

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](#).

September 16, 2019 Board of Education Meeting

After an executive session and the Pledge of Allegiance, the regular monthly public meeting was called to order. Board President Tracy Frankel welcomed the students and community back for the 2019-2020 school year. Dr. Rogers announced the District is working to update its Code of Conduct to incorporate restorative practices, which educates students on understanding the impact their mistakes may have on others in the learning community. The proposed changes to the Code of Conduct will incorporate restorative behavior language. The District is in the process of holding focus groups with parents and students, and will share the feedback received with the Board. A hearing on the proposed updates to the Code of Conduct will be held at the October meeting. The Board then approved the minutes from the August 12, 2019 meeting. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and approved.

The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items:

- Syosset High School Assistant Principal Mr. David Steinberg announced the 14 National Merit Semi-Finalists, who are among the highest scorers in the state and nation on the Preliminary SAT/National Merit Scholarship Qualifying Test. The Board of Education congratulated the following Syosset High School seniors: Jacqueline Albert, Giulia Barbella, Connor Chen, Caleb Deitch, Ronit Dhulia, Vivian Duan, Sophia Jang, Lance Lampert, Caroline Lee, Cindy Li, David Stekol, Nkihil Vohra, Kevin Xu, and Alex Zhuo.
- Dr. Rogers summarized the extensive amount of construction work completed over the summer, much of which was done by the District's own Facilities staff. Dr. Rogers recognized Mr. Michael Beckerman, Maintenance Supervisor; Mr. Severino Fasulo, Director of Facilities; and Mr. Greg Hamilton, Executive Director of Operations for their hard work and dedication. Dr. Rogers noted that while some work is continuing into the fall as planned, an enormous amount of work was completed in a very abbreviated summer window.
- Dr. Rogers provided an update on the District's research into high school start times. He recapped that the District worked with a consultant who identified several options for shifting school times, each requiring significant compromise.
 - Dr. Rogers stated the District will be pursuing public input on this topic and will be using a new online tool to invite feedback and opinions from the community.

Board President Tracy Frankel asked if the new tool would accommodate multiple languages. It was confirmed after the meeting that the tool allows for participation in multiple languages.

A Trustee asked if the feedback to be provided through the online tool would be anonymous. Dr. Rogers confirmed that all comments provided through the tool will be anonymous. The advantage is that people may comment more honestly, but a disadvantage is that we cannot control with certainty that only Syosset district residents are commenting, since there is no name provided. The link to participate would only be sent to district residents.

- As a follow-up to an inquiry presented during Audience to the Public at a previous meeting, Dr. Rogers stated that he contacted the Village of Muttontown and was informed that it has withdrawn its hearing request regarding a change in zoning related to a golf course. (Note: The Village Board did hear comments on the proposal at that meeting and subsequently held a hearing on September 18, after which it approved the change to the Village code.)
- Regarding the status of the multi-family development planned at the former Woodbury Country Club site, Dr. Rogers reported the District met with the Developer. Dr. Rogers stated the District does not represent the developer or the Town, but shared the information he received at the meeting noting that he cannot guarantee the accuracy as the school district is not a spokesperson for the development:
 - The planned development is located on a 16.78-acre parcel, with 72 residential townhouse units planned in 20 two-story buildings. There will be no age restrictions.
 - The Town Board granted a zoning designation change in 2010.
 - The developer is in the process of finalizing their plans with the Nassau County Planning Commission and applying for approval of maps. There will be a phase 1 and phase 2 to the project.
 - Dr. Rogers noted the developer entered an agreement with the District in 2008, committing to a \$1 million payment to the District to offset the impact of any potential new students as a result of the development. The agreement allows for successive meetings with the developer to determine how the payment will take place. The District is in the process of scheduling another meeting with the developer to further discuss the payment.

A Trustee stated the \$1 million payment to the District is low considering the amount of homes proposed in the development. Dr. Rogers commented that the District is undertaking another enrollment study which will include the impact of this development as well as other proposed developments in the community.

- Dr. Rogers stated that the District experienced some issues with the Elementary Lunch program as it was implemented, specifically some food item shortages and difficulty in hiring food service workers. A main factor contributing to both circumstances is the sharp increase in the number of lunches sold daily, which increased from approximately 700-800 meals during the first few days of school to a high of approximately 1,400 by the second week. Aramark has significantly increased the amount of food available and is actively recruiting additional food service workers to address the concerns.
- Dr. Rogers introduced the District's security consultant, Mr. Don Flynn of Covert Investigations, and together they delivered a presentation on the many security initiatives implemented at Syosset over the last year and a half.
 - Mr. Flynn reminded the community there are covert and overt operations involved in a security plan and there are certain safety and security-related areas that must be kept confidential in the interest of maintaining a secure plan.
 - Mr. Flynn provided an overview of several areas that all play a critical role in a global K-12 security approach, including facilities, personnel, training, procedures, student supports, hardware and software. Mr. Flynn noted Syosset has done an exceptional job in covering all

areas, and also noted that developing security-related best practices is ever-evolving and the District will continue to build on and refine its practices.

- Dr. Rogers commented that there has been a lot of investment in security-related projects, many of which were developed in 2015 when the District began working with Covert Investigations. Many of the Phase 1 and Phase 2 projects, approved by the community in May 2017, and February 2018, were security-focused.
- Dr. Rogers stated that the addition of a Director of Security, a former NYPD Sargent, has been a great asset to the District. The number of security guards has been doubled and the District has been increasing the number of District-employed guards with law enforcement backgrounds.
- Dr. Rogers gave an overview of the many student supports in place, the threat assessment program, and the increase in mental wellness staffing.
- [The complete presentation can be found here.](#)

Board President Tracy Frankel inquired about the status of School Resource Officers (SROs). Dr. Rogers noted there is a difference between a contracted security officer and an SRO, who is a sworn officer of the police department. SROs are employed and trained by the police department. Nassau County Police Department (NCPD) has a limited number of SROs who are deployed in districts where there has been some history indicating active support is needed. Last year, the District approached the County on whether the program will be expanded. The County indicated it would require a significant increase in staffing to accommodate all schools in Nassau County. Dr. Rogers said the District indicated to the County it would be willing to explore offsetting some of this expense should that option become available.

A Trustee commended the construction of vestibules in all school buildings and commented that the location of the Syosset school buildings is in very close proximity to the Second Precinct. Mr. Flynn commended Commissioner Ryder on his responsiveness and action related to school security. He noted that the District's Director of Security meets very frequently with the Precinct as well as the Homeland Security Officer, and NCPD has been a great partner to the District. Dr. Rogers supported this statement saying they have been very responsive to the District's needs.

A Trustee asked for clarification if the determination is made by the County to accept financial assistance in deploying SROs to Syosset. Dr. Rogers confirmed the County would have to create a program and then the District could choose to participate in it.

A Trustee asked for clarification between an SRO and a POP Officer and asked how often POP Officers visit the schools. Dr. Rogers explained that the POP officers are Nassau County police officers who are in frequent daily communication with the Director of Security and are always accessible to the District for advice. They are frequent visitors to the school buildings and know the layouts of the school buildings. The POP Officers have multiple responsibilities in addition to acting as the liaisons to the school district. The role of SROs is different in that they are assigned to one school district and they would not have other duties outside that district.

A Trustee asked if it would be possible to run an SRO program through a Sheriff's office, as done in some upstate New York locations. Mr. Flynn responded that this question would have to be posed to the NCPD Commissioner. Mr. Flynn stated he is not aware of any districts in the county that have entered into an agreement to subsidize an SRO program through the NCPD.

A Trustee asked how the additional psychologist and social worker support is deployed throughout the buildings. Dr. LaMelza, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Service, explained the social workers are assigned across multiple schools. One of the recently hired social workers is a specialist in the Multi-Tiered System of Support now in place and is working on implementing positive behavior supports. The recently hired board-certified behavior analyst (BCBA) is focused on the seven elementary schools, while the District's other BCBA is now focused on the secondary schools. Dr. LaMelza noted that the role of recently hired social workers and psychologists is to build capacity at all levels to handle various situations. They work with the building-level staff to enhance their ability to analyze behaviors and appropriately respond. It is a proactive approach as opposed to reactive. Dr. LaMelza also commented on the threat assessment team which identifies students displaying concerning behavior. There is a protocol in place and mechanisms are followed to provide interventions and support.

Audience to the public

- A resident expressed his support for hiring SROs in each school in the district. The resident read a quote from Lori Alhadeff, a mother of a Marjory Stoneman Douglas student who perished in a school shooting.
- A resident commended the district for its academic strength, the opportunities it provides its students and the security-related work already done but expressed strong support for permanent armed guards in the school buildings.

Dr. Rogers responded that he will contact the county again to see if anything has changed related to an SRO program in Nassau County. Board President Tracy Frankel asked Dr. Rogers to reconvene with Commissioner Ryder and report back to the Board on the status of the program.

- A resident commended the District on the construction work done over the summer. The resident also noted children cannot be free of risk anywhere and questioned the rationale of whether having armed guards will make students safer.
- A resident inquired about the training and certification of staff members in the lunchroom and expressed support for CPR certification for lunch aides. The resident also inquired about the timeframe of the delivery of flexible furniture to Walt Whitman and expressed a concern about the impact of the multi-family development at the former Woodbury Country Club site on Walt Whitman.
 - Ms. Adele Bovard, Deputy Superintendent, reported that as of last week, 135 individuals have received Heimlich Maneuver and Stop the Bleed training as well as a basic safety training overview, based on the recommendation from the District's physician. There are certified people in the building who can respond to an incident very quickly, and what is needed to support them is people who are trained to stabilize a situation and get help quickly.
 - Dr. Rogers stated there was an enrollment study on the Board Agenda for the evening to help analyze potential enrollment from the new development.

- Dr. Rogers confirmed some of the new furniture has been delivered to Walt Whitman and the principal will follow up on the delivery of the remaining shipments. Note: Those shipments will begin arriving in October.
- A resident asked if certification or training is required for bus drivers related to how they speak to students. The resident alleged cases of bus drivers speaking negatively to students and getting into verbal exchanges with parents.
 - Dr. Rogers confirmed bus drivers are certified and trained. He stated it is never appropriate for the behaviors alleged to be exhibited by a bus driver. He advised contacting himself or Dr. Rufo regarding any concerning situation and stated it would be investigated and addressed.
 - Board President Tracy Frankel stated she observed buses taking fast turns and noticed middle school buses not arriving on time. She also requested any issues be reported to the Transportation Department so that they can be appropriately addressed.
- Two residents inquired as to when the football field will be ready and expressed disappointment over the homecoming game not being played on the home field and seniors not having the opportunity to play on the new field.
 - Dr. Rogers reminded the community that the new track and field was always planned to be a four-month job with two months of work taking place in the summer. For the other two months of work, the District was faced with the decision to overlap at the end of the school year or the beginning of the school year. The decision was made to not start the work in the middle of testing season at the end of the school year; therefore, the work will extend two months into this school year. Dr. Rogers stated that the District is making every effort to get the work done as quickly as possible and he believes the October 26 game against Oceanside is likely to be played on the new field, barring any unforeseen or weather-related interruptions. The contractors having been pushing to get the work done as quickly as possible.

Discussion Items

- District Mission and Vision Statement: Board President Tracy Frankel stated the Board has desired to have a mission statement and vision to share with the Syosset community, outside communities and the Administration that outlines what the District stands for and identify long term goals for the District.
 - [The Mission and Vision Statement can be read in full by clicking here.](#)
- Inclusion of Policy 7500 in the Manual, Naming Facilities:
 - The Board discussed the addition of a policy to develop procedures and criteria for naming facilities. Topics discussed included criteria for selecting honorees, a timeframe after an honoree's passing or community contribution before a request is entertained, distinction between a facility building and rooms within a building, the length of time for the name to remain, determination at the District vs. building level, the number of requests that may be received, and if it is appropriate to include a policy on this topic.
 - The Board directed Dr. Rogers to research other district's policies related to honoring community members and report back to the Board.

- Parameters for the acceptance of gifts:
 - The Board discussed the acceptance of donations in relation to maintaining parity among school buildings, a limit on the value of donations,
 - Dr. Rogers stated past practice has been to accept donations while being attentive to parity among the buildings. The District has generally not declined donations related to site work or amenities that improve the value of the properties, as this is a benefit to the entire community.
 - Dr. Rogers recommended Administration meet with the PTA to get more feedback on this topic and report back to the Board.

- Communication through lighted road signs:
 - The Board discussed the potential addition of lighted LED message boards for use in front of some school buildings. Topics discussed included location of signs, messages that could be displayed, cost of the signs, lifespan of the signs, cost of installation including running power to the signs, the option of using solar powered signs and the potential of testing the signs through a pilot program.
 - Dr. Rogers stated he would research Department of Transportation regulations regarding road signs as well as the cost of running the electrical lines for the signs.

New Business

Various resolutions were approved relating to staff appointments, transfers, reassignments, resignations, retirements, leaves of absence, appointment of substitute staff, coaching recommendations, 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, a settlement agreement and the adoption of the revised District Plan for Students with Disabilities and the District-Wide Safety Plan.

The Board approved a number of resolutions related to financial operations of the District, including authorization for contracts, adoption of grants, awards of bids, participation in a cooperative purchasing agreement, award of a Request for Proposal, the disposal of obsolete equipment and books and the acceptance of donations.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, October 7, 2019 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.