



PROCEEDINGS OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 5, 2015

7:00 p.m.

Albany High School

PRESENT: Ms. Sue Adler
Dr. Rose Brandon
Mr. Kenneth Bruce
Mr. Dan Egan
Ms. Ginnie Farrell
Mr. C. Anthony Owens
Ms. Anne Savage
Dr. Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard
Mr. Paul M. Aloy, Esq.
Ms. Kathleen Culligan
Mr. William F. Hogan

ABSENT: No Absences

Call to Order:

Board Counsel, Paul Aloy, called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and the Mission Statement.

Selection of Chair Pro-Tem

Mr. Aloy called for a motion to appoint the Board Counsel as the Chair Pro-Tem for the meeting. Upon motion by Mr. Egan and second by Ms. Farrell, the Board voted (7-0) to appoint Mr. Paul Aloy, Chair Pro-Tem.

Motion passed.

Board of Education Election

WHEREAS, at the General Election held on November 4, 2014, the following two candidates for the office of member of the City School District of Albany Board of Education ("Board") received the following votes: Anne Savage received 7,698 votes, and Kenneth Bruce received 5,747 votes; and,

WHEREAS, the Albany County Board of Elections has certified the above results to the District Clerk of the Board; and,

WHEREAS, as a result of this election, Anne Savage will fill a full four year term commencing January 1, 2015, and ending on December 31, 2018; and,

WHEREAS, as a result of this election, Kenneth Bruce will fill a full four year term commencing January 1, 2015, and ending on December 31, 2018.

IT IS HEREBY RESOLVED that the certified results of the General Election as such pertain to vacant seats on the Board, are hereby accepted.

Administration of the Oath of Office to newly elected Board Member

Mr. Michael Myers administered to oath of office to Ms. Anne Savage. Ms. Adler administered the Oath of Office to Mr. Kenneth Bruce.

Election of Officers for the 2015 Calendar Year

Mr. Aloy called for nominations for the office of President of the Board of Education. Mr. Bruce nominated Ms. Farrell for the office of President. Ms. Farrell accepted the nomination. Nominations were declared closed.

The Board voted (6-1) to approve the motion. Dr. Brandon was opposed.

Mr. Aloy declared Ms. Farrell the President of the Board of Education.

Ms. Farrell then called for nominations for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education. Mr. Owens nominated Ms. Adler for the office of Vice President of the Board of Education. Ms. Adler accepted the nomination. Nominations were declared closed.

The Board voted (6-1) to approve the motion. Dr. Brandon was opposed.

Ms. Farrell declared Ms. Adler Vice President of the Board of Education.

Mr. Aloy called for nominations for the office of Secretary of the Board of Education. Mr. Egan nominated Mr. Owens for the office of Secretary of the Board of Education. Mr. Owens accepted the nomination. Nominations were declared closed.

The Board voted (6-1) to approve the motion. Dr. Brandon was opposed.

Ms. Farrell declared Mr. Owens Secretary of the Board of Education.

Mr. Bruce left the meeting at 7:25 p.m.

Board Member Statements

Board members congratulated the new slate of officers and new Board members. Board members spoke about the problems the district faces every day that are not under the control of the District. Focus needs to be on those issues the District does control such as student achievement, connections with the public relative to school issues. The Board needs to focus on providing services to all students, particularly those most in need. Board members look forward to working together to insure each student realizes their own potential.

Ms. Farrell noted the agenda needs to be amended to include additional Human Resource listings agreement with Mr. Novak, Internal Auditor should read Marvin & Company. There is also a correction in the proceedings indicating that Ms. Farrell was absent for the JROTC Program. Mr. Egan made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Ms. Adler seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Appointments/Designations/Authorizations/Bonding

Ms. Farrell called for a motion to approve the following:

Appointments of Officers

1. Clerk of the Board – Catherine Cutting
2. District Treasurer – Tishawn Terry-Garcia
3. Deputy Treasurer – Melinda Griffith
4. Tax Collector – Anthony DiLella
5. Extra Classroom Treasurer – Tishawn Garcia
6. Internal Claims Auditor – Joseph Ferrandino
7. Internal Auditor – Marvin & Company

Other Appointments

1. Purchasing Agent – Tina Phan
2. Records Access Officer – William F. Hogan
3. Asbestos Local Education Agency (LEA) Designee – Brian Dengler
4. Independent Auditing Firm – The Bonadio Group
5. Board Counsel – Girvin & Ferlazzo

Designations

1. Official Bank Depository – Key Bank, N.A.
2. Official Bank Depository Health Insurance Funds – J.P. Morgan Chase Bank
3. Official Newspapers – Times Union & Daily Gazette

Authorizations

The Board of Education approves the following authorizations for the 2015 calendar year:

1. The Board of Education authorizes the Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, to certify employee payrolls.
2. The Board of Education authorizes the Assistant Superintendents, and the Director of Curriculum and Instruction, to approve conferences, conventions and workshop attendance.
3. The Board of Education authorizes the Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, to approve property tax refunds and tax roll adjustments up to \$2,500 either mandated by court order or directed by the County of Albany Real Property Tax Service. (The Board of Education will be notified of all refunds and adjustments approved during the preceding month pursuant to this authorization at each regular Board meeting.)
4. The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools, to approve budget transfers up to \$10,000. (The Board of Education will be given a report of all such transfers pursuant to this authorization at each regular Board meeting. Transfers over \$10,000 will require Board approval.)
5. The Board of Education authorizes the Superintendent of Schools and, as necessary, the President of the Board of Education to execute grant applications.
6. The Board of Education authorizes the reimbursement of pre-approved transportation expenses for the 2015 calendar year at the current allowable IRS mileage reimbursement rate through December 31, 2015.
7. The Board of Education authorizes the District Treasurer, Deputy Treasurer, and the Central Treasurer of the Extra Classroom Activity Fund as individuals designated to sign checks.
8. The Board of Education authorizes the use of corporate credit cards by William F. Hogan and Dr. Marguerite Vanden Wyngaard.
9. The Board of Education authorizes the re-establishment of Petty Cash Account

Bonding

The Board of Education approves a blanket bond in the amount of \$1,000,000 for all District employees.

Mr. Egan made a motion to approve Appointments/Designations/Authorizations/Bonding. Ms. Adler seconded the motion. Mr. Owens asked that the Official Bank Depository-Key Bank, N. A. be set aside.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve the motion, absent the item set aside.
Motion passed.

Mr. Egan made a motion to approve the Official Bank Depository Designation for Banking. Ms. Adler seconded the motion. Mr. C. Anthony advised he would recuse himself from this vote based on the fact that he an employee of Key Bank.

The Board voted 5 ayes, and 1 abstention. Mr. Owens abstained.

Motion passed.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Public budget workshops

Dr. V extended a message to hope everyone had a wonderful holiday season. The holidays flew by like they always do, and that means it's time to start looking ahead to budget season. The District has been working internally on our budget-development process since the fall. The first of two public workshops here at Albany High will be held tomorrow night from 5:30-7 p.m. in the media center. Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs Bill Hogan will provide a general overview of public-school finance and answer questions. The second public budget workshop will be held next Tuesday, Jan. 13, also at Albany High from 5:30-7 p.m. This workshop will build on tomorrow night's conversation. Dr. V encouraged those present to attend both forums if your schedule allows.

On January 21st, the District will look to the governor's State of the State for the first look at state-aid projections for 2015-16. Following that, the Board will receive the first-draft budget at the Feb. 5 meeting. Community and school based budget workshops are scheduled for the following week.

Re-Imagining Albany High School

Dr. V advised the agenda tonight includes a discussion about a public referendum later this year on a major renovation for Albany High School. After two years of study and public engagement, we are eager to bring this important project to our community for a vote next fall. The District is confident the project that will be review this evening provides our students and community with the facilities they need and deserve for decades to come, while also being very mindful of what our families can afford. The District will engage in an extensive public-engagement process in advance of a vote, and we look forward to that conversation with our community as we work together to re-imagine Albany High.

Scholarship Student-athletes

Finally tonight, we have two guests here with us. Albany High seniors Mylah Chandler and Mary Elle Arduino both have earned athletic scholarships to attend Division One universities next fall. These young women truly epitomize the term "student-athlete." Dr. V introduced Kathy Ryan, Athletic Director who introduced these exceptional seniors.

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE REPORT

Student Representative, Fiona Leary congratulated and welcomed Ms. Savage and Mr. Bruce as Board members, thanking them for their contributions and service. Many students are achieving great things at Albany High. Seniors have started to hear responses from colleges across the country. Students will be going to Barnard, Cornell University, Northeastern University, Colgate, Towson, Boston College and Harvard University as well. It is an honor to be surrounded by such motivated people with bright minds. Many positive programs are under way at the high school as well. The school newspaper, the Nest, is always turning out new stories. At the Nest we have decided to dedicate this year's edition to the late Tom Healey, a high school former History

Teacher, whose presence touched the lives of many students. The peer mentoring program at the school is gaining momentum as well. We have also recently incorporated an SAT tutoring program in the school. The SAT tutoring program is usually expensive, and we believe it is really important that all students get equal opportunity to learn. It is now offered in the Library after school at no cost to the students. There was a Ski Trip, sponsored by Albany High this past weekend where students had the opportunity to participate in outdoor activities over the weekend. It is trips like this, provided by the high school, that accentuate the school's desire to give students boundless opportunities, and for this Ms. Leary is extremely grateful.

OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Aloy read the following statement:

The Board wishes to remind the public of certain Board policies.

Board Policy 1230, entitled "**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**", states in pertinent part:

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Board Policy 1230, entitled "**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT BOARD MEETINGS**", states in pertinent part:

The board will not permit in public session discussion involving individual district personnel or students. Persons wishing to discuss matters involving individual district personnel or students should present their comments and/or concerns to the Superintendent during regular business hours.

Board Policy 1400 entitled, "**PUBLIC COMPLAINTS**", states:

The Board of Education recognizes the right of community members to register individual or group concerns regarding instruction, district programs, instructional materials, operations, and/or staff members. The main goal of the district is to resolve such concerns specifically with the parties involved, whenever possible.

Public complaints about the school district will be directed to the proper administrative personnel. Complaints about specific classroom practices shall be directed to the teacher concerned. If the matter is not settled satisfactorily, the complainant shall then contact the building principal; if there is no resolution on this level, the Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be contacted. The Superintendent shall refer the issue to the Board for final resolution, if necessary.

All matters referred to the superintendent and/or the board shall be in writing. Concerns registered directly to the board as a whole or to an individual board member shall be referred as soon as is reasonably possible to the superintendent for investigation, report, and/or resolution.

At a recent Board meeting, these policies were not strictly adhered to by the Superintendent and during public comment. We apologize to everyone involved and categorically state Board policies will be adhered to in the future.

One reason for these policies is to allow a full investigation of all complaints without embarrassing or criticizing any individuals in advance of any findings of wrongdoing. Going forward no public comment will be tolerated that discusses individual District staff or violates any Board policy. The Board fully appreciates the public's cooperation with assuring these policies are followed.

1. Mark Barth addressed the Board regarding the content of the cyberbullying incident that violated the Dignity for All Students Act, which outlaws menacing, intimidation, and harassment and discrimination in New York State Schools. The parents of the victims saw this experience as a teachable moment, community activists wanted more severe punishment, and others considered lawsuits. Mr. Barth did an analysis of one-third of these tweets indicating 21% were positive messages, 37% were neutral messages and 42% were negative. Mr. Barth forwarded a copy of this analysis for distribution to the Board. Racial bullying is not only the practice of white students.
2. Marlon Anderson addressed the Board regarding the disengagement of the public. The public does not feel that have access to the school district or the personnel within. When there is a prevailing culture with an undercurrent of racism in 2015 in schools "IT STOPS HERE". That is the hallmark the Board needs to go forward in the 2015 calendar. The District continues to be its own worst enemy. If this District is going to go forward and improve it has to be set in this room and adhered to "IT STOPS HERE". No more racism or disengagement with the public.
3. Mark Bobb-Semple addressed the Board specifically to thank the staff that is present at this meeting. We beat up the staff here and it is hard because we have a juggling act. We have to figure out how to serve our black kids and white kids and all the kids. The problem is no one knows really how to solve, and in the midst of doing that we point and we blame. Mr. Semple said thank you to those soldiers who are out in the field fighting every day. Hopefully, the new leadership will work with those soldiers, and help them and give them resources. Mr. Semple also expressed his sincere feeling that the District needs a new high school.

4. Anne Pope addressed the Board confirming her request for information made at the last meeting. Ms. Pope noted there are some people who are not happy with the way the cyberbullying incident was handled. Ms. Pope asked if there have been any additional training or meetings with students and parents. Students need to learn how to respect one another. Parents need to know how to handle their children. Ms. Pope also asked if there is anything on tap for the recruitment of teachers of color to the District. She would like to hear something from the Board and/or Superintendent relative to a plan to close the achievement gap. Lastly, has there been any action taken on the violations that were pointed out by the Department of Education.

FACILITIES

Planning the Capital Project at Albany High School

Mr. Hogan advised the District, and Mr. Peckham and his staff from CSArch has been studying the future high school project for the last couple of years. The physical needs and the academic needs centered around 21st century learning. There have been numerous public meetings including the community, staff and students. There have been opportunities for all stakeholders to provide input on both educational specifications and conceptual designs. The District has studied enrollment projections, the financial impact, and most recently, we brought this back to the Facilities Committee to help plan the next steps on how to keep this process going. Tonight we are going to reiterate the recommendations of the Facilities Committee which is made up of three Board members.

Mr. Hogan reviewed the project highlighting Option A-, which incorporate all the educational specifications that were developed. It will support and improve student achievement in several areas in five small learning communities, integrating career and technical education. Welcome and wellness center, student support at each SLC, increased natural light, a facility that students can be proud of. The project assumes a 7-year construction phase-in to maximize State aid and minimize costs to the local community. It also assumes building areas will be opened as completed, not waiting 7 years to benefit students, and it assumes the average tax increase to a homeowner on a \$150,000 property is \$50 and \$93 on a \$250,000 home (estimates assume properties qualify for STAR).

The project concept drawings were again reviewed. Mr. Hogan noted the next steps would be to prepare a resolution in February to affirm Capital improvement plan Option A-1 for the high school with a public referendum October 6, 2015 or December 8, 2015. Sample draft timelines were presented for the two proposed referendum dates.

Discussion continued relative to a campaign to provide information to the public. Mr. Hogan noted the timeline will be fine-tuned and clarified. Questions that have come up will be addressed in a Q & A type meeting. Once the referendum date is confirmed, the planning will be scheduled, taking into consideration the upcoming budget vote. Mr. Hogan advised ideally is to have a resolution at the first meeting in February to confirm a date for the referendum. Board members indicated pros and cons of the two proposed dates.

INFORMATION

Special Education Plan

Director of Special Education, Debby Sharpe DeFries introduced staff members, Tim Fowler, Assistant Director of Special Education, and Elaine Greissler, Committee of special Education, Chairperson. Ms. Sharpe DeFries advised she and her staff are here this evening to answer questions and concerns related to the presentation overview that was previously distributed to Board members. The focus of the presentation addressed the special education data, and updated Board members regarding the 2012-2017 Special Education Action Plan, which was developed in March 2012, in consultation with CASDA consultants. Ms. Sharpe DeFries highlighted the classification rates and out-of-placement students, which have decreased significantly. The District has saved approximately \$1 million, with this decrease. Ms. Sharpe DeFries also spoke about closing the achievement gap involving special education students. Staff has been involved in the Learning Walks and Studio Classrooms, providing innovative practices to support students.

Board members expressed concerns relative to the District being cited referring to the suspension of black and brown students. The District continues to work on this matter. There was also concern regarding the procedure for classifying students. Ms. Greissler reviewed the referral process in response to RtI. This addressed and also behavior. There are building level RtI teams that address academic and behavioral issues. Students are brought to those teams. They work at putting interventions within the school atmosphere to see if they can make a positive improvement. The support becomes more intensive on an academic and behavioral level. The student goes through the entire Tier I and II process prior to the RtI considers a referral to Special Education, including information and data.

What is causing this decline in suspensions? In terms of the behaviors, the behaviors have not changed that much. The consequences have also not changed. The numbers can be misleading in the way the state computes the rates, which is determined by the overall number of students identified. With the revision of the Code of Conduct Policy and the intervention of support teams has changed. In addition, the PBIS is well under way. Most of the buildings are at Tier I or Tier II, which is the climate of change. The teams is also working with data, looking at students across buildings each month, being more proactive in identifying the level of support the students need.

Ms. Adler asked that information related to the percent of out-of-district placement for the District compares to the statewide percentage. Ms. Adler continued to explain her frustration in not receiving the presentation she anticipated, which was to go back to the action plan recommended by the consultants in 2012, with an update in 2014. Following a lengthy discussion, Dr. V suggested that this information related to the expectations of the Board be presented to the agenda setting committee so that a decision can be made as to what the Board is looking for in the near future.

ACTION

Professional Development Plan

Dr. V noted the Plan has previously been presented to the Board. Tonight's expectation is that the action on approval will take place. Mr. Egan made a motion to approve the District Professional Development Plan as presented. Mr. Owens seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

ROUTINE CONSENT

Ms. Farrell called for a motion to include additional Human Resource Items, Resolution to Approve Novak Agreement, and a change in the minutes of 12/11/14 to indicate that Ms. Farrell was absent for the JROTC vote. Mr. Egan made a motion to amend the agenda to include these items. Mr. Owen seconded the motion.

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

Motion passed.

Ms. Farrell presented the following Routine Consent Items for approval, Proceedings of Meeting (December 11, 2014); Human Resource Items; Treasurer's Report; Budget Transfers under \$10,000; Budget Transfer over \$10,000; Budget Appropriation Status Report; Revenue Status Report; Extra Classroom Activity Report; Grants Report; Authorization to Enter into Contracts (see attached schedule); Board Meeting Schedule 2015; Resolution to Approve Ten Dyke Agreement; Resolution to Approve Novak Agreement. Mr. Egan made a motion to approve Routine Consent. Mr. Owens seconded the motion.

The Board voted unanimously (6-0) to approve Routine Consent Items.

Motion passed.

Board Committee Reports

None

Board Member Items

Dr. Brandon requested an update related to the cyberbullying incident at Albany High School, including the steps that are being taken to address this issue in terms of student and faculty understanding the severity of this issue. A suggestion was to insist that students who are involved in this conduct need to do a report or receive training regarding cyberbullying prior to being admitted back in school. This issue needs to be addressed in the near future. Ms. Adler noted that there has been work done at the high school, which will be shared with the Board. Dr. V noted that this is about how students and faculty interact with each other. There are community partners that are interested in working with the District to address this issue.

Ms. Adler requested a presentation on the implementation of the Code of Conduct Policy throughout the District related to problems with punishments in forcing consistency.

Other Business

None

Adjournment

There being no further business, Mr. Egan made a motion to adjourn. Mr. Owens seconded the motion. The Board adjourned at 9:15 p.m.