

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](#).

December 17, 2018 Board of Education Regular Meeting

After an executive session and the Pledge of Allegiance, the regular monthly public meeting was called to order. The Board approved the minutes from the November 19, 2018 and December 11, 2018 meetings. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and approved.

The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items

- South Woods Middle School Student Council Representatives Blessen Kuriakose and Yasmin Baaser provided an update on the many activities the middle school students have been engaged in since the start of the school year, including the work the student body has done to raise hunger awareness and their partnership with rock CAN roll, Inc., a non-profit, hunger relief organization. The students held several successful food drives and the annual walkathon raised over \$1,900 for the organization. The students also updated the Board on several other activities, including a "Can Drive Challenge" sponsored by the Coding Club, the new Girls Who Code Club, Mock Trial student teams, Jazz Band, the Stock Market Club, Feminist/Equality for All Club, Multi-Cultural Club, the Drama Club's performance of The Little Mermaid, Sports and Recreation Club, Peer Mediators' visits to elementary schools to promote kindness, Astronomy Club, Science Olympiad Club and the LEGO Robotics Club. The Student Council, Triple A Club and the Business Club will be hosting a fundraising event, "Laughs for Leukemia" on December 20, 2018, which will benefit the Memorial Sloan Kettering Pediatric Cancer Research Center.
- The Syosset High School Adelettes and Choral Pride performed seasonal selections, after which the students led the audience in a sing-along of holiday classics.
- Ms. Joanne Mannion, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Research and Technology, and a team of K-12 administration, faculty and staff gave a presentation on the transformative virtual and physical environments being piloted across the District. The team gave an overview of how the District has been incorporating instructional technology into learning environments, explained how flexible learning spaces are beneficial to students, and provided an update on the successful 1:1 Chromebook deployment and the new coding and robotics initiatives implemented this year. A demonstration was given of the impressive coding projects completed by students and a digital portfolio was shown of the various badges a student earned by completing coding projects in kidOYO, the K-12 virtual learning environment recently rolled out in the District. A video was shown that provided a look inside a classroom completely redesigned with flexible learning spaces and showcased how the flexible furniture in the room allows for a student-led approach to learning, facilitates transitions from whole group to small group instruction, and promotes a sense of community in the classroom. An overview was also given of the new pilot

classroom in the high school; a flexible, modular space with a variety of interactive technology to encourage collaborative learning and experimentation. The overarching goals of all these new enhancements to the learning environment is to prepare students for a continually changing world and develop their abilities to be creative, solve problems and work collaboratively.

- Dr. Rogers presented the Board with the 2019-2020 District calendar and announced there will be three days indicated as make-up days for inclement weather.
 - The District will be sharing an inclement weather guide with parents shortly, which will provide information on the various courses of action that may be taken in the event of any changes to normal operating procedures due to bad weather.
- Dr. Rogers stated that the process of residency re-verification has begun for families with students entering 6th and 9th grades in the 2019-2020 school year. Families will be contacted via email with instructions and the timeline for completing the process.
- Dr. Rogers reported on his meetings with the student cabinets and the topics covered, some of which included new coding initiatives, changes made in classrooms and air conditioning.
- The PTA School and Community Committee met to review and discuss how the District communicates with the public during unusual incidents.
 - Dr. Rogers announced the District will be adding text messaging as a means to communicate with parents.
- The next meeting of the Security Advisory Committee will be held in January. The topic will be District communications in times of emergencies.
 - Dr. Rogers noted that blue strobe lights will be installed on school buildings after the new year so that people outside the building have an indication if there is an emergency situation.
- Dr. Rogers also stated that the District sent a letter to the Nassau county IDA, a governmental entity that approves tax abatements, in opposition to a PILOT project, which was approved over the District's objections.

Report from the Spokesperson of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance

- A representative from the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance reported on the Committee's November 28, 2018 meeting. Topics discussed included the draft budget, previous budget communication brochure, the implementation of WinCap accounting system which now has a full year of data and will provide efficiencies in preparing the budget, and an update on Phase 2 construction projects. The next meeting of the Committee will be held on January 17 at 6:15 pm.

Audience to the public

- A resident asked for more detail about the PILOT the District opposed.
 - Dr. Rogers explained that the owner of a piece of property on which a warehouse sits for a liquor distributor had an existing PILOT tax abatement that was about to expire. The owner also acquired an adjacent piece of property and requested that the current PILOT be renewed for an additional ten years and also granted to the adjacent piece of new property. Although the District expressed opposition, the PILOT was granted.
- A resident expressed concerns about teachers tutoring students within the District and inquired if reflective writing is incorporated into the students' digital portfolio. The resident also commented on a NY Times article regarding the high school start time and the impact on sleep and asked that the District review the current early extra help sessions in favor of afterschool sessions. Lastly, the resident commented that the Gold Award given to middle school students for a perfect record may put added pressure on students.
 - Dr. Rogers responded that there is much reflective writing incorporated into the curriculum, but it is not included in the kidOYO digital portfolio which focuses on coding. Dr. Rogers also commented on the ample extra help sessions available to students and the focus of the District on encouraging students to maintain a balance in their schedule and taking care of themselves.
 - Ms. Frankel commented that there is a system in place for avoiding a conflict of interest related to teachers tutoring students, and that as Syosset has the very best teachers, it is seen by many as an advantage that they can tutor students.
- A Syosset High School student thanked the Board for supporting the students in starting a Fencing team.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved relating to staff appointments, leaves of absence, appointment of substitute staff, tutors, extracurricular assignments, coaching, recreation personnel, medical examinations of a District employee, renewal of contract of the Superintendent of Schools, the approval of committee meetings and minutes, approval of settlement agreements, adoption of policies, approval of the 2019/2020 school calendar, approval of student club charters, authorization for special education and nursing contracts, authorization for service contracts, disposal of broken, surplus and/or obsolete equipment and books, authorization for insurance policies and other financial operations of the District.
 - The Board congratulated Dr. Rogers on the renewal of his contract and expressed appreciation for the work he has done for the District.

Next Meeting

- The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, January 14, 2019 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.