

**SYOSSET COUNCIL OF PTAS
COMMUNICATION CONFERENCE COMMITTEE
FALL 2018**

District-Wide Topics:

Relationship between the school District, Town of Oyster Bay and Nassau County relative to the following areas:

- Impact of potential new homes in areas such as Syosset Park, Woodbury Country Club, and Piquets Lane.
- Scheduling of road construction and paving projects.
- Status of multiple families living in single family residences.

District Response:

- Though the District and Town have different roles, we do try to communicate.
- The District tries to coordinate on scheduling of projects that impact our community (road projects, etc.) but we are one of several government entities that are making requests.
- The District's law firm follows applications for significant new developments, including multi-family developments.
 - The District has no authority over code enforcement. Though if there is an unsafe condition in the home, we can recruit CPS.
- In the case of significant developments, we will comment on the Environmental Impact Statement.
- The District cannot perform roles that are statutorily performed by other forms of government (for example: code enforcement, zoning enforcement, traffic control, zoning changes, etc.).
 - The Town is also responsible for the State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA), which requires the Town to balance the environmental impacts with social and economic factors when deciding to approve or undertake an action. The District is an interested party and can comment and share feedback, but the Town is the lead agency.

Transportation Topics:

- Real-time communication plan for bus delays (example: can parents be contacted within 5 minutes when a route is known to be 30 minutes delayed, notification process for morning delays, etc.).
- Sharing Medical Plans with drivers so they can be aware of protocol to be followed in the event of emergency.
- Information regarding security cameras on buses, such as which buses? how are they chosen? who is monitoring them? whose policies are followed (District or bus company)?
- Frequently changing drivers on bus routes. Is there a way to notify parents when there will be a different driver?

District Response:

- The District secured two priorities in our last transportation contract negotiation: GPS and security cameras.
- The GPS will eventually enable us to use a parent app that will be available on mobile devices to give a sense of when a bus will arrive. It will not give actual location of buses for security reasons.
- The District has access to the GPS of all buses.
- Every bus will eventually have surveillance cameras. The contract provides that the bus company will install them throughout the course of the year. At this point, 52 of our 115 buses have security cameras. The District is in the process of adopting a surveillance camera policy.
 - Footage from security cameras can be viewed by principals on request, and helps to provide clarity for certain situations. Parents typically cannot view footage due to privacy issues.
 - Students and parents are made aware that cameras are on the bus (there are signs on buses that have cameras).
- Parents of students with 504 plans and IEPs are offered an “emergency health care form” to be given to bus drivers. The forms are maintained on the bus. Not every parent chooses to complete this form.
- The Code of Conduct applies at all times to students, including when they are on the buses.
- Though it is not typical to have a rotation of drivers, at the start of the school year there is an adjustment period. If there is a concern, the first step would be to call Transportation.
 - There is a driver shortage in NY and we have had conversations with Huntington Coach about stability.

Safety Protocol Topics:

- Is there a protocol for a potential lockdown or security adjustments at Village for when a resident leaves Mercy First? When are police notified that a resident is missing?
- Is there training for volunteers to understand various emergency drills?
- ID badges for frequent volunteers.
- Occurance of "inconvenient" drills.
- Training for substitute teachers to understand various emergency drills.
- Can students be given NARCAN training along with CPR and first aid?
- Shielding young students from police activity in the vicinity of elementary buildings.

District Response:

- Safety plans are developed with POP officers, District NYSED/NCPD Liaison, District security consultant, Director of Security, Administration, etc.
- Plans are annually evaluated at the building level and at the District level. The District-level Safety Plan is posted on the website; Building-level plans are kept confidential by law.
- Drills are mandated by law. The District has provided building staff with a schedule which exceeds the State requirements and also requires drills to be conducted at inconvenient times.

Drills are periodically observed by the Syosset FD, NCPD, and/or our Director of Security in order to make adjustments.

- ID badges are only provided for District personnel, as per a Board of Education policy. Once a volunteer has checked in for the first time, their information is already in the system and they proceed through screening quickly thereafter.
- Regarding substitute teachers, there are protocols in place in each building. The Director of Security is responsible for making plans consistent.
- Visitors, including PTA volunteers, should always be in the presence of District staff and should respond to all directions from staff in the event of an emergency.
- Nurses are trained in the use of NARCAN at the secondary level. The District will also be offering voluntary training sessions for additional staff and is researching the possibility of offering training to high school seniors.
- Staff and coaches are trained in CPR/AED/First Aid. Student training is being explored through the Health curriculum.
- Regarding MercyFirst issues, we cannot disclose building-level safety plans. The District is aware of the activity at MercyFirst, though we have never experienced a MercyFirst resident visiting one of our campuses uninvited.
 - All buildings operate in a state of perpetual lock-out. During an actual lock-out, the change in protocol is that visitors are not admitted until the lock-out has ended.
 - Security guards are outside when students are.
 - The District has an open line of communication with MercyFirst.
 - The District is installing 6 foot fencing at all schools, and the fence at Village has already been installed.
 - Though we can't avoid police activity taking place in the vicinity of the buildings, the principals will evaluate situations and make adjustments to the normal course of operations if necessary.

Social Emotional Learning Topics:

- Please provide updates on the efforts at every level in light of the new regulations.
- Please explain the roles and responsibilities of the social worker and psychologists.
- What is the ratio of social workers and psychologist relative to students in each building?
- Bullying
- Restorative Practices

District Response:

- This topic was recently discussed at a Board of Education meeting as well as reviewed by the Security Advisory Committee. The presentation can be found [here](#).
- NYS is the first in the nation that has mandated mental health training.
- The District has been focused on mental health for many years.
 - Social Emotional Learning and character education has been a big focus and the District is very cognizant of student needs.

- The District has worked to develop a culture in all buildings that is supportive and safe. The PRIDE (Patience, Respect, Integrity, Dignity, Empathy) program, student clubs including Peer Leaders and Peers Reaching Out, and the newly-launched Advisory program are some examples of character education programs in place.
- As part of the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS), sub-committees have been created, one of which focuses on social emotional learning. The Committee is made up of stakeholders from all buildings.
- At the building level, the multi-disciplinary teams meet weekly, with a standing agenda item to evaluate any students exhibiting signs of concerning behavior.
- The District has adopted a social emotional learning program named Sanford Harmony for K-5. It was piloted in prior years and will be rolled out at all elementary schools next year.
- At the middle schools, there is an advisor/advisee program, which provides an opportunity for teachers and staff work directly with students in small groups.
- There has been an increase in staffing. An additional social worker and psychologist have been hired.
- Any bullying issues should be reported to the building principal and/or psychologist. DASA is the Dignity for All Students Act, and provides a process for reporting and responding to bullying incidents.
 - The District runs friendship and peer support groups.
 - A team from the secondary schools received training on restorative practices for discipline.
 - Teachers raise concerns to counselors if necessary.

Elementary Topics:

- How is the lunch period evaluated to ensure ample time is allotted for eating as well as recess time?
- Is it possible to provide the gym or all-purpose rooms for recess time in the colder months?
- A loss of recess time should not be used for disciplinary actions.
- Possibility of an online payment for lunch program.

District Response:

- Students are given 55 minutes for lunch at elementary schools.
- Lunch service should be completed in 25 minutes, leaving the balance for recess and transition.
- Each building has a different size and space configuration and is given latitude to adjust in order to maximize the time in each building.
 - Any building-specific issues should be reported to the principal.
- The District has changed lunch service providers this year, and the beginning of the year had some transition issues that have since been ironed out.
- The District meets the State mandate for physical education time, as well as providing recess daily. The PE time includes full periods as well as the “fitness 15” and/or “mindfulness” activities.

- Recess taking place in the gym has been difficult to implement as all buildings have different configurations and space constraints.
- A loss of recess time is no longer used as a disciplinary action.
- The District recently approved the agreement for an online payment method, so this capability is now available.
 - We will investigate the possibility to have one account per family instead of one account per child.

Middle School Topics:

- Please explain to South Grove and Robbins Lane parents/guardians how students are assigned to Thompson or South Woods.
- How are athletic uniforms ordered and distributed to middle school teams? Recently there has been a shortage for some teams.

District Response:

- The District is split into two zones for middle school.
- The line splits the elementary zones of Robbins Lane (along the railroad tracks) and South Grove (along Jericho Turnpike).
- Reversing this decision would be challenging:
 - It would require double-busing the students in both middle schools for two years while they age through;
 - half the students would be directed to a different middle school than they anticipated;
 - half the families would have younger siblings go to a different middle school than older siblings, etc.
- Students are reunited with their classmates in 9th grade.
- The middle schools are doing more things jointly so there is more uniformity between schools.
 - The District will also look into more opportunities for clubs/teams to work together between the schools.
- Parents with concerns about uniforms should speak with the coach and/or Athletic Director. The District practice is to maintain adequate uniforms at all levels of athletic competition, and there is a regular replacement cycle for uniforms.
 - There was a delay in receiving some t-shirts this year for the cross county team, which was a unique situation.



High School Topics:

- Parent Teachers Conferences: will there be an online scheduling program? Can student volunteers be used to help conferences stay on schedule?
- Absences: can there be a few days of sick time allowed where a parental note is sufficient rather than requiring a doctor's note for all absences?
- Transition: please explain the steps involved in transitioning from 8th to 9th grade and the resources available to parents.
- Grading: please explain why the 8-point scale is being used.

District Response:

- We have an online scheduling system for the middle schools, but due to teacher course load, the system does not provide enough "slots" to accommodate the high school schedule.
 - The District will look into whether student volunteer timekeepers are being used, and will also look into scheduling appointments during the day.
- The District is working with a committee of teachers and administrators from the high school to address three areas:
 - Parent/teacher conferences
 - Testing schedule (including "blackout days")
 - Homework
- District has been doing a number of new things for the 8th to 9th transition to increase understanding of the process for parents and to support students.
 - 9th grade transition parent information night added in December to explain the process from beginning to end and to introduce our new online course catalog.
 - Parents and Students will attend an overview and "elective fair" at the HS in January.
 - Middle School Counselors will present information to students about high school courses.
 - Teachers will recommend courses for students.
 - 1:1 meeting with middle school guidance counselors added for parents & students to review and finalize the course selections.
 - The goal is to allow students to take advantage of the many opportunities at the high school while not overwhelming themselves.
- The Board recently changed its attendance policy to permit more unexcused absences at the high school in order to accommodate college visits. No changes were made to the requirement for a doctor's note. Policy No. 5100 states:
 - **Attendance/Awarding of Credit**
Secondary – All Credit Bearing Courses
 "When a secondary student (grades 8 through 12) exceeds a cumulative total of twelve (12) unexcused absences in a credit bearing course he/she will not receive credit for a full year course. Students exceeding a cumulative total of six (6) unexcused absences will not receive credit for a half-year course or an alternate day course. Properly excused student absences shall not be counted as an absence for the purpose of determining the student's eligibility for course credit. Unexcused lateness or early departures will count as unexcused absences."
 - The District will review how we communicate regarding "unexcused" absences to ease the stigma associated with unexcused absences.

- Regarding grading, the District’s use of an 8-point scale works to students’ benefit by allowing additional credit for students attempting more challenging coursework (honors/AP). As a result, students get additional credit towards their GPA. Regardless of the GPA reported on the transcript, most colleges will calculate their own weighted average based on a subset of courses they prioritize.
 - Colleges are looking for a progression of rigor. They are less focused on GPA alone. Colleges may back out classes they deem not essential to calculate their own GPA.

| Course Grade | Alpha | Points | Average of all Courses | Conversion to GPA |
|--------------|-----------|----------|------------------------|-------------------|
| 100.00 | A+ | 8 | 8.5 | 100.0 |
| | | | 8.1 | 98.0 |
| | | | 8.0 | 97.5 |
| 94.50 | A | 7 | 7.9 | 97.0 |
| 94.49 | | | 7.4 | 94.5 |
| | | | 7.3 | 94.0 |
| 89.50 | B+ | 6 | 7.0 | 92.5 |
| 89.49 | | | 6.9 | 92.0 |
| | | | 6.4 | 89.5 |
| 84.50 | B | 5 | 6.3 | 89.0 |
| 84.49 | | | 6.0 | 87.5 |
| | | | 5.9 | 87.0 |
| 79.50 | C+ | 4 | 5.4 | 84.5 |
| 79.49 | | | 5.3 | 84.0 |
| | | | 5.0 | 82.5 |
| 74.50 | C | 3 | 4.9 | 82.0 |
| 74.49 | | | 4.4 | 79.5 |
| | | | 4.3 | 79.0 |
| 69.50 | D | 2 | 4.0 | 77.5 |
| 69.49 | | | 3.9 | 77.0 |
| | | | 3.4 | 74.5 |
| 64.50 | F | 0 | 3.3 | 74.0 |
| 64.49 | | | 3.0 | 72.5 |
| | | | 2.9 | 72.0 |
| 0.00 | | | 2.4 | 69.5 |
| | | | 2.3 | 69.0 |
| | | | 2.0 | 67.5 |
| | | | 1.9 | 67.0 |
| | | | 1.4 | 64.5 |
| | | | 1.3 | 64.0 |
| | | | 0.0 | 55.0 |

SEPTA Topics:

HIGH SCHOOL, COLLEGE & BEYOND

- Knowledge of multiple pathways to graduation.

- Knowledge of programs/colleges best suited to special ed students and ability to assist with applications.
- Knowledge of Barry Tech, statistics of success and ability to expand SHS relationship with other tech colleges.
- Establish network of alumni for benefit of current SHS students;
- Self-advocacy support and training.
- General Studies Classes for subjects not currently offered (Pre-Calculus, Chemistry, etc.).
- Conversely, if GS can't be offered in these subjects, what can be put in place to help support mainstreaming of special ed students interested in those subjects (besides IS or after school extra help?).
- Regents classes without having requirement of Regents test. Understanding Regents "requirements."
- Release of general Special Education data collected by the District.

District Response:

- There are current supports in place for transition services. The Guidance Office puts together the College Planning Guide for Students With Disabilities, which includes post secondary supports available in colleges. A Transition and College Readiness Workshop for Students With Learning Differences is run by a special education teacher and counselor. This is a workshop for parents that reviews programs available at local colleges.
 - The District will make the available information online.
- The staff attends training run by the state on graduation requirements and pathways.
- The District has a liaison with the Barry Tech program, Ms. Goldberg, who can assist any parent or student interested in the program.
- The District worked with SEPTA on communication protocols for any issues related to special education. The information will be posted to the District website.
- Regarding collection of data, the state collects information that is posted to a website. Each year there is a report card and on a six year cycle, the District is required to report on the graduation outcomes. The graduation percentages for the District are very strong.
 - Data is collected to establish mainstreaming of students from self-contained classrooms;
 - Number of special ed students receiving regents diplomas, college acceptance (four year vs. two year) and graduation.
- The District is exploring dedicated support to assist students/families with post-secondary transition.

Communication - Technology Adoption &

"Onboarding" Procedures:

- Chromebook/Google classroom are not universally used/supported by all teachers, mandate should be required for adoption by all.
- Read & Write Gold, Book Share, etc. are not readily being discussed by IS teachers. Teachers have been trained on these apps, procedure is needed for this information to be communicated to IEP students who would benefit whether or not student or parents ask specifically for it.

- As special ed students move from elementary to middle, middle to high school, and even within schools grade to grade, there is a lack of "onboarding" procedure about students' IEP goals and support needs.

District Response:

- This is the first year of the 1:1 Chromebook rollout at the high school, and we had a flawless rollout of over 2,000 Chromebooks.
- The District is currently exploring two student management systems (Google Classroom and Canvas). Canvas is used by colleges.
- The District is conducting a lot of staff development.
 - An Ed Tech specialist was hired this year, Ms. Holzweiss, who has been doing a lot of work with the teachers.
 - We created what is known as the TAC Center at the high school, where teachers teach teachers on new technology they are using.
 - Assistant Technology Specialist, Ms. Jay, also works with the teachers on the assistive technology available.
 - We have staff developers from BOCES come in to run workshops for the teachers.
- For specific technology requests, please have a conversation with the teacher of record and/or the school psychologist.