

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 10, 2019 Board of Education Meeting**

After an executive session and the Pledge of Allegiance, the regular monthly public meeting was called to order. The Board approved the minutes from the May 13, 2019 and May 21, 2019 meetings. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and approved.

#### *The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items:*

- Mr. Bonanno introduced H.B. Thompson Student Council representatives Dylan Wechsler and Emma Silverstein, who reported on student activities during the second half of the school year. Activities included Multicultural Week; the annual "SOUPer Bowl" food drive during which 600 pounds of food was collected and donated to Island Harvest; annual Cupcake Wars; a new event named "P.S. I Love You! Day" dedicated to spreading love and promoting mental wellness; Wellness Week; the 7<sup>th</sup> grade trip to the New York Hall of Science; the Drama Club's performance of Peter Pan; participation in the Metropolitan Model UN Conference and Long Island History Day competitions; the PTA-sponsored presentation of *From the Fires*, a play about the Holocaust; the 8<sup>th</sup> grade social at the North Ritz Club; and the annual talent show. The students also announced that 31 students represented HBT at the Nassau County Music Festival; nine HBT students were selected as this year's Nassau All-County Artists; 250 students participated in NYSSMA; a 7th grader was recognized with a national Award of Excellence by the National PTA Reflections program; the Science Olympiad team medaled in 14 events at a competition in early March; the Technology/Robotics Club made it to the finals in the FIRST Lego League's "Into Orbit" tournament; four HBT students scored in the top 5% of the nation on the latest AMC 8 mathematics competition; the Math Fair Team competed in the final round of the Al Kalfus Long Island Math Fair with all students earning medals and two students winning gold medals; 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> place at the Math By the Sea Competition; and 13 students traveled to Chicago to participate in the National History Bee, the National Geography Bee, the National Science Bee and the National Academic Bee.
- Ms. Maryanne Concessi introduced three Business Education teachers who provided an overview of recent accomplishments by the Virtual Enterprise students and the DECA club.
  - Business Education teacher Ms. Kathleen Goldin recapped the success of Virtual Enterprise team AstroDough, who created a business plan for an edible cookie dough company, at the Long Island University Business Plan Competition and the Long Island Virtual Enterprise Business Plan Championship. The students then competed in the world final in New York City at the MicroSoft headquarters where they won third place in the National Business Plan competition. AstroDough is currently the number one Virtual Enterprise international team in New York State. On behalf of the students, Ms. Goldin thanked the Board, Administration and the 15 alumni who mentored the students on their business plan.
  - Business Education teachers Mr. Glen Baumann and Ms. Danielle Garrison shared the 2018-2019 DECA Club award winners. The DECA club had 180 members this year, with 92 State

competition qualifiers and 34 qualifiers for ICDC, the international competition held in Orlando, where they competed against over 22,000 students. The club had 11 finalists and out of the 559 New York State competitors, Syosset student Jake Greenberg was the only one to place in the top three.

- Dr. Rogers commented that in the short three years since Syosset started its Virtual Enterprise program, the District has had two top three finishers in the national competition. He commended the Virtual Enterprise and DECA students, and the entire Business Department on their hard work and success.
- Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation Drew Cronin highlighted the successes of Syosset High School's spring athletic season. Teams and individual athletes honored included the following:
  - Varsity boys golf team: Nassau County Champions, LI Champions.
  - Varsity boys tennis team: Three All State honorees including Kabir Rajpal, Peter Bukary, and Brian Gao. Kabir received All American honors and won the Nassau County Section VIII Individual tournament.
  - Varsity boys track: Justin DePinto named 1600m County Champion, Hunter Pick named 800m County Champion.
  - Varsity girls golf: Malini Rudra named Nassau County Champion, State Qualifier (finished in the top 10).
  - Varsity girls track: Anna Hatzioannou named Nassau County Individual Champion in Pole Vault and qualified for the New York City championship where she jumped 9'6", the 5<sup>th</sup> highest jump in the school's history.
  - Kendall Halperin: a three-sport athlete (soccer, basketball, lacrosse) who attained All American and All County status.
  - Track coach Rich Cafiero was named New York State Coach of the Year.
- Dr. Rogers read an email from a parent commending the dedication and work ethic of the Syosset coaches and remarked on the strong character of the Syosset athletes.
- A progress report was provided by Deputy Superintendent Ms. Bovard and the Secondary Work Group. The group of 6-12 teachers and administrators has been working on three topics the Board asked the Administration to focus on, including volume of homework, the testing calendar and scheduling of high school parent teacher conferences. The goal is to design a process that is responsive to students and allows them to take agency of their learning through managing their homework and test schedule in the most effective manner.
  - Status of the volume of homework investigation:
    - The Work Group considered national research and engaged faculty on the topic of quality homework. The academic purpose of homework was defined and the relationship between the amount of time students spend on homework and the quality of the learning experience was examined. Student feedback was taken into consideration as well. The Group believes completion of homework should demonstrate competence and allow students to show pride in their work and make connections to content. A homework map was created identifying the goals of

homework completion and how they support students' learning. The next step is to further engage teachers in the discussion.

- Status of the testing calendar work:
  - The social emotional wellbeing of students is a focus for the District. To minimize conflicts that lead to unnecessary student stress, a testing calendar will be implemented schoolwide in the secondary schools to manage the number of tests on any given day. No tests will be administered on the day after a holiday break to allow all students time to spend with family.
- Status of the improving the scheduling process for parent-teacher conferences:
  - This has been a challenge due to the number of time slots required at the high school level. Two three-hour nights contain 72 x 5-minute times slots, however, most teachers have caseloads of well over 100 students. Thus, software alone cannot solve improve the scheduling challenge, thus additional work is ongoing.
- Ms. Bovard provided an overview of “restorative practices” being developed as a disciplinary tool in Syosset. Ms. Bovard is a member of the NYS Bar Association’s workgroup formed to make recommendations to the State Legislature on changes to statute that would incorporate “restorative justice” practices in schools. The intention of this approach to discipline is for students to learn from their mistakes as well as rectify whatever harm may have been done. Ms. Bovard reviewed the principals of restorative practice and touched on the following points:
  - Discipline should be viewed as an opportunity for social emotional growth, accountability and behavioral change.
  - At the elementary level, the Sanford Harmony social emotional curriculum recently implemented in Syosset supports restorative practices and student reflection on the effects of their actions.
  - At the middle school level, the Advisory program has been implemented based on restorative circles where conversation is encouraged, and restorative questions are used during conflict.
  - The high school is implementing the Advisory concept for ninth-grade students and looking at an in-school assignment suspension as an alternative to a typical out-of-school suspension. The student would be required to complete a reflection on what occurred, how their actions made others feel, and how they can resolve the situation to repair the harm. The reflection is completed with involvement of appropriate support staff.

Dr. Rogers commented that the worst behaviors will still result in more severe sanctions, on balance, the time we have with students in the most effective means we have to teach them. This restorative approach will provide another tool to enable the District to provide help to students grow without avoiding accountability for their mistakes.

- Dr. Rogers mentioned he and a school attorney attended a Nassau County IDA meeting regarding an extension of a PILOT program application for a local business. Although they outlined the reasons for the District’s opposition to the application, the PILOT extension was approved, essentially providing the applicant with a subsidy underwritten by Syosset property taxpayers. The District is drafting a follow up letter to the IDA outlining its concerns on all PILOT extensions, as requested by the Board.

- Dr. Rogers announced the installation of live-streaming equipment will take place in July, after which monthly public Board of Education meetings will be live-streamed by the District. More information on how to access the livestream is forthcoming.
- Dr. Rogers reported the District has encountered delays with three of the capital construction projects scheduled to begin this summer.
  - The lowest classroom and secondary auditorium air conditioning bids were nevertheless significantly higher in cost than estimated (based on bids awarded last summer) and therefore the District is not recommending the bids be awarded. This will delay the implementation of the air conditioning project into the new school year.
  - There has been an ongoing delay in State approval of the plans for the new fitness center.
  - The District was informed by National Grid that there is a moratorium on any new gas installations due to the failure to get a pipeline project approved, which will impact the plan to install natural gas service to Walt Whitman while the water service to the building is being updated and the parking lot is being repaved.

Dr. Rogers introduced two representatives from the District's architect and engineering firm, H2M, who provided more information on the delays and alternatives for the District to consider. A representative from Park East Construction, the District's construction management firm, was also in attendance.

- The H2M representatives explained cost estimates for air conditioning were based on bids from summer of 2018 for similar work. The bids are coming in much higher now due to shortage of electrical and mechanical manpower in the local area. Therefore, the recommendation is to install a single larger unit in each classroom that would require less manpower to install as opposed to the multiple smaller units as originally planned. The job would have to be re-bid and the work would begin in the fall rather than over the summer. Work would be done during an evening shift and the construction timeline extended to avoid overtime charges.
  - A Trustee asked if the larger equipment was as efficient as the smaller units originally planned.
    - The H2M representative confirmed the single larger condenser would provide similar efficiency with as the two smaller condensers.
  - Board President Ms. Tracy Frankel asked the representative to clarify the difference in quality from the original plan.
    - The representative stated the temperature will be the same and the new plan is just a different approach to the design.
  - A Trustee asked if the operating cost of the larger units is the same or higher than the smaller units and asked about the timing of completion of the project.
    - The representative stated there is no cost difference to maintain the larger units and stated all schools should be complete by end of summer 2020 as originally planned, depending on the timing of approval of permits from the State.
  - A Trustee asked if the schools to be completed in the summer of 2020 will be redesigned in the same manner and the schools to be started in the fall of 2019.

- The representative confirmed that most likely all schools will be designed in the same manner.
    - Board President Ms. Tracy Frankel asked if there would be savings from the original plan if it was put out to bid in the fall as opposed to the summer, and if it was possible to negotiate with any of the bidders.
      - The representative stated there would be savings by bidding the job in the fall but not to the extent of redesigning the plan to use the larger units.
      - The Park East representative explained it is only permissible to negotiate with the lowest bidder and attempts to negotiate have not been successful. He stated that they work with several dozen local districts and all are facing the same issues related to mechanical labor costs.
    - A Trustee asked if the redesign of the plan needs SED approval.
      - The representative confirmed that it does not as approval is based on fresh air requirements and the design intent, which is remaining the same for the new plan. The actual equipment specified is not subject to SED approval.
    - The Board gave direction to bid out the redesign.
      - Dr. Rogers stated the District will proceed as quickly as possible and noted air conditioning will not be in place in every classroom by the fall.
- The H2M representative then gave an update on the fitness center project, which was met with a delay as a result of the approval process. Although the accelerated third-party review process resulted in preliminary approval of the plans, the State Education Department delayed final approval and requested redesigns related to egress and fire hydrant placement. Although full approval is expected by the end of month, the delays have foreclosed the opportunity to bid this work to start in July. H2M would like to seek pricing for two different options: completion of the fitness center foundation work by August, as well as an extended timeline if the price is too high for the first option.
  - Board President Tracy Frankel asked if the District was being charged for the redesign of the plans.
    - H2M confirmed the District is not charged for the redesigned plans.
  - A Trustee asked why the original design was not approved by the SED.
    - The representative explained the code is open to interpretation and similar designs have been approved in the past. Moreover, the third-party reviewer did approve the plans in March 2019, however, the State reviewer asked for the additional changes.
  - A Trustee asked if there is a reasonable expectation that new design will be approved.
    - The representative stated redesigned plans have already received a preliminary approval and no additional issues are expected.
  - A Trustee asked if a communication will go out to community regarding the new timeline of the project.
    - Dr. Rogers confirmed that the community will be informed.
  - The Board gave the District direction to proceed with the redesign and Dr. Rogers stated every effort will be made to have the foundation work done prior to start of school.

- Regarding the installation of a natural gas line at Walt Whitman, Dr. Rogers asked H2M for some additional options to consider for a natural gas hookup since National Grid is not approving any gas service installations or expansions to existing service at this time.
  - The H2M representative stated that consideration was given to running a gas service line from an existing line on Jericho Turnpike (to avoid repaving the parking lot) but due to the moratorium, National Grid will not confirm if that supply line can accommodate the school building.
  - Another option under consideration is for the District to run its own gas line under the parking lot while the lot is torn up for the repaving project. The line would have to be capped, then uncapped when the moratorium is lifted. This option avoids the need to rip up the new paving for National Grid to install the gas line once the moratorium is lifted but comes at a cost of approximately \$75k.
  - The H2M representative noted the plan to remove the fuel oil tank this summer cannot proceed without the installation of the gas line and recommended some additional testing and monitoring for the tank at a cost of approximately \$10-15k.
    - Board President Tracy Frankel inquired about the timeframe for the moratorium from National Grid. The representative replied that there will be an update in 30-60 days.
    - Since a decision is not required in the next 30 days and it would be beneficial to wait for more information from National Grid, a decision will be made regarding the pipe at the July Board meeting. Since the oil tank cannot be removed this summer, it was decided to proceed with the additional testing and monitoring of the oil tank.

#### *Audience to the public*

- A resident inquired on possibility of the dedication of the football field on behalf of former Syosset student Joseph Mario Reali.
  - Board President Ms. Frankel explained the next step is for the Board to set a policy committee meeting to develop a process for how requests for dedications will be considered.
- A resident commended the homework research and restorative practice work the District is conducting in support of social emotional health. The resident advocated for ample time for leisure reading and creative writing in the curriculum as well as poetry in the classroom and the creation of learning communities at the secondary level. The resident expressed concern that it is difficult to locate counselor contact information on the District website and stated it would be helpful to include pictures of staff members. The resident expressed support for the co-teaching model expansion and the addition of a behavioral specialist at the elementary level, though she expressed concern that the position was allocated to all elementary schools.

#### *New Business*

Various resolutions were approved relating to staff appointments, transfers, reassignments, resignations, retirements, leaves of absence and a settlement agreement.

The Board approved a number of resolutions related to the management of the District, including committee meeting minutes, policies, appointment of individuals to serve as Volunteer Judges for Forensics events, the appointment of a Board of Registration member for the 2019-20 school year, the establishment of a Districtwide Safety Team and the certification of the May 21 budget vote and trustee election results.

The Board approved a number of resolutions related to financial operations of the District, including authorization for contracts, award of bids, cooperative bidding, the issuance of Tax Anticipation Notes, limits to the allotment of reserve funds, the disposal of obsolete equipment and books and the acceptance of a donation.

*Next Meeting*

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Tuesday, July 2, 2019 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.