THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
OF THE SCHOOL DISTRICT OF PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA

MINUTES

Meeting of: February 14, 2007

Call of the Meeting: Special Legislative Meeting

Members Present: Mr. Brentley, Mrs. Colaizzi, Dr. Dowd, Mrs. Fink, Mr. Isler, Mr. McCrea, Mr. Romaniello, Sr., and Mr. Sumpter, Jr.

Absent: Mr. Taylor

The following matters were received and acted upon.

Actions taken are recorded following the reports.
ROLL CALL

A. COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

CHARTER SCHOOLS:  

1. Education InnovationsLAB Charter School Application

2. Polaris Academy Charter School Application

3. Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy Charter School Application
1. **Education InnovationsLAB Charter School Application**

RESOLVED: That the Pittsburgh Board of Education denies The Education InnovationsLAB Charter School Application in accordance with the Charter School Law, 24 P.S. § 17-1717-A.

The Education InnovationsLAB Charter School Review Team's recommendation is to deny the application for the following reasons:

1. Charter does not have sustained support from parents, teachers, and the community.
2. Charter applicant fails to demonstrate its capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students pursuant to the proposed charter.
3. Charter applicant does not provide expanded choice and cannot serve as a model for Pittsburgh Public Schools.
4. Charter applicant failed to complete the requirements of the application as required by PA Charter School Law, sections 1717-A and 1719-A

2. **Polaris Academy Charter School Application**

RESOLVED: That the Pittsburgh Board of Education denies The Polaris Academy Charter School Application in accordance with the Charter School Law, 24 P.S. § 17-1717-A.

The Polaris Charter School Review Team's recommendation is to deny the application for the following reasons:

1. Charter does not have sustained support from parents, teachers, and the community.
2. Charter applicant fails to demonstrate its capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students pursuant to the proposed charter.
3. Charter applicant does not provide expanded choice and cannot serve as a model for Pittsburgh Public Schools.
4. Charter does not have plans to meet the needs of students with disabilities, bilingual, and at-risk students.
5. Charter does not comply with all federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to the health, safety, civil rights and education of students.
6. Charter applicant failed to complete the requirements of the application as required by PA Charter School Law, sections 1717-A and 1719-A.
3. **Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy Charter School Application**

RESOLVED: That the Pittsburgh Board of Education denies The Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy Charter School Application in accordance with the Charter School Law, 24 P.S. § 17-1717-A.

The Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy Charter School Review Team's recommendation is to deny the application for the following reasons:

1. Charter does not have sustained support from parents, teachers, and the community.
2. Charter applicant fails to demonstrate its capability to provide comprehensive learning experiences to students pursuant to the proposed charter.
3. Charter applicant does not provide expanded choice and cannot serve as a model for Pittsburgh Public Schools.
4. Charter does not have plans to meet the needs of students with disabilities, bilingual, and at-risk students.
5. Charter does not comply with all federal, state, and local regulations pertaining to the health, safety, civil rights and education of students.
6. Charter applicant failed to complete the requirements of the application as required by PA Charter School Law, sections 1717-A and 1719-A.

Respectfully Submitted,

Thomas Sumpter, Chairperson
Committee on Education
TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

PITTSBURGH BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION
SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE MEETING
WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2007
6:10 P.M.
ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - BOARD COMMITTEE ROOM

BEFORE:

WILLIAM ISLER, BOARD PRESIDENT
THERESA COLAIZZI, SECOND VICE PRESIDENT
MARK BRENTLEY
PATRICK DOWD
JEAN FINK
FLOYD McCREA
DANIEL ROMANIELLO, SR.
THOMAS SUMPTER

MEMBERS ABSENT:

RANDALL TAYLOR, FIRST VICE PRESIDENT

ALSO PRESENT:

MR. MARK ROOSEVELT  DR. LINDA LANE
MR. IRA WEISS  MR. PETER J. CAMARDA
MR. RICHARD R. FELLERS  MR. DWIGHT LAUFMAN
MS. PATRICIA A. FISHER  MR. LAWRENCE BERGIE
MS. LISA FISCHETTI  DR. KAYE CUPPLES
MR. HOWARD BULLARD  DR. BARBARA RUDIAK

REPORTED BY: EUGENE C. FORCIER
PROFESSIONAL COURT REPORTER

COMPUTER-AIDED TRANSCRIPTION BY
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PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA
412-281-0189

ORIGINAL
MR. ISLER: Good evening, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to welcome you to the February 14th, 2007 special legislative meeting of the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education.

Would you all rise, so we may salute the flag.

(Salute to the flag.)

MR. ISLER: I want to wish you all a happy Valentine's Day. It is a wonderful -- as Mr. Romaniello says, yes, he is spending it with me, I'm sorry, that is the way it is going to be, Mr. Romaniello.

It depends on how many questions, as to when we get out of here.

On this special legislative agenda, we would like to ask Mr. Weiss to please call the roll.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Brentley?

MR. BRENTLEY: Here.

MR. WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

MR. BRENTLEY: Here.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Dowd?

MR. DOWD: Present.

MR. WEISS: Mrs. Fink?

MS. FINK: Here.
MR. WEISS: Mr. McCrea?

MR. McCREA: Here.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Romaniello?

MR. ROMANIHELLO: Here.

MR. WEISS: MR. Sumpter?

MR. SUMPTER: Present.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Taylor?

Mr. Taylor is absent.

Mr. Isler?

MR. ISLER: Present.

MR. WEISS: Eight members present.

MR. ISLER: Thank you, Mr. Weiss.

There is one item on the agenda this evening, it is the Committee on Education report on charter schools.

We discussed last week, at the Education Committee, three charter school applications, and the reports that were submitted to us by our staff.

There was one on the Education InnovationsLAB Charter School application, one on the Polaris Academy Charter School application, and one on the Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy School application.

The report is before you.

Are there any questions, or comments?
Mr. Brentley.

MR. BRENTLEY: Yes.

Mr. President, I just want to share some of my comments that I shared last week when we received the report from our committee -- from the three different committees.

First I wanted to just say thank you so much for our staff, for their hard work, and doing the research, and preparing the report for us.

But, Mr. President, I just want to say, historically, my position has always been one of supporting the recommendations of the committee.

My comments, last week's meeting, was especially on one particular school, and that's the one that's No. 3, and that's the Three Rivers Youth and Leadership Academy Charter School application, and my concerns for this particular applicant, I do believe that they are attempting to serve an under served population in the District, and that simply means students who are either in foster care, residential care, or a combination of the two.

And so, I do believe that we are not serving that population.

I do respect the recommendations of the committee, but on that particular application, I will
be voting -- or, just simply abstaining, because I
know that we are not doing what we should be doing in
terms of providing all of the necessary services to
that population.

And, by the way, I think all of the
research will show that that number is increasing,
because of the problems that exist in a lot of
communities. A lot of grandparents are raising
children, a lot of children are in foster care, a lot
of children are in residential group home settings.

And so those numbers continue to climb.

So I will ask again that our staff extend
an invitation, in meeting with the Three Rivers Youth
administration, they are very knowledgeable, great
reputation in the community, and always serving that
population.

So I will be abstaining on No. 3.

And on a second note, Mr. President, I have
shared in the past, when applications are presented
before this Board in terms of voting up and voting
down, I have always said, just from my point of view,
it has always been an uncomfortable vote, because I
still believe that, as a Board member, I do not have
enough information on what my role and
responsibilities are in accepting or rejecting the
I only go on what our staff submits to us, and so I just want to say that again, for the record. I continue to be somewhat confused, and I guess it is a statewide issue as well, what exactly is my role in terms of the applications, and even in cases where we may have denied some applicants, there is a process where they can go on, and it still comes back to the District.

And so I'm one that will stand and say that I am totally confused on that process, as well as my role and responsibility.

So once again here, I want to say for the record, my confusion on understanding my total role, but I will be supporting the recommendation for the other two affirmatively, for the first two applications.

MR. ISLER: Thank you, Mr. Brentley.

Mr. Romaniello.

MR. ROMANIELLO: Thank you, Mr. President.

Before we vote, I would just like to say that the other day there was a report, I believe it was in the Tribune Review, that shows that, you know, everybody wanted -- likes to jump on the charter school bandwagon, and say, you know, that they can out
perform our schools, and that story was very telling, that charter schools aren't, you know, turning out to be what we thought; you know, a lot of people thought they would be. So I think there will be some very interesting reading for everybody to see that, you know, and then maybe they will know why some of these folks come out the way they do.

MR. ISLER: Thank you. Any other comments?

Hearing none, Mr. Weiss, could we have a roll call vote, please, on the Committee on Education Report, charter schools.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Brentley?

MR. BRENTLEY: Yes.

Mr. Weiss, I will be voting yes on No. 1, yes on No. 2, and I will be abstaining on No. 3, which is the Three Rivers Youth Leadership application.

MR. WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

MS. COLAIZZI: Yes.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Dowd?

MR. DOWD: Yes.

MR. WEISS: Mrs. Fink?

MS. FINK: Yes.

MR. WEISS: Mr. McCrea?
MR. McCREA: Yes.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Romaniello?

MR. ROMANIELLO: Yes.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Sumpter?

MR. SUMPTER: Yes.

MR. WEISS: Mr. Isler?

MR. ISLER: Yes.

MR. WEISS: The report's approved.

MR. ISLER: Thank you.

And on behalf -- and I think Mr. Brentley said it well, on behalf of this Board, I would like to thank the staff, and the parents, the community members, everybody who participated in this process. It is a long and detailed process, and there were three very, very good teams and reports submitted to us.

Before we adjourn, I wanted to do this in the beginning, and I actually forgot about it, and was not reminded by either the person on my right, or the person on my left.

Mr. Bergie is our new chief information officer, has joined the District, we want to thank you, very much, for coming to Pittsburgh, and we look forward to working with you, sir.

So, thank you.
MR. BERGIE: I look forward to working with all of you.

MR. ISLER: And as they said, you really do not have to sing a song. That was just the Board, sort of pulling your leg a little bit.

MS. COLAIZZI: Yes, he does.

MR. BERGIE: I have even been going over the words.

MR. ISLER: No, please, we are going to save us all.

If there is no other business, at this time, I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

MS. COLAIZZI: So move.

MR. DOWD: Second.

MR. ISLER: It has been moved and seconded.

Meeting's adjourned. Thank you, very much.

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(Thereupon, at 6:17 p.m., the Agenda Review Meeting was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

I, Eugene C. Forcier, the undersigned, do hereby certify that the foregoing nine (9) pages are a true and correct transcript of my stenotypy notes taken of the Special Legislative Meeting, held in the Pittsburgh Board of Public Education, Administration Building, Board Committee Room, on Wednesday, February 14, 2007.

Eugene C. Forcier, Court Reporter