

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 14, 2017 Board of Education Regular Meeting**

After an executive session, the regular monthly public meeting was called to order. The Board approved the minutes from the July 5 meeting. Prior to approving the minutes, Trustee Christopher Di Filippo asked that the minutes be amended to reflect his recommendation that the District consider a “risk mitigation plan” to address possible cases of illegal registration and subsequent enrollment of non-resident students. 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 production, “Willy Wonka Jr.” They performed songs from their August 10 and 11 shows. Cast members also had the opportunity to introduce themselves to the Board and others in attendance.
- Coordinator for Educational Services Peggy Grosso updated the Board on the work of the Nutrition Advisory committee, which has resulted in heightened student awareness of food service offerings, the creation of a healthy snack cart and the evolution of the high school breakfast cart. In addition, the district has implemented tastings of the month and is considering more multicultural food offerings at the middle school (at the request of students). Secondary student representatives have met periodically with the committee and food service representatives to provide significant input that has resulted in these measures and the expansion of fruits and vegetables and other healthy food options, as well as procedure improvements to the overall service.
- Dr. Rogers updated the community on the major facilities projects taking place over the summer, including roof and floor replacement projects at both Baylis and Berry Hill elementary schools. The Baylis roof/flooring project was completed at approximately \$13,000 under budget, however the Berry Hill floor work is about \$13,000 over budget and it was determined that additional reinforcement to the roof of the portable classrooms is necessary. Additionally, a second access is being created at Walt Whitman Elementary School and, in accordance with State Education Department regulations, the use of a temporary heating system may be required in the event the new furnace is not operational by September 15.
- Reporting on recent curriculum writing, Dr. Rogers noted that an eighth-grade math curriculum has been created and changes have been made to the elementary curriculum to better align World Languages with the multisensory phonics, spelling and handwriting “Foundations” program at the kindergarten level.
- Following up a letter to State Education Department Commissioner MaryEllen Elia signed by the Board of Education, Dr. Rogers gave a presentation regarding concerns about the State Geometry exam. Dr. Rogers made the following points:

- Despite the Geometry exam's flaws and overall difficulty, Syosset's Geometry scores have been going up, particularly at the Mastery level, with 42% achieving mastery (Level 5) – an increase of 3.7% from last year.
- Three flawed questions have already been acknowledged by SED (for which students were awarded credit);
- District research points to an additional flawed question (#11).
- The confusing nature of these questions may have negatively affected student performance in other areas of the exam, but cannot be quantified;
- Board members asked Dr. Rogers to explain the impact of the exam on student GPAs, final course grades and diploma acquisition. He replied that any student in geometry would have already passed the Algebra exam and this would still be eligible for a Regents diploma. However, they would be required to pass the Geometry exam in order to earn an Advanced Regents diploma. Dr. Rogers said that despite the difficulty of the exam, Syosset's failure rate dropped from 5.8% last year to 5.3% this year.

#### *Audience to the Public*

- Multiple residents echoed some of the concerns expressed by Board members over how flaws in the Geometry exam would impact a student's final grade. One resident was concerned that a failed exam would be used to calculate a student GPA even after the student passed the test on a later attempt. Dr. Rogers indicated that he would research this matter. One resident also suggested taking the approach of only counting the exam if it improved a student's GPA or adopting the New York City Department of Education policy of not using Regents exams to calculate final grades. Dr. Rogers replied that his understanding of the philosophy behind Syosset's longstanding use of summative exams has been to help students retain the entire course curriculum, rather than treat each unit as a stand-alone class.
- Some residents asked about District registration practices and shared their concerns over non-residents enrolling in Syosset schools and asked the Board to consider incorporating more frequent (annual) residency verification procedures. Dr. Rogers referred the residents to the district website, where the presentation of district residency verification procedures that was given at the July Board meeting is posted. President Dr. Michael Cohen reiterated the Board's direction from July to explore more proactive procedures that comport with law. Trustee Di Filippo reiterated his support for such measures and said he will advocate for them in future policy committee meetings.

#### *Discussion Items*

- Dr. Rogers said he is coordinating with the director of Mercy First to attend their next standing meeting with the Nassau County Police to discuss concerns expressed by residents, including the Village Elementary School PTA, regarding disruptive behavior in the neighborhood by some students of the facility. The Board also plans to meet with the Village PTA to discuss how the district can address the matter.

### *New Business*

- Various resolutions were approved relating to: appointments of staff and coaching positions; committee minutes and recommendations; policy amendments, acceptance of service contracts; awarding of cooperative bids under the school districts purchasing consortium; and the allocation of contingent funds to rent a temporary heating system for Walt Whitman Elementary School (if needed) and change orders associated with roof and flooring projects at Baylis and Berry Hill elementary schools, all of which were discussed earlier in the meeting.
- The Board approved the Annual Professional Performance Review plan for the 2017-18 school year.
- The Board officially established the school and library tax levies for the 2017-18 school year.

### *Next Meeting*

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, September 18, 2017 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.