

Parents Balk at SB 20 Search for New Superintendent

By Craig McGuire

Enraged parents blasted the District 20 school board this week over a move they feel threatens Superintendent Ralph Fabrizio.

At its December meeting at P.S. 105, 1031 59th street, School Board 20 approved expenditures to advertise for the superintendent's position, and voted down a motion to conduct an evaluation of Fabrizio before deciding whether or not to renew his contract.

Fabrizio, a veteran superintendent whose contract expires on June 30, 1994, needs a majority vote of the nine-member school board to stay on the \$110,000 job.

Hostile speakers representing parents associations across the district ripped both board actions. Their anger culminated when the majority of the contingent walked out of the meeting in protest.

The parents' anger focuses on the board allocating funds (which are not to exceed \$6,000) for advertisement without conducting a December evaluation of the superintendent. Only Mafalda DiMango voted against the motion, with Israel Licht abstaining. (Naftali Klagsbrun and James McCarthy were not present.)

Beverly Gordon, president of the Presidents Council, said, "If we are deciding to retain Fabrizio, there is no reason to waste the time and money."

'When they advertise (for a new superintendent), I will be the first one to send in a resume.'

— Current Supt.

Said Fabrizio, "When they advertise, I will be the first one to send in a resume." That resume would show 37 years of service in School District 20, which includes public elementary, intermediate, and junior high schools in Bay Ridge, Dyker Heights, and parts of Bensonhurst, Bath Beach, Borough Park, and Kensington.

The board has received the results of evaluations mailed in April to each of the 28 Parents Association presidents (who comprise the Presidents Council), representing each school in the district.

Judy Steinweiss, first vice president of the council, told the board she, as a

council member, was concerned that Fabrizio might sue over the evaluation procedure that the board conducted in April.

"At the time, none of us realized the situation," said Steinweiss, adding, "In 20 years, this is the most underhanded move I've seen."

School Board 20 President Ellen McGuinn said, "All 28 schools were contacted. Each president was sent a form directly."

According to McGuinn, only 16 schools responded.

Lorie Spano, co-president of the parents association at both I.S. 259 and P.S. 170, agreed with Steinweiss. "I think the PTA presidents weren't aware of the impact of the evaluation. I think if they had been, you would have gotten more than 16 responses."

Who Opposes Fabrizio?

McGuinn said eight of the returns favored Fabrizio, while eight opposed him.

"Where are the eight against?" asked Steinweiss, noting that not one of the approximately 20 speakers spoke against Fabrizio.

Steinweiss suggested that a closed ballot evaluation be conducted at the next Presidents Council meeting.

"As much as I'm angry, you guys have a chance to redeem yourself by reconsidering your actions," Steinweiss told the board.

However, Fabrizio's current contract stipulates that only one formal evaluation of his performance be conducted prior to a possible renewal.

Before entering his vote, board member Frank Spadaro said he supported an open search for the next superintendent. "I think it would be a disservice if we don't see what's out there," said the first-year board member.

"One of the problems in

this system is that a lot of the jobs are self-perpetuating," explained Spadaro. "The bottom line is we're doing this to get the best man for the job."

Principal Chastises Board

Parents were not the only ones who were outraged at the motions.

Robert Cohen, principal of P.S. 247, 7000 21st Avenue, said, "When I saw the agenda I was upset and could not believe that you are going outside the district before you properly evaluated Superintendent Fabrizio."

Cohen said, "I think it's

pretty sad that some members of this board are in the hip-pocket of members in this district who want to be superintendent."

Cohen advised, "If I were him, I'd tell all nine of you to take the job and shove it."

Answering charges made by several speakers, Spadaro said, "A lot of what is being said here is not true. I don't think there is anyone up here [on the board] who thinks Ralph is not doing a good job."

District 20 will now advertise for a pool of applicants for the position of community superintendent.



Former President of parents association at PS 205, 6701 20th Avenue, asks the board, "Why should we spend \$6,000 when we already have a superintendent?"

