

COXSACKIE-ATHENS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Special Board of Education Meeting
March 10, 2009

Call to Order

The meeting was called to order at 7:07 p.m. by President Garland

Roll Call

Present: Mrs. Carroll, Mrs. Tailleir, Mr. Cardinale, Mr. Nadler, Mr. Gerrain, Mr. Wallace, Mr. Petramale, Mr. Garland

Absent: Mrs. Hanse

Public Input – Agenda Items

None

Public Input – Non-Agenda Items

Tracy Watson 9 years CATA member, C-A graduate, coach in the district, and children in the district. Teaches history at C-A. Thanked the Board and administrators for all of their hard work in addressing all of the educational issues. As you continue to review our options, look beyond the test scores, examine the impact these cuts would have on individual students. This community, board, administrators, parents have worked very hard to make this district what it is.

Jason Danz – HS math teacher 4 years CATA. He spoke on behalf of the math department. Spoke about upcoming PI Day, where they will have several in class activities, PI posters, songs, riddles and stories.

Richard Roberg – Spoke about the economic decline of the US. We are in a financial crisis. He is concerned with quality of education. Quality education comes from parents who should send children to school ready to learn with a good value system; classroom teachers, who present an environment for the students to learn; and maintenance custodial staff keeping the building in a good shape, therefore the students come to a clean and maintained environment. The administrators, teachers aides, assistants, and support staff are necessary up to a point. When you look at your cuts he would hope we would look in a similar fashion.

Chris Byas – CATA teacher for 35 years, Very concerned about the potential cuts of four elementary positions. This would increase class size. The educational climate requires more and more from our students. Smaller class size enables teachers to meet the individual needs of our students. Reading and writing must be developed at the elementary level. Our district is chosen by parents due to our academic success.

Jamie Rubin – School Psychologist. She spoke about her roles and responsibilities as a school psychologist. She works in Coxsackie Elementary and the High School. This is her third year with district. She has been working on policies for Response Intervention.

She works with staff helping the 8th to 9th grade transition and the 9th grade orientation. She completes assessments, counseling and consultations. Each year she is required to complete three year re-evaluations, 25 per school year plus initial referrals to special education. These numbers have not decreased over the past three years. These referrals are very time consuming 8 to 10 pages is the average report. Teachers often look to her for guidance and expertise. For counseling she sees mandated and non-mandated students. There is an increasing trend of students engaging in self-mutilation. She coordinates the Banana Splits group at the elementary level. Provides support to a self-contained special education classroom. Her roles and responsibilities have continued to increase over her three years.

Shauna Evans – School Psychologist – Currently the two school psychologists are split between the four buildings and preschools. Due to the demands placed on both of the school psychologists the time they currently spend with students is minimal.

Superintendent's Recommendations

Business Matters

Budget

Potential Staffing Reductions/Pyramid Decision Making Model

Dr. Gregory explained that the district is faced with balancing the needs of children and the needs of taxpayers. At this point the district is unsure as to what funds it will be receiving from the State of New York and also not clear on what the Federal Stimulus will be providing and when. Last week \$240,000 in non-staff reductions were recommended to the Board. Following are potential staffing cuts being recommended.

District wide summer cleaners reduce from ten to six.

Coxsackie Elementary would reduce the number of 4th grade sections with an average of 16 per class

Edward J Arthur would reduce the number of 4th grade classes to 2 sections, with 21 per class

Middle School would reduce one 5th and one 6th grade sections, average 5th grade class would be 21 students, average 6th grade class would be 24 students.

Elementary Librarian – elementary schools would be staffed by two full time teaching assistants, being supervised by librarians in the other schools.

AIS Math teaching assistant (middle school) given the improvement of student achievement, we believe this position is not needed. There are still two AIS teachers on staff working with students in the middle school.

MS Clerical ½ Time Library – coverage could be provided by the high school library clerical person. Student activities treasurer, which is currently the responsibility of the high school library clerk would be moved to the secretary for the Chief of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment.

LPN Excess Appropriation – LPN on bus for a special education student. We do not need the amount originally budgeted for.

Teacher Aide (CE) Special Ed – no longer a need for this position

Teacher Aide (EJA) Special Ed – no longer a need for this position.

Psychologist – With the changing enrollment and needs the district would return to that of one school psychologist.

Special Education Teacher – With 12 middle school students in self contained class, the number of classes can be reduced from 3 to 2. Reduction in the number of the students at the middle school level.

Impacts of Retirement

\$71,114 Includes benefits (does not include the cost of the incentive)

Pyramid Decision Making Process was distributed. By next week's meeting Board will receive a complete listing of staff reductions to complete the pyramid. Will be complete and distributed by the 3/31 Board meeting. It was agreed to leave two teacher aide positions off the pyramid since there is not a need for those positions next year.. Dr. Gregory will put a list of positions together and bring to Board meeting.

Mr. Nadler asked if we should go back to First Student (bus transportation) to see if they are willing to re-consider there contract increase.

Mark Gerrain – In the future could we even consider a 4 day school week to save costs? Numerous items would need to be dealt with such as contracts, transportation, and NYS requirement of 180 days of instruction. Variety of items that would be problematic. Some schools have adopted 4 days work weeks with summer staff.

Mr. Nadler asked if the Operations and Maintenance budget could be reviewed. Maybe some additional savings in his budget. Dr. Gregory explained that we need to have a certain amount of flexibility in this budget and he would not be comfortable at reducing it any further.

Mr. Garland assured everyone who was present at the meeting that these decisions require a lot more discussion. The rollover budget was 4.1% which is a 13% tax levy increase. He explained that cuts are never easy but a 13% tax levy increase would never be approved by the taxpayers. We have to come up with something that everyone can live with. Not an easy task for any Board member. We are here for the kids.

Public Input

Richard Roberg – Last year Dr. Gregory recommended a new administrative position with a secretary, quite frankly, if you demanded your department chairperson do their

job, it would be better than layering with another administrative position. Is it necessary to have that additional layer?

Shauna Evans – School Psychologist There are things that a school psychologist does that the social worker cannot do. Social worker cannot do evaluations, cannot chair CSE/CPSE meetings.

Desiree Pacuk – When looking at class size keep in mind that typically the schools get 4 to 8 new students per year.

Roberta Strenka – All the staff cuts mentioned were at the elementary and middle level. Is there going to be any at the high school level?

Susan McLaughlin-She was not approached that her ½ time clerical position was being cut. She found out in a roomful of people tonight that her position was being cut. How is one person going to handle two very busy libraries?

Abbie Breen – She is concerned with cutting of one school psychologist. Due to schedules and responsibilities, it is already very difficult to reach one of them when she needs them. With all of the issues such as cutting, alcohol, and drugs, there are times that she needs the help of one of the psychologists.

Mary Thumann – Co-President CATA Teachers Association. She is very disappointed that nobody responded by Mrs. McLaughlin's concern regarding her position. Dr. Gregory stated Mrs. McLaughlin was not contacted today because due to her seniority she has bumping rights to another position in the district.

Wayne Deyo who is a father of two students stated that it is very difficult to hear speakers in the front of the room. Suggested using a microphones next time.

Request for Reports/Information

Mr. Petramale, asked for a copy of Ms. Rubin's statement to the Board.

Mr. Cardinale would like to see more on the tracking of enrollment.

Mr. Gerrain asked if would could look into the savings if we increased the radius for student transportation.

Establishment of Future Meetings

Board of Education Meetings

Tuesday, March 17, 2009, 7 p.m. Middle School Library, Regular Board of Education Meeting

Tuesday, March 31, 2009, 7 p.m. Middle School Library (Tentative Budget Workshop scheduled if needed).

Adjourn

A motion was made by Mr. Cardinale, seconded by Mr. Gerrain and unanimously passed to adjourn the meeting at 8:25 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Judith Zoller
District Clerk