

**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.**

# **THE BOARD OF PUBLIC EDUCATION**

**PITTSBURGH, PENNSYLVANIA 15213  
Administration Building  
341 South Bellefield Avenue**

## **SPECIAL LEGISLATIVE AGENDA**

**February 14, 2007**

### **ROLL CALL**

#### **A. COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION**

##### **CHARTER SCHOOLS:**

**[Roll Call]**

- 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

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TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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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

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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

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REPORTED BY: EUGENE C. FORCIER  
PROFESSIONAL COURT REPORTER

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412-281-0189

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**ORIGINAL**

1 P-R-O-C-E-E-D-I-N-G-S

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

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

8 (Salute to the flag.)

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

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

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

18 MR. WEISS: Mr. Brentley?

19 MR. BRENTLEY: Here.

20 MR. WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

21 MR. BRENTLEY: Here.

22 MR. WEISS: Mr. Dowd?

23 MR. DOWD: Present.

24 MR. WEISS: Mrs. Fink?

25 MS. FINK: Here.

1 MR. WEISS: Mr. McCrea?

2 MR. McCREA: Here.

3 MR. WEISS: Mr. Romaniello?

4 MR. ROMANIELLO: Here.

5 MR. WEISS: MR. Sumpster?

6 MR. SUMPTER: Present.

7 MR. WEISS: Mr. Taylor?

8 Mr. Taylor is absent.

9 Mr. Isler?

10 MR. ISLER: Present.

11 MR. WEISS: Eight members present.

12 MR. ISLER: Thank you, Mr. Weiss.

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

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

19 There was one on the Education  
20 InnovationsLAB Charter School application, one on the  
21 Polaris Academy Charter School application, and one on  
22 the Three Rivers Youth Leadership Academy School  
23 application.

24 The report is before you.

25 Are there any questions, or comments?

1           Mr. Brentley.

2           MR. BRENTLEY: Yes.

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

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

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

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

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

24          I do respect the recommendations of the  
25 committee, but on that particular application, I will



1 be voting -- or, just simply abstaining, because I  
2 know that we are not doing what we should be doing in  
3 terms of providing all of the necessary services to  
4 that population.

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

11           And so those numbers continue to climb.

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

17           So I will be abstaining on No. 3.

18           And on a second note, Mr. President, I have  
19 shared in the past, when applications are presented  
20 before this Board in terms of voting up and voting  
21 down, I have always said, just from my point of view,  
22 it has always been an uncomfortable vote, because I  
23 still believe that, as a Board member, I do not have  
24 enough information on what my role and  
25 responsibilities are in accepting or rejecting the

1 applications.

2 I only go on what our staff submits to us,  
3 and so I just want to say that again, for the record.

4 I continue to be somewhat confused, and I  
5 guess it is a statewide issue as well, what exactly is  
6 my role in terms of the applications, and even in  
7 cases where we may have denied some applicants, there  
8 is a process where they can go on, and it still comes  
9 back to the District.

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

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

18 MR. ISLER: Thank you, Mr. Brentley.

19 Mr. Romaniello.

20 MR. ROMANIELLO: Thank you, Mr. President.

21 Before we vote, I would just like to say  
22 that the other day there was a report, I believe it  
23 was in the Tribune Review, that shows that, you know,  
24 everybody wanted -- likes to jump on the charter  
25 school bandwagon, and say, you know, that they can out

1 perform our schools, and that story was very telling,  
2 that charter schools aren't, you know, turning out to  
3 be what we thought; you know, a lot of people thought  
4 they would be.

5           So I think there will be some very  
6 interesting reading for everybody to see that, you  
7 know, and then maybe they will know why some of these  
8 folks come out the way they do.

9           MR. ISLER: Thank you.

10           Any other comments?

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

14           MR. WEISS: Mr. Brentley?

15           MR. BRENTLEY: Yes.

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

19           MR. WEISS: Mrs. Colaizzi?

20           MS. COLAIZZI: Yes.

21           MR. WEISS: Mr. Dowd?

22           MR. DOWD: Yes.

23           MR. WEISS: Mrs. Fink?

24           MS. FINK: Yes.

25           MR. WEISS: Mr. McCrea?

1 MR. McCREA: Yes.

2 MR. WEISS: Mr. Romaniello?

3 MR. ROMANIELLO: Yes.

4 MR. WEISS: Mr. Sumpter?

5 MR. SUMPTER: Yes.

6 MR. WEISS: Mr. Isler?

7 MR. ISLER: Yes.

8 MR. WEISS: The report's approved.

9 MR. ISLER: Thank you.

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

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

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

25 So, thank you.



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C-E-R-T-I-F-I-C-A-T-E

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.



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Eugene C. Forcier, Court Reporter

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