance due to the freezing of budget spending last fall. For the Federal Award audit, the Title I, Special Education cluster and State Fiscal Stabilization Fund, again, there were no findings.

- Is there anything the District can do at this time to resolve the fund balance issue?
Not this year. This can be addressed through the budget process for next year.
- On page 46 of this document there is an item featuring the original and actual appropriation for the facilities project. Is this the official record of the project?

Everything has to be finalized to the District's satisfaction with the contractors. There are two schools that have not yet been closed out. Mr. Hogan noted that all of these projects have been completed within budget. This will be updated next year when everything is closed out.

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

Motion passed.

Policies

The following policies were presented for approval:

- 2265 Shared Decision-Making and School Based Planning
- 2410 Policy Development, Adoption, Implementation and Review
- 2510 New Board Member Orientation
- 2521 School Board Conferences, Conventions, Workshops
- 2710 Communication Among Individual Board Members

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Mrs. Leet seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

INFORMATION

Professional Development Plan

An overview of the District's Professional Development Plan for 2010-2013 was presented by Mrs. Rudnick and members of the Professional Development Committee, Ms. Kubish and Mr. DiGiulio, along with other members of the Committee in the audience. The presentation included Vision and Purpose, Development and Impact, Needs Assessment, Professional Development Goals, How the Plan Works, Models and Constructs, Evaluation of Goals, the Professional Development Budget and the future Direction of Professional Development. Board endorsement is required by the Board of Education. Approval will be scheduled for the November 4th meeting. The Plan will be submitted to the State Education Department.

- In the assessment of needs by the staff, how did the needs expressed by staff tie in with the needs of the District has. Is there the flexibility that one teacher with a particular need can have training that many teachers in the District need?

There may be a need for particular training at a particular school. That type of training is provided. Teachers also communicate well, and there are a variety of surveys that identifies some of the needs of the teachers.

- Will all the teachers get the same training at the professional development days?
There is a professional development fair. There are multiple, different sessions. Teachers are provided coverage to allow teachers to move around to receive training.
- Student involvement in this process is also important. What is being done to include them in the process?

The needs assessments were placed on-line for teachers to respond to the survey. The District is also committed to including students, with focus groups and surveys to garner student input.

- How can we be certain that teachers have weaknesses are getting what they need to be better teachers? If we are not consistently evaluating we don't know where we are going. How do we evaluate the effectiveness of the plan?
- Are teachers mandated to attend professional development training?

Attendance is highly recommended. There will be some required training. The District is working to provide on the job attention to targeted professional development. The District and the teachers need to come to an agreement related to professional development. Required training is something that will need to be addressed during contract negotiations.

- The issue is that this is an elaborate plan, but there are no goals that can be measured. How well are we doing now, and how much better will we be after spending \$1.1 million?
- Discussion followed regarding measurable objectives. As the principals develop their plans for the school, there are goals in the CEP plan that has a percentage. Specific assessment goals are identified each year. If the assessments gains are there, it is indicative of the success of professional development. Board members requested that measurable objectives be identified on the major pieces of the plan when it is presented for approval.

Dr. Colucciello noted teacher effectiveness will be measured this year 20% on student achievement. This District will meet with union leaders to determine how this will be done. Quantifying what we do is part and parcel of every conversation in this profess. It has not been.

Strategic Plan

Dr. Colucciello requested that discussion of this item be delayed pending additional input. Discussion centered around the need to identify those specific pieces that the District will be focusing on and those things that are in process.

DISCUSSION

Budget Development Calendar

The 2011-2013 Budget Development Calendar was presented for discussion. Mr. Hogan noted the schedule has been developed in consideration of holydays. Under this calendar the budget will be discussed at nine meeting, with additional meetings that can be scheduled if needed.

- The community needs to be part of the budget process. Where is the Budget Committee? Mr. Egan noted that the Audit Committee discussed this and agreed not to go forward.

- The District needs to find a way to include the community in this process.

Discussion continued relative to the experience of the Budget Advisory Committee. A suggestion was made that the Audit Committee look into a citizen's budget committee. The Audit Committee will report back to the Board in terms of staffing, the charge, the cost and the benefit. Board members were comfortable with the Budget Development Calendar. The Calendar will be presented at the next meeting for approval.

Legislative Agenda

Mr. Egan noted this last discussed in July. The District acknowledged there was problem that this District is heavily impacted by things it does not control at the State level that affect the District, i.e. late state aid, undetermined charter school tuition, the state funding formula, etc. This District gets ignored. The District needs to be out there influencing the Legislature. Mr. Egan suggested things that could be done by the District, including engaging a lobbyist to represent the District. There are many organizations that have lobbyists. The cost is a risk. Every spending decision the District makes is a risk. The potential payoff could be significant. The purpose is to maximize the odds that the District receives the funds it is entitled to. The District determines the mission and the lobbyist carry that mission out. Politicians listen to lobbyists.

We need to set legislative goals, most importantly enacting fair and equitable state aid formulas. There are also issues around charter schools, i.e. making them accountable to the school boards in the district they are located.

- State Aid for transportation closer than 1.5 miles from school.
- We need a more cohesive legislative agenda. The aid formula is most important. The issue around Universal Pre-K is very important. My overall concern is do we see an effective path with the use of a lobbyist.
- The Board does not have the manpower or the time to chase these issues. I'm still undecided about the funds for a lobbyist. This agenda is critical.
- How many years for how much money and when will we know when we have accomplished something?
- The commitment would be for one year.

Following discussion Mrs. Leet made a motion to approve a zero cost contract with Wilson Elser. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the motion.
Motion passed.

Mr. Egan advised he would forward goals to Board members and to Wilson Elser and give them the charge of coming up with a plan for the District, which will be considered at a Board meeting in November.

Policy Review

The following policies were presented for review:

- 3000 Goals and Objectives for Administration
- 3100 Superintendent of Schools
- 3120 Duties of the Superintendent
- 3230 Organization Chart
- 2520 Board Member Training

It was noted that additional training is now required for new Board members. Policy #2520 has been revised to include the additional training for new Board members. Policies will be brought forward at the next meeting for approval.

BOARD COMMITTEES

Ms. Mackey advised Alternative Education Think Tank Advisory Subcommittee Committee met this past week. There are 10 members on this committee. Ms. Mackey advised she will be serving as Co-facilitator of this committee, along with Dr. Malerba. Mr. Clement gave an update now that all students are at Schuyler. The Group brainstormed about how they would interface with the Safe Schools Committee. The larger group will be meeting on November 15th.

Dr. Diggs advised the High School Restructuring Committee met this past week. The group will be meeting every other Tuesday, following the trip to Washington for a conference. There are four individuals who will be going to the conference on the Magnet School Grant from November 2 – 4, 2010. Meetings will alternate times to accommodate member's schedule. The District needs to expand the number of people on this committee. It is important community input is part of this project. Mrs. Leet advised the Restructuring Committee voted to have two student representatives on each of the sub-committees, seeking students who are at level 1 and 2. This will be a strong representation with a total of 16 students.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Mrs. Leet advised she attended the Albany High School Hispanic Celebration. It was a wonderful program. There was strong community participation.

Adjournment

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