

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 they are approved by the board members 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](#).

October 26, 2015 Board of Education Meeting

After an executive session, the meeting was called to order and the minutes from board meetings held on September 21, 2015, September 24, 2015 and October 14, 2015 were approved.

The Superintendent's Monthly Report and Other Items

- Syosset High School Student Government representative Josh Thomas updated the board and community on recent student extracurricular activities at the high school including the student-run carnival that raised approximately \$18,000 for student activities.
- The school district's independent external auditor gave a report on the district financial statements for the 2014-2015 school year in which he found there to be no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in the district's fiscal controls. All of the financial statements reviewed were in compliance with General Accounting Standards.
- PTA Council President Stephanie Avidon and PTA officers provided each board member with a gift for School Board Recognition Week, thanking them for their service and dedication to the students of Syosset. Board members thanked the Council for its work and support.
- Director of Athletics, Physical Education and Recreation Drew Cronin provided an overview of "return to play" medical procedures for students who are believed to have suffered a concussion, including a five-step protocol and the roles of the coaches, trainers and nurses in communicating with physicians and affected students.
- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas Rogers indicated that the district will file a waiver application for the development of a new APPR (educator evaluation) plan in order to preserve an increase in state aid. He reiterated that this is not due to a failure to agree on a new plan but rather because the State has not released a tool necessary to develop a final plan.
- Dr. Rogers announced that Syosset High School student Kylie Marlow was named a News 12 Scholar Athlete, and that students Sarah Lee and Kunal Shah were named regional finalists in the Siemens Competition for Math, Science and Technology.

Board Members' Reports

NYSSBA Update: Board of Education members reported on their activities at the recent New York State School Boards Association conference including:

- Productive workshops attended by board members including a session with the new State Education Department Commissioner in which changes to Common Core implementation and testing were discussed.
- The annual NYSSBA business meeting, where 16 resolutions were approved as position statements to lobby lawmakers for various legislation. A few approved resolutions of interest were cited, including an overhaul of the current system of standardized testing, granting public school districts the same exemptions as charter schools and permitting the development of voting wards.
- A trustee also shared information on a U.S. Army sponsored NYSSBA workshop regarding STEM careers and educational opportunities. The workshop detailed some of the ways the Army helps students with their education, including online support with SAT and ACT performance.

Athletic Committee Update: a board trustee reported on the last meeting, where several questions were addressed including the permissibility of accepting gifts for facility improvements. He indicated that while the health and safety facility improvements take precedence, the Board is committed to continuously improving district athletic.

Audience to the Public

- A parent inquired about the possibility of online signup for parent conferences at the high school, a practice that will be implemented in the middle school this spring. Deputy Superintendent of Schools Dr. Jeffrey Streitman indicated the district is currently working to address a restriction with the high school software in order to allow this in the future.
- A parent commended the district on its services to students with special needs, stating her gratitude for the support she received with her own children. She also expressed concerns over the environmental impact of the Syosset landfill, the potential for residential development on the former Cerro Wire property, and the effects these sites have on water and air quality at South Grove Elementary School. The board thanked her for her support and said the district is monitoring these issues, reiterating the importance of student safety. Dr. Rogers indicated air monitors are in place at South Grove ES (with no reported concerns to date) while the Jericho water district tests wells quarterly and results are made available. He also informed her of the extensive Town review and State Environmental Quality Review Act procedures for development of sites such as the former Cerro Wire property.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved including appointments, acceptance of volunteers, contracts, student club charters, policies, purchases and bids, as well as the APPR waiver application, the independent external audit report and the use of an Energy Performance Contract auditor.

Discussion Items

- A board member cited the benefits of attending past National School Board Association conferences that have resulted in improvements in technology, communication and student registration. He motioned a resolution to fund Board members' attendance of the upcoming NSBA conference in Boston, MA, which was approved.
- A board member initiated discussions to eliminate the need to annually review the Finance Committee. The board approved this via resolution.
- A board member brought up the possibility of implementing more proactive residency validation efforts, starting with a review of the procedures of other school districts. Dr. Rogers indicted that the district pursues all legitimate residency concerns, which generally amount to two or three investigations annually. Not all cases are found to be in violation of residency laws. The board did not carry a motion to begin researching other districts' procedures.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is Monday, November 16, 2015 at 8 p.m. at South Woods Middle School.