



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 17, 2013

7:00 p.m.

Albany School of Humanities

PRESENT: Alexandra Streznewski President Dr. Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard
Ginnie Farrell, Vice President Bill Hogan
Dr. Rose Brandon, Secretary Dr. Tresa Diggs
Sue Adler Linda Rudnick
Dan Egan Kathleen Culligan
Felicia Green Mark Place
Edith Leet

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.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Dr. V advised the District has been in frequent contact with building leaders, Mayor Jennings, and Police Chief Krokoff, about safety practices and protocols since the tragic Connecticut shootings last month. As the next step in that process we have convened a meeting this week with representatives from the District, the Police Department, and the City's Critical Asset Team. Dr. V noted that the City and our local law enforcement emergency response agencies have been outstanding partners throughout her brief tenure, especially in response to the concerns raised following Sandy Hook. They have a laser focus in working with the District to ensure the safety of each and every one of our 10,000 students and staff members. Patrol officers have been visiting schools on their regular beats on Wednesday and will continue that outreach to strengthen relationships with our building leaders and staff. The Critical Asset Assessment Team will work with the District to review and strengthen response plans in each building. Dr. V will continue to provide updates on this extremely important work.

The District once again has a teacher who is being recognized as one of the best teachers in the Capital Region. Suzanne Fowler, a 2nd grade teacher at Delaware Community School, has been chosen as one of Channel 13's Top Teachers of 2013. Suzanne was nominated for this award by one of the parents, and we look forward to having Suzanne at a future Board meeting. Suzanne will be recognized in the future on the Channel 13 segment on Top Teacher in the Capital Region.

Nominations for the City School District of Albany Hall of Fame Class of 2013 are due by Friday, February 1, 2013. Please help us recognize our many talented graduates, as well as exemplary staff and community members who have provided strong support and leadership for our students through the years. Applications can be found on the District website in the Hall of Fame section.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

There were no speakers.

FACILITIES

Change Orders

Mr. Hogan presented a change order for mechanical work at Albany High School and renovations in the fashion room and the auto shop at the Abrookin Vocational School performed during last summer's recess. The total amount of the change orders is \$25,597.00. Mr. Hogan noted the change orders have been reviewed by the Facilities Committee. In response to an inquiry regarding the program at Abrookin, Mr. Hogan noted the program has been up and running since the first day of classes. Mr. Egan made a motion to approve the change orders. Ms. Adler seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

ROUTINE CONSENT

Routine Consent items were presented for approval as follow: Human Resource Items; Bid Award #13-440 Johnstone Supply; 2013 Board Committee Schedule; Authorization to Enter into Contracts. Ms. Cutting noted there was an addition of an Administrative Appointment and a revised listing of contracts also included under Routine Consent. Ms. Adler made a motion to approve Routine Consent items, Ms. Green seconded the motion. Ms. Cutting noted an administrative appointment and the Innovative Charitable Initiatives Contract (ICI), has been added to the Authorization to Enter into Contract listing. Mr. Egan set aside (ICI) contract. Ms. Streznewski set aside the Siena (AmeriCorps VISTA) Contract,

The Board voted 5 ayes, 1 nay, and 1 abstention absent those items set aside.

Mrs. Leet voted nay and Ms. Farrell abstained.

Motion passed.

Ms. Adler made a motion to approve the ICI Contract. Ms. Farrell seconded the motion. Mr. Egan suggested that this item be set aside for the next meeting because this is a contract with no deliverables attached. Ms. Adler noted the contract has a 30 day termination, as well as the requirement of invoices, for the purpose of insuring a worthwhile program is funded, and the safeguards now exist, there are items that provide oversight and protections for the District.

The Board voted 5 ayes, 2 nays and no abstentions.

Mr. Egan and Mrs. Leet voted nay.

Motion passed.

Ms. Green made a motion to approve the Siena (AmeriCorps) Contract. Mr. Egan seconded the motion. Ms. Streznewski noted the contract appears to be for volunteer services, yet has a total figure of \$11, 124.00 for two VISTA volunteers. Dr. Diggs noted there are two VISTA volunteer workers at Hackett Middle School. They also perform a variety of activities outside their volunteer services, i.e., newsletter, advisory services, etc. They are paid minimum wage through AmeriCorps.

The Board voted 6 ayes, 0 nays, and 1 abstention.

Mrs. Leet abstained.

Motion passed,

DISCUSSION

Budget Update

Dr. V started the presentation noting that throughout the process of her candidacy she had the opportunity to do homework about the District. In reviewing the budget over the last four years, it was very clear that the Board, business services, and the office of the superintendent were working really hard to make sure that our programs could remain solvent for as long as possible, knowing full well that the weight of finance, for not only the K-12 system, but K-12 and the collegiate system, was coming under difficult times. Part of the joy of coming to the District was the opportunity to work with Mr. Hogan, the business office, and the Board, to try to draw a map between resource allocation, programs, and student achievement. Performance Goals for 2012-2020 are that all students will reach high standards, established by the Board and state performance level standards without predictability based on race, ethnicity, linguistics, or ability, and that all students will graduate prepared for post-secondary options without the need for remediation. Dr. V reviewed the Operational Goals for 2012 – 2020. Dr. V noted she is trying to create a synergy around alliance and alignment and between both. This Board is poised to do some phenomenal work.

Mr. Hogan continued the presentation with an overview of the present fiscal environment, which is in crisis statewide. Mr. Hogan noted it will take the District a generation to get back to 2009 funding levels from the State. Mid-year cuts, declining state-aid, escalating mandated costs, and new mandates leave few options for school districts. In developing the budget this year, new information will be forthcoming, assumptions may change, and numbers will also change. The staff will comb through the budget, line by line, in an effort to reduce the budget as much as possible before the first draft is issued. Program review and staffing levels will also be reviewed in developing reductions to reduce the 2013-2014 deficits.

The Governor is scheduled to release state-aid figures on January 22nd. The preliminary financial outlook for next year indicates rising costs for mandates in health insurance, pension costs, staffing costs and charter school tuition costs. These items represent a \$5.1 million deficit or a tax levy equivalent of 4.7% in order for the District to continue existing programs. The deficit and tax levy impact will change when state-aid is known. The District is presently \$32 million worse-off every month than budget figures in 2009. This is the main reason school districts are struggling. Costs are increasing and aid is decreasing. Mr. Hogan reviewed proactive management steps the District has initiated throughout the last four years to decrease expenses in the District. The presentation ended with a review of the new tax cap law, and the next steps the District will take in developing next year's school budget.

- Do charter school payments decrease according to decreases in funding?

Charter school payments have increased \$9.7 million every year since 2008-2009. This is just another unfunded mandate. Payments to charter schools do not decrease based on state-aid.

- What does applying for grants cost in terms of staff time and effort?

There are small grants and huge grants. There are three people in the grants office. When a grant application comes in, they can't write the grant in isolation. Typically this involves the superintendent, cabinet members, and sometimes, building level staff. The grant's office works very hard to seek grants. Grants people do not give money to supplant what a district is already doing. Grants are not as free as they appear. A major issue is whether or not the program being funded is sustainable.

- What will it cost the District to investigate a new high school and how will we evaluate how that money will improve student achievement.

There is money in this year's budget and money in next year's budget to cover pre-referendum costs, which involve the architect, construction manager and an educational consultant. The fee is to address the facility for our high school students.

- What kind of grants will the District be eligible for?

The District will probably lose some money in the charter transition aid, because that formula is based on escalating enrollment in charter schools. Charter enrollment has leveled off for several years.

- Will there be opportunity for additional funding?

In addition to Foundation Aid previously noted, there may be Career Aid reductions. The two possibilities are more money for extended day and full-time Pre-K. Additionally, there may be a stipend for exemplary teachers. We anticipate that those may all be competitive grants and consideration would include sustainability.

- The accomplishments during the last four years are something to be proud of. Historically, the Board and staff have worked hard to keep the deficit as minimal as possible.

The fourth option is to concentrate on the District receiving additional state aid. The Board should commit to keeping all schools open.

- There was clarification that the District has actually had a total reduction in state-aid of \$50 million over the last four years.

- Does it remain that every percentage of revenue brings in \$1million?

Actually, it is now \$.9 million.

- Is the \$11.85 million fund balance and reserves in line with planned use of the District's fund balance?

Yes. In the future something has to change in view of the situations with Districts, etc.

- What happens if the District decides to not meet the mandates because they are not in line with goals, etc.

That would probably depend on the mandate and a number of other factors.

- Board members expressed their gratitude to Mr. Hogan for his efforts in developing school budgets that sustain programs and are acceptable to the taxpayers in the District.

Policies

Ms. Streznewski called for a motion to approve the following policies.

- 2120.2 Voting Procedures
- 4321.23 Programs for Students with Disabilities Under IDEA
- 4321.24 Interpretation Services for Parents & Persons in
Parental Relationship Who Are Hearing Impaired
- 4321.25 Use of Emergency Physical Interventions
- 4325 Academic Intervention
- 5405 Wellness Policy
- 5410 Concussion Policy
- 5410R Concussion Policy Regulations
- 5420 Student Health Services
- 5420R Student Health Services Regulations
- 9600 Family and Medical Leave
- 9600R Family and Medical Leave Regulations

Mr. Egan made the motion. Ms. Farrell seconded the motion. Mrs. Leet moved to send the policies back to the Policy Committee because there are editorial changes and the policies do not reflect changes made by the Policy Committee. A second to motion is necessary. Ms. Adler seconded the motion.

Following discussion, a suggestion was made to vote on the remaining policies. The motion is to set the policies aside.

The Board voted 1 yea and 6 nays. Mrs. Leet voted aye and all others were opposed.
Motion failed.

Ms. Green made a motion to approve all policies with the change to Policy 4325 Academic Intervention Services from the word “semester” to “marking period”. Ms. Adler seconded the motion.

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

Board Committees

No reports

Board Member Items

Ms. Green suggested that each Board Standing Committee have a Board member as the chairperson to insure that the committee is focused on its initial charge. Mrs. Leet noted her support for this item.

Ms. Streznewski noted her interest in the continuation of the Golden Apple Award in the absence of Dr. Colucciello and Linda Jackson-Chalmers.

Dr. Brandon also mentioned the recognition ceremonies for the Level IV students.

Other Business

Dr. Brandon confirmed that there was a separate after-school program at Harriet Gibbons from 3:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

There being no further business, Ms. Farrell made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Green seconded the motion. Meeting adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Catherine Cutting