



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

March 17, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Hackett Middle School

PRESENT: Dan Egan, President
Rose Brandon, Vice President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Felicia Green
Edith Leet
Melissa Mackey
Alexandra Streznewski (Arrived at 8:10 .m.)
Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Bill Hogan
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Linda Rudnick
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Ken Cioffi

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 read a letter from a parent of a student at Giffen Elementary. The family came to the United States from Berma. The parent commented on the support they have received from the Albany refugee community and the positive impact his children have experienced as students at Giffen.

Mr. Egan made a motion to include in routine consent the approval of a resolution related to Shunn McKenzie. Motion was seconded by Ms. Mackey.

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

Motion passed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Onnolee Smith, President of the Albany Fund for Education (AFE) presented a booklet entitled "The Greening of Albany's Schools" in appreciation of the District's role in Project Learning Tree. The project Brought 7 community organizations together, SEFCU, the College of St. Rose, Stewarts, the City of Albany, and the State Department of Environmental Conservation. Two hundred and fifty trees were planted at nine different schools. More trees will be planted this April at Eagle Point Elementary School. Teacher training programs provided elementary teachers throughout the District with a new activity-based science curriculum. The booklet documents the activities.

Coach Kelly Haggerty and Assistant Coach Decky Lawson introduced this year's girls' varsity basketball team, The Lady Falcons, who ended their season as Big 10 champions -- a first in Albany High history. Team members include Ciara Alison-Koneth, Jazmyn Branch, Melissa Canty, A'Montay Giddings-Watson, Kelsey Greene, Erin Jeffers, Crystal Mallett, Antonia Merritt, Zaraya Merritt, Tremay Rouse, Breahanda Stratton, India Terrell, Mia Valentine, Cara Waterson, Emia Willingham-Hurst, and Captains, Jillian Carr and Jenise Torres.

Priscilla Richards, program manager for new construction for the New York State Energy Research and Development Authority, presented a plaque to Hackett for the outstanding energy-saving systems that were installed when the building was renovated.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Cheryl Pollock addressed the Board regarding hands-on learning and the importance of offering this form of instruction to students who learn differently.

FACILITIES PROJECT

Action Item

The following EXCEL Resolutions for Albany High School, Abrookin, and Giffen were presented for approval:

1. SEQRA Resolution regarding Giffen Memorial Elementary School, and Abrookin Vocational Technical Center;
2. SEQRA Resolution regarding Albany High School;
3. Resolution of Necessity;
4. Resolution to Submit Proposition to Voters; and,
5. Bond Resolution.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Dr. Brandon seconded the motion. Mr. Hogan noted these are the EXCEL Project Resolutions previously discussed with the Board. There is a series of five required resolutions. Ultimately, the project will be approved by the voters in May. Mr. Hogan noted there is special EXCEL Aid available to the District to cover the taxpayer's portion of the building project. The amount is \$11.4 million. The project involves renovation in three schools, Albany High School, Abrookin and Giffen. These resolutions are broad in nature. The District will come back with a more specific scope. The next step is to gather more information from others on the high school and make a recommendation to the Board regarding specific construction at the high school. Following a discussion regarding the wording of the proposition, indicating a tax levy, Ms. Green made a motion to table the item pending discussion with counsel. Mrs. Leet seconded the motion. Board members agreed to table the item. Mr. Hogan placed a call to Mr. Honeywell for review of the language in the bond resolution.

INFORMATION

Update on Abrookin

Dr. Diggs introduced, Sophia Newell, Assistant Principal at Albany High School, who is in charge of the Abrookin Program. Cecily Wilson, Interim House Principal at Albany High School and Lorraine Clark, Family and Consumer Science Teacher and Technical Centers that Work coordinator at Abrookin. Dr. Diggs advised they would be making the presentation on the Abrookin Vocational and Technical Center. Ms. Clark introduced students from Abrookin who competed in the regional competition of Skills USA, the five of the eleven students placed in the competition. The group will participate in state competition next month.

The presentation included programs, student performance data, rigor at Abrookin, and restructuring Abrookin. Ms. Newell advises there are four programs at Abrookin, Career Academy, Career and Technical Education, IEP Diploma and the TAM Program. Restructuring of Abrookin will include moving all core courses and all but three self-contained Special Education classes will move to Albany High School. CTE courses will remain at Abrookin and some elective courses will be moved from the high school to Abrookin and there are plans to offer single period CTE preparatory courses and a Comprehensive IEP Academic/Career and Work ready pacing map.

Board members noted that Abrookin is an integral part of educating students. Discussion followed relative to programs, moving the core courses to Albany High School, issues around class enrollment, attendance, attendance reports, supports for those students who are failing and academic rigor. Ms. Clark noted all programs are expected to be certified by June. Comment was made about services such as New York State Vehicle Inspection and the issue of advertising. It is important that all classes are taught by qualified teachers. Consider using credit recovery for these students. Discussion of the Abrookin program will continue at a future meeting.

After School Programs

Mr. Cioffi noted that the Coordinator of the After School Program was not able to attend the meeting this evening due to a previous commitment. As the supervisor for this position, Mr. Cioffi gave a presentation on the after school programs, showing a variety of programs provided to elementary and middle school students, the number of students served, program costs and funding resources for the programs. In addition to school based programs there are a number of programs provided through volunteer agencies, and community partnerships.

The programs provide extended day and enrichment opportunities for 2,740 students (2,003 students in elementary programs and 737 students in middle school programs). They provide a service to parents who rely on these activities for child care, both free and fee based. Funding for these programs comes from a wide variety of sources. The District provides \$825,431 from the general fund to fund a number of programs. Other programs are grant funded and some programs are provided at no charge. Mr. Cioffi also reviewed the impact these various programs provide to the community. Some programming could continue with grants, volunteers, school based resources and community support, but number would be reduced. A District-wide coordinator would still be needed for oversight of all the programs. Reductions in these programs could have an impact on student achievement and there is a possibility that the district could lose families who attend our schools for the length of day provided.

- Why are the numbers of students at Myers Middle School low?
Myers conducts after school clubs in the school. Most of the clubs operate through the teacher for one hour after school. Students take the late bus home.

- Is data available regarding statistics of students in these programs and how they are doing academically?

That information can be provided.

- Has there been any dialogue between the District's instructional supervisors and those who are administering the instructional after school programs in terms of coordination so that the staff working in these program have an idea of what students need. The "Y" is the largest provider and they would be willing to work with the District to insure that the extended day could be used for increasing achievement.

- After school programs should be geared to increasing student achievement to meet the academic needs of students.

Transportation provided through ACAN for activities that are better equipped to provide program activities.

Budget Update

Dr. Colucciello introduced Stephanie Primero of the Business Office who has done most of the analysis in review budget items. Dr. Colucciello noted the Board has had a number of discussions related to the 2011-2012 budget and hopefully this evening the Board can come to some decisions related to reductions. Dr. Colucciello reviewed a schedule of presentations indicating that there are two meetings scheduled for budget discussion. Facts and figures related to administrative expenses include the total salaries of all administrators, including the Superintendent and Cabinet, along with benefits that make up approximately 3% of the budget. The City School District of Albany was one of 70 schools districts in the State that is targeted to receive "Administrative Efficiency Aid" in the 2011-12 state aid run. Only 10% of the school districts in the State were eligible. The State aid runs indicate a credit amount of \$532,872. Without this credit the State aid reduction in funding would have been \$4.8 million instead of \$4.3 million.

Mr. Hogan noted revenues for 2011-2012 have decreased 2.21% and expenditures have increased 4.14%. The budget gap is higher than originally estimated in January. The projected deficit is now \$10.8 million. This figure is prior to Tier I reductions, increases in tax levy, or additional use of fund balance/reserves. Potential staffing reductions of 80.5 positions have been identified. Tier I and Tier II listings of possible reductions were reviewed for input from Board members. Tier I reductions total \$4.9 million. Tier II reductions total \$2.7 million. Tier III addressed reductions in programs. New requests for additional spending were also presented for discussion. In summary, the current figure of \$10.9 million does not include any of the possible Tier reductions. The District is seeking relief from its employees via wage freeze. The District is also seeking mandate relief from the legislature, additional State aid and an "on time" state budget.

Board members noted that these are difficult decisions. Board members were in favor of accepting Tier I reductions. Comments included concern about inadvertently jeopardizing programs. Concern was expressed about the Home School Coordinators, Hall Monitor Positions, Counselors and Special Education. Tier II issues were the librarians, foreign language and middle school summer school. Tier III comments included moving the 5% reduction to Tier II. More information was requested regarding Career Explorations, Sports, and specific programs at Abrookin. Other comments included increasing the fund balance amount that would be used to balance the budget. Items in Tier III reflect the cost of the entire program. Board members commented on the add-in listing. The group as a whole was not in favor of the attendance residency verification, suggesting this function be conducted internally. The majority of Board members were in favor of adding the AVID program.

Discussion continued with an extended discussion relative to how the budget is developed and reflective surplus in past years. Concerns were also expressed relative to under-enrolled classes. Mr. Hogan noted that last year's budget was within 98.5% of the final budget, taking into account additional state aid and a settlement in favor of the District of \$1.6 million. Reserves are being used to balance the budget. A portion of these funds will be used for 2011-2012 Budget, and another portion for the following year. The proposed budget is \$4 million less than the previous budget. Additional information will be provided at the next meeting for further discussion.

ROUTINE CONSENT

Routine Consent items were presented for approval as follow: Appointments (Civil Service, Miscellaneous, Coaches) Leaves of Absence; Retirement; Creation of Positions; Correction; Disposal of Assets – Milk Cooler; Donation – Stitching Machines; Approval of Time Warner Cable Franchise MOA; Bid Awards (Advanced Therapy, Electronic Equipment Disposal & Recycling-Maven Technologies, Galaxy Magazine); Resolution to Approve Library Petition; Authorization to Enter into Contracts (Ellen Hopkins, Capital Areas Development Association); and the Shunn McKenzie Resolution. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve Routine Consent. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey set aside appointments. Mrs. Leet set aside Authorization to Enter Into Contracts. Mr. Egan set aside the McKenzie Resolution.

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

Mr. Egan made a motion to accept the Resolution related to Mr. McKenzie. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

The Board voted (6-0-1) to approve the motion, Ms. Streznewski abstained.
Motion passed.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve appointments. Ms. Green seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey confirmed that the Saturday Academy listing are appointments, and if coaches are evaluated using the same tool as teachers? Mrs. Jackson-Chalmers confirmed this practice. Coaches are evaluated on an annual basis.

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

Mrs. Leet questioned the Creation of Position. The item of Creation of Position is placed on the agenda for approval. The Board creates the position and then the position is filled. Appointing personnel to the position will be placed on a future agenda.

DISCUSSION

Policies

The following policies were presented for review:

- 4000 Student Learning Objectives and District Instructional Goals
- 4200 Curriculum Management
- 4322 Programs for Gifted and Talented Students
- 4325 Academic Intervention Services
- 4420 Class Size

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to table policy review to the next meeting. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to table Board Committee Reports to the next meeting. Dr. Brandon seconded the motion.

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

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to table Board Member Items to the next meeting. Dr. Brandon seconded the motion.

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

Facilities Project

Mr. Egan noted the Board previously tabled the following resolutions related to the EXCEL Project:

1. SEQRA Resolution regarding Giffen Memorial Elementary School, and Abrookin Vocational Technical Center;
2. SEQRA Resolution regarding Albany High School;
3. Resolution of Necessity;
4. Resolution to Submit Proposition to Voters; and,
5. Bond Resolution.

The item was tabled pending language clarification from counsel. Mr. Hogan noted he spoke via phone to Mr. Honeywell and there is language in Section 8 that states there shall be a levy. Mr. Honeywell advised the language should not be changed. The resolutions were developed by Bond Counsel and they should remain as written. EXCEL is currently in the Governor's proposal. If for any reason this is pulled from the State budget, this referendum would be pulled from the ballot. Mr. Egan repeated noted that the original motion was made by Mrs. Gaffuri and seconded by Dr. Brandon. Following additional discussion a clarification was made to the description of the Abrookin project to include "and exterior" with the interior renovations.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the motion as stated.
Motion passed.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Mackey made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Green seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 11:20 p.m.