

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](#).

May 8, 2017 Board of Education Meeting

After an executive session, the district held its annual budget hearing. Assistant Superintendent for Business Dr. Patricia Rufo provided an overview of the proposed 2017-18 school district budget. Her presentation included the three-part budget summary, the breakdown of revenues and the proposed tax levy and tax levy increase in relation to the district's tax cap. The Syosset CSD proposed tax levy is 2.12% which is below the State-calculated tax cap of 2.24%, in keeping with the district's history of remaining at or below the cap. Dr. Rufo also covered the plan to fund roof replacement projects at two elementary schools through transfers of unspent funds from the 2016-17 budget to the 2017-18 budget. Copies of the proposed budget were available for residents to view and take home.

In addition, Dr. Rufo addressed Proposition No. 2 which will appear on the ballot – a proposal to use up to \$7.7 million from the Capital Reserve (which currently contains \$14.1 million) to pay for the first phase of health and safety facility projects recommended as part of the district's Building Condition Survey and Security Audit. Dr. Rufo explained that voter authorization is required to use these funds, but since the funds are already in the Capital Reserve (essentially a savings account dedicated to facility needs) they would not need to be raised through an additional tax increase. She also detailed the projects to be addressed.

Thereafter, the regular Board meeting was called to order. The Board approved the minutes of the April 20, 2017 meeting. The Treasurer's report was delivered and approved.

The Superintendent's Monthly Report and Other Items

- South Woods Middle School Student Council representatives Stamatia Katsatos and Justin Simon gave a report on various happenings at the school, including a food drive to benefit Mercy First, fundraising efforts by the Future Business Leaders Club of America in support of Sunrise Day Camp, a pajama drive in support of Jake's Jammies and school spirit week.
- K-12 Science Coordinator Raymond Loverso introduced Science Olympiads from H.B. Thompson and South Woods middle schools and Syosset High School. All three schools were regional winners with South Woods and the high school capturing first-place honors at regionals and sixth- and eighth-place in the state, respectively. The three schools sent 94 students to the state competition. They collectively won 39 medals. South Woods coach Linda Stallow won an Outstanding Coach award and her team finished first at the states among small schools. This marked the first trip to the states for HBT Middle School.

- Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation Drew Cronin highlighted the successes of winter athletes and athletic teams. Individual honorees were: News 12/conference scholar-athlete for basketball Griffin Halpern; Rebecca Lee, Jacqueline Tang and Mackenzie Wagner as state qualifiers in bowling; Richard Chow, Michael Jiang, Sungchan Kwak, Sunghyuk Kwak, Joseph La Bianca, Kevin Li, Javier Ramirez, Alexi Weis and James Wun as state qualifiers in boys swimming with Javier, Joseph, Michael and Sungchan honored as county champions; girls winter track All-Americans Samantha Destefani, Melissa Esswein, Reilly Seibert and Lauren White; boys winter track state qualifier John Antonelli; and No. 1 ranked All-American, state and county champion, all-academic state team and county consecutive wins record-holder Vitali Arujua for varsity wrestling. Teams honored were the county champion girls varsity bowling team; the conference/division champion varsity boys swim team; and the National Dance Association showmanship award-winning varsity kickline squad. Gregory Cardona (boys basketball), Michael Ferreira (girls basketball) and Christopher Schleider (boys swimming) all won conference coach of the year while Wayne Berbert (girls bowling) won Newsday Coach of the Year.
- South Grove Elementary School Principal Mi Jung An and Walt Whitman Elementary School Principal Chad Snyder gave a presentation on the Teachers College Reading and Writing Project and Elementary Cross-Cutting Curriculum. Mr. Snyder explained how cross-cutting subject areas helps maximize and repurpose instructional time at the elementary level. He gave examples of how different subject areas are joined together with elementary reading and writing units thanks to feedback provided by teachers. Ms. An explained how the district is utilizing a comprehensive curriculum map for teachers to view all subject area units and discuss and share ideas for cross-cutting using Google classroom. She described this as a living, breathing, dynamic document for teacher collaboration.
- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers reminded the community that the budget vote will take place on Tuesday, May 16 from 6 a.m.- 9 p.m. at Robbins Lane Elementary School, H.B. Thompson Middle School and Syosset High School. He also announced that school will be in session on Thursday, May 25 but will be closed Friday, May 26 for the Memorial Day holiday weekend.
- Dr. Rogers also announced the following student recognitions: Syosset High School senior/Salutatorian Ben Rhee was named a U.S. Presidential Scholar; Rachel Doyle of Syosset High School is a National PTA Outstanding Interpretation Award winner in the PTA Reflections contest; Syosset High School senior Michelle Gery is the recipient of a National Merit Scholarship; and senior Haley Kushner is the recipient of a Nassau County School Superintendents' Association scholarship.
- Syosset High School has been ranked No. 24 in the state and No. 173 nationally in U.S. News & World Report's 2017 rankings of the "Best High Schools in America."

Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance Update: a spokesperson reported that at their April 24 meeting the committee had discussed: the overall proposed budget; proposed summer facility projects; the tax cap and the proposed tax levy; state aid revenues and the use of budget reserves and fund balance appropriations; customized budget presentations for all of the district schools; budget

communication outreach to senior citizen communities; and an unanticipated enrollment increase last summer and how the district plans to more closely study student population changes using an enrollment consultant. This was the final Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance meeting of the school year.

Audience to the Public

- A parent inquired if the district had considered closing its schools on Election Day as a security measure. Dr. Rogers said that additional security personnel are put into place to ensure visitors are directed to the polls and are not granted access to other areas of the building. The parent also asked if the district planned to utilize metal detectors to screen voters, to which Dr. Rogers responded no.
- A resident/student appealed to the audience to participate in a fundraising walk scheduled for June 11 at Sunrise Day Camp in Wheatley Heights, 9:30 a.m.–12:30 p.m. Proceeds from the walk will benefit the camp which provides recreational opportunities for pediatric cancer patients. Dr. Rogers applauded the student and commented how admirable he finds the philanthropic spirit demonstrated by students throughout the district.

Discussion Items:

- Board of Education President Dr. Michael Cohen touched on a recent forum on homework that was an outgrowth of a community meeting last fall to explore high school start times and adolescent sleep deprivation. He said it was the Board's desire to involve more parents in the discussion regarding these important topics. Board members suggested creating online feedback forums for parents and soliciting feedback from alumni.
- Dr. Cohen also asked Dr. Rogers to provide his assessment of the newly released revisions to the Common Core Standards and develop a letter from the Board to the Regents with comments from Syosset prior to the Regents' June meeting (June 2nd).

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved pertaining to: coaching and staff appointments; committee minutes; service contracts; and the award of tenure.
- The Board awarded bids to various vendors for supplies in the following areas: art; athletics; audio visual; awards and plaques; computers and printers; classroom and office; family and consumer sciences; industrial technology; medical; music; physical education; printing of school calendar; and science.
- The Board also awarded bids for the following: automatic temperature controls services and repairs; public address, intercom and main clock systems; and security guards.
- Donna Viola was appointed as District Deputy Treasurer and Central Treasurer.

Next Meeting

The budget vote is Tuesday, May 16, 2017 from 6 a.m.–9 p.m. at Robbins Lane Elementary School, H.B. Thompson Middle School and Syosset High School. The next meeting of the Board of Education is Monday, June 12, 2017 at 8 p.m. at South Woods Middle School.