

In Board Briefs, we summarize key agenda items and discussion topics from previous Board of Education meetings. Full meeting minutes are usually not available until approved by the Board at a subsequent meeting. The community is encouraged to attend each meeting, and the Board welcomes questions and comments. Previous Board Briefs can be found on the district website [here](#).

February 10, 2020 Board of Education Meeting

After an executive session, followed by attendance at the PTA's Reflections Awards ceremony and the Pledge of Allegiance, the first of four Budget Information meetings was held. Dr. Rufo, Assistant Superintendent for Business, presented on the capital portion of the budget and touched on the following points:

- The recent history of the tax levy and the calculated tax cap, and the projected cap for 2020-2021.
- External budget drivers including the tax cap, TRS/ERS contributions and health insurance rates.
- Investments planned for continued enhancements to learning environments with flexible furniture, library redesigns and instructional technology; security enhancements including staff, surveillance cameras and equipment; and facilities upgrades including replacement of aging maintenance and grounds equipment.

Dr. Rogers noted that at this time, the budget numbers presented are not yet finalized as the Board has not yet adopted the budget. He also commented that the next scheduled Building Condition Survey (BCS) for the District is scheduled to take place in 2023. In order to be financially prepared for the projects identified in the 2023 BCS, Dr. Rogers asked the Board to consider establishing a capital reserve fund to offset costs of projects identified in that BCS. He noted the District successfully used a capital reserve to fund the projects identified in the last BCS.

- Later in the meeting, the Board further discussed creating a capital reserve fund.

[Please click here to view the Budget Information presentation.](#)

The regular monthly public meeting was then called to order. The Board approved the minutes from the January 13, 2020 and February 1, 2020 meetings. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and approved.

The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items:

- Dr. Rogers introduced Science Research Coordinator Ms. Veronica Ade, who introduced Regeneron Science Talent Search Scholars Hailey Edelman and Michelle Li. The students each gave a brief synopsis of their respective research projects.
- Dr. Rogers then introduced faculty members Kathleen Jay, Kristina A. Holzweiss and Colleen Vereline, who provided an overview of the assistive technology being used throughout the District to support an environment for universal learning where every student can succeed. The team demonstrated how assistive technology is being used by all learners and provides each student access to resources that best aligns with their unique personal learning styles. [The presentation can be found here.](#)
- Dr. Rogers reminded the community about the importance of responding to the 2020 Census. Responses to the Census help determine the amount of federal funding the school district receives

for the next ten years, and it is therefore very important that all community members are counted so the District gets its fair share of funding.

- Dr. Rogers reported on the results of the community engagement regarding the high school start time. Over 2,300 parents, students, staff and community members participated in the online engagement tool Thought Exchange, and over 2,000 thoughts were shared with over 55,000 ratings on the thoughts shared. Strong support was shown for a later start time and some opinions were shared on acceptable compromises to achieve a later start time. The next steps in the investigation process include soliciting feedback on specific options and conducting cost evaluations on the options. [The presentation can be found here.](#)
- Dr. Rogers stated that the District commissioned an enrollment study by an outside consultant and the report presented by the consultant was nearing completion. The full report will be available by the next monthly Board of Education meeting. Dr. Rogers provided background data of how the enrollment study is calculated, including evaluating the number of live births in the Syosset area, new housing developments, and families moving into the District. [The preliminary presentation can be found here.](#)
- Dr. Rogers commented on a change included in the New York State proposed budget that could reduce the amount of aid school districts receive related to capital projects. Dr. Rogers noted the legislature may not approve this proposed change, but if it passes, it would impact projects approved by voters after July 1, 2020.

Report from the Spokesperson of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance

- Dr. Rufo read a statement on behalf of a representative of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance, who was unable to attend the meeting, regarding the Committee's January meeting. The next meeting was scheduled for February 11 at South Woods Middle School.

Audience to the public

- A resident inquired about how the District will inform the community about the importance of the Census and asked if the District would be communicating with Civic Associations as well.
 - Dr. Rogers commented that the District is planning an awareness campaign around the 2020 Census to take place in April during "Census Awareness Month," and Civic Associations as well as the PTA, will be engaged.
- A resident commented on the proposed legislation related to HPV vaccinations and stated his belief that the vaccinations were a parental rights issue, rather than a health issue. The resident requested the Board advocate against legislation that would mandate this vaccination without parental consent.
- A resident commended the work the District is doing with assistive technology and the expansion of the technology to all students. The resident asked the District to consider expanding the technology used in the AP courses at the high school, such as Canvas and Blackboard, and to consider a course coordination site, which the resident reported is a curated site of electronic resources on every area of curriculum, which would be helpful for students if they missed class time. The resident also commented that student evaluation of a course is done for college courses

and should be considered for use in AP courses. Lastly, the resident requested a method for asking questions of the presenters and Board meetings.

- Dr. Rogers responded that the District is conducting a pilot with Canvas, meaning that a group of teachers is testing and evaluating the software; and while it is robust, it is cumbersome to use. He commented that the District has made extraordinary strides related to the use of technology over the last five years. One initiative that has helped advance the adoption of new technology is the faculty-led “Teachers Actively Collaborating” (TAC) program at the high school, whereby teachers meet to discuss and share information on new technology. He also noted that community members can present questions related to the presentations to him during Audience to the Public.
- A resident stated a concern that the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) has not released the results of environmental testing conducted at the former Cerro Wire and Syosset Landfill sites. The resident inquired if the DEC has been in touch with the school district regarding the date the test results would be released, and asked if County Legislator Drucker and/or Senator Gaughran have asked for the District’s assistance in getting the results released.
 - Dr. Rogers confirmed the District received a letter dated March 3, 2019 from the DEC containing the statement “Preliminary results do not show any cause for concern.” The DEC assured the District if anything changed making that statement no longer accurate, it would contact the District immediately. The District has not received any communication on this matter since that time, indicating the DEC continues to stand by this statement. The DEC also indicated the full results of the testing would be released in May 2019. Since that timeframe has passed, the District’s consultant inquires every month on the status of the independent testing on behalf of the District but has not yet received additional information. Dr. Rogers stated he has not been contacted by any elected officials on this matter. Dr. Rogers noted the District has done an extensive amount of its own testing, including soil testing, ground water testing, air testing, radon testing, and drilled three permanent monitoring wells for continued testing. All results have been evaluated by environmental consultants, who did not find any cause for concern, and they have been posted online on the District website.
 - A Board Trustee stated the District should consider escalating the issue above the DEC.

Discussion Items:

- **Capital Reserve:**
 - The Board discussed creating a capital reserve fund to be financially prepared for the projects identified in the next Building Condition Survey (BCS), which will be done in 2023.
 - The Board discussed the success of the 2014 capital reserve fund, which was used to address the issues identified in the last BCS. The funds have now been exhausted with the last round of facilities projects, so there is now an opportunity to create a new fund. Any savings the District has at the end of the school year can be put into the fund in preparation for new projects identified.
 - The Board directed the Administration to proceed with preparing to present a proposition to the public on creating a new capital reserve fund.
- **Facilities:**
 - The Board discussed the proposed state budget that currently alters the way state aid is provided to school districts for facilities related projects. Since any projects approved by

voters prior to the new budget going into effect would not be impacted, the Board discussed the advantages of identifying projects for voter approval in May.

- The possibility of kitchens in the elementary schools and additional gymnasium space were mentioned.
 - The Administration will put together estimates for the Board to review by the March 16 Board meeting.
- **Human Papillomavirus (HPV)**
 - The Board discussed proposed legislation requiring the HPV vaccination.
 - Various points were discussed, including whether this was a health policy issue or an education issue, parental rights, the requirement of a vaccination for a disease that is not communicable in the classroom, the different viewpoints of community members, whether it is the role of the District to inform the community about proposed legislation, and any potential cost or impact to the District. No clear consensus emerged among the Board members.
 - **N-SSBA Legislative Items**
 - The Board informed the community of some of the initiatives the Nassau-Suffolk School Board Association (N-SSBA) plans to advocate for on behalf of school districts on Long Island.

New Business

Various resolutions were approved relating to staff appointments, transfers, reassignments, resignations, retirements, appointment to extracurricular assignments, coaching recommendations and stipends and hourly rate activities.

The Board approved a number of resolutions related to the management of the District, including committee meeting minutes and policies, and approval of student club charters.

The Board approved a number of resolutions related to financial operations of the District, including authorization for contracts, awards of bids, authorization for change orders, authorizations for piggybacking, the disposal of obsolete equipment and books and the acceptance of donations.

Next Meeting

- There will be a Budget Information Meeting followed by the Monthly Board of Education meeting on Monday, March 16, 2020 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.