

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 21, 2016 Board of Education Meeting

After an Audit Committee, executive session and budget information meeting, the regular public meeting was called to order and the minutes from the February 7 and February 8, 2016 Board meetings were approved. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and also approved.

The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items

- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas Rogers and the Board recognized Syosset High School's KEN Literary and Art Magazine staff, which received first-place recognition in the American Scholastic Press Association Contest for the fourth time. Coordinator for English Dr. Catherine Longmore introduced three members of the KEN staff, two of whom recited poetry.
- Dr. Rogers introduced members of the Syosset High School Association of Creative Thespians, who performed the song *One More Day* from their recent production of *Les Miserables*. ACT members introduced themselves following the performance.
- Dr. Rogers announced that: 13 Syosset High School students have advanced to the finalist round of the National Merit Scholarship competition; English teacher and Forensics club advisor Lydia Esslinger has been inducted into the National Speech and Debate Association's Hall of Fame; six high school students have been named as candidates for the U.S. Presidential Scholar Award; three music ensembles have been selected to perform in the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Young Musicians Concert—one from the high school and two from H.B. Thompson Middle School; and a chamber ensemble from the high school was also selected for the prestigious Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center's Young Artist Competition. Dr. Rogers also noted that the annual daytime incoming freshman orientation program for parents will be held on April 21 at 9:30 a.m. in the high school auditorium and that the grade 10 parent workshop that was canceled due to inclement weather was rescheduled for April 18.
- Members of the district's Technology Workgroup "Project IDEA" gave a presentation about the many new technology pilot programs that are underway and forthcoming at various schools. They also shared results of a recent survey that showed students adapted quickly to their technology devices and that interaction and collaboration improved. They concluded the presentation with a video about the pilots, which included positive testimony from teachers and students, backing the survey results.
- Dr. Rogers announced that the secondary curriculum committee approved the General Science 8 curriculum proposal and curriculum writing is

- underway. As a follow-up to the question on whether a similar unaccelerated Grade 8 curriculum would be beneficial in the math, Dr. Rogers offered that consideration of a General Math 8 course is complicated by the fact that math concepts are taught over time in a certain order with topics progressing, and the district is obligated to provide Academic Intervention Services in math that would double staffing implications. However, he said he would provide additional information on the matter at the April Board of Education meeting. On a separate curriculum council item, Dr. Rogers announced that an alternate physical education unit would be made available during the swim unit for students who are unable to participate in pool time.
- Following a previous Board discussion of the pros and cons of the current practice of Parent Visitation Days, Dr. Rogers gathered input from every elementary school and shared two possible options to reduce the impact on a given instructional day. Both options would break out parent visitation into partial day visits over the course of two instructional days: one by grade level; the other alphabetically by last name. While both would limit the number of visitors in each building, thus improving safety conditions by creating less building traffic, Dr. Rogers suggested the alphabetical option would ultimately prove more effective in controlling the number of guests per classroom. The Board discussed the idea of inviting parents to class at the end of each unit to maintain the spirit of the practice. Administration will develop this additional option for the Board to review.
 - Dr. Rogers provided an update on the district's joint lawsuit with other Nassau school districts against Nassau County. The matter is over the county's shift of properties owned by LIPA from the assessment rolls to Payments in Lieu of Taxes (PILOTs) and subsequent unilateral reduction of the district tax levies. The districts obtained a temporary restraining order and as a result received half of their entitled payments from the County, a positive first sign in their pursuit of full reimbursement of taxes as the case moves forward.

Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance Update: a spokesperson reported that the committee has discussed the capital and administrative portions of the budget, as well as the implications of the tax cap at previous meetings. She also announced a change in time for its next meeting, scheduled for March 22.

Athletic Committee Update: a Board member reported on the last two meetings, which included an update by Athletic Director Drew Cronin on several new athletic facility upgrades and additions, areas that are in need of attention and the present state of the fields. He also spoke about the master plan developed by the district's architect with alternative locations and designs for athletic facilities, which could encompass a new turf field and additional track lanes and parking spaces, with considerations given to

reduce the potential impact on the neighborhood (particularly in terms of sound).

Audience to the Public

- A community member inquired whether the report of the internal auditor would be available on the district website, to which she was answered “yes.”
- The SEPTA president reviewed the mission and goals of SEPTA, discussed the parent support and sibling groups available through SEPTA, spoke about the Response to Intervention (RTI) and Individual Educational Program (IEP) development process. She also expressed appreciation for the high quality of the district’s special education program. She thanked the Board and administration for its commitment to children with special needs, urged interested parents to join SEPTA and announced an April 14 SEPTA scholarship fundraiser.

Discussion Items

- The Board recommended holding a public forum this spring to allow parents, students and other community members to provide input on the implications of changing the high school start time to later in the morning.
- A Board member inquired about the possibility of communicating with parents regarding the upcoming grade 3-8 assessments. The District is also providing an overview of the testing changes at a parent meeting scheduled for March 22, which will include a PowerPoint presentation that will be posted on the district website as well. Dr. Rogers assured the Board that the district honors all parent requests whether or not they choose to have their children participate in the state assessments. Dr. Rogers also shared that there are a handful of changes in the state testing program, most notably that tests are now untimed.
- In response to an inquiry about possibly amending the current Code of Conduct to include a policy that addresses corrective behavior measures. Dr. Rogers assured that student behavior is proactively addressed within the PRIDE program and Code of Conduct, but that he will work with secondary school principals to compile for the Board’s information the efforts that the schools already make and to identify any areas of possible improvement relevant to the request.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved relating to appointments, district policies, acceptance of donations, acceptance (and rejection) of bids, award of contracts and other financial operations of the district.
- The Board approved an inter-municipal cooperative agreement with a consortium of school districts to advertise bids for air conditioning and refrigeration repair as well as carpet cleaning services.

- The Board approved a revised resolution regarding the school district budget hearing, ballot, voting and Board trustee election, also covering the Library budget vote and elections that appear on the May 17 ballot. The Board also set the date for its annual reorganization meeting as July 11, 2016.
- Two resolutions were approved declaring that roof improvement projects at Syosset High School and A.P. Willits Elementary School do not require further review under the State Environmental Quality Review Act.
- Following a question from a Board member, Dr. Rogers announced that summer school would be held at H.B. Thompson Middle School this year due to planned work on the high school roof.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is Monday, April 19, 2016 at South Woods Middle School, beginning with a budget information meeting at 7:00 p.m. followed by the regular Board of Education meeting at 8:00 p.m.