

DATE: February 15, 2011
WHERE HELD: Charlton Heights

KIND OF MEETING: Regular
PRESIDING OFFICER: John Blowers

**MARGINAL
NOTATIONS**

MEMBERS PRESENT:
John Blowers
William Farmer
Elizabeth Herkenham
James Maughan
Lee-Ann Mertzlufft

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Patre Kuziak
Joe Pericone

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jim Schultz, Jacqueline St.Onge, Rick Evans, Christy Multer, and 17 others.

President John Blowers called the Board meeting to order at 7:30 PM.

Reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the approval of the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the February 7, 2011 regular meeting of the Board of Education, the authorization of Textbooks & Films, and the acceptance of the Internal Claims Auditor Report.

Motion carried 5-0

Privilege of the Floor –

Community resident Richard Evans provided a handout to the Board and administration with his comments about a report on productivity of US schools. The handout is available at the District office. He urged school district administrators to go to the site and study the data. His comments include a table comparing BH-BL to Cambridge.

Bill Giniecki, resident of the Town of Glenville for thirty five years, spoke about higher costs and higher taxes. He feels that people should fight to have Triborough waived. Teacher's benefits are too high and salaries should be based upon results. He feels we need to be more competitive with our education system to compete with other countries.

Program Review – 21st Century Skills: Leadership & Vision

Rick Evans began the discussion by asking what does an exemplary leader and exemplary team look like? What is effective school leadership? The team looked at the research and feel that BH-BL is very much in line with the highest performing entities. Rick briefly went through the vision statement that was developed which includes the following categories: leadership, relationships among colleagues, expectations/relationships with students, curriculum & instruction, and professional growth & development.

District Leadership was invited to the meeting to talk to Board members about their vision for the future and how it relates to the overall BH-BL Mission Statement. The vision statement was included in the Board packet. The format was a question and answer session. The first question was what are the greatest challenges facing educators and the discussion centered on how to maintain the quality of our education in light of the funding crisis that we are facing. This is the third year of cuts and it is becoming increasingly more difficult to maintain excellence and find ways to improve in this economy.

How have the students changed in the last ten years and how does it affect school leadership? In the past there were similar expectations but now expectations, behavior and respect are not as unified. These differences add a dimension to how students are taught. For example kindergarten students are entering school and some are tech savvy, and some have no technical skills. Some know how to use scissors, and some don't which requires differentiation to adapt to the varying levels of ability and skills. Some students have supportive parents and others do not and even in small groups of students there is a wide range of experiences, knowledge, and ability that leaders must recognize. Educators must be capable of more multitasking to engage the students and explore effective strategies for motivating students. They need to stay current with what's going on and recognize that constantly changing curriculum and emerging technology also helps to engage students. We need to strengthen our infrastructure connections to guarantee students have access to the available technology.

How do we measure success? We focus on results and Rick Evans mentioned a book called *On Common Ground*. We agree that schools need to build professional learning communities and focus on a few key areas. Data is used to monitor performance and some examples were cited for English, Global studies, Math, and Special Services.

How do the students rate us and what kind of feedback do we get from them? At O'Rourke Middle School 9th graders were recently surveyed on their middle school experience. They are currently in the process of analyzing the data and will share the results. A student advisory board was also set up to hear from the students on their middle school experience. Marge Rizzo gave examples of anecdotal information from students using tools such as survey monkey. Rie Posillico developed an evaluation sheet for parents to provide feedback for the Mentor program.

Who do we hold in high regard as an example of great leadership? BH-BL has embraced the Danielson model in which everything is focused on the student. Ralph Rothacker talked about an anti-bullying meeting at which students shared stories about their experiences. They discussed how things were handled, how they felt, and whether or not the issues were resolved. The award winning Adlai Stevenson high school model from Rick Dufour's book was cited as the school that we hold up as a model to emulate. There was a concern voiced that the twenty four state consortium for common core curriculum will water down our curriculum since we already have higher standards.

What would you like BH-BL leadership to focus on? Responses included: stay current and look at many perspectives, challenge the status quo, explore opportunities for enabling students to pursue passions or areas of interest upon mastery of the required elements, and provide learning experiences for students using technology.

What is your view for education over the next 5-10 years and how can we support this vision? We need to look at area businesses and other schools and then create our own programs and partnerships. Examples of newly developed math classes that emphasize college readiness and that are project based were cited. They talked about a partnership with math to build a STEM course. Also discussed were online writing courses and electives that have a blogging component now. Many students are working on projects that encompass many disciplines using technology.

ACTION ITEMS:

Ms. Mertzlufft moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the acceptance of the Financial Reports.

Motion carried 5-0

Mr. Farmer moved and Ms. Mertzlufft seconded the approval of the substitute teacher/nurse appointment of Jenna Niles.

Motion carried 5-0

Mr. Farmer moved and Ms. Mertzlufft seconded the approval of the civil service personnel action as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.

Motion carried 5-0

Ms. Mertzlufft moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the approval of the Special Athletic Competition Request for the Varsity Girls Lacrosse team.

Motion carried 5-0

Mr. Farmer moved and Ms. Herkenham seconded the approval of the Contract for Health & Welfare Services with:

- a. South Colonie Central Schools
- b. North Colonie Central Schools

Motion carried 5-0

Ms. Mertzlufft moved and Ms. Herkenham seconded the approval to participate in a Cooperative Bid for:

- a. Swimming Pool Chemicals
- b. Miscellaneous Bus Parts
- c. Toner Cartridges
- d. Filters - HVAC

Motion carried 5-0

Ms. Mertzlufft moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the acceptance of the Finalized Risk Assessment Report for 2009-10 (Questar III).

Motion carried 5-0

Ms. Mertzlufft moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the approval of the recommendations from the Committee on Special Education.

Motion carried 5-0

Budget Forum

Board member James Maughan began the discussion about the recent budget forum and he thought we did well as far as the objective of sharing information with the community. Jim Schultz talked about the mediators and the fact that this session was free, but there may be a cost in the future. Discussion centered on whether to bring the mediators back for the next forum. It was agreed that they were very effective and Lee-Ann Mertzlufft will look into using them for the next forum. Christy Multer handed out a copy of the online survey as it currently stands. The resource allocation results were discussed briefly and we expect to get more input. Christy pointed out all of the budget information that is now available on the website including the presentation. Progress is being made on a frequently asked questions section for the website. The next forum is March 3rd and Superintendent Schultz will be presenting his first draft of budget proposals. There will be a finance meeting on Thursday to hear Jim's recommendations and receive an update on revenues.

Lobbying – Talking Points

John Blowers reviewed the lobbying points from last year that were included in the Board packet and the process. What's different this year? Can we adopt the Governor's language to start the message and then give some information on the cumulative impact of his proposals on fund balances, staff cuts, etc. Board members talked about what to focus on and how to communicate this information to our legislators. There was a discussion about mandate relief and whether we can have information available for the forum on March 3rd. We should coordinate with NYSSBA so that our message is consistent.

Reports & Communications

- Will Farmer attended the Middle School PTA meeting at which they talked about the budget and staff concerns. PTA fundraising is short. Will listened to the anti-bullying webinar. He thought that there was a lot of good information provided that he will share in his notes.
- Jackie St.Onge reported that our Internal Auditor from Questar will be in the District for the next couple weeks auditing fuel and transportation.
- Lee-Ann Mertzluft would like the District to have a Board policy on social media if we are going to have a District Facebook page.
- Jim Schultz responded that we have places in our current policy where we might be able to add components on social media. He emphasized that we would like to pilot an institutional Facebook which he believes would not present the same problems as a personal Facebook. Jim met with his student budget advisory group and they struggled with how difficult it is to create a budget. He scheduled a meeting on March 22nd with the Board for SGO. Included in the Board packet was a letter regarding the open meeting law and Jim has drafted a response with actions already taken by the District. Once we receive an opinion, then we will know what we may need to change in the future. He reported that tomorrow night the Mythology Symposium will be held and our students will present their research. He talked about the anti-bullying meeting which was very powerful and that surveys are replicating national trends.
- John Blowers reported that he will do a PTA blurb from the Board for March. He also attended the Follies over the weekend with many great performances. John attended a meeting to discuss healthcare strategies to help the District.

Mr. Farmer moved and Ms. Mertzluft seconded a motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline St. Onge
Clerk of the Board