

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](#).

### **March 20, 2017 Board of Education Meeting**

After an executive session, the district held the second of four budget information meetings. Assistant Superintendent for Business Dr. Patricia Rufo outlined the administration's recommendations for the Administration codes and the Program codes (the latter representing 80% of the school district's annual expenditures). The presentation addressed cost drivers such as health insurance cost increases and decreases in pension contributions as well as sources of revenue including a projected increase in state aid. Lastly, a recent history of Syosset's property tax cap and levy (which the school district controls) was contrasted with how the County converts (via assessments, appeals, and base proportions) that school tax levy into individual homeowner tax bills.

On the facilities front, Dr. Rufo reiterated the plan to fund roof replacement projects at two elementary schools through the budget. In addition, she addressed the second vote that will appear on the ballot – a proposal to use up to \$7.7 million from the Capital Reserve to pay for additional health and safety facility projects recommended as part of the District's Building Condition Survey.

Thereafter, the regular Board meeting was called to order. The Board approved the minutes of the February 13, 2017 meeting. The Treasurer's report was delivered and approved.

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

- The Syosset High School Association for Creative Thespians performed "Aquarius" from its spring musical production of "Hair." Following the performance, cast members introduced themselves.
- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers introduced members of the district's Technology Workgroup, who collaborated on a presentation highlighting the District's comprehensive Technology Plan. As a key goal of the Board of Education, the District organized an internal workgroup to "amplify instruction" through the use of technology. Recognizing that students will inhabit a future where some 80% of the jobs haven't been invented yet, the District has deployed numerous technology "Pilot Projects" throughout the district over the last year and a half. Each Pilot was the result of a successful application process that emphasized using devices to enhance instruction and student support services while promoting project-based learning and creating active learning spaces. The District is now in its 3<sup>rd</sup> wave of Pilots. Highlights of the presentation included the impact the Google platform has had on teaching and learning as well as plans to expand the 1:1 Chromebook initiative. Presenters reported on the many professional development opportunities and collaborative efforts of teachers inspired by the Workgroup,

even citing one example of older students mentoring younger students in technology use at the elementary level.

- Dr. Rogers described the technology pilot initiative as a means to amplifying the successful practices in the classroom, rather than replacing instruction. The overarching goal is to prepare students for the globalized, digital workforce by enhancing instruction through technology use, breaking down the silos between traditional disciplines and ultimately enhancing students' skills.
- Following the presentation, Board members asked questions about the future of the Workgroup, replacement cycles for hardware, future investments in new technologies, and the technology infrastructure backbone including Wi-Fi access. Deputy Superintendent Adele Bovard, a chair of the Workgroup, said that the District has enlisted Nassau BOCES to audit the district's Wi-Fi to ensure remaining issues would be addressed. She responded affirmatively to a suggestion that students reporting on Wi-Fi access issues.
- Dr. Rogers announced that Yash Samantaray and Benjamin Rhee have been named Syosset High School Class of 2017 valedictorian and salutatorian, respectively. He also announced that South Woods Middle School English teacher Kimberly Costa, and Syosset High School social studies teacher Georgette Kagan joined Syosset High School Principal Dr. Giovanni Durante as "Distinguished Educators" named by the Harvard Club of Long Island.
- Additionally, Dr. Rogers announced that Harry B. Thompson and South Woods middle schools were both ranked as top 10 middle schools in New York State by Niche.com, a school and community ranking service that uses Department of Education data and student/parent surveys in its evaluation process.
- Flip Chip, one of four Virtual Enterprise classes/teams at Syosset High School, is among only four national finalists from Long Island to advance to the Virtual Enterprise International National Business Plan Competition on April 3 at the Microsoft Technology Center in New York City.
- Syosset High School junior Iree Mann is the New York State champion in the 12th Annual Poetry Out Loud competition and will represent the state in the national semifinals to be held in Washington, D.C., April 25-26.
- Three students from the district are New York State finalists in the National Geographic Geo Bee competition. South Grove Elementary School fourth-grader Samuel Wang, Harry B. Thompson Middle School eighth-grader Trisha Sinha and South Woods Middle School sixth-grader Daniel Chan will compete in Albany on March 31 for the right to represent the state at the National Geographic Bee in Washington D.C. this May.
- Dr. Rogers reminded the community that voter registration for the May 16 school budget vote and trustee election will take place on March 29, between 8am and noon at district offices.
- Following through on a Board goal to enhance communication with the greater community, Dr. Rogers announced that discussions are underway with an ad hoc group with representation from every school PTA group to identify the most effective ways to reach more residents. This includes the possibility of using social media more to communicate not only information on student successes, but on issues of concern to residents more broadly.

### *Audience to the Public*

- A resident urged the Board to oppose the proposal for the Syosset Park development on the former Cerro Wire property, citing community health concerns and density. Board President Dr. Michael Cohen reminded the resident that the Board does not have the approval role in the matter, but would be willing to consider any factual information that was shared with the District. Moreover, the absence of a Board position should not be misinterpreted as an indication of support and that individual Board members have the right to take individual stances on the matter. He also asked the resident to send him contact information and any information in support of his argument for the Board to review.
- Residents asked multiple questions in response to the Technology Workgroup's presentation including concerns about reliance on a single platform or device, research on technology usage in other school districts, and Pilot Project assessment. Ms. Bovard and other members of the Workgroup described visits to nearly a dozen other schools from throughout the Long Island and upstate, and our use of membership in networks and professional organizations.

### *New Business*

- Various resolutions were approved including coaching, and staff service appointments, student club charters, committee minutes, policy readings and service contracts.
- The Board approved a resolution regarding the school district budget hearing, ballot (including a proposition to expend \$7.7 million in capital reserve funds), voting and Board trustee election, also covering the Library budget vote and elections that appear on the May 16 ballot. The Board also set the date for its annual reorganization meeting as July 5, 2017.
- Multiple resolutions were approved declaring that roofing, flooring and masonry projects at Baylis and Berry Hill elementary schools, electrical upgrades at A.P. Willits Elementary School and districtwide capital projects associated with fire alarm systems, storage tank removal, security vestibules, interior door replacement and related construction, plumbing and electrical work do not require further review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act.

### *Next Meeting*

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is Thursday, April 20, 2017 at 8 p.m. at South Woods Middle School. The third public budget information meeting will commence at 7:45 p.m., prior to the regular meeting.