

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](#).

### **January 14, 2019 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 December 17, 2018 meeting. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and approved.

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

- Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation Drew Cronin introduced the fall championship athletes and coaches: county champion varsity boys cross country, county champion and state qualifiers varsity girls cross country, county champions varsity girls soccer, county champions varsity girls tennis, varsity boys cross country state qualifiers Sean Ahearn and Gary Sautner, varsity girls swimming state qualifier Julia Thoms, Nassau Zone Award recipients William Taffe and Melissa Esswein, Section VIII Sportsmanship Award recipient Sean Ahearn, and Coach of the Year recipients Mr. Rich Cafiero, varsity boys cross country, Mr. Brett Waxer, varsity boys soccer, and Mr. Michael Acquaro, varsity boys volleyball.

Board President Ms. Frankel remarked that the Board is very proud of the students' achievements as well as the good sportsmanship shown by all Syosset student athletes.

- Dr. Rogers announced that four Syosset high school students were named 2019 Regeneron Scholars. The students are Thomas Lam, Serena Lee, Spencer Pugach and Michael Wang. They will each present their projects to the Board at the February monthly meeting.
- Coordinator of Math Dr. John Genova and faculty gave an overview of mathematic instruction at Syosset, with a focus on developing a deeper understanding of math concepts and generating solutions as opposed to computation alone. The math curriculum has also benefitted from being infused with technology, which is used to make math more fun, engaging, and collaborative for students. Faculty reviewed the work being done to develop confidence and a strong mathematical growth mindset in students. Lastly, an overview was provided of the many opportunities for students to learn and experience computer science, which supports their ability to think algorithmically, critically and computationally.
  - Dr. Rogers remarked on how Syosset is a leader in implementing a K-12 coding program, with other districts visiting the schools to learn how it was implemented. Ms. Bovard and South Woods Assistant Principal Ms. Berke presented at a mathematics conference on getting more girls into coding programs, and Ms. Owens will be participating on a state-wide task force responsible to rewriting the standards for K-12 computer science and programming.

- Dr. Rogers announced that at the next monthly Board meeting, he will provide an update on the investigation into new multi-family dwellings being planned for the community.
- Dr. Rogers asked the community to take caution and be safe when driving on Southwoods Road. He reminded everyone that students should take advantage of the bus transportation provided to all students, as this is the safest way to transport students and manage traffic. Dropping students off on Southwoods Road is a dangerous practice and should be avoided.
- The latest round of routine radon testing at Baylis, South Grove and South Grove Annex came back negative. Air quality (VVI) testing was also conducted at South Grove and South Grove Annex; which also came back negative for both buildings. The results of the testing along with a summary will be posted online.
- The last meeting of the Security Advisory Committee meeting is taking place on January 15, 2019. The topic is District communications during emergencies. Dr. Rogers announced that the District has started training with Sandy Hook Promise on their “Say Something” anonymous tip line program.
- Dr. Rogers announced the District has been working to identify retired law enforcement to work as District employees in conjunction with existing security staff.
- Ms. Bovard reported on the work being done to support students and parents during the transition from 8<sup>th</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup> grade and the new opportunities provided by the District. Curriculum content has been reviewed to ensure multiple pathways to higher-level course work over the four years of high school to relieve the pressure on ninth grade students. In addition, course work has been more clearly connected to career pathways and the High School Curriculum Guide has been updated to reflect that. Ms. Bovard also reviewed the following activities taking place related to the transition process:
  - During a new event planned this year, the secondary administrators met with eighth-grade parents to provide an overview of the entire transition process.
  - The K-12 coordinators held meetings with eighth-grade teachers and guidance counselors to review the changes to the Curriculum Guide and updated career pathways.
  - The middle school guidance counselors visited classrooms to educate the students on the process.
  - The eighth-grade teachers created customized recommendations for ninth-grade course work for each student; a new process added this year.
  - The Elective Fair was held at the high school for parents and students. Parents and students were able to hear about all the opportunities available at the high school.

Ms. Bovard reminded the community that course registration will be open beginning January 15. Parents will be able to review the course recommendations for their student in the Portal and will also be asked to schedule an appointment with their child and guidance counselor to work together to finalize the ninth-grade course selection, also a new process this added year.

- Dr. Rogers spoke about the short timeframe provided by the Nassau County IDA in responding to a proposal regarding a PILOT agreement. The District was not given ample time to go through a public process before responding to a recent PILOT application.
  - The Board asked Dr. Rogers to appeal to the Nassau County IDA and/or a Nassau County Executive requesting more lead time before a decision is made on a proposal.
  
- Dr. Rogers reported that the District has investigated several low-cost options for streaming of Board meetings and reviewed those options with District attorneys, who identified some concerns with the licensing terms. Dr. Rogers requested direction on proceeding with more robust, higher cost options for streaming in order to alleviate these concerns.
  - The Board expressed support in investigating vendors that offer more robust services but requested more information on how the product works and how the streaming would be staffed.
  
- The first of five Budget Information Meetings was held for the 2019-2020 Budget. During the meeting, Dr. Rufo, Assistant Superintendent for Business, presented on the following points:
  - The recent history of the tax levy and the calculated tax cap, and the projected cap for 2019-2020. Dr. Rufo provided an explanation of how the tax cap is calculated.
  - External budget drivers including the tax cap, TRS/ERS contributions, and health insurance rates.
  - Investments planned for security enhancements including staff, surveillance cameras and equipment, and facilities upgrades including library re-designs, flexible furniture, and replacement of aging maintenance and grounds equipment.
  - Dr. Rufo stated the District will see a significant savings from switching to a new insurance provider of approximately \$650k and reviewed some codes for which expense will be increasing such as legal, public relations, and capital codes.

Board members asked questions related to the increase in tax anticipation notes and the expense related to in-service training, as well as the opportunity for additional savings, savings from energy conservation measures, and the possibility of securing grants.

- Ms. Bovard provided information on the intensive training related to Teacher's College, which has been very impactful and improved the instructional model not only for reading and writing but math as well.
- Dr. Rufo explained that the District sends out bids every year to ensure we have the best pricing.
- Dr. Rogers explained the work related to the energy performance contract will commence in the summer of 2020 with an approximate 18-month build-out. Therefore, savings are expected in approx. the 2022-2023 school year.
- Regarding grants, Dr. Rogers commented that the District is often ineligible for state grants as Syosset is often ineligible due to screening criteria such as the combined wealth ratio. Dr. Rogers stated he would investigate interviewing a grant consultant to determine if they could add value to the District.

### *Audience to the public*

- A resident expressed a concern regarding the change to school start times related to swapping the elementary and high school start times.
  - Ms. Frankel explained that the Board dismissed the option of swapping the start times of the elementary and high school start times. The consultant is currently working on new options for a change to start times that may be more palatable to the community. There will be public engagement before any decisions are made.

### *New Business*

- Various resolutions were approved relating to staff appointments, leaves of absence, appointment of substitute staff, tutors, coaching, recreation personnel, continuing education staff, the approval of committee meetings and minutes, approval of student club charters, authorization for special education and nursing contracts, authorization for service contracts, authorization for contracts for Federal Part B funds, acceptance of the internal audit reports, authorization for adjustment to budgetary reserves, disposal of broken, surplus and/or obsolete equipment and books, authorization for piggybacking, and other financial operations of the District.

### *Next Meeting*

- The next regular meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, February 11, 2019 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.