

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](#).

### **November 19, 2018 Board of Education Regular Meeting**

After an executive session, the Pledge of Allegiance was led by the Jericho Syosset Service Unit of Girl Scouts and the regular monthly public meeting was called to order. The Board approved the minutes from the October 15, 2018 regular meeting and the October 22, 2018 and October 29, 2018 special meetings. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and approved.

#### *The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items*

- H.B. Thompson Student Council Representative Emma Silverstein was introduced by Principal Kevin Bonanno, who provided an update on the many activities the middle school students have been engaged in since the start of the school year. Activities included the Advisory Club's efforts to promote empathy, friendship, support and kindness; a Club Fair was held which led to increased participation in the many clubs available; the Coding Club's engagement with KidOYO; the implementation of "Fun Friday" each week; the sixth grade trip to Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory; the Drama Club's production and the AV Club's support for the show; Red Ribbon week; the annual social for sixth graders; the eighth grade trip to Washington, D.C.; and a wrap-up of the Fall sports season. Emma also provided information on upcoming events including the school's annual Spirit Week, their "Pie in the Face" fundraiser, and holiday activities.
- The NYSSMA All-State and NAFME All-National and All-Eastern Musicians were announced by Mr. Michael Salzman, Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts and NYS President of NYSSMA. Four Syosset students were recognized as All-National musicians; nine Syosset students were selected as All-Eastern musicians; and 34 Syosset students were recognized as All-State musicians, which is the largest number in the state. In addition, 318 Syosset students in grades 4 through 12 were selected for Nassau All-County, which is the largest number in the county.
- A presentation was given on the systematic, comprehensive approach taken by the District to support students' mental health and mental health education by Dr. LaMelza, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Service, along with Mr. David Steinberg, Syosset High School Assistant Principal, Ms. Mary-Lou Sapienza, Director of PPS, and District Social Workers Ms. Lauren O'Rourke and Ms. Melody Chan. Presenters outlined how Syosset has been proactive over the last 10 years in addressing the needs of the whole child and addressing social emotional learning, with a focus on establishing a positive school climate. As a result of this ongoing work, Syosset's instructional program exceeds the new State Health Curriculum mandates that were implemented on July 1, 2018. In addition to students' instruction, an overview was given of the student supports and programs at the elementary, middle and high school levels as well as the on-going staff training and professional development that takes place. The presenters also outlined several 2018-2019 enhancements to the programs, including creation of a Threat

Assessment Protocol added to the existing building-level Support Team meetings. The Protocol is designed to identify concerning behaviors, implement a reporting system and provide effective early intervention.

- Dr. LaMelza also provided further explanation of the Sanford Harmony social emotional learning program being piloted at the elementary schools, and the Positive Behavioral Intervention and Supports (PBIS) system in place, which is a systematic, standardized method of analyzing behaviors that indicate interventions may be necessary.
- Dr. Rogers provided the Board with an update on the research of live-streaming Board of Education meetings. A product has been identified to live-stream the meetings, which is an extension of the software the District plans to use to automate the internal processes to develop the Board meeting agendas. In response to concerns about the audio system in the auditorium, a new system has been identified that will integrate with the streaming technology. The technology could be available for the January Board meeting should the Board decide to proceed.
- Dr. Rogers announced plans for a new electronic communications platform, which will include a new District website and a smartphone app. The platform will build on the existing communication tool used by the District to provide a comprehensive solution. A survey will go out to the community regarding preferences on communication and content. The District is also planning to do some work to update the visual identity (i.e. logo) of the school District.
- Ms. Bovard provided a report on the work being done regarding the 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade transition process, which connects to the over-arching goal of K-12 alignment. The District has taken feedback from students and parents and improved the process by which it supports all students and parents in the transition to the high school. A new meeting for all 8<sup>th</sup> grade parents has been planned for early December, the 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Transition Parent Education and Information Night, during which the whole transition process will be detailed for parents. The new and improved Curriculum Guide will be previewed, parents will be educated as to what is offered at the High School and review the 9<sup>th</sup> grade year as the first of four years of opportunity for students. In January, the District will hold an elective fair to showcase all the electives and clubs available to students, as well as a dedicated SEPTA meeting to address special education needs related to the transition. In addition, a personal meeting has been added to the schedule with each parent and student with their middle school guidance counselor to review the course recommendations. Additional information will be sent directly to parents and guardians of 8<sup>th</sup> grade students in the near future.
- Dr. Rogers provided the Board with an update on the investigation into school start times. The District has been attempting to follow the timeline outlined last April, but recognizing that this was an aggressive timeline informed the Board that the investigation would continue as quickly as possible, but that we didn't want the quality of work to suffer by trying to meet the aggressive timeline.

- A representative from the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance reported on the Committee's October 22 meeting. Topics discussed included the audited financial statements for the 2017-2018 year and the unmodified opinion on the District's financial statements, adoption of new required accounting rules (GASB 75), post-employment benefit costs, budget vs actual activity and the positive variances, Teacher's Retirement System as an asset, reserves, refinancing of debt to save money on interest, Extra-Classroom Activities funds, fire alarm bid rejection, phase 2 construction updates, and starting the budget preparation earlier to meet deadlines. The Committee also discussed the NYS Office of State Comptroller payroll audit, which praised the District "for effectively designing and implementing policies and procedures that ensure the accuracy of compensation paid and benefits provided to District employees." The audit resulted in no recommendations for areas needing improvement. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on November 28, 2018.

#### *Correspondence*

- Dr. Rogers reported that the District sent a letter to the Town of Oyster Bay requesting information on the timeline anticipated for independent testing of the former Cerro Wire and former Syosset Park landfill sites in order to ensure that the District was able to provide thorough and detailed comments on the process and results.

#### *Audience to the public*

- A resident inquired further about the independent testing letter and Dr. Rogers indicated that the District had been assured that a written response from the Town of Oyster Bay would be forthcoming, but that as of the Board meeting had not yet been received. The resident also expressed skepticism of the process the Town was following to implement the independent testing.
- A resident complimented the District on the Chromebook 1:1 rollout to the high school students and inquired about professional development for teachers, use in special education and standardization of online practices for homework and grades.
  - Dr. Rogers replied the teachers are very proactive in their professional development, forming a group known as TAC (Teachers Actively Collaborating). The District also actively engages in professional development during the Superintendent Conference days in August, including for assistive technology (special education).

#### *Discussion items*

- The Board discussed student representation at Board of Education meetings to share their views and participate in conversation. The Board expressed support of honoring student voice and discussed various means of engaging with students in more informal settings that would require a much less significant time commitment on school nights. The Board expressed interest in receiving feedback from the students on their level of interest in such interaction.

- A brief discussion was held about the timing of the Town of Oyster Bay's response to the District's request for information regarding the independent testing.
- Board trustees provided a recap of presentations they attended at the National School Boards Association conference, including using social media for emergency communication, student mental health issues, adding empathy to STEAM education to integrate social emotional learning, Board goal-setting and mission statement development, sexual harassment, election of new officers, evaluation of the superintendent, privacy laws and freedom of information law, and school safety and security.

#### New Business

- Various resolutions were approved relating to staff appointments, leaves of absence, appointment of substitute staff, tutors, extracurricular assignments, coaching, recreation coordinators and personnel, peer mediator/Dignity Act coordinators, related service providers, unaligned Director, interim Coordinator of Personnel, Consultant to perform staffing Configuration, Executive Director of Human Resources, the approval of committee meetings and minutes, approval of student club charters, acceptance of Nassau BOCES Budget Advisory Committee designees, adoption of policies, acceptance of Undue Burden Independent Evaluation Hardship waiver, approval of volunteers, authorization for service contracts, authorization for special education and nursing contracts, awards of bids and other financial operations of the District.

#### *Next Meeting*

- The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, December 17, 2018 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.