

City School District of Albany

August 5, 2010

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Dan Egan, 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 7:00 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 made a motion to approve an addendum to the agenda to include addition items under Routine Consent. Resolution to Appoint Employee Disciplinary Hearing Officer, Resolution to Appoint Special Education Impartial Hearing Officer, Resolution to Approve Public Hearing for Charter Schools, Resolution to Approve Changes in Tenure Areas.

Ms. Mackey seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Colucciello introduced Tom McGurn, a Social Studies teacher at Albany High School. Mr. McGurn has been chosen as the Best High School Teacher in the Capital Region in a poll conducted by the Albany *Times Union* newspaper. This is the second consecutive year Mr. McGurn has been awarded this recognition. Dr. Colucciello extended congratulations to Mr. McGurn, who spoke about school as being an "Isle of Civility and Training" in the lives of many of the students in the District. Albany High School is the last, best hope for the children of Albany. Mr. Egan personally thanked Mr. McGurn for his part in educating students.

Dr. Colucciello advised the New York State 2010 Budget has been passed by the Legislators. There are still a number of issues that need to be resolved. Among the many unknowns are the state aid amount, Charter School payments and the impact of the Jobs Bill. The Board of Education will be provided updates as soon as they are received. The District is obligated to set the tax rate on August 19, 2010. Hopefully, there will be additional information provided to the District before this decision is made.

PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Robert Malerba addressed the Board regarding the students who were scheduled to attend Harriet Gibbons High School this fall and the importance of assessments in determining the needs of these students. Collaborative teaching and assessment should be ongoing every two weeks. Quarterly assessments do not cut it.

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Approval of Change Orders

Change orders for Arbor Hill Elementary School were presented for approval. Mr. Morris made a motion to approve the change orders. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

ROUTINE CONSENT

Routine consent items were presented as follows: Proceedings of Meetings (July 1, 2010 and July 14, 2010); Appointments, Administrative Reorganization, Transfers, Miscellaneous, Civil Service, Summer School 2010; Stipends; Leaves of Absence; Transfers; Corrections; Retirements/Resignations; Attendance at Conferences; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000 /09-10; Budget Transfers over \$10,000/ 09-10; Budget Transfers over \$10,000/ 10-11; Revenue Status Report; Appropriations Status Report; Real Property Tax Adjustments; Central Treasurer's Report for Extra Classroom Activity Funds; Donation; Authorization to Enter into Contracts; NYS Association of Small City School Districts Litigation - \$25,000; Certification of Acceptance of Free & Reduced Price Lunch Program; Resolution to Appoint Employee Disciplinary Hearing Officer; Resolution to Appoint Special Education; Impartial Hearing Officer; Resolution to Approve Public Hearing for Charter Schools; and Resolution to Approve Changes in Tenure Areas. Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval. Mr. Morris seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey asked that Proceedings of Meetings be set aside.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve Routine Consent Items absent those items set aside.

Motion passed.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve Proceedings of Meetings for July 1, 2010. Ms. Mackey seconded the motion. Ms. Mackey asked if there were any restrictions on members of the public who are permitted to present comments at Board meetings. Following a brief discussion a suggestion was made that public speakers will be asked to identify themselves and give their address. Also, staff members will be asked to identify themselves, give their affiliation with the District, and indicate whether or not they are speaking as a private individual, or on behalf of a particular organization. This information could then be reflected in the minutes. Mr. Egan suggested that this issue could be brought forward as a discussion item on a future agenda.

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

Motion passed

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion to approve the proceedings of July 14, 2010. Mr. Morris seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed

INFORMATION

Alternative Education Think Tank

Dr. Diggs expressed the District's gratitude to the members of the Alternative Education Think Tank for their dedication and commitment to this task. Dr. Diggs introduced, Mr. Raymond Schimmer, Chair of the Alternative Education Think Tank. Mr. Schimmer provided a verbal review of the written report from the Think Tank. The review included an introduction: the Think Tank Plan of Work: Mission, Vision and Goals of the Alternative Education Think Tank: and a summary of subcommittee reports (stakeholder involvement, literature review and benchmarking, cohort study and program evaluation, a comprehensive listing of recommendations developed by the Think Tank members, recommendations to be implemented by September 2010, and ongoing implementation). Mr. Egan expressed his gratitude to the members of this group for the excellent report.

- Urge the Board to find a way to continue the Alternative Education Think Tank, perhaps on a quarterly basis, and to use resources to look at discipline policies, and figure out how to best meet the needs of those students who are struggling behaviorally and those who are struggling academically.
- This is an important aspect of improving education to close the achievement gap. Thank you to everyone who participated in this project.
- I support recommendation #6 that speaks to having one designated person to oversee all alternative education programs.

Mr. Schimmer read a letter that was sent to the Board of Education relative to his experience on this project. Mr. Schimmer noted the positive changes the District might make in the trajectories of these students' lives dwarfs what it can do for students who enjoy multiple supports with respect to their educational and vocational futures.

Dr. Colucciello extended gratitude to Mr. Schimmer for providing the leadership to this group. The District has already started working on the first recommendation. A re-directed alternative education student becomes one of the most powerful adults in our society.

New York State Scoring Standards

Ms. Rudnick gave a comprehensive report on the NYS ELA and Math Test Results: Analysis and Action. The report included what the District learned, what is unknown, what the District must do, what is happening now, and what will continue to happen through the start of the school year. The District will work closely with Principals this year to make sure that they understand the work ahead of them.

- Who will be receiving the data? Will it be District-wide?
School reports come back to each individual school. Students are grouped. Students will be matched with a profile sheet that is reviewed by the principal and the members of the BLT, who are the data people. The first day of school, teacher will start the analysis. All principals will be doing this exactly the same way. All teachers will have the profile sheet for every student available to them.
- How does this information get home to parents?
By regulation parents have to get a copy of the student's results. They are mailed to them. The District is looking at hosting workshops for parents so they understand the process. Parents will receive formal notification at least five times throughout the year. There needs to be additional conversation regarding communicating information to parents.

- The District needs to say that college readiness is the standard. It needs to take responsibility to raise the bar. Expectations should be the same for every student. A broad standard should be set for the entire District. The District needs to insure that every student who leaves the District is able to function at any level in every way no matter what career choice they make. Each child should reach the absolute limit they are able. We need to take responsibility to raise the bar.
- Are the profile sheets a step toward individual assessment for each student?
Yes.
- What part do the Instructional Supervisors play in this process?
Three schools have to do a formal Comprehensive Education Plan. The Instructional Supervisors for ELA and Math for elementary students have sat in on the BLT meetings in order to develop the plan. Prior to the start of school, the Instructional Supervisors will meet with the principals and the BLTs and look at all the students. They work with the coaches, reading teachers, and AIS teachers to insure that the services for students are what they need to be.
- Once students get into middle school, the grammar and sentence structure teaching is not as strong. Students need to read and write in state tests. Students are not prepared for these tests.
- Will the curriculum be aligned with National Standards?
The National Standards were available to the Supervisors. NYS Standards were developed from the National Standards.
- I'm glad that the District continues to move beyond teaching students to do well on standardized tests. I would like to see the scale scores by building and by teacher, not identified, simply identifying information to see outliers, also include percentage change at the same level to determine the trend.
Yes.
- Does the District do practice tests?
Students need skills, strategy and stamina. Practice is necessary for test awareness.

Appointment

Mr. Egan congratulated Dale Getto on her new appointment as Principal for School Improvement; Cecily Wilson, Interim Principal, Albany High School; Zuleika Sanchez-Gayle, Interim Principal at Sheridan Preparatory Academy, and Leslie Buff, Interim Principal, North Albany Academy.

DISCUSSION

Employee Handbook

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers presented the revised Employee Handbook. This handbook is aligned with the contract and general operating procedures. The language is broad enough to insure that it is aligned with union contracts. The document has been reviewed by counsel. The purpose of the document is to communicate personnel policies and practices to all employees so that each employee understands the policies that relate to rules, regulations, procedures, employment classifications, and benefits. It is not a contract. Related information has been updated. Following approval, each employee will receive a copy with a statement indicating that they have received the document. Employee responses will be documented in PD Express. The language of the Technology Policy will be included in the document.

Policies

Ms. Jackson-Chalmers presented the following policies for approval:

- 2310 Regular Meetings
- 2320 Special Meetings
- 2330 Executive Session
- 2340 Notice of Meetings
- 2342 Agenda Preparation and Dissemination
- 2350 Meeting Procedures
- 2351 Quorum
- 2352 Rules of Order
- 2360 Minutes
- 2382 Broadcasting and Taping of Meetings

These policies represent the completion of policies related to the Board meetings. Policy review will continue with the completion of the 2000 series and continue on to the 3000 series. These are standard policies that have been reviewed by counsel. Ms. Mackey noted concern that staff members come to the Board meetings and speak without indicating whether they are representing themselves, a group, or the District. The public comment policy will be brought forward to the Policy Committee for additional consideration based on these comments. These policies will be brought forward at the next meeting for approval.

Operation Graduation

Mrs. Leet presented a proposal to extend Operation Graduation to all grades K-12, previously provided to Board members for consideration. The purpose of this project is to insure that struggling student are provided support services to insure that they are prepared to go forward with appropriate skills into the next grade.

- This proposal ties in with some of the things that have been previously discussed. Additionally, regular reports on each student, is a concern in terms of this information being more helpful to Instructional Supervisors and the coordination of AIS services, and that it might be too much information to be forwarded to Board members. Social promotion is also a concern. However, there will be some students who are stronger in some areas, but not proficient in others. Would they be held from promotion? Perhaps additional assistance should be made available to these students to insure that they are ready for promotion. The District would need to develop clear guidelines, with some flexibility, if proficiency is to be tied in with promotion.
- This is a brief proposal, but it's huge. Before going forward with it, staff should be given time to react to it and present responses for board discussion. The implications of changing promotion policies are huge.
- I see implementation directives in here, and I believe that it is the District's job to do that. The idea of PEPs for students is a good idea. Some of these initiatives might cost money. The feasibility of adopting this needs further discussion.
- A lot of this is in the works to be done. Student profiles are the first step toward the Personalized Education Plan. Providing support services is where the Instructional Supervisors could be involved. Also, the Strategic Plan addressed several items included in this proposal.

Enrollment

Mrs. Leet proposed a policy related to students remaining in their home school throughout their education to address issues of transition and suggested that be presented to the Attendance Zone Committee for study. Practice in the District has been that students are permitted to stay in their home school through the completion of the school year, and then they can apply to stay in that school through open enrollment. The District also provides transportation for those students. Following discussion, the Board agreed that it should be presented to the Attendance Zone Committee.

Board Committee Reports

Members of the Board were provided a draft outline of Board Committees for their review. Dr. Colucciello suggested that the Board consider a community committee to look at the high school. The other piece is a curriculum committee that starts to look at services and progress. That committee could be getting some of the reports mentioned earlier in this meeting for review, comment, and recommendation. Mr. Morris advised he would like to volunteer to serve on the Charter School Committee. Dr. Colucciello noted that committee membership is permitted to change. There was consensus from Board members to go forward with a Curriculum Committee. Mention was also made to establish a committee that will begin to look at the rebuilding of the high school.

The Shared Decision Making Plan Review group has met with members of the Building Leadership Teams. The group will be meeting with their individual BLTs to review the plan. The group will come together in the next week to consider recommendations from the BLTs. This information will be presented to the Board, for its review.

Board Member Items

None

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Mackey made a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Brandon seconded the motion. Meeting was adjourned at 9:25p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cutting