

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](#).

### **April 19, 2016 Board of Education Meeting**

After a budget information meeting, the regular public meeting was called to order and the minutes from the March 21 Board meeting 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 five semifinalists in the Intel Science Talent Search. After being introduced by Science Research Coordinator Veronica Ade, Alexandra Chan, Rachel Kang, Joshua Katz and Benjamin Senzer each had the opportunity to give brief "elevator pitches" regarding their respective research projects. Semifinalist Daniel Hirsch was unable to attend.
- Following up on previous discussions regarding whether an unaccelerated General Math Grade 8 curriculum would be beneficial to students, Dr. Rogers presented student performance data as well as research from another school district demonstrating that such a program was unlikely to result in higher scores in grade 9 and would create a segregated track through 11<sup>th</sup> grade as well as additional complications. He contrasted the recently approved General Science 8 course, a General Math 8 course is complicated by the fact that math concepts are taught over time with topics progressing. Dr. Rogers responded to Board member concerns over students struggling with the current accelerated math program, and questions about the composition of the class of students taking Algebra I in 9<sup>th</sup> grade. Dr. Rogers indicated that the demand for math acceleration has traditionally been high and that ninth-graders studying at grade level are predominantly comprised of transfers from other districts, English language learners and, in some years, students with a learning disability. Following up on a question about staffing, Dr. Rogers said that a General Math 8 section would likely require an estimated 1.2 FTE positions based on the needs of the current group studying at grade level. He recommended a change in the practice to allow students to use a second or higher Regents exam grade to replace an initial/lower grade 8 Regents exam grade for Algebra 1 on a transcript.
- Dr. Rogers provided a report on a recent Security Forum hosted by the district in which information was provided on future infrastructure improvements and the addition of security cameras. He indicated that the impetus for ongoing security enhancement is the result of the District constantly reviewing its practices and not a reaction to any particular event or concern. He also stated that both the Nassau County Chief of Police and the new Problem Oriented Police officer assigned to the district were present

and provided updates on their efforts to improve safety, including the practice of monitoring social media.

- New York State School Boards Association Nassau Area 11 Director Robert “B.A.” Schoen thanked the Board for its participation in the NYSSBA School Board U Recognition program, which provides Board of Education members with mastery training in areas of governance and leadership, fiscal management, student achievement and overall district operations.
- Dr. Rogers updated the community on a series of student/district achievements and newsworthy items: For the 15<sup>th</sup> time, the district was recognized by the NAMM organization as one of the Best Communities for Music Education; Benjamin Senzer and Michael Collet were named Syosset High School’s 2016 Valedictorian and Salutatorian, respectively; H.B. Thompson Middle School eighth-grader Rika Mizoguchi won the L.I. Regional Spelling Bee and advanced to the Scripps National Spelling Bee in Washington, D.C.; Districtwide kindergarten enrollment for the 2016-17 school year is currently at 363 students; A judge from a recent track meet took the time to write Director of Physical Education and Athletics Drew Cronin to praise the Syosset High School Girls Track team for demonstrating good sportsmanship during the meet, even cheering opposing runners.
- Coordinator for Educational Services Peggy Grosso reported on the biennial review of the district’s Compact for Learning Plan. Based on input provided by each school’s site based management team and the district steering committee, she cited that the various components of the district’s plan has been successfully implemented and the Compact remains consistent with the district mission statement and goals and has been submitted for re-certification.

Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance Update: the chair reported that the at the March 22 meeting, administration discussed the internal audit risk assessment report, citing that there were “no high risk areas,” that one area had been reduced from moderate risk to low risk based on the adoption of a recommendation, and that while an excess in the cafeteria fund balance is an ongoing issue, it is being reduced every year. She also reported on the committee’s review of components of the budget, noting that reserves are used to fund obligations to the employee retirement system, workers compensation and unemployment. The next committee meeting was scheduled to take place on April 20 at South Woods Middle School.

#### *Audience to the Public*

- A community member requested that the district consider eliminating field testing for Common Core exams. Dr. Rogers noted that field tests, which help the state to design future exams, are required by New York State.
- A second resident expressed concerns over field testing for the Regents Algebra 2 test and the loss of instructional time attributed to the test. Dr.

Rogers said that approximately 30 minutes of instructional time is taken for the field tests. In answering a follow-up question regarding any benefits to these tests, he suggested that field tests perhaps have the minimal benefit of allowing students to practice for the official exams and preview types of questions they could possibly see on these exams.

#### *Discussion Items*

- Following previous Board discussions of the pros and cons of the current practice of Parent Visitation Days, Dr. Rogers presented alternatives to visitation day: Hold a day consisting of morning and afternoon sessions designed to limit the number of parents in the classroom/building at one time; or conduct curriculum-based celebrations in conjunction with the culmination of a given unit, also reducing building traffic during visitation. The Board voted in favor of the curriculum celebrations but left open the opportunity to tweak this practice in the future.
- The Board directed Dr. Rogers to explore options for addressing inadequacies in the existing high school fitness/weight room, which is used extensively for physical education and student-athletes.

#### *New Business*

- Various resolutions were approved relating to appointments, district policies, acceptance of donations, acceptance (and rejection) of service contracts and other financial operations of the district.
- Resolutions were approved regarding the recertification of the District Compact Plan, the appointment of a districtwide School Safety Team and the appointment of various election and voting inspectors for the May 17 school budget and Board of Education election.
- The Board voted to approve the Nassau BOCES administrative budget for the 2016-17 school year and voted in support of three candidates for the Nassau BOCES Board of Education.
- The Board adopted a proposed district budget of \$219,860,188 for the 2016-17 school year to be presented at a public hearing on May 9 and for voting on May 17. The Board also approved the School Property Tax Report Card for 2016-17.

#### *Executive Session*

The Board convened to executive session to discuss personnel matters.

#### *Next Meeting*

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, May 9, 2016 at South Woods Middle School, beginning with a budget hearing at 7:30 p.m. The budget vote is May 17.