

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](#).

October 17, 2016 Board of Education Meeting

After a meeting of the audit committee and an executive session, the meeting was called to order and the minutes from September 19, 2016 meeting were approved.

The Superintendent's Monthly Report and Other Items

- Syosset High School Student Government representative Carly Battipaglia provided an update on recent extracurricular activities at the high school including the blood drive that collected 73 pints with the potential to save 219 lives, and the carnival that raised approximately \$23,000 for student activities. She also gave updates on Spirit Week, student committee activities, high school fall athletics and a student mural project.
- The district's independent external auditor gave a report on the district financial statements for the 2015-2016 school year. She described the district's fiscal controls to be "very good" with "no material weaknesses." The Board later formally accepted the report.
- PTA Council President Stephanie Avidon and PTA officers provided each Board member with a gift for School Board Recognition Week in appreciation for their service. On behalf of the Board, President Michael Cohen thanked the Council and community for its support and confidence in the Board.
- Coordinator for Educational Services Peggy Grosso provided follow-up information on a Board request of the district's food service provider to post ingredients of all its meals online as a precaution for students with food allergies. The company said that due to its different partnerships with various food vendors that often change, this was not feasible. Grosso said that while competing food service providers post expanded online interactive menu listings, they do not provide a comprehensive list of ingredients. Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas Rogers said the district would consider writing a new Request for Proposal that would require food service providers hoping for work with Syosset to provide menu information online.
- Dr. Rogers updated the community on the cost of a series of facilities projects outlined at the September Board meeting. Based on new economies realized from some overlapping work and identifying additional work that can be performed by district maintenance staff in-house, the Administration was able to reduce the cost by approximately \$3.5 million from what was originally estimated.
- Dr. Rogers also discussed a recent meeting he had with the PTA Cultural Unity Committee in which administration agreed to improve translation services for parents with minimal English language comprehension.

- Following a meeting with members of the New York State Board of Regents, Dr. Rogers reported that the state appears open to re-examining its scale scoring practice for the Regents Math exams, as other school districts have also expressed their concerns with the current system.
- On November 8, the district will conduct a joint superintendent conference/professional development day with the Jericho School District. According to Dr. Rogers, this “Ed Camp” format, requires participants to develop workshops that will be conducted on both district campuses.
- Dr. Rogers provided a recap of a September 29 community forum on the possibility of changing the high school start time. Approximately 60 residents attended the forum and were presented with medical research on sleep deprivation and melatonin development in adolescents, social research on the implications of healthy home environments on sleep habits, as well as logistical and financial challenges of transportation schedule changes associated with a time change and how this would affect other schools in the district. The subject of homework volume and how it impacts the amount of sleep students receive became a focus and Dr. Rogers said he would review feedback from the attendees and conduct additional research on the homework issue.

Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance Update: a member of the committee reported on discussions at the September 21 meeting covering the facilities projects currently under consideration. These projects address age of facilities and findings of the district’s building condition survey and include a proposed Energy Performance Contract, reconfiguration and renovation of the high school bus loop and parking lot, security vestibules, air conditioning options, the master athletics plan for the high school and South Woods Middle School campus and other upgrades. Costs associated with these projects, as well as the proceeds from the sale of a 2.4-acre parcel in Woodbury near the Walt Whitman Elementary School, were also discussed.

Audience to the Public

- Two separate petitions were presented to the Board: one requested that Diwali be declared a holiday on the school calendar; the second requested that Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha also be made holidays. Numerous community members, including some students, made the case to observe all three of these holidays. Speakers cited the importance of each holiday in their respective culture and religion and referenced holidays of other faiths that are traditionally observed on the calendar. Several Board members acknowledged the importance of being inclusive to all cultures and faiths. After listening to all of the comments, the Board unanimously approved Diwali, Eid-ul-Fitr and Eid-ul-Adha as holidays to be scheduled in the 2017-18 school year.

Discussion Item

- The Board named Trustee Susan Parker as Board delegate for the 2016 NYSSBA convention in Buffalo, NY. Trustee Parker will attend the convention later this month and report back to the Board and community at the November meeting on the many legislative issues that will be addressed at the convention.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved including coaching, special assignment, and staff service appointments, acceptance of contracts, policy readings, student club charters and volunteers.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is Monday, November 14, 2016 at 8 p.m. at South Woods Middle School.