

December 7, 2011

The regular Planning/Action Meeting of the Board of Education of the Freeport Union Free School District was held on Wednesday, December 7, 2011, in the cafeteria of the Caroline G. Atkinson Intermediate School. Debra Mulé, Vice President of the Board of Education, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. She then led the pledge of allegiance.

Those present were: Ms. Debra Mulé, Vice President
Mr. Ronald Ellerbe, Trustee
Ms. Vilma Lancaster
Mr. Michael Pomerico, Trustee

Absent were: Ms. Debra McQuillan, President

Also present were: Dr. Kishore Kuncham, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Wafa Westervelt, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Dr. Kenneth Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Mr. Michael Singleton, Executive Director of Operations

Also absent were: Dr. Mary Bediako, Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Special Projects & District Clerk

The number of people in the audience at the opening of the meeting was 17.

Ms. Mulé called for a resolution to appoint a Clerk Pro Tem upon the absence of the District Clerk, Dr. Mary Bediako. Mr. Pomerico moved to appoint Dr. Ken Rodgers, Assistant Superintendent for Business, as Clerk Pro Tem. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ellerbe and the motion was approved.

The vote was unanimous, Ellerbe, Lancaster, Mulé and Pomerico.

Superintendent's Report

Dr. Kuncham, Superintendent of Schools, called for a moment of silence to remember Ms. Doris Selub, retired Superintendent of Freeport Union Free School District. Ms. Selub had retired in June of 1992.

Dr. Kuncham also informed the Board and the public of the following:

- The Freeport Top Ten students of the graduating class for 2012 are:
 1. Brea Baker
 2. Lakiea Simmons

3. Shakira Walden
4. Isaiah Barnes
5. Bart Zvitcovich
6. Katherine Monjaras
7. Marcus Desir
8. Monique Robinson
9. Sayyid Abdullah
10. Alvin Paredes

We are all very proud of these students' accomplishments and recognize their hard work.

1. Bayview Avenue School Holiday Musical under the direction of teachers Christina Giaquinto, Geraldine LaPenne, Jeannie Rodriguez and James Stalzer was wonderful.
2. He also remarked that Ms. LaPenne was recognized as the Decembers Teacher of the Month for Freeport Schools.

Presentation of the Comprehensive Educational Plan

Dr. Kuncham informed the public that under NYSED's Differentiated Accountability System, public and charter schools that are not in good standing are designated to an accountability phase – Improvement, Corrective Action or Restructuring- based on its history of making adequate yearly progress (AYP) for each accountability measure. Unfortunately, two (2) of our schools, Caroline G. Atkinson Intermediate School, John W. Dodd Middle School are on the list as Schools in Need of Improvement (SINI) Year 1. These designations were for our English Language Learners (ELL) and our Students with Disabilities (SWD), the two groups who did not meet the Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) in ELA and Math. A third school, Freeport High School is also on the list at Restructuring, Advanced Focused Level for ELL, Special Education and Hispanic Students in ELA and Math.

There are many reasons why our ELL, Special Education and Hispanic students are having difficulty making AYP. Some of these reasons are;

- o Statistical adjustments that permitted school districts to make AYP with students with disabilities sunset.
- o Introduction of higher proficiency standards 3-8 grades
- o Establishment of more rigorous HS graduation rate goal and targets as required by the US Department Guidelines.

These three (3) schools are required to develop a Comprehensive Education Plan Attached are the presentation of the plans presented by Mrs. Carter, Mr. O'Mard and Mr. Kight, the principals of the three schools.

The Superintendent thanked the three Principals, Coordinators, Directors, Teachers, Parents and Dr. Westervelt who served on the committee to develop the Plans. Dr Kuncham emphasized that the District is putting a great effort into the implementation of the Plans and the Common Core Learning Standards with the goal of meeting or exceeding the Adequate Yearly Progress targets. It is a daunting task but we are all pulling together to accomplish it and get off the list.

Mr. Ellerbe gave a report of the meeting on November 18, 2011 of the Budget/Legislative Committee Meeting. Mr. Ellerbe asked Dr. Kuncham if he would like to add additional information on the 2% Tax Cap legislation passed by the New York Legislature. Dr. Kuncham emphasized that the key issue is sustainability of the District's programs and staff over the next three to five years given the stringent restrictions placed on the District's two major sources of revenue: state aid and the tax levy. The District is considering developing budget proposals for 2012-13 that are within the constraints of the 2% tax cap legislation along with a budget that preserves our programs and staff and exceeds to 2% cap, but would require a super majority of 60%.

Dr. Kuncham addressed the key external trends and issues that will affect the 2012-13 budget. He noted the prolonged economic recession of the last three years has had an adverse impact on the District and the Freeport community. For the last three years, it has been a challenge to develop a budget proposal that preserves the District's educational and support programs, retains necessary staff, and provides a tax levy increase that the community can support and afford. With the passage of the 2% property tax cap, Dr. Kuncham highlighted the additional challenges that lie ahead, including:

- **A tax cap limits local revenues for education** – Beginning in 2012-13, the District's ability to increase property tax levies may be constrained by an average annual rate of inflation increase or 2%, whichever is less. The legislation allows certain overrides and exclusions, which may results in a tax level increase above 2%. The initial projections are that the tax levy increase for next year will need to be in the range of \$1.6 to \$2.1 million, in order to require only a simple majority of the voters. A proposed tax levy that exceeds the 2% tax cap as specified in the legislation would require a supermajority of 60%. Dr. Kuncham noted that the final regulations have yet to be released by the Department of Education.
- **A state-wide cap limits future General Support for Public Education funds from the State** – The local tax levy cap is accompanied with a parallel year-to-year cap on the General Support to Public Schools (GSPS) of state aid.

This cap is established by the rate of growth in personal income in New York State. For 2012-13, the GSPS growth is projected to be \$805 million. Approximately 50% of this amount will be allocated to the increases in expense-based aids and the Governor's two new competitive grant programs, leaving approximately \$400 million for allocations to districts through the Foundation Aid formula. Dr. Kuncham estimated, based upon currently available information that the District could receive between \$1.2 and \$1.7 million in additional state aid for next year.

- **Due to contractual obligations, legislative mandates, and other factors, the costs of education continue to rise for Freeport** – For 2012-13, the District is facing significant increases in costs related to:
 - Teachers Retirement System Employers' Contribution – the projected rate increase for next year is 11.5% to 12.5%;
 - Employees Retirement System – projected to increase by approximately 20%;
 - Roll-over for staff salaries, based on contractual obligations, amounts to approximately \$4.4 million;
 - Health Care Premiums are anticipated to increase approximately 6%.

He emphasized that these costs are all projected to increase well about the 2% tax levy cap for next year, and will require the District to find off-setting expense reductions or increases in revenue in order to balance the budget.

- **“Cliff year” of Federal ARRA funding** – 2012-13 will be the “cliff year” with respect to the benefits that New York State has received from Federal ARRA funding. For 2011-12, the final year of ARRA funding for Freeport, the District has received approximately \$1.9 in Federal EdJobs funding that is devoted to supporting teachers' salaries and benefits. Any potential gains in general State Aid funding could off-set this loss in EdJobs funding.

After discussing the external trends affecting the 2012-13 budget, Dr. Kuncham reviewed alternative scenarios for preparing the 2012-13 budget, including:

- **Roll-over Budget** – this budget would satisfy the District's existing contractual obligations and commitments and would result in an approximate budget-to-budget increase of \$6.5 million. Dr. Kuncham explained that he is having discussions with the appropriate union leaders regarding the budget challenges the District, the tax cap issues, and how, working together, we can develop a budget that is educationally and financially sound.

- Make the reductions in the District's costs so that the tax levy would be within the 2% requirements – this option will require making substantial cuts to fill a gap of approximately \$4.5 to \$5 million and would require reducing some of the District's most important educational and student service programs. Voter approval of this option is a simple majority of 1 vote greater than 50% of those voting;

Under each of the above scenarios, if the proposed budget is not approved, the District can present a revised, or second budget for revote, either within the 2% tax cap or above the tax cap which requires a 60% supermajority. If the budget is defeated a second time, then the District must accept a revised budget with a tax levy equal to the previous year. In conclusion, Dr. Kuncham noted that he would keep the Board of Education and the community informed of future developments that affect the 2012-13 budget as they occur.

Questions from the Public

The public was given the opportunity to address the Board of Education. Each speaker was allowed to address the Board for four minutes on any topic. The Board and administration addressed the comments from the public.

Items for Action

On a motion by Mr. Pomerico and a seconded by Mr. Ellerbe the following item was approved:

CSE/CPSE Minutes

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Freeport Union Free School District hereby accepts the minutes of the meetings of the committees on special education and preschool special education for the following dates:

October 4, 5, 7, 13, 17, 18, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28, 2011

November 1, 3, 7, 9, 10, 15, 16, 17, 18, 21, 22, 2011

The vote was unanimous, Ellerbe, Lancaster, Mulé and Pomerico.

Adjournment

At 9:18 p.m. with no other business on a motion by Mr. Pomerico and seconded by Ms. Lancaster, the Board adjourned the meeting.

The vote was unanimous, Ellerbe, Lancaster, Mulé and Pomerico.

Next Meeting

The next regularly scheduled Action meeting of the Board of Education will be on December 21, 2011, 7:30 p.m., at New Visions School.

Respectfully submitted,

Kenneth Rodgers, Ed.D.
Clerk Pro Tem