

<u>March 27, 2006</u>	<u>Special Meeting</u>	<u>Mohansic School</u>	<u>J. McCoy</u>
Date	Type of Meeting	Where Held	Presiding Officer
Members Present:	<u>A. D'Alessandro</u>	Members Absent:	<u>P. Faigle</u>
	<u>M. Drexel</u>		<u>T. Perrino</u>
	<u>P. Harris</u>		
	<u>J. Miller</u>		

Also present: Dr. Bruno, G. Heller, T. Cole, E. Cariello, staff, community and press.

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Ms. McCoy.

Ms. McCoy led the Board in the pledge to the flag.

Ms. McCoy stated that the Public Comment period would be extended to one hour in order to accommodate all questions. Each question would be answered as they are asked.

### **Public Comment**

Adele Kivel, teacher, speaking on behalf of differentiated instruction, asked the Board for some budgetary considerations. Ms. Kivel read a statement which emphasized the need for a process for teachers to talk across grade levels, departments and across schools. Teachers can't use staff development unless they internalize it and make it part of their being. The role of the teacher/coach for differentiated instruction is to aide teachers in articulating this connection as well as communicating among teachers their aspirations, their needs, and the benefits to their students. If you want children to think, then teachers have to think. If you want children to learn, then teachers have to be engaged in learning.

Mr. Miller asked for a breakdown of the actual costs and hours. Ms. Kivel stated that it would be \$3,000 for each teacher/coach stipend for each of the four elementary schools (4 x 3,000 = \$12,000); and for the IA/TA \$2,500 for each school (4 x 2,500 = \$10,000) to be used at the principals' discretion – for an approximate total of \$22,000.

Dr. Bruno asked Ms. Kivel to provide her analysis to the Board for their packets. On April 3<sup>rd</sup> the Board will decide what they want to add to the 2006-07 budget.

Christina Johnson, parent, stated that she believes in differentiated instruction and how it helped her child. Fortunately, his class had differentiated instruction and it did wonders for his self esteem – treated as an individual.

Trici Kushner, parent, stated that differentiation is a true diamond, a jewel, and every child has a better experience when teachers practice it with their students. She asked for the Board's support for this program.

Karen Corrado, parent and a member of the Differentiation Task Force, would like to see the District embrace differentiation as a philosophy. The program works in a lot of ways, and the facilitator can work with the people who take PIPs.

Mr. Drexel asked how we will measure what tangible things have for our students.

Ms. Kivel stated that the teacher/coach on stipend in the four buildings will coordinate with each other to assess the needs for transitioning students from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 3<sup>rd</sup> grade. They would ask teachers who took part in this program to come back and let the Board know the benefits in the classroom and to the teachers themselves.

Mr. Drexel asked that the program, if approved, be structured as a program with pre-determined objectives.

Ms. Kivel stated that differentiation is not a program but a philosophy. Parents are crying out for information on differentiated education. The teacher/coach will provide that information.

Mr. Miller stated that staff development involves taking teachers who are doing things well and getting them to do it better. The concern is that differentiated instruction is not occurring in all classrooms, therefore not all children are reaping the benefits of DI. It is a matter of getting the teachers who are not using DI to learn to use it.

Ms. Kivel responded that one should begin with the teachers who are interested in learning about differentiation and not force those who are not ready. Ms. Harris agreed with Mr. Miller and stated that the teacher/facilitator would help those teachers who are ready to begin to use what they have learned.

Ed Ciffone, resident/UTY President, stated that he will go to the UTY and ask them to support the budget at 5.9%. He requested that the Board take \$300,000 out of fund balance to do the small O&M projects. The UTY will not support the bond as it is, but will support the budget.

Jean Cilione, music teacher/resident, spoke about the performance by the music faculty last Thursday and the fact that only Dr. Bruno attended the performance, and not any other administrators or Board members. It is disheartening to see that we are not supported by the Board.

Jackie Carbone, parent, stated that a maintenance budget means there is no growth and the differentiation instruction would help with that growth. She asked about the Crompond roof and whether there was money in the budget to replace that roof if the bond was voted down. Mr. Cole stated that there was no money in the budget for that purpose and that we would have to go out with another bond.

Dr. Bruno addressed the issue of the maintenance budget and stated that he had asked the principals to compile a budget within certain boundaries but that they could change whatever requests that are within those boundaries.

Nick Ditomasso, resident, stated that he would be available to be a poll taker.

Ed Ciffone, explained that Mr. Ditomasso would be willing to do a poll regarding the bond to find out what the vote would be. He suggested taking \$1.6 million from the fund balance to repair the Crompond roof. Mr. Ciffone talked about the bond projects and areas to cut.

Mr. Cole stated that when we used fund balance to complete the roofs at Brookside and Mohansic we had over \$3 million and we were able to complete the roofs without draining every dollar to complete a roof. Mr. Cole stated that there was no excess at all in the area of materials and supplies in each of the schools – it was quite the opposite, with elementary teachers purchasing their own supplies.

Regarding the Evening School, the funding was reduced from \$129,000 to \$95,000. However, Dr. Bruno has had talks with BOCES about their running a regional evening school on their campus.

Karen Corrado, parent, had a question from the Families for a Smarter Yorktown. How did we come up with such a low tax increase for the budget? Does that mean that next year we will have a double digit increase? Mr. Cole stated that assuming State Aid stays at the current level; and if the Teachers' Retirement increase is reasonable, and if we negotiate reasonable contracts for the teachers, custodians, and nurses – all these events would be a plus to keep the increase to a single digit. However, we have no idea what will happen next year.

Jackie Carbone, parent, asked where do we get our power from. Mr. Cole stated that most of our power is from New York State Electric & Gas (NYSEG).

Mr. Drexel said that he had questions that were not answered regarding the functions of some of the positions in the central office and business office and would like to have that information this week. Dr. Bruno stated that the central office is putting that information together.

Ms. McCoy read a statement from Mr. Perrino regarding the position in Human Resources going from part-time to full-time. What is the need if the work has been getting done?" Mr. Perrino asked. Dr. Bruno responded that we are understaffed and need the increased hours. Most personnel departments are staffed by an Assistant Superintendent and two to three assistants. He stated that the district would be at risk without the increase in this time.

Ms. McCoy stated that the Board has been provided with the job description and all of the information required to make a decision on this and wanted the public to know what was going on.

Ms. McCoy discussed the need for the Evening School, and how students' needs could be met with the evening school. Mr. Heller stated that he will sit down with the evening school administrator to be sure that classes are scheduled with sufficient enrollment. Ms. Harris asked if students could take those same classes in summer school. Mr. Heller responded that summer school is handled through BOCES and courses depend on enrollment.

Ms. Harris asked how many students actually need evening school. Do our children have another option? Dr. Bruno stated the administrative costs for the evening school is where he has a problem, not the instructional costs.

The Board discussed the situation at the middle school regarding the math teacher position and the AIS resource needs. Ms. Grimm stated that AIS needs have grown substantially. This is the first year there is a 6, 7, & 8 grade assessment. The needs are based on the requirements by New York State. She said they are anticipating that 45-50 students in sixth grade will require services. The current sixth grade has 35. Mr. Heller stated that the math assessments are rigorous, comprehensive exams. Ms. Grimm explained the math classes and the teacher-student ratios for AIS.

Ms. McCoy asked what the math position will do for the district. Ms. Grimm stated that the teacher can either push in or pull out. Some instruction may be done in the classroom. Ms. Grimm stated that she is requesting a full-time AIS teacher.

The Board then discussed the issue of an additional 0.25 science teacher at the high school. Mr. Heller said that John Sullivan was requesting a 0.6 FTE. Due to an oversight when preparing the budget, there are two full sections of social studies, psychology and the Holocaust. The recommendation from the Social Studies Teacher Coordinator is that there is a need for an additional 0.6 teacher. Mr. Miller stated that enrollments in the assortment of AP courses have not gone down, but there is an increased interest for more courses. Ms. McCoy stated that the Board needed to decide on the request for a 0.25 science and 0.6 social studies teacher.

Ms. Harris asked about the overtime for the business office. Mr. Cole stated that the increase in the budget was due to payroll working before or after vacations to meet the deadlines for State Aid. The increase is for \$2,000 over last year to \$5,000. Mr. Drexel again asked for job descriptions of personnel in the business office to understand the need for overtime.

Dr. Bruno stated that the clericals have the same school recesses as the faculty and students. This is something that not many other districts provide. Mr. Cole stated that no one is paid for vacation not taken, it is a contractual issue that the clericals have the same time off. It reflects the needs of the payroll department.

Ms. McCoy mentioned rejoining NYSSBA because of the valuable information that comes from that organization. Also, Mr. Perrino (in his statement) requested that the Board take a look at funding for DestiNation ImagiNation.

There were questions regarding technology purchases, including the plan for replacement of classroom computers on a rotating basis. Mr. Heller stated that the District was working with BOCES and IBM for an installment/purchase plan. Mr. Miller asked that the new Technology Director give the Board a presentation on the technology plans for the future. He wanted an update on where we are and where we are going. Dr. Bruno stated he would schedule such a presentation.

Mr. Miller asked that the administration come forward with a plan to fund the items that were added to the budget at this meeting without going over the 5.9% tax rate. Dr. Bruno stated that they would come up with options, but under no circumstances would he recommend a budget that goes any higher than it is now.

Motion by Ms. Harris, seconded by Mr. Miller, to adjourn the meeting.

5 aye, 0 nay, Motion Carried

The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Board Secretary