

On November 15, 2022, the Communications Conference Committee met in the District's board room to discuss various topics with district administrators.

Below is a summary of the question and answer session in the following order:

1. Elementary school report cards
2. Holiday celebrations
3. Overcrowding of schools
4. High School start time
5. College admissions process
6. Mercy First
7. SEPTA

1. Elementary School Report Cards

During the district-wide committee-based process of restructuring the elementary report card 6 years ago, an extensive list of teacher-created comments was created and included. These "dropdown" comment options supported communication with families about student progress directly related to each of the report card standards.

Teachers are required to comment on any report card indicator where a student has received a designation of an "N" (Not Yet). Principals do encourage elementary teachers to take full advantage of describing the indicator rating given, by making use of the list of the various drop-down comment options.

The first set of report cards are released after the first round of parent-teacher conferences. This allows the conference to be a holistic discussion of student work and progress, rather than a conversation focused on individual grades, giving teachers the chance to discuss progress with parents ahead of the first grading period prior to receiving the actual report card itself.

Report Cards:

Teachers analyze and assess evidence of student learning for each standard indicator in each content area, and then assign a designation of either:

N (Not Yet) meaning there is **no evidence YET** of the student demonstrating any understanding/learning of the report card standard indicator.

P (Progressing) meaning there is evidence of the student demonstrating understanding/learning of the report card standard indicator. The student is progressing toward mastery of the standard and continues to require support in achieving the standard.

C (Consistent) meaning that there is evidence of consistent independent understanding/learning of the report card standard indicator.

Parent Report Card Guidance Documents (insert links):

- [Kindergarten](#)
- [Grade 1](#)
- [Grade 2](#)
- [Grade 3](#)
- [Grade 4](#)
- [Grade 5](#)
- [The Arts](#)

2. Holiday celebrations

What holidays are being celebrated in elementary schools?

The Syosset Council of PTA president and the PTA Cultural Unity Committee have worked with the elementary building principals to identify consistent observed days of celebration across all seven elementary schools. The goal of this work is to create guidelines for the format, extent, manner, and various components of the in-school celebrated holiday and recognition celebrations, to be certain to address and include the wonderful diversity and equity of our school communities, cultures, and traditions.

When are parents permitted into the building to join the celebrations?

Parents are an important part of the joyful occasions and celebrations happening across the seven elementary schools. We are working closely with our PTAs to eliminate any discrepancies between individual schools and are striving to involve parents to the greatest extent possible.

3. Overcrowding of schools

How often are residency checks completed to ensure students who do not live in the district are not attending our schools?

The Board of Education Residency Reverification Policy requires all Syosset School District families to participate in the reverification of residency when they have a student in either grade 5 or 8. If a family has multiple students, at various grade levels, it is not necessary to repeat the residency reverification process if families have completed the process within the past 12 months. The reverification process requires families to present three important residency

documents: a mortgage document or current lease, a current utility bill, a valid driver's license or NYS issued identification with address. If a student is living in the district with a non-parental relative, these three documents are still needed, plus an additional signed affidavit of guardianship. The Residency Office is available and happy to assist with any and all details regarding residency and the reverification process. School officials are constantly working to monitor and confirm that all students who attend our schools are Syosset School District residents. Families that establish residency through impermanent means, like a one-year lease, must submit updated documents upon the expiration of the ones used initially.

Does the District have plans to address school space constraints?

The District is constantly monitoring school instructional and facilities spaces. The District also conducts enrollment studies and projection analyses as needed to prepare for future changes to enrollment patterns. The District is currently studying enrollment and reviewing building capacity with an outside consulting firm to determine both short-term and long-term space needs.

How does the district determine when a school footprint needs expansion? What is the process to select a school for expansion and if selected what is the process to complete the work?

The analysis of building occupancy and the possibility of expanding the building footprint begins with an enrollment projection study for the individual building as well as for the overall district. If long-term enrollment projections signal the need for additional instructional space, the district will work towards addressing the facilities needed to accommodate the additional enrollment.

The process would involve architectural drawings of potential new space, public engagement in discussing a facilities program, and ultimately a public vote to borrow the funds needed to build.

How do you define when a school is considered overcrowded or at its maximum capacity?

Maximum capacity for school instructional and non-instructional spaces is determined by taking into consideration the square footage of the various rooms, the maximum allowable occupancy, and where appropriate, established district class size guidelines.

What is the maximum class size at the elementary, secondary, and high school levels?

- The Board of Education has set class size maximums:
- 25 students for grades K-3
 - 27 for grades 4 through 5
 - 30 for grades 6 through 12

How can enrollment be evened out across elementary schools?

Enrollment analysis is done on a school-by-school basis. Enrollment tends to be cyclical, thus efforts made during one part of the cycle tend to be counterproductive in another. Thus, changes to feeder patterns make sense in the context of sustained trends, rather than cyclical peaks and valleys.

Can children have outdoor recess in the winter?

The administration is reviewing the possibility of using permission slips to allow students, properly dressed for the weather, to participate in outdoor recess on days where the temperature falls below 32 degrees.

4. High School Start Time

Most District buses are tightly scheduled doing high school pickups and dropoffs, followed immediately by middle school pickups/dropoffs, and then elementary pickups/dropoffs. Thus, any change to the start time for the High School would impact every school in the District. We are working closely with a school transportation efficiency consultant to determine various options and scenarios for making any changes to the school start times. The District presented [several options at the Board of Education meeting in December](#), and is in the process of refining those options in order to take public comment.

5. College Admissions Process

How can parent and student access to current Guidance and College Admission Programs be made more accessible and improved?

As part of our webpage redesign process, the Guidance Department is streamlining the current Guidance Website resources making it easier for students and parents to access important resources, such as timelines, checklists and archived videos. The Department will also increase communication with families to ensure they receive more timely email reminders for important registration deadlines for ACT/SAT.

6. Mercy First

Are there any updates about Mercy First and how Syosset School District is working with them and local authorities to ensure Syosset students are safe?

The District remains in close contact with leaders at Mercy First. In response to the incident in Syosset Village, Mercy First announced on June 10th it would be closing their Residential Foster program. There has been no additional update since then.

7. SEPTA

Can we create CPSE/CSE meetings that include the parents' input?

We are firm believers that parents should be active members in their child's education. PPS strives to make sure parents know their voices are important at the start of each meeting. We believe it's critical for parents to have opportunities to make sure they can make comments and ask questions. The goal is that we are in agreement or able to reach compromise at these meetings.

Can ICT be rolled out in all grades?

ICT (integrated co-teaching) is a special education program that is dependent upon recommendations as well as needs of particular cohorts of students. In addition, we want to ensure that student needs are met through direct instruction, particularly at the lower levels, as this is the time we want to support skill development for students, particularly in the area of reading, writing and math. Programs are based on CSE recommendations.

Would we consider expanding the reading intervention options for children who struggle in that area?

We currently have many programmatic options for students, including educators within each school trained to provide these programs. Our current programs include Passport Journeys, LLI, Wilson (Foundations, Just Words), Orton Gillingham, and Lindamood Bell programs. We will continue to train our teachers to maximize the number of teachers in each building with specific certifications and training. As new programs are identified, we will go through a similar process of incremental training of our staff.

How can we get ASL added to the middle school curriculum?

The secondary (grades 6-12) World Language program begins when middle school language learners select among Chinese, French, Italian, Korean or Spanish as their choice. ASL, Latin, Japanese & Russian are taught as high school elective classes, giving students even more options for multiple language study. Periodically, the district engages in a process to review the offerings. This process resulted in Chinese being added in 2018 and Korean in 2022. Factors considered for determining the addition of new languages to the existing program include: student and family interest, staffing, enrollment numbers, and course scheduling.

What opportunities are there for social skills development at the elementary, middle and high school level? How can this be improved to include time during lunch/recess?

Our students have many opportunities to build their social skills at all levels. In our elementary schools, students receive instruction relating to social emotional learning through our Harmony curriculum resource. Our Social Workers, at both

the elementary and middle level, have collaborated to develop lessons that explicitly teach students social skills, such as perseverance and navigating conflicts with others. In addition to these curricular components, students also have opportunities to develop their social skills in extracurricular activities. At the elementary level, students can participate in clubs during recess, as well as other structured recess activities. There are also various extracurricular activities (i.e. clubs and sports) in both middle school and high school.

What steps can be taken to ensure that all the children in special classes are given the same opportunities to progress academically and socially?

There is an ongoing collaboration between the special education staff and general education staff. Our special education teachers take part in all staff curriculum training, in addition to their more specialized training for programs needed based on individual student needs. We continue to take inventory of opportunities for mainstreaming students. This already occurs within specials, lunch, and recess for all students. When appropriate, we seek out additional opportunities for students to thrive in their least restrictive environment.

Why is the special class extremely small in numbers?

All recommendations for special education programs are determined by the Committee on Special Education. Our current class structure ratio allows for a maximum of 12 students. Our current class sizes range from 6 students to 10 students.

Are there any legal specifications where services such as speech, OT, and PT can be or cannot be provided (e.g. private classroom, hallway, multi use room)?

No law exists that designates the location where services are required to take place. However, on each student's IEP, school locations where services will be provided are specified. The District reviews each such space to ensure that it is appropriate for the services being provided, safe, and private.