

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](#).

### **April 16, 2019 Board of Education Regular Meeting**

After an executive session and the Pledge of Allegiance, the last of four Budget Information meetings was held. The meeting focused on sources of revenue that support the budget. Assistant Superintendent for Business, Dr. Patricia Rufo, summarized several of the District programs supported by the budget including coding initiatives, interactive instructional technology, the addition of two positions to support student social/emotional health, and facilities and security improvements. Dr. Rufo touched on several capital projects that the District is planning to fund through a transfer to capital, including the high school pool deck renovation, continuation of the renovation of elementary libraries, high school vestibule enhancement and addition of a guard booth, bollards, a dust collection system in the shop room at H.B. Thompson Middle School, and roofing repairs at South Woods Middle School. The District is able to accomplish these objectives and remain below the calculated tax cap of 3.34 percent with a proposed tax levy increase of 2.49 percent. Since the inception of the tax cap, the District has been at or below the calculated tax cap.

Dr. Rufo provided an explanation of the difference between the budget, which is the expenditure plan that supports all instructional programs and services of the District, and the tax levy, which is the amount of money raised through property taxes after all other revenue sources are deducted. Dr. Rufo outlined the revenue sources for the District, including State aid, local revenue (which includes PILOTs), appropriated fund balance and restricted reserves. The District continues to utilize reserves to support capital projects and fund direct expenses in the budget.

Dr. Rufo reviewed Proposition 2 which will be included on the ballot, which seeks the public's approval to use a combination of reserves and grant funds to upgrade classroom doors with firearm resistance and remote-control locking functionality. Because of the use of existing funds, Proposition 2 would have no impact on the tax levy.

Dr. Rogers spoke in more detail about how the tax levy translates into an actual tax bill for a property in the District. Dr. Rogers explained the process starts with the school district creating a budget based on need, it then subtracts out its revenue sources, and what is left is the tax levy. He also addressed common myths including a "2% cap" on property taxes and the misperception that the school district sets the tax rate. He explained the school district, in fact, only controls one number: the tax levy. How the levy is apportioned among residents and businesses is up to the County.

First, Nassau County apportions how much of the levy is paid for by each of 4 Classes of property: (residential, commercial, utility and condominium). Assessments have been going down for Class 1 properties (likely due to tax grievances being granted). Therefore, the annual tax rate has been climbing much faster than the tax levy, which is a function of the assessment system as opposed to being driven by the school district. (Slides from this presentation can be found [here](#).)

Dr. Rufo then stated the budget information would be posted on the website, that the budget brochure and Budget Notice would be mailed to homes in early May, and that the Budget Hearing will take place on May 13.

At the conclusion of the Budget Information Meeting, the regular public meeting reconvened. The Board approved the minutes from the March 18, 2019 meeting. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and approved.

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

- Dr. Rogers introduced Syosset High School Senate President Sahil Rustami and Senior Class Treasurer Susanna Hur, who reported on recent activities at the high school. The students spoke about several fundraising activities, including the St. Baldrick's event hosted by the junior class that raised more than \$15k for childhood cancer research, the annual blood drive through which more than 60 pints of blood were donated, and a new event, a Dance-a-Thon hosted by Interact, which raised over \$15k for Cohen's Children's Hospital. The students spoke about the many ways in which the student body is giving back to the community, including the Veterans Day Breakfast and various clothing & food drives. Other recent activities included the Unity Day Chalk Walk, Autism Awareness week, the spring musical production of Mama Mia by the ACT Club, the Pro Club's baseball Opening Day event, High School orientation during which the Student Senate members spoke to parents of incoming students, Science Olympiad State Competition in which the Syosset team took 3<sup>rd</sup> place overall, Forensics activities, and the Robotics team who qualified for Nationals. The students spoke about upcoming events including the senior prom, Bravesfest, and Senior Day. The students also updated the Board on events of the Music Department including a recent trip to Disney where students participated in workshops. The students were also proud to announce that 10 students qualified for All-State, five students qualified for All-National, and eight students qualified for All-Eastern.
  - Board President Tracy Frankel commended the students on their public speaking skills and commented on the impressive number of ways the student body gives back to the community.
  - Dr. Rogers commented that the Rotary Club was very appreciative of and impressed by the amount raised by the Interact Dance-a-Thon.
  
- Dr. Rogers introduced Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation Drew Cronin, who highlighted the successes of winter athletic teams and athletes.
  - Varsity Fencing team: six fencers qualified for Counties, which is an exceptional honor as this is the first year the team competed.
    - All-Long Island award: Annie Li
  - Varsity Gymnastics: Conference II Champions, County Champions, All-American team award.
    - All-Long Island award: Allison Jacobs
    - All-American award: Allison Jacobs, Olivia Donach, Nicole McDermott
    - State Qualifiers: Allison Jacobs, Jenna Kolberg
  - Varsity Boys Winter Track and Field: 6<sup>th</sup> place at County Championship, qualified for State Championship
  - Varsity Girls Track and Field: 5<sup>th</sup> place at County Championship

- 1500 State Qualifier, 3000m County Champion: Mayu Iio
  - Pole Vault County Champion, NY State Qualifier: Anna Hatzioannou
- Varsity Girls Basketball: Undefeated Conference Champions, County Finalists
  - Defensive Player of the Year: Kendall Halpern
  - All Long Island, Player of the Year: Rachel Mahler
  - Coach Michael Ferreira awarded Coach of the Year
- Varsity Boys Swim: Conference 1 Champions, Nassau County Champions, NY State Team Scholar Athlete Award.
  - State Qualifiers, All County: Michael Jiang, Michael Lu, Alec Eng, Alexi Weis, Patrick Yan, Shuohang (Danny) Zeng
  - County Champion in 100 Back, All American honors, fastest time in NY State: Michael Jiang
  - Coach Christopher Schleider awarded Coach of the year
- Varsity Girls Bowling:
  - NY State Qualifier, All County: Oliva Chan
- Varsity Wrestling:
  - NY State Qualifier: George Oroudjov

Dr. Rogers commended all the athletes on their sportsmanship, and stated he was proud of the character of the student-athletes and coaches.

- Dr. Rogers introduced Ms. Joanne Mannion, the assistant superintendent for curriculum, research and technology and Ms. Christine Payne, District staff developer, who gave an overview of educational instructional technology in Syosset and the advancements made over the last five years. They provided an overview of the Technology Workgroup, a committee of District faculty and staff tasked with creating an educational technology vision for the District and a plan for the future. Ms. Mannion presented the Technology *WHY* statement, created to propel the iteration and innovation forward, and the Board of Education Technology Initiative Plan, which provided a roadmap for amplification of learning and identified key objectives to prepare students for a globalized, digitized and robotized workplace. The Workgroup developed an implementation plan that employed the use of pilot projects. Phase 1 of the plan included rebuilding the District Wi-Fi and infrastructure; 1:1 Chromebook deployment in elementary and secondary schools; enhanced K-12 library media curriculum; Google G-Suite for Education as the learning management system; implementation of the KidOYO coding platform; and professional development. Phase 2 of the implementation plan began this school year and included the expansion of the 1:1 Chromebook deployment to include high school students; reimaged libraries with flexible furniture, interactive displays and added technologies; expansion of the System 2 robotics and KidOYO programs; and continued professional development. Ms. Mannion stated Syosset has become a lighthouse district for technology, coding and learning spaces, and outlined future plans for the Workgroup and its sub-committees which is centered around learning spaces, digital resources, data privacy and security, creative computing and professional learning.
  - Members of the Technology Workgroup then presented examples of the technology initiatives in action, demonstrating the use of KidOYO coding, Python, LEGO Robotics, green screen technology, software for video creation including Chatterpix and Flipgrid, Google Drawings, the Learning Management System Canvas, and drone technology including design, coding and fabrication with 3-D printing. An overview was also provided

of the transformative learning spaces created to support the technological advances and the professional labs created that allow teachers to learn, collaborate and experiment with digital tools.

- An overview was given of the Girls Who Code club, and the impressive accomplishments of its members this year. Members of the high school club created coding challenges for over 50 of our middle school students who participated in a pre-qualifying round for the KidOYO Hack-a-Thon, and then judged the submissions based on a scoring rubric they created. The ten middle school students with the highest scores participated in the Hack-a-Thon, where ten districts battled for three hours resulting in a first-place win for team SYO Code. Members of the team were in attendance and were congratulated by the Board of Education.
  - Two new innovative technology programs at H.B. Thompson were highlighted, including the HBTv Team and HBTech Support. The HBTv Team produces the student-led morning announcement show streamed via YouTube and shared school-wide. The students are responsible for running cables, preparing equipment, transposing videos into live-streams and collaborating with the “anchors” of the show. The students from this club are also the lighting and sound engineers for the school auditorium productions. The club members were recently invited to speak at the 2019 ASSET’s Technology Conference about the unique program. The HBTech Support club provides peer-led workshops in the area of technology. Some of the topics covered by the students included Google extensions, keyword shortcuts, internet safety, mindfulness and privacy.
  - Ms. Manion thanked the Board and Administration for their support of the many technology initiatives in the District.
    - Board President Tracy Frankel thanked and commended the Administration and staff on behalf of the Board on the amazing progress made in the District in the last few years and expressed appreciation for the work.
    - Dr. Rogers commented that the work has been teacher-led and Administration-supported, and thanked the members of the Technology Workgroup.
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- Dr. Rogers provided an update on the research the District is doing related to school start times. He stated that an internal committee evaluated options presented by the consultant, and the District is planning to provide an opportunity for community feedback prior to the end of the school year.
  - Dr. Rogers announced the Virtual Enterprise Team placed 3<sup>rd</sup> in the world out of 604 competitors.
  - Dr. Rogers explained that the District is moving quickly on Phase 2 construction work and some bid openings took place just the prior week, resulting in their addition to the agenda at the last minute. He also noted that the State Education Department approval process had slowed some of the schedules and that it may be necessary for the Board to have a special meeting to award some bids in order to maximize the amount of construction that can be accomplished over the summer months.
  - He commented on the status on some of the planned construction projects and noted that several of the projects, including the fitness center, the high school vestibule, and the turf field

and track, all have construction schedules of between 4 and 6 months in length and thus will not be completed over the summer and will carry-over into the fall.

- As a follow-up to a question posed by a resident last month regarding the DEC environmental testing, Dr. Rogers stated the District has been in contact with the DEC. They are developing a remediation workplan as part of the Brownfield program requested by Simon Properties. The DEC has indicated they do not release testing results piecemeal but rather release complete reports at the conclusion of their work, which they have indicated should be soon. They had indicated that if they were to learn of anything that is of concern during the course of their investigation, they would have alerted the District immediately. Dr. Rogers indicated that they have not alerted the District to any findings of concern.
- A representative from the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance reported on the Committee's February and March meetings. The Committee discussed the draft budget, including the building-by-building budget requirements to be implemented in July 2019, State Aid, use of reserves, transfer for capital needs, and the proposition for the upgraded/ reinforced classroom doors.

#### *Audience to the public*

- A resident asked about the opportunity for the community to have input into the playground at Walt Whitman that will be relocated behind the school building.
  - Dr. Rogers replied that the community will have an opportunity to provide input prior to the end of the school year, after the District evaluates the equipment and identifies what needs to be replaced and what can be relocated and reused.

#### *New Business*

- Various resolutions were approved relating to Certified Staff Changes; Certified Staff Revised Tenure; Appointment of Per-Diem Substitute Principal; Approval of Student Club Charters; Coaching Recommendations - Winter 2018/2019; Coaching Recommendations - Spring 2019; Additional Pay – Coaches; Appointment of Summer School Principal – 2019; Appointment of Driver Education Instructors; Authorization to Execute a Side Letter Agreement between the District and the CSEA; Approval of Committee Meetings and Minutes; Adoption of 2019-2020 Budget; Approval of School Property Tax Report Card SY 2019-20; Policy - First Reading; Adoption of Policy 1900; Acceptance of the 2019-2020 Proposed Nassau Board Of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) Administrative Operations Budget; Selection of Candidates for the Board of Education of the Nassau Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES); Revised Ballot Proposition; Authorization for Service Contracts; Authorization for Special Education and/or Nursing Contracts; Authorization to Participate in the Nassau County Consortium for Transportation Services; Authorization to Participate in a Joint Municipal Cooperative Bidding Program; Approval of Inter-Municipal Cooperative Agreement; Authorization for Piggybacking; Authorization for Change Order #G-02 Deduct Arista Renovation Inc.; Award of Bid Site Improvements; Award of Bid Contracts; Bid Rejection; Award of Bid for Cafeteria Equipment; Authorization for Preliminary Smart School Investment Plan; Acceptance of a Donation; and Disposal of Broken, Surplus and/or Obsolete Equipment and Books.

*Next Meeting*

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, May 13, 2019 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m. The annual Budget Hearing will be held prior to the regular meeting at 7:45 p.m. at the same location.