

PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

November 8, 2006

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT:

Edward Brown, President
Barbara Gaffuri, Secretary
William Barnette
Jackie Jenkins-Cox
Judy Doesschate
Susan Kushner (10:50 p.m.)

Dr. Eva Joseph
Jeffrey Honeywell
Joseph Dragone
Kathleen Wetmore
Linda Jackson-Chalmers

Absent/Excused:

Teneka Frost

Call to Order:

Mr. Brown called the meeting to order at 7:10 p.m. All present joined in the Pledge of Allegiance. Mr. Brown welcomed the members of the audience and thanked them for taking the time to attend the meeting.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. Joseph noted in terms of continuing the commitment to the quality education that the district provides, the district conducted a parent teacher conference day district wide for grades K-12 yesterday. Dr. Joseph advised the feedback has been very positive.

November 12– 18, 2006 has been designated by the National Education Association as American Education Week. Dr. Joseph advised as part of that recognition, the district is celebrating Great Public Schools: Keeping the Lights On After School on Monday, November 13, 2006 at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy from 6:30–8:30 p.m. Activities include Double Dutch, African Drumming, Choir, Dance Exhibitors, Poetry, Theatre Ensemble and more. Dr. Joseph encouraged those present to participate in this celebration.

Dr. Joseph introduced Mr. Brian Cartwright, who is being recommended to the board this evening for appointment to the position of Instructional Supervisor for Social Studies. Dr. Joseph noted Mr. Cartwright is presently a Social Studies teacher at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy. Dr. Joseph noted Mr. Cartwright assisted the district in an Assistant Principal role last year when the leadership at Philip Livingston Magnet Academy was strengthened and renewed.

Dr. Joseph noted the board would be hearing a presentation on the Facilities Project this evening, which is an opportunity to discuss the all-important projects that remain with Phase I of the Facilities Project. Dr. Joseph noted that hopefully, through long discussions, the board would set direction toward thinking about the high school restructuring.

Mr. Brown congratulated the two newly elected board members, Mr. Mark Barth and Mr. Wayne Morris. Board membership will be effective January 1, 2007.

STUDENT REPRESENTATION REPORT

The student representative was not present. There was no report.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

1. Lisa Angerame addressed the board relative to the swing space for School 19.
2. Patricia Purcell addressed the board relative to building conditions at TOAST.
3. Beth Labunski addressed the board relative to Routine Consent Items on the agenda.
4. Nolene Smith addressed the board relative to NCLB regulations.
5. Bill Ritchie addressed the board to congratulate and welcome the two newly elected board members.
6. Alicia Barr, Jamere Holland and Shinasha Lawson addressed the board regarding the cheerleading coach position.

Following discussion Mr. Barnette made a motion to convene into Executive Session to hear remarks from this group. Ms. Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion. The board convened into Executive Session at 7:40 p.m. and reconvened into public session at 7:50 p.m.

7. Robert Reilly addressed the board relative to building conditions at TOAST.
8. Alex Streznewski addressed the board relative to building conditions at TOAST.
9. Mary LaMont-Calsolaro addressed the board regarding the library at TOAST.
10. Onnolee Smith addressed the board regarding the Albany Fund for Education Eighth Annual Gala on November 19, 2006.

Mr. Barnette made a motion to amend the agenda to include Policy #2270 School Attorney under Action Items – Policy Review. Mrs. Gaffuri seconded the motion.

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

INFORMATION ITEM

Dr. Joseph advised the district has received assessment information from the previous school year. The Comprehensive District Education Planning Committee has met to review data and the district now begins the process of sharing that information with the board. Dr. Joseph noted this is the data upon which the district sets improvement goals each year. Mr. Dragone previously gave a comprehensive presentation regarding the high school performance data as an encapsulation or pulse check in terms of how the district is doing academically. Mr. Dragone outlined the important issues regarding high school accountability, trend data and implications. Three important elements of accountability are participation, performance and graduation rate.

Mr. Dragone reviewed regulatory changes along with requirements necessary in meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). Mr. Dragone continued with changes implemented in the Fall of 2005 made by the Office of Instruction in terms of action steps and specific actions. Mr. Dragone reviewed the participation rate trend for ELA and Math participation, the ELA and Math cohort achievement (4 year trend) and ELA and Math graduation requirements 2001-2002. Mr. Dragone concluded with the implications for students entering grade 9 in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008, additional opportunities for students to sit for Regents exams, strengthen academic opportunities and expectations for underclassmen, Special Education/IDEA Accountability, continued curricular evaluation and redesign, focus on student centered pedagogical practices, emphasis on additional opportunities for academic support and future high school issues and how they impact graduation rates.

ROUTINE CONSENT ITEMS

Mr. Brown presented the following routine consent items for approval: Proceedings of Meeting (October 3, 2006, October 19, 2006); Resignations, Position Vacated, Abolish Position, Creation of Position, Leave of Absences, Transfers, Appointments (Administrator, Probationary, Regular Substitutes, Part-time Teacher, Miscellaneous, Coaching – Fall 2006, Albany Evening High School, Civil Service, Civil Service Permanent, Tenure Appointment and Emergency Conditional Appointments), Treasurer's Report – 9/30/06, 2006-2007 Budget Transfers under \$10,000, 2006-2007 Budget Transfers over \$10,000, Budget Status Report-9/30/06, Extra Curricular Activity Fund-Summary of Accounts, Approval to establish Myers Drama Club – Extracurricular Activity Fund, Approval to establish Myers Spanish Club – Extracurricular Club, Bid Awards, and Real Property Tax Adjustments. Committee on Special Education, Subcommittee on Special Education, Committee on Pre-School Special Education, Contracts for Grants and Special Projects – Supplemental Educational Services (Adirondack Tutoring Services, LLC (Club Z), ARTPARTNERS/TSEHAYA & Co. Inc., Catapult Online, LLC (a subsidiary of Educate, Inc., St. John's Community Development Corp., Siena College). Universal Pre-K (Albany County Opportunity, Inc (Head Start), Albany Jewish Community Center (AJCC), Boys and Girls Club of Albany. Special Projects (Catholic Charities of the Diocese of Albany, Success For All Foundation, Thomas Communications & Technologies) and Attendance at Conferences.

Mrs. Gaffuri made a motion for approval of Routine Consent Items. Ms. Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion. Ms. Doesschate requested that the proceedings of meetings for October 3, 2006 and the SES contract for Catapult Online, LLC. be set aside.

The board voted unanimously 6-0 to approve the Routine Consent Items absent those set aside.

Mrs. Gaffuri later requested that her vote be changed to abstained.

The vote was 5 ayes and 1 abstention. Mrs. Gaffuri abstained.

Mr. Brown presented the proceedings of October 3, 2006 for approval. Mr. Barnette made a motion for approval. Ms. Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion. Ms. Doesschate made a motion to table this item pending further review. Ms. Kushner seconded the motion.

The board voted unanimously 6-0 to table this item.

Mr. Brown presented the SES contract with Catapult Online, LLC, to the board for approval. Mr. Barnette made a motion for approval. Ms. Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion. Following discussion, Mr. Barnette made a motion to table this time pending further review. Ms. Kushner seconded the motion.

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

FACILITIES PROJECT REPORT

Discussion Items Related to the Facilities Project

Phases E-F Referendum

Dr. Joseph advised the facilities team along with Richard Peckam of Collins & Scoville, Mr. Vislosky of Fiscal Advisors, Sandra Baptie of Envision, Tony Armlin, Armlin Damon Associates and Shawn Hamlin with Hamlin Design Group gave a presentation on finishing the existing facilities plan. Mr. Peckam advised the state has released EXCEL Aid that would fund additional facility work. The recommendation is that infrastructure issues at Arbor Hill Elementary School, Giffen Memorial and TOAST be addressed with this funding and remaining funds from the adjusted referendum in 2003.

The breakdown of funding is \$13 million projected savings and unencumbered funds, \$7.8 million in EXCEL Aid and \$11.2 million estimated State Building Aid as a result of Excel Aid for a total of \$32 million. The use and limitations of EXCEL Funds include the timing of projects submitted to SED, which is critical and voter approval required with a 60% approval to exceed debt limit. Mr. Peckam noted that the use of EXCEL Aid would result in no additional tax increase to taxpayers. Essentially, what's happening is that the EXCEL Aid is paying for the local share of any additional funding and then state building aid pays for the additional \$11.2 million for a total of \$32 million that would be available. Mr. Peckam reviewed Board of Education directions in July 2005 and the items that have changed since that time in terms of the Excel Aid, Charter Schools and increased construction costs. Mr. Peckam also reviewed the options for the use of these proposed funds to address needs at Arbor Hill, Giffen and TOAST and options for meeting the budget goals for these projects.

Mr. Peckam advised there are three reasons to go forward with a referendum at this time, cost, enrollment and adaptability and flexibility. Mr. Peckam also reviewed a draft timeline for presenting a referendum on February 5, 2007 that would authorize the expansion of the funding for these projects, noting that this would be a zero cost referendum. Dr. Joseph noted the district is poised to realize the project to completion as opposed to not having had the EXCEL Aid. The district is presenting this as very positive to be contemplating the referendum date as the right time in that it keeps the project moving and provides maximum time for accessing the EXCEL Aid.

A lengthy discussion followed relative to timing, swing space during the construction process, accessibility of State Education approvals and a financial plan for the projects. Board members also expressed their gratitude to the facilities team for developing this plan. Discussion also centered on how the information to this as a no cost referendum would be communicated to the public. The public will be asked for the authority to spend more money and borrow at no additional cost to the local taxpayer. The district would be spending more money than has been approved by the voters because of the leverage ability with the EXCEL Aid. Dr. Joseph noted the district is aware that very deliberate outreach is necessary to insure that the public is aware that approval of this referendum would result in no additional cost to taxpayers.

Facilities Project Improvement Planning Phase II

Dr. Joseph gave a comprehensive presentation on the vision of the facilities plan. Dr. Joseph reviewed the progress of the facilities plan with the completion of seven schools, two more to open in January 2007, the planned renovation of two more to be completed in 2008, and the potential for completing the plan with three additional schools to be renovated.

Dr. Joseph noted the district has had numerous conversations about the high school and the high school restructuring since 1998 which include a great deal of iteration. Dr. Joseph noted the district has learned a lot and at this point the plan needs to take some shape that the district can work from in terms of bringing all that information together to be sense making and, with the completion of the first phase of the facilities planning in a way that the district the district and the public are confident about and there is trust in the completion of the plan to move forward in the completion of the plan.

Dr. Joseph discussed the vision of where the district goes from this point in the facilities planning in renewing the high school, meeting athletic needs and accommodating middle school enrollment changes. Dr. Joseph noted the three Charter Schools Middle Schools did not exist when the public approved the original referendum. The fluctuation of the Charter School enrollment remains a significant factor in determining the district's enrollment.

Dr. Joseph reviewed the various proposals the board has discussed in restructuring the high school. Dr. Joseph described the vision with the present high school renovated for 1700 students with Abrookin replacement located on campus. Philip Livingston as a 650-700 student themed high school of choice, with a commissary, central offices, and athletics. Additionally, the Athletic Master Plan for the high school and middle schools and Giffen Middle School possibly accommodating (Pre K-8). Dr. Joseph concluded with the next steps, which include community involvement and feedback. Continued educational programming, further investigations of existing high school reconstruction and exploration of other district building needs.

Dr. Joseph noted this vision captures a number of goals in terms of the school system and its connection to the community, which would garner the broad based support that is needed in order to be successful in the next referendum. Dr. Joseph noted it is evident that the high school needs some work in terms of educational program and structure. The opportunity to create something with such promise is very exciting.

Discussion followed regarding class size, alternative education opportunities, concerns with the Adult Learning Center, authority for Giffen and consideration of the Philip Schuyler Building in this planning. Mr. Gifford advised referendum planning from the building side is relatively easy. The logistics of implementation involve considerable planning. Mr. Gifford advised this referendum also requires a 60% voter approval. Community education of the plan to garner support is very important. Dr. Joseph advised future deliberations would be scheduled as needed.

Action Items Related to the Facilities Project

Approval of Change Orders

Mr. Gifford presented change orders for the Stephen & Harriet Myers Middle School, Hackett Middle School, Pine Hills Elementary School (School 16) and Delaware Community School (School 18). Mr. Barnette made a motion for approval. Ms. Jenkins-Cox seconded the motion.

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

ACTION ITEMS

2005-2006 Financial Statements

Mr. Brown presented the 2005-2006 financial statements presented at the October 19, 2006 board meeting, for approval. Ms. Kushner made a motion to approve the financial statements. Mr. Barnette seconded the motion.

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

School 19 Swing Space

Mr. Brown brought forward the School 19 Swing Space plan presented at the October 19, 2006 board meeting, for approval. Mr. Barnette made a motion to approve the plan. Ms. Doesschate seconded the motion. Discussion followed relative to the kindergarten class. Mr. White advised there would be three classes of School 19 kindergarten students situated at Eagle Point. Eagle Point will also have two kindergarten classes. Those kindergartens will stay at Eagle Point through 2007-2008 and the fall of 2008. They will stay at Eagle Point as first graders. Rather than asking them to do a four-month transition, those students will stay at Eagle Point for four months as first graders and then transition with the rest of the school in January of 2009, when the renovated School 19 is opened.

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

Policies

Mr. Brown presented the following policies for approval: 6640 Fixed Assets (Inventories), 8334 Credit Cards, 9710 Travel & Conferences and 2270 School Attorney. Ms. Doesschate made a motion for approval. Ms. Kushner seconded the motion. Mr. Honeywell suggested the elimination of "unless authorized in advance by the Superintendent in the last sentence of the second paragraph in 9710 Travel & Conferences and a grammatical correction in the second sentence of the 2270 School Attorney policy to remove the word "The" and to change the word member to members in that same sentence. Ms. Doesschate accepted the changes.

The board voted unanimously 6-0 to approve the motion as amended.

DISCUSSION ITEM

Budget Development Calendar

Dr. Joseph presented the Budget Development Calendar for the 2007-2008 budget process. Dr. Joseph noted this schedule follows the dates defined in previous years, particularly last year when the approval of the budget was moved forward to allow for as much information as possible from the State in considering the final budget. Mr. Barnette requested that round table meetings be structured to allow 60minutes for public comment to allow as much feedback as possible from the public. Mr. Barnette also suggested that the budget meeting on March 27 be set up as a forum to allow for additional public input. Mr. Brown advised this item would be scheduled on the next agenda for action.

BOARD COMMITTEE REPORTS

Ms. Kushner noted the Intergovernmental Committee would be meeting on Thursday, November 9th would include discussion relative to fluoridation of the City water supply. Ms. Kushner noted Drs. Kotlow and Hart, local pediatric dentists would be joining in that discussion. Ms. Kushner encouraged board members to attend this meeting.

Ms. Doesschate advised the Academic Committee has been discussing issues related to the Honors Program and AP. Discussions have focused on realigning the program as a Pre AP, Pre IBO process providing parents with a brochure that provides comprehensive information to students and parents about the program. Also, the committee is recommending that the teacher recommendation requirement should be eliminated from the process as a means of reducing barriers to admission into the program.

Mr. Barnette noted the board committee structure is such that committees do not make decisions. Recommendations are brought forward to the superintendent to be scheduled on the board agenda for discussion and action. Discussion followed relative to the structure and function of committees. Mr. Barnette noted this situation is basically members of the board making recommendations to the administration absent the review of the entire board. Mr. Barnette noted the purpose of this conversation is to keep the roles delineated. Dr. Joseph noted that if a decision were necessary for an item that fell within the line of regulations, guidelines, protocols, the subcommittee would then bring it forward to the board for discussion. Dr. Joseph noted this particular brochure is really an information item that was refined through the subcommittee. Dr. Joseph advised she would put it in an information packet to board members.

Mr. Barnette noted the policy committee met earlier this week to review policies that were acted on this evening. Ms. Gaffuri noted the committee has suggested that the bulk of policies will be forwarded to counsel for review and move forward to board members for discussion and action.

BOARD MEMBER ITEMS

No items.

Adjournment

Ms. Jenkins-Cox made a motion to adjourn. Meeting was adjourned at 11:10 p.m.

Catherine L. Cutting
Clerk of the Board