



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

May 5, 2011

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Dan Egan, President
Rose Brandon, Vice President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
Felicia Green
Edith Leet
Melissa Mackey
Alexandra Streznewski
Dr. Raymond Colucciello
Dr. Tresa Diggs
Bill Hogan
Ken Cioffi
Linda Jackson-Chalmers
Linda Rudnick
Jeff Honeywell

ABSENT: None

BUDGET HEARING

Mr. Hogan gave a comprehensive review of the 2011-2012 school budget that will be presented to voters on May 17, 2011 for approval. The presentation began with a review of scheduled budget presentations throughout the District. Misleading information that has been targeted to voters through mailings and phone surveys was clarified, including the fact that enrollment has increased between 9/08 and 9/10 by 466 students; the District has incorporated \$9.3 million into the 2011-2012 budget which represented approximately one and one-half payrolls; the taxpayer share of the proposed \$11.4 million construction project will be paid in full by EXCEL aid, and there will be increase to taxpayers as a result of this project. 100% will be paid by State-aid.

The 2011-2012 school budget calls for a total spending of \$206,528,639; budget-to-budget increase of \$3,687,689 with a 0% tax levy increase. The average increase in tax levy for the City School District of Albany over the last three years has been 2.97%. A listing of the programs the District will continue to provide to students was presented, along with the full complement of support services available to students, academic opportunities and alternative education programs. Mr. Hogan reviewed the recent settlement with APSTA, 0% increase in teacher salaries for 2011-2012, zero teacher layoffs, and more time for students (2 instructional days) and 3 professional development days will be added to the school calendar. Additional savings in the 2011-2012 budget were also reviewed.

Mr. Hogan explained that there are three components to the school tax bill: the increase in school taxes (tax levy), which is 0%; changes in STAR aid and changes in assessments between homestead and non-homestead, unknown until July. The presentation continued with the impact of a contingency budget, should the public vote down the budget, a review of the propositions that will be on the ballot, review of the 18 voting locations and the date and time for the school budget election. Voting locations and additional information are available on the District website.. Mr. Hogan advised that the school tax bill will include the library tax and assessment changes that impact the total tax figure. The public needs to be aware that the school tax levy increase is 0%. The District has no control on the library tax or changes in assessments.

Mr. Hogan noted this was a very difficult budget. However, the results are that the District is able to provide a quality education with no teacher layoffs and there will be no increase in the school tax levy to the public, absent the library tax and changes in assessments.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING

Call to Order

- Meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. following the Budget Hearing for the 2011-2012 school budget.
- 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 Tyler Rhodes, a student at Albany High School who was killed last week.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Tom Giglio, Principal of Delaware Community School introduced a group of students who participated in "Jammies for Japan". Those in attendance were Mariam Mahmood, Jerry Rhodes, Hans Curtis Sanders, Eva Holts. Students presented a check in the amount of \$600.00 to the American Red Cross. The students at the school who participated in "Jammies for Japan" were able to wear pajamas to school if they made a donation for those people suffering from the tsunami in Japan. Students at Delaware also attended the Cinco de Mayo celebration that took place earlier this evening.

Dr. Colucciello recognized Board members, Jeff Honeywell, School Counsel, Cathy Corbo, President of APSTA and Derek Lewis of NYSUT for their diligence in working together to come to the MOA agreement, This accomplishment has been noted by the community and beyond.

Dr. Colucciello also recognized the Albany High School staff and faculty for their efforts in assisting students during the difficulty they experienced this week with the loss of a fellow student.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Mr. Thompson spoke about the death of Tyler Rhodes and the impact on the students at the high school. Jon also expressed his gratitude for the support and understanding of staff and faculty shown those students grieving this loss. John noted that violence is never the answer to anything. There are alternate routes to take in solving problems with people. Jon also expressed sympathy to Tyler's family.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no speakers.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Action

Approval of Resolution

A resolution to approve a contract with Professional Services Industries, Inc. (PSI) to provide Asbestos Abatement Monitoring/Air Monitoring related to the \$7.6 million renovation project currently taking place at Albany High School was presented for approval. This firm also provided services at the Arbor Hill renovation. Mr. Hogan noted that State Education prefers the use of the same vendor in these projects. The project includes flooring, ceiling, lights, bathrooms, stairs, and doors. The maximum cost of the project will not exceed \$12,000, based on professional hourly rates. The final cost could be less than that amount. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the contract. Ms. Streznewski seconded the motion.

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

INFORMATION

Alternative Education Program

Dr. Tresa Diggs provided a brief review of the Alternative Education Think Tank. The Alternative Education Think Tank was created as a result of the District's Strategic Plan. The plan called for the creation of the Think Tank to evaluate existing Alternative Education Program opportunities offered in the District, and to research new and innovative ideas. The Board of Education selected a community partner, Mr. Raymond Shimmer, Executive Director of Parsons Family and Child Center, served as facilitator of the Think Tank. There are also several other community members, stakeholders, parents, and partners who were part of that team.

Mr. Shimmer provided an overview of the work of the team including the opening meeting on November 30, 2010 with approximately 40 people in attendance. Participation dwindled down to a hard core of about 20 members. The group broke into three subcommittees, the data subcommittee that looked at how youngsters who had been in various components of the Alt Ed program were doing after their experience, the best practices subcommittee researched activities going on in other parts of the area, and a stakeholder subcommittee that interviewed family members, teachers and students. The groups came back together to prioritize twelve to fifteen recommendations that were submitted to the Board. A complete report was submitted in August with the primary data and a summary of activities of the subcommittees.

At this time the Alternative Education Thank Tank is somewhat fragmented due to the importance of the high school redesign. This year there was the formation of a group looking at socio-economical programs operating in the District. The request from the committee at this point is to secure additional direction from the Board as to where it needs to go from here. Mr. Shimmer advised he would no longer be in a position to continue as Chair of the committee.

Dr. Diggs reviewed a listing of Alternative Education Program Opportunities offered by the District, the Referral/Placement Processes, Transitional Learning (TLC) at the primary and intermediate level, tutoring programs for Grades 1 through 6, middle school alternative program (MsAPS), tutorial options (TOPS), Albany High School Transition Program, Abrookin Extended Day Program after school, St. Anne's afterschool program. Alternative Education Program changes were also reviewed. The presentation concluded with statistics relative to enrollment and numbers for the Alt Ed Program.

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers gave a brief narrative of the socio-economical subcommittee now called the Behavioral Management Design Team. Two needs were identified, students who needed a smaller learning environment, credit recovery and accelerated learning, and those who have been placed in alternative school placements because of safe school violations. The focus of the group is to address prevention and social-emotional development of children. The goal of the group is to recommend a District-wide Behavioral Management Manual to be adopted by the Board.

- Have we seen improvement in academics following the student's attendance in the TOPS Program?

No. The District needs to start early intervention for those students who are repeatedly involved in safe school issues.

- What types of academic services are offered to those students?

Staff members are assigned to the program in core areas. The students do receive academics.

- Has the District tracked students who were doing okay academically and then they started a spiral downhill when in alternative placement?

Not at this time. Many of these students have attendance issues and failing grades. There is a lot of discussion relative to how staff will support these students.

- Is there a way of connecting these students with a mentor?

There are counselors and other socio-economical support. There is no formal mentoring program at this time.

- The Personalized Educational Plan for every student, from kindergarten to graduation, seems to be part of the solution for these students. Mr. Shimmer noted that parent involvement is very important.
- When is the District going forward with the Personalized Educational Plan? This was one of the recommendations from the Think Tank. This should be a priority. The District needs to continue to assess alternative education.
- What the group is looking for, from the list of issues that were brought forward, is where the Board would like the group to focus as they move forward, whether it is adapting best practices in some of the existing programs or whether it is to develop a way to continue to collect the data. Another large issue is special education and the nexus between special education and alternative education. The group would be looking at identifying specific functions that the Board feels would be appropriate moving forward, i.e. special education, personal educational plans and data collection. In addition to the socio-emotional issue, the Board will continue discussion at a future meeting.
- If in the future you have the opportunity to consolidate services at one site would that be of any help?

The District needs a program that supports students socially, emotionally and academically. Students have so many issues that they cannot focus on academics. The major issue is getting these students to the point of being able to make better decisions. If money is available, the recommendation would be to put those funds into socio-emotional programs for alternative education students. Agency programs focus on socio-emotional support for students.

- Is there a possibility of partnering with an agency to have an on-site mental health clinic in the schools?

Presently, there are two clinics in the area at Schuyler Achievement and Stuyvesant.

Attendance Zone

Mr. Cioffi reviewed the operation of the Attendance Zone Committee, membership, meeting schedule, committee work, findings and recommendations of the committee based on current building usage and grade configuration. The committee reviewed a tremendous amount of information. Final recommendations include keeping school zones in the current configuration with adjustments as recommended and revisit attendance zones every 2 to 3 years to study enrollment trends, keep open enrollment at magnet schools, and make changes to the street directory as indicated.

- How feasible is it that the students would be able to attend their first choice school through open enrollment? Did you look at where kids are not going to District schools?

Open enrollment is based on availability of space in their chosen school. A survey was developed. It is on hold based on other surveys that were going around in the District. Private and parochial school enrollment was reviewed. Density around schools was also reviewed. There were 140 students in St. Theresa's and when that school closed 81 students went to All Saints. The majority of students at Blessed Sacrament come from outside the District. Parents choose to send their children to parochial schools.

- Can all students stay in their original school regardless of where they move within the District?

That issue changes with administrative changes. Dr. Colucciello noted that this practice will continue. Students moving within the District will be permitted to stay in their original school.

- Look at alternative programs as we move into reconfiguration of the grades.

Strategic Plan Update

The Board was provided an update on the strategies in the Strategic Plan. Dr. Diggs provided information on the Alternative Education Think Tank, previously discussed. The redesign of the high school is well under way with the academies. A mentor-type program remains a future project. Professional training for teachers in cultural diversity has taken place through the Safe School Healthy Students Grant, Honors course enrollment has increased following the change in criteria for admission, and is expected to move into Advanced Placement courses. A parent resource center has been established at the high school. An orientation program was created during last summer that is being used by the middle schools. That document will be updated by the committee this year.

Ms. Rudnick provided information on engaging parents and families in the education of their children. Elementary schools are holding increased open houses to allow parents to visit the school and orientation programs are in place for new students entering schools. Website videos for each elementary school will be developed for viewing on the District website. Volunteer involvement is also being developed. The District is in the process of working with staff to redesign the elementary report cards that will now be distributed quarterly. Report cards will be electronic and the parent portal will be open at the elementary level. Building Leadership Teams will include parents and/or community members, including the curriculum committee.

Mr. Cioffi noted that staff has been trained in the use and application of a variety of assessment data. The District has developed training teams. All schools presently have data teams and administrators have been trained in using and interpreting data. All data teams have met to discuss the use of data to drive building improvement plans. Mr. Cioffi noted the District has chosen Pearson Inform Data Management System. That program will be in place within the next several months with all information by September. Teachers will be able to see each student's

grades and student profiles as the student moves from grade to grade. All programs are expected to be in full operation in a year's time. The next issue to be addressed is program evaluation and the training of parents to interpret information. Next year the District will be assigning passwords to students so they can access their own information.

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers provided information on the process of developing volunteerism in the schools. The Volunteer Coordinator has been in place for this year, strengthening school level participation. The data base includes over 400 applicants.

Mr. Lesko provided information on communications in the District. The first task was to find a way to reach all segments of the community more effectively. To that end, a standard marketing plan for a variety of projects throughout the year will be in place. The Communications Office is working with CDTA and Lamar for advertising throughout the City. A community outreach team has been developed to attract and retain charter-school students, through door-to-door community outreach and focused marketing efforts. Communications will continue to assist the schools in developing a brochure highlighting individual characteristics of each school, and also developing a distribution list throughout the community.

Dr. Colucciello noted the Joint Intervention Report (JIT) for Hackett Middle School is presently in draft form and has been sent to the State Education Department (SED) for review, which will take a period of time. Once that review is completed the report will be provided to the Board. The grant application deadline, \$2 million for Hackett Middle School and \$2 million for Albany High School is next week.

- Mentoring for alternative education students could possibly be overseen by the volunteer coordinator. This might be something that makes a significant difference in the lives of these students.
- The District is making some progress in a number of strategies defined in the Strategic Plan. A suggestion was made to change the format of the Strategic Plan update document to make it more user friendly, showing progress for each strategy and statement.

ROUTINE CONSENT

Routine Consent Items were presented as follow: Proceedings of Meetings (March 3, 2011, March 17, 2011 and April 12, 2011; Appointments (Probationary, Miscellaneous, Substitutes); Leave of Absence; Terminations; Field Trips; Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000; Budget Transfers over \$10,000; Revenue Status Report – 03/31/11; Appropriate Status Report – 03/31/11; Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Fund; Bid Awards #335 & 318; Real Property Tax Adjustments; Health Services Contracts (Guilderland Central School District and Waterford-Halfmoon UFSD); and Authorization to Enter Into Contracts. Ms. Streznewski made a motion to approve Routine Consent Items. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Mr. Egan set aside proceedings of April 12, 2011. Ms. Mackey set aside field trips.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the motion, absent those set aside,

Mrs. Leet was absent for the vote.

Motion passed.

Ms. Streznewski made a motion to approve the proceedings of April 12, 2011. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion. Mr. Egan requested clarification in the proceedings repeated to myths presented to the public and Mr. Hogan's responses. Clarification will be made.

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

Mrs. Leet was absent for the vote.

Motion passed.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve field trips. Mr. Egan seconded the motion, Ms. Mackey repeated her concerns related to how the District raises money for field trips. The field trip presented this evening is a trip in 2013 for students to go to Costa Rica at a cost of \$2,200. As the District moves the high school into four academies, in order to maintain equity the issue of how decisions are made relative to field trips needs to be reviewed so that all students have the same opportunities. Dr. Colucciello advised the District has started this conversation. Additional information will be forthcoming, Questions and comments relative to this item can be forwarded to Der. Colucciello. Information will be provided to Board members in the future. Following additional discussion, the Board modified the current motion to separate the two field trips presented.

Ms. Mackey made a motion to approve the Washington, D.C. field trip. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Mr. Egan made a motion to approve the Costa Rica trip. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

The Board voted 0 ayes, 2 nays, 5 abstentions.

Mr. Egan and Ms. Green voted nay.

Dr. Brandon. Mrs. Gaffuri, Mrs. Leet, Mc. Mackey, and Ms. Streznewski abstained.

Motion failed.

ACTION

Policy approval

The following policies were presented for approval:

- 4000 Student Learning Objectives and District Instructional Goals
- 4200 Curriculum Management
- 4326 Limited English Proficiency Instruction
- 4326R Limited English Proficiency Instruction Regulations
- 4325 Academic Intervention Services
- 4420 Class Size

Mr. Egan noted Board members had questions on Policies #4000 and #4200, suggesting that the Board vote on the remaining 4 policies (#4324, 4326R, #4325 and 4420). Ms. Streznewski made a motion to approve the 4 policies. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Ms. Streznewski made a motion to approve policy #4000. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. #4000 – Mrs. Streznewski noted a concern with the phrase “All students will demonstrate the ability to”, taking into account factors that the District does not have control over, i.e. students who come into the District that do not speak English, those with disabilities and those with behavioral problems who may not be able to accomplish this goal. Ms. Streznewski recommended that the policy read “demonstrate the ability” for Objectives 1, 2, 3, and 4. Objective 5 lists subjects that not all students are able to take. Objective 6 is outside the scope of what the District is able to do in terms of programming. Programs would have to be established.

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers noted the Policy Committee considered the concerns related to this policy and decided to go forward with the policy as written, knowing that each school, as they do their school improvement and set their own benchmarks for achieving will be setting goals more specific to their school level. The members of the committee felt that the Board goals should be of the highest expectations. The policy further states the Board’s responsibility to provide the opportunity for quality learning.

Following discussion, Mr. Egan suggested that the Board call the vote. If the policy is not approved it should go back to the Policy Committee once again for additional review.

The Board voted 4 ayes, and 3 nays.

Mr. Egan, Dr. Brandon and Ms. Streznewski voted nay.

Motion passed.

Ms. Streznewski made a motion to approve policy #4200. Mr. Egan seconded the motion. Ms. Streznewski expressed concern with the annual review of curriculum, considering the one year review would involve a great deal of work and changes to curriculum every year, which could be confusing. A recommendation was made to develop a schedule to rotate the review by subject matter each year.

The Board voted unanimously (7-0) to approve the policy as edited.

Motion passed.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Egan advised the Audit Committee met last week with the Bonadio Group to discuss the audit, which will begin in the near future. The group also discussed activity based costing, which would involve additional labor costs.

Ms. Rudnick advised the Curriculum Committee met on April 26, 2011 for a presentation on response to intervention and discussion of the Retention and Promotion Policy. All ELA subcommittees have met since that date. Topics for the next meeting on May 17, 2011 will include a presentation from the BOCES Instructional Coordinator, and a video presentation held on April 28, 2011, which was hosted by David Coleman, author of the new core curriculum standards.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

Mrs. Gaffuri advised she is unable to attend the May 19, 2011 Board meeting.

Mrs. Leet advised the winning posters for the Crop Walk were displayed at the registration for the event. The artwork will be used next year and an essay contest component will also be added. Mrs. Leet expressed her appreciation to Ms. Rudnick and Ms. Savino for their cooperation in the project. There were about 400 walkers in the area for local food pantries.

Mrs. Leet asked that the Board consider changing the Board meeting on Thursday, April 5, 2012 and also how the additional days on the calendar affects other employee contract in the District. The District is working on contracts.

Mrs. Leet suggested that the District develop a publication that lists the program and opportunities for high achievement. It would be good to have that all in one place.

Ms. Streznewski asked for information relative to the Board approving the Grants for Albany High School and Hackett Middle School prior to submission. Following discussion Dr. Diggs suggested that a draft of the grant is available and could be sent to Board members for their review.

Ms. Mackey requested consideration of allowing the use of school buildings by AAU Basketball.

Ms. Mackey suggested a review of the District website for inconsistencies, access, and outdated information; is there a plan for development of web pages for the new academies; there are a number of District's that have an automated scheduling system for sports; an automated athletic schedule on the website; things that can bring the website into the 21st century.

Ms. Mackey noted the Alt Ed Think Tank is scheduled to meet in July and asked when this item would be brought to the Board for discussion.

Ms. Mackey asked for clarification of monies in the Extra Classroom Activity Fund to determine the level of support provided by the Booster Club. Mr. Hogan noted that if funds are sent to the District, there is a record and receipt indicating pertinent information, If funds go directly to the manufacturer, the District would not have a record of the donation. Mr. Hogan will provide additional information.

Mrs. Gaffuri noted the meeting this evening was full, stating that her preference is that Board meetings conclude at 10:30 p.m. Mrs. Gaffuri suggested that the Board work on possibly tabling items so that the meeting can be concluded by 10:30 p.m.

Mr. Egan noted Founder's Day is May 14, 2011.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to adjourn. Dr. Brandon seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned 12:05 a.m.