

DATE: April 26, 2011
WHERE HELD: High School

KIND OF MEETING: Regular
PRESIDING OFFICER: John Blowers

MARGINAL
NOTATIONS

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

MEMBERS ABSENT:
Patre Kuziak

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jim Schultz, Jacqueline St.Onge, Rick Evans, and 35 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. Pericone seconded the approval of the consent agenda, which included the minutes of the April 12, 2011 regular meeting of the Board of Education and the authorization of tradebooks.

Motion carried 5-0

NYSSBA Board Achievement Award

John Blowers announced that two of our Board members, Lee-Ann Mertzlufft and Will Farmer, have achieved recognition from the NYSSBA's School Board U for their service. School Board U acknowledges the extensive time and effort required of School Board members who continually strive to expand their knowledge and skills for better Board governance. Lee-Ann Mertzlufft and Will Farmer were both presented with pins signifying their completion of the entire core curriculum.

Privilege of the Floor – None

Program Review – Student Achievement Reports: Elementary, Middle & High School

Rick Evans thanked students and staff for attending tonight's meeting. He introduced the presentation on student achievement and explained that it is organized into three parts – elementary, middle school, and high school. Data was provided to the Board members previously with charts, graphs and other data evidencing student achievement results.

Stevens Principal Ralph Rothacker began with the elementary results and he specifically referenced the Fountas & Pinnell results included for the first time this year. He explained Response to Intervention (RTI) and how our district responds to children who need extra help. Also discussed was how these results have resulted in greater differentiated instruction and frequency of assessments. Jill Bonacio and Tim Sinnenberg commented on the way that it has helped their elementary buildings, specifically greater sharing of best practices among buildings rather than within buildings. Board members asked questions about the Fountas & Pinnell data, as well as about other forms of assessments, areas of need, etc. Many examples of different methods of instruction were shared by administrators. There was also some discussion about testing and the reliability of COGAT testing.

Colleen Kane, Middle School Principal, said the focus for next year will be heavy in Math and ELA. She has learned from ELA teachers that after looking closely at the data they felt there was a need to focus on vocabulary. She talked about how the testing has changed to provide more continuity for the student results. She believes BH-BL has a very strong curriculum and tremendous support from staff. Some of our greatest strengths are the quality of educators and the Culture: Team: Data initiatives in the District. There are many dedicated special education teachers and they are looking at various instructional models for special education students. At Middle School they need to 'read to learn' so it's critically important that at the elementary levels they 'learn to read.' She wanted to showcase the OASIS program and the support that it provides for certain kids who just need extra TLC. Colleen commented on the strength of our foreign language program and how it impacts students with a passion for language. She also spoke about the Tech Department and how it is integrated with other areas of instruction. She feels all of the departments; guidance, art, music, etc. contribute to the Middle School results. Lori Maloney gave an example of a problem with tests that demonstrated that students did not understand questions properly due to lack of vocabulary skills. The staff revamped an existing program into a new vocabulary program which has been much more successful. There were other questions about PDA, BMI, course failures, and other measurements. World Language department head Suzanne Rayome discussed the challenge of developing a smart goal when student achievement results are already so high. She and Raelene Noll decided to focus on a smart goal that would improve our students' speaking ability. The team developed a rubric and an assessment process that refined instruction to focus on areas such as fluency, vocabulary, technical skills, and sentence structure.

High School Principal Maryellen Symer highlighted a new area that she included in her report this year entitled "High

School Headlines.” She talked about a comprehensive program and what it means in terms of the opportunities provided to students. In our school the CTE programs and Fine Arts programs are designed for all students rather than just a certain track. When you look at the state assessment data, you need to realize there have been changes in the format, courses, and other things that make it difficult to compare results from year to year. Special education programs at the High School are designed to support the students and help them to reach their individual potential. In encouraging these students to achieve at their highest level, they will take the tests numerous times. The High School staff has worked to provide additional after school tutorial support to these students. The High School Academic Support Center has a teacher who dedicates some of her time to work with any students needing extra help, not just special education students. PAT meets weekly to focus on student recommendations provided by guidance counselors and to collaborate with teachers and administrators. Maryellen spoke about efforts that address the affective domain of educating students. She discussed a program for students that are making the transition from 8th grade to 9th grade, as well as the X factor program to connect male students. Both programs are staffed voluntarily and geared to make students feel more connected. There was discussion about the graduation rate goal being changed to extend until September so that students may complete graduation requirements by attending summer school. Maryellen talked about ways that they use to improve the graduation rates. They also discussed student engagement and motivation, as well as citing examples of can’t do versus won’t do student attitudes. They are trying to determine what are the factors contributing to students who have the ability to achieve a Regents diploma but would rather settle for a local diploma because they don’t want to put in the extra effort.

Rick Evans highlighted some of the departments that have had significant achievements but were not specifically discussed during tonight’s presentation including Social Studies and Library & Media departments. Tonight’s discussion focused on team and data, but not culture. We need a trusting culture to be transparent with data.

John Blowers thanked the team for providing data in advance so that they could be well informed and have questions before tonight’s presentation.

Elizabeth Herkenham arrived at 7:50 PM near the beginning of the Program Review.

ACTION ITEMS:

Mr. Farmer moved and Ms. Mertzluft seconded the acceptance of the Financial Reports.
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the approval of the substitute teacher/nurse appointments of Joanne Baldasare, Michelle Cenci, Joanne Dostis, Kathy Keating, Khadijah Onanuga-Islam, Michael St. Louis, Christine Strebel, Jacqueline Weaver.
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the approval of the civil service personnel action as recommended by the Superintendent of Schools.
Motion carried 6-0

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the approval of the Special Athletic Competition requests for the Outdoor Track Team.
Motion carried 6-0

Mr. Pericone moved and Mr. Farmer seconded the approval of the nomination of Lynne Lenhardt as Area 7 Director of the New York State School Boards Association for a 2 year term commencing January 1, 2012.
Motion carried 6-0

Mr. Pericone moved and Ms. Herkenham seconded the approval of the recommendations from the Committee on Special Education.
Motion carried 6-0

Budget Hearing

James Maughan, Finance Chair, went over the proposed budget of \$54,769,942 which represents a 2.5% increase in the appropriation budget over the current year. He talked about the tax levy of \$34,281,282, STAR information and the bus proposition to purchase four buses at a cost not to exceed \$400,000. He went over further details about the vote and Board candidates.

Budget Vote Exit Poll

In the packet a copy of last year’s exit poll was provided. Board members were asked if they thought the questions were still appropriate or were there changes they’d like to see? One suggestion was made to include “online” as a choice under question #8 – sources of information. NYSSBA will be present to do some research on our exit poll

since the process allows information to be entered via computer rather than filling out pieces of paper.

Budget Communication Plan Update

Elizabeth Herkenham talked about the budget presentations at both the elementary and secondary schools. She introduced the budget and how challenging the process has been. She talked about the fund balance. James commented that she did a nice job of personalizing the message and showing how invested the Board is in the school and the budget process. She also talked about the transparency of the process. There are many competing interests which makes it even more difficult to develop a sound budget. John Blowers and Will Farmer presented at the Town of Glenville meeting. There are more opportunities to share at the Town of Ballston meeting next Tuesday, May 3rd at 7:30 pm and the Town of Charlton meeting scheduled for Monday, May 9th. The BPA meeting will be a breakfast meeting on Wednesday May 4th at the High School. The newsletter is at the press and is expected to be delivered next week.

Reports & Communications

- Jackie St. Onge has a meeting with Town of Ballston scheduled to discuss shared service opportunities. The Internal Auditor is in the Business Office doing the annual risk assessment. She has been working with our fiscal advisors to structure our debt service in such a way as to encourage more participation and obtain the best possible rates in our upcoming bid.
- Will Farmer received another letter about the head lice situation at Charlton Heights.
- Elizabeth Herkenham is meeting tomorrow night with the Community Foundation to explore donations from community members that will be targeted for academics. She received a call from Semi Tech and they are looking for interviewers to participate on May 19th and she asked if any Board members might be interested. Board members would need to conduct student interviews.
- Lee-Ann Mertzluft shared information that she received about a scheduling conflict on Honors Night with a track meet. This is a building issue and the procedure is to give the information to the building administration.
- Rick Evans reported that the 21st Century Committee has met twice and is moving along.
- Jim Schultz took us on a field trip out to the hall to see a student writing project. He mentioned the BOCES meeting and the need for at least four Board members to attend to be able to vote. He reminded everyone of the Walkabout Thursday at the three elementary buildings. Elizabeth Besozzi is one of four candidates selected to spend a year in China.
- John Blowers reminded the Board about a letter from a staff member questioning activities and open meetings law. Jim Schultz has posed questions to legal council and is awaiting a response. John discussed a teacher externship program that provides opportunities for teachers to learn and work with private employers. His employer will be participating in the program and BH-BL may want to consider participating. Next week is the Tech Hall of Fame dinner and John is the featured speaker. He has invited Rick Evans to attend as his guest. He talked about a different format for Meet the Candidates Night this year.

Ms. Herkenham moved and Mr. Pericone seconded a motion to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:00 PM.

Respectfully submitted,

Jacqueline St. Onge
Clerk of the Board