

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](#).

June 12, 2017 Board of Education Meeting

After an executive session, the regular Board meeting was called to order. A public hearing was held regarding revisions to the District-wide Safety Plan in accordance with Project SAVE. Updates included changes in communications systems, emergency response protocols and offsite evacuation locations, among other changes. The Board of Education later approved the revised Safety Plan.

The Board approved the minutes of the May 8, 2017 and May 16, 2017 meetings. The Treasurer's report was delivered and approved.

Retiring Board of Education Vice President April Neuendorf and Board Trustee Laura Schlesinger were recognized for their collective 18 years of volunteer service to the District. Board members praised Ms. Neuendorf and Ms. Schlesinger with words and phrases such as "altruism," "caring," "commitment," "incredibly fair," and "smart." Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers and Board President Dr. Michael Cohen awarded each with a plaque of recognition on behalf of employees and the Board, respectively. Ms. Neuendorf and Ms. Schlesinger also spoke about their experiences on the Board, thanking Dr. Rogers, administration, Dr. Cohen and members of the Board as well as the teachers, staff and community members for their support.

The Superintendent's Monthly Report and Other Items

- Harry B. Thompson Middle School Student Council representatives Aidan Charlip and Muntaha Sabir reported on various happenings at the school, including the recent Cupcake Wars, fundraising efforts, Math and Science Olympiad and sports teams successes, multicultural week and the school's designation as a "No Place for Hate" school by the Anti-Defamation League.
- Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation Drew Cronin highlighted the successes of spring athletes and athletic teams. Individual honorees were: varsity girls golf state qualifiers Malini Rudra and Sarah Sung; varsity boys lacrosse All-American player Daniel Ochs; varsity boys All-State tennis players Eli Grossman and Preet Rajpal; and varsity track state qualifiers Jonathan DiSiena, Jonathan Louie, Scott Mansouri, Michael Stanco and Peter Zimbalist. Teams honored were: varsity and junior varsity girls lacrosse team, each of which won the Sportsmanship Award; and the varsity boys tennis team, which won the Long Island and County Championship –the latter for the third consecutive year while amassing a 52-0 record in that time while also winning the team GPA Award this season.
- World Languages Coordinator David Balsamo gave a presentation on the K-12 program, covering the FLEX program (which begins in kindergarten), the middle school program, and the eight different languages that are offered at the high school. The FLEX program offers six different languages from grades K-5 with

instruction in culture as well as language. Mr. Balsamo noted that 83 percent of students at Syosset High School are learning at least one world language, with 134 students studying two. Next initiatives include teaching American Sign Language in kindergarten, creating a pathway to the new “Seal of Biliteracy” (a diploma endorsement for high school graduates who have attained a high level of proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages), and exploring the offering of a non-European language through “Checkpoint C” (i.e. AP level).

- A representative of Nassau BOCES gave a report on their analysis of the District’s technology infrastructure. The core network was designed more than 10 years ago to support a wired environment with student computers mainly in labs. The wireless network was designed to support coverage, not density and demand. After Hurricane Sandy, disaster recovery became a priority. While the network equipment has lasted a long time (between 7-10 years in many cases), it is now well beyond its useful lifespan and the District has shifted its strategy to wireless devices for instruction and cloud-based disaster recovery. Based on the study’s findings, Dr. Rogers recommended that the Board:
 - o Build a state-of-the-art high-density/high-bandwidth network designed to meet our current need and to accommodate emerging technologies over the next 7-10 years, rather than continuing to invest in the aging network;
 - o Repurposing the existing network to serve the less taxing needs of the District’s wired surveillance systems and guest wi-fi network.
 - o Replacing 7+ year old desktop computers with faster, more secure Windows 10 machines and initiating a replacement cycle.
 - o Redesigning the phone system with a “failover” to ensure backup phone capability if the main system were to go down.
- Dr. Rogers acknowledged receipt of a letter from State Assemblyman Charles Lavine congratulating Syosset High School for being ranked No. 24 in New York State and 173 nationally in U.S. News & World Report’s “Best High Schools in America” study.
- Dr. Rogers explained that there was a resolution to declare an “emergency,” not because there is a danger, but so that the District could accelerate the time frame for replacing a furnace before the next heating season.
- Dr. Rogers also shared an overview of a consultant demographer’s 5-year enrollment projections, which showed:
 - o Syosset’s 12-year long drop in enrollment is likely to reverse gradually for the next several years and level off in 5 years after recovering only about half of the loss from the 2005-06 peak enrollment.
 - o It is still too soon to tell if the 2016-17 spike in kindergarten enrollment is a trend or an anomaly, but it should be monitored closely;
 - o Over the next few months, the administration will be comparing building-by-building projections with actual enrollments more closely.
 - o The district is monitoring the tax and enrollment implications of the proposed mixed-use retail/residential development of a former trailer park on Route 25, as well as the Syosset Park development. The District has been

complying with formal information requests from Town officials and representatives of both projects.

Correspondence

- Dr. Cohen acknowledged a letter received from the Village School PTA regarding disruptive behavior in the neighborhood by some students from Mercy First, a nearby residential school for teens. Dr. Rogers indicated he had spoken with Mercy First officials and has been invited to attend their next standing meeting with the Nassau County Police to discuss these concerns. Dr. Cohen said the Board would look further into the issue, as well.

Audience to the Public

- Two residents voiced concerns about the Mercy First students, including a representative of the Village PTA who read their letter aloud. Both residents indicated support for the District's longstanding positive relationship with Mercy First, but believed that greater efforts were needed to control the disruptions.

Discussion Items:

- Board members discussed concerns raised by residents over the increasing number of cell towers in the area and possible health implications. Dr. Rogers said some residents have shared some research studies with the District, but that neither the State nor the county Departments of Health have issued guidance to schools regarding cell towers at this time. He informed the Board that the Town of Hempstead had adopted an ordinance relating to cell tower siting.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved relating to: appointments and abolishment of positions, committee minutes and service contracts; multiple staff member leaves of absence; establishment of various stipends and budgetary limits to various reserve funds; designation of banks as District depositories; and the issuance of tax anticipation notes based on levies for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2018.
- The Board accepted the certified results of the May 16, 2017 budget vote and trustee election and approved multiple resolutions related to voting procedures and personnel.
- The Board appointed David Steinberg as Assistant Principal at Syosset High School (reinstating a third assistant principal at the building), Mary-Lou Sapienza as Director of Pupil Personnel Services, John Genova as Coordinator of Mathematics and Amanda Barney as Coordinator of English, the last two filling vacancies resulting from retirements of Angela Kozlowski and Catherine Longmore, respectively.
- The Board ratified agreements with the Syosset Teachers Association and the Civil Service Employee Association.
- Separate bids to perform roof replacement, flooring and masonry work at both Baylis and Berry Hill elementary schools were awarded. A resolution to perform

emergency work to address the Walt Whitman Elementary School heating system was also approved.

Next Meeting

The next meeting of the Board of Education is Wednesday, July 5, 2017 at 8 p.m. at South Woods Middle School.