

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](#).

August 13, 2018 Board of Education Regular 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 July 10 meeting. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and approved.

The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items

- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas Rogers welcomed the cast of this year's Summer Stock who performed songs from their August 9 and 10 productions of "The Greatest Showtunes." After the performance, cast members introduced themselves to the Board and audience members.
- Dr. Rogers provided an update on kindergarten enrollment for the 2018-19 school year, which is currently at 362 students. This number represents a slight decline from previous years, which was 409 for the 2017-18 school year and 416 for the 2016-17 school year. Although there is typically a small flurry of enrollment activity just prior to the first day of school, it is likely the enrollment will remain slightly below previous years. Dr. Rogers reported there are a couple of classes that are being watched for a possible split, depending on the final level of enrollment.
- Dr. Rufo provided an update on the tax levy calculation. During the budget vote in the spring, the calculation is an estimated number. Dr. Rufo confirmed the tax levy is the same value as that estimated and communicated during the budget vote.
- The District received a request by the Town of Oyster Bay to reduce bus traffic and parent parking on Renee Road. Dr. Rogers reported that the District already reduced bus traffic several years ago on this road, and will continue to investigate ways to try and reduce it further. However, our research revealed that other districts are also using Renee Road when their routes transit Syosset. We will reach out to the other districts to encourage them to also make efforts to reduce bus traffic on this road.
- The District received some comments on the District-Wide School Safety Plan, and some of the feedback has been incorporated into the plan which was presented to the Board for adoption at the meeting.
- Dr. Rogers reported that a meeting of the Citizen's Security Advisory Committee was held on August 6. The Committee reviewed best practices in school security and the progress made by the District this summer regarding security enhancements.
- Dr. Rogers reported a back to school community newsletter has been added to the schedule this year which will outline new security procedures put in place for the upcoming school year, such as student IDs for high school students, the visitor management system and security vestibules.
- As a follow-up on the Board's request to research the implications of utilizing metal detectors at school buildings, Dr. Rogers reported the research continues, but it has been challenging to accommodate the physical requirement of the metal detectors within the space limitations of

the District's buildings and the District continues to work with the architects to explore alternatives.

- Dr. Rogers provided an update on the environmental testing being executed at South Grove Elementary School, which includes soil testing, Volatile Vapor Intrusion (or VVI, which measures interior air quality), and ground water testing. The test results have come back negative on both the soil and air quality testing, which indicates there is no cause for concern. The drill has had difficulty achieving the depths needed to sample ground water in order to complete the last phase of testing. Therefore, the full report is not yet available. The District is working with the environmental engineering company on a new protocol with a bigger drill to complete the testing. Dr. Rogers also advised the Board that the cost difference of drilling a permanent well vs. a temporary well is negligible, therefore to facilitate future testing of ground water, the District recommends drilling a permanent well.
- Dr. Rogers provided an update on the District's progress related to preparing its comments in response to the Syosset Park DEIS. The District is moving quickly on the comments and will have them complete by the August 31 deadline.
- Dr. Rogers announced there will be a special Board of Education meeting on August 28, during which the environmental testing company, JC Broderick, will present the test results from South Grove and the environmental engineering company, Walden Environmental Engineering, will be present to discuss their assessment of the environmental and health implications of the Syosset Park DEIS.
- Dr. Rogers provided an update on the status of the Phase 1 construction projects that are in-progress over the summer, as well as the planning taking place for the Phase 2 work to be done in the summer of 2019. The District has been working with the security consultant as well as the Nassau County Office of Homeland Security, who has assigned an Officer to conduct campus evaluations and make recommendations. Based on the recommendations provided, some of the Phase 2 construction projects have been amended to order to accommodate security recommendations. Public meetings will take place in early September to outline the updated construction plans for the community.
- In response to a question, Dr. Rogers clarified the difference between a school resource officer (SRO) and school armed guards. A school resource officer is an active-duty police officer that is assigned to a school full-time, whereas an armed security officer is not a sworn police officer.
- Dr. Rogers followed-up on a request by the Board to research the structure of Audience to the Public in other districts' board meetings. While the District's research showed that some local districts have more than one Audience to the Public session, Syosset's practice of holding one Audience to the Public appears typical among the districts surveyed. The placement of the Audience to the Public in the meeting also varies according to district, however holding the session in the middle of the meeting is also common. Many districts place time limits on speakers and on the overall time allotted to Audience to the Public.

Ms. Frankel asked if the back to school newsletter will be delivered prior to the August 28 Board meeting. Dr. Rogers confirmed that the District is working to meet that deadline and it is expected to be delivered before the meeting.

Dr. Cohen asked that the newsletter notice the special Board meeting on the Syosset Park DEIS for August 28th. He also asked Dr. Rogers to clarify the agenda for the August 28 special Board meeting. Dr. Rogers replied that the District will review its comments to the Town in response to the Syosset Park DEIS, and he explained what is involved in that process. The District has prepared comments for items within the DEIS that are within its area of expertise and contracted with an environmental engineering firm (Walden) to evaluate areas for which we do not have expertise. Dr. Rogers and Walden will jointly present their findings for the Board's consideration at the meeting on the 28th. JC Broderick will also be present to review the results from the soil, air and water testing done at South Grove and answer any questions.

Dr. Cohen asked if the public will have access to the District's comments in response to the DEIS to review prior to the August 28 Board meeting. Dr. Rogers replied that he will speak with the school's attorney to determine what is required by the SEQRA process that governs the comment period.

Mr. DiFilippo commented there is an effort underway in the Town of Oyster Bay to create a committee to oversee independent testing, and since various community civic associations have been asked to submit representatives, he inquired if the District intends to play a role. Dr. Rogers replied that the District has not been invited into this process by the Town and has no germane expertise on staff. Currently, the District is focused on the first of two upcoming deadlines: the August 31 deadline for comments on the DEIS (as accepted by the Town on March 27). The District may also submit remarks on the independent testing prior to the Town's January 31 deadline. The District's contract with Walden Environmental Engineering permits the District to extend their work to include evaluating any new test results, in order to aid the District in making comments for the January submission.

Ms. Parker asked if the Board will immediately enter into an Executive Session on August 28th or will there be a public meeting. Dr. Rogers confirmed that the agenda items he outlined would be presented in a public session.

Audience to the Public

A resident inquired if, while researching the structure of other districts' Board of Education meetings, it was determined if videotaping and/or live streaming of the meetings is typical. Dr. Rogers responded that this wasn't part of the scope of research. The resident commented this is something that would be helpful for community and requested the District investigate it.

A resident inquired about the timeline for determining if classes will need to be split due to enrollment and stated a concern about enrollment increasing at the end of the summer due to home sale closures at the end of the month. Dr. Cohen replied that in last few years, the Administration has been very proactive in splitting classes if necessary to avoid having to make changes once school has begun. Dr. Rogers explained that the District tracks open residency applications, even if the home sale hasn't closed yet, so potential students are identified. Statistical analysis is also completed based on housing data from sources such as Zillow. Based on the enrollment information available and the statistical analysis, the District determines the likelihood a class may need to split. If the data indicates a good chance a class may require a split, the District will proactively split it so that a change doesn't have to be made after school starts.

Discussion Items

Dr. Rogers asked the Board for direction on requests for providing transportation for the rowing club in response to a request from residents and canvassing for a coach to establish a fencing team as a result of an interested group of students submitting a viable request through the District's new team protocol.

Ms. Cheng inquired if the students with an interest in fencing are all high school students. Dr. Rogers replied that he will respond at a later time. Ms. Cheng inquired how many coaches would be needed for a fencing team since there are three different weapons used. Dr. Rogers replied that the plan would be to hire one coach for all weapons, much like the gymnastics coach who teaches multiple disciplines.

Ms. Parker inquired if fencing would be a club or a team and if it would be possible to combine the team with another district. Dr. Rogers replied that students request was varsity status and that he had already approached other districts about forming joint teams, but was politely turned down.

Mr. Feldman inquired if fencing could be a club if we cannot find a suitable coach. Dr. Rogers replied that it is certainly possible, and this route would allow for gauging interest prior to establishing a team.

Dr. Cohen inquired if fencing is not a varsity sport, would it be possible to make it co-ed. Dr. Rogers replied that he will research that issue.

Mr. DiFilippo expressed a concern regarding providing transportation for the rowing club related to the students in the club who are not Syosset District students. Mr. DiFilippo also asked Dr. Rogers if he felt interest in the fencing team or club would continue in future years. Dr. Rogers replied that the Jericho and Cold Spring Harbor Districts are able to sustain interest in the sport. Mr. DiFilippo also inquired about the location for fencing. Dr. Rogers replied that Mr. Cronin investigated locations and determined the high school cafeteria would suffice since fencing is a sport that does not require a location with high ceilings.

Dr. Cohen asked to confirm that only Syosset students would be transported from the rowing team, since non-residents on the team would present a liability issue. Dr. Rogers confirmed that only Syosset students would be transported, and the District would ensure this measure was enforced.

The Board gave Dr. Rogers direction to move ahead with investigating transportation for the rowing team and canvassing for a coach for a Fencing club or team.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved relating to: appointments of staff and coaching positions, approval of leaves of absence; committee minutes and recommendations; approval of mentor-intern coordinator stipends; adoption of policies; acceptance of service contracts; awarding of cooperative bids under the school facilities purchasing consortium; acceptance of a donation; award of a bid for security guards; and authorization to participate in a joint municipal cooperative bidding program.
- The Board approved the appointment of Mr. Jemal Graham as Assistant Principal of H.B. Thompson Middle School and welcomed him to the District.

- The Board adopted the District-Wide School Safety Plan.
- The Board officially established the school and library tax levies for the 2017-18 school year.

Next Meeting

- There will be a special Board of Education meeting on Tuesday, August 28, 2018 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.
- The next monthly meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, Sept. 17, 2018 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.