



THE ENLARGED CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT OF TROY, NY
BOARD OF EDUCATION

Date of Meeting: March 21, 2012
Type of Meeting: **WORKSHOP**
Location: School 16

MINUTES

Members Present: Mrs. Anne Wager-Rounds, President
Mrs. Ilene Clinton
Mr. Bill Strang
Mr. Schofield
Mr. Michael Tuttman
Ms. Martha Walsh

Members Absent: Mrs. Carol Harvin
Ms. Mary Marro-Giroux
Mr. Tom Mayo

Also Present: Dr. Brian Howard, Interim Superintendent
Mr. John Carmello, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction
Ms. Mary O'Neill, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Ms. Kathy Culligan, Human Resources Director
Ms. Kathleen Cietek, Treasurer
Ms. Kathy Ahearn, School Attorney

Citizens Advisory
Committee Present: Mary Ellen Adams
Laura Bevevino
Ken Hughes
Tom Meyer
Jeannie Steigler

Citizens Advisory
Committee Absent: Richard Ellis
Lynne Dubray
David Heyward

I. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

At 6:00 pm Mrs. Wager-Rounds called the meeting to order.

II. EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mrs. Wager-Rounds made a motion to move to Executive Session for the purpose of a 3020-a matter regarding a tenured employee. Mr. Carmello, Ms. Culligan, Ms. Ahearn and Mrs. Bruno also attended.

III. ACTION ITEMS

A. SUPERINTENDENT'S RECOMMENDATIONS - HUMAN RESOURCES (Reviewed by J. Carmello)

Mrs. Wager-Rounds made a motion to approve Item A (1).

Second: Mr. Schofield

Carried: 6-0

1. 2011-12 THS Odyssey of the Mind Volunteer

Ann Clemente

IV. NON-ACTION ITEMS

A. PS 16 PRINCIPAL'S PRESENTATION - T. FORD

Dr. Tracy Ford began this school year as new Principal at PS16; staff, parents and student are all very supportive. He reported that the transition at School 16 following last year's redistricting was seamless. PS 16 has 372 students; 154 are new students. 51 percent of students receive free or reduced lunches with more diversity of student enrollment. There is a new breakfast program at School 16 with students eating at 7:30 am in the cafeteria. There are numerous programs which include Michelle Obama's school Challenge for healthier eating; Emma Willard student tutoring; YMCA Advantage Program and Albany Institute of History and Art.

B. GRANTS REPORT - K. SLEZAK

Ms. Kathleen Slezak gave an overview of the activities in the funded programs Office. She was the grants coordinator in 2007 for one and half years; and resumed the position in August 2011. This position was left vacant until recently and this has caused significant problems. The District's federal programs were recently audited by State Education; everything was under scrutiny, both programs and financials. There was comprehensive review of documents for one month. Following that, in December 2011, SED sent nine staff members to spend a week in interviews and more document reviews. There was no misuse of money found but we need to implement better procedures on how money is used. There were also significant programmatic issues, some of which will involve the Board of Education in policy revision. Dr. Howard and Mr. Carmello will address issues. Ms. Slezak feels strongly that we need to keep someone in this position to replace her since she is retiring. She is willing to assist with transition of new person. Mrs. Clinton thanked Ms. Slezak for her hard work and congratulated her on her retirement.

C. BUDGET DEVELOPMENT - M. O'NEILL

1. Financial Reports

Ms. Kathleen Cietek, Treasurer, reported on February financial reports. Budget transfers for February were salary-related to cover substitute costs. Claims Audit - 366 payment checks with a total of \$6.8 million payments approved. UPK providers have been complying with their contractual obligations regarding student attendance. Claims Auditor is continuing to audit the accuracy of the payroll.

General Funds - total revenues are up approximately \$1.3 million from the same time last year. This is due to the refund of prior year in which we received a reimbursement for insurance. School Lunch Fund continues to show an increase in revenue; we expect a profit at the end of the year. Nothing significant to report for the Book Store.

There is currently one grant in the Special Aid Fund that is under review for approval for Title I School Improvement. The requested funds have been received and will be reflected in the March financial report. Treasurer's report shows all accounts have reconciled.

2. Budget Draft 4

Dr. Brian Howard, Interim Superintendent, made a power point presentation regarding the proposed 2012-13 budget. This is the most difficult budget crisis he has experienced in 40 years. Last year Troy passed \$92,416,493; at the beginning of the budgeting process the Dr. Howard discussed Budget Drafts 2 and 3 that were presented at previous meetings. He presented Draft 4 with 3 stages of cuts totally nearly \$2,400,000 to achieve a 2% tax levy. This draft included reductions in equipment, supplies, permanent elementary substitutes costs and an increase for health insurance. Additional cuts due to a shortage of revenue would result in a worst case scenario with a devastating elimination of an additional 31 positions (10 non-instructional; 1 administrator and 20 instructional positions) above the 11 cuts already in District is looking at reducing 12 reading teachers because Troy has the highest number of reading staff but the student achievement is at the same level as similar districts with less than one-half the number of reading teachers. It would be more effective to change current AIS He explained that a contingency budget (if voters do not pass budget two times) would require an additional reduction of \$641,000. Dr. Howard is extremely concerned about the overall impact budget cuts will have on our students.

There is a potential for savings from Questar III who is offering shared services of central business office. We are still waiting for savings information regarding "Futures Education" study of special education; retirement incentives and state aid.

3. Discussion

Mr. Schofield would like us to look at contacting out for all services that could provide a savings, including auditors and vendors.

Mrs. Wager-Rounds said she met with legislators regarding the budget. She does not feel our District is unique except that we have a disadvantage with the tax cap because many of Troy's commercial properties do not pay taxes.

Mr. Strang asked for a clarification regarding the reduction of reading teachers. 8.0 FTE is equivalent to 12 reading teachers because 4 teachers will be brought back. Mr. Strang asked if Grants position will be filled.

Dr. Howard said as funding comes in, positions will be restored.

Mrs. Adams asked about grants for available next year available for potential funding.

Mr. Schofield asked the BOE to consider what would be an acceptable tax cap. Public perception is 2% but Troy can go as high 3.6% to remain within the legal limit. It was suggested that BOE meets with City Council to explain impact of new tax levy cap.

D. PUBLIC COMMENT

1. Mariana Brunell (teacher) - She has 31 students in her class; thank you for providing aide which makes a huge impact. Mrs. Brunell indicated that students need small groups. A classroom teacher cannot be a reading teacher; reading specialists are needed. Since two schools are in need of improvement, this is not the year to eliminate reading teachers.
2. Mark Walsh (TTA president) - Mrs. Brunell is correct; other districts have made serious cuts to reading teachers but are playing catch up. We need to sell the City, education is an investment in the City. We need to educate the tax payer on the tax cap.
3. Michael O'Brien (teacher) - Was there a savings at PS12? We have had 5 Superintendents; the business office is the only consistency. He is concerned about cutting reading teachers; 90-minute reading blocks is only manageable because of support. ELA state reading scores will suffer from cutting early elementary reading teachers. His students are in need of intense reading assistance; 26 of 30 did not pass. Please do not cut reading teachers.
4. Christine Potter (teacher) - She is a former AIS teacher and understands the importance of a small groups to reading. So many students are in lower levels; they will fall further behind.

V. FUTURE MEETINGS

1. April 2, 2012 at 6:00 pm (PS 1) - Workshop (MONDAY)
2. April 18, 2012 at 7:00 pm (PS 18) - Business Meeting
3. April 24, 2012 at 6:00 pm (PS 1) - Workshop (TUESDAY)

At 8:20 pm, Mrs. Rounds made a motion to adjourn the meeting. This was seconded by Mr. Schofield and carried 6-0.

Respectfully submitted by,

Mary Beth Bruno
Board Clerk