

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](#).

December 11, 2017 Board of Education Meeting

After an executive session, the regular monthly public meeting was called to order. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Board approved the minutes from the November 12 and November 13 meetings. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and also approved.

The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items

- H.B. Thompson Middle School Student Council Representatives Leah Corcoran and Brandon Mazen updated the Board on recent activities that took place at the school since the beginning of the academic year. Among other initiatives, they highlighted numerous activities including the school's club fair, during which the school's extracurricular activities were introduced to the new sixth-graders, as well as the various fundraisers held for hurricane relief. Leah and Brandon also noted the various trips that students at H.B. Thompson have taken this school year, including the eighth-grade trip to Washington, D.C., a seventh-grade trip to an escape room for team building purposes, and a seventh-grade trip to see the movie "Wonder."
- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers and the Board of Education recognized those students who were honored at NYSSMA All-State and NAFME All-National Musicians. A total of 34 students were recognized as All-State musicians. They are: Sami Ahn, Matthew Ardizzone, Stephanie Benedictus, Gabrielle Bieder, Sydney Chen, Josephine Chuang, Sean Han, Allison Hsu, Susanna Hur, Maxwell Izakson, Brandon Ji, Jihoon Jun, Paige Kahn, Joseph Kim, Anthony LaBarca, Thomas Lam, Hannah Lee, Subin Lee, Justin Lee, Annie Lin, Kalena Liu, Nicholas Massimo, Gabriela Mataras, Ashkan Moghaddassi, Aileen Park, Jake Quadrino, Harrison Rubin, Madison Schatz, Albert Shabaev, Brandon Sung, Callista Tse, Derek Warshauer, Emily Wong and Charles, Zandieh. The three students recognized as All-National Musicians are Grace Mittleman, Eric Schess and Hannah Son. Dr. Rogers thanked Syosset Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts Michael Salzman for his leadership.
- The Choral Pride, Syosset High School's male a cappella group, and the Adelettes, the school's female a cappella group, performed a variety of songs from their recent winter concert. The performance concluded with a combined performance and audience sing-along from both groups.
- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Thomas Rogers presented the draft calendar for the 2018-19 academic year. Dr. Rogers noted that typically by this time, the New York State Education Department has released the final date for the Regents exam period, which dictates what the final day of the school calendar will be. Since the SED has not yet released this date, the proposed 2018-19 academic calendar is still tentative and could

be adjusted in the future. Dr. Rogers also noted that on Election Day, school will not be in session for elementary students. This was accomplished by altering the schedule for parent/teacher conferences. In addition, Dr. Rogers noted that the district has been in contact with the Board of Elections, which dictates polling locations to examine options for other polling locations in the future. He thanked the Board of Elections for their willingness to engage in this discussion with the district.

- Dr. Rogers updated the Board on progress in developing a language sequence in a non-European language. Members of the district's Cultural Unity Committee served as a focus group to help the district determine which new languages might have the most interest. Chinese and Hindi emerged as two options from the focus group. The district then surveyed incoming sixth-grade parents to gauge their interest. It was determined that there was more interest for Chinese among the two. The district's Secondary Curriculum Council will now research this recommendation to better determine what the implementation would entail.
- Dr. Rogers read a statement on the progress of the investigation into the bias-related vandalism incident last August. Dr. Rogers noted that the District has been cooperating with requests from the police, including delaying aspects of the District's investigation and avoiding comment in order not to impede the police effort. Dr. Rogers noted that just prior to Thanksgiving, those restrictions were lifted by law enforcement and both investigations were now proceeding in parallel. Dr. Rogers also observed that the surveillance system and night guard shift both exhibited flaws. He recommended that the district pursue bids for a more robust surveillance infrastructure and rebid after-hours security shifts. Dr. Rogers stressed that the district will share further updates with the community to the extent that Federal privacy laws permit.

Report from the Spokesperson of the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance

- A representative from the Citizens Advisory Committee for Finance reported on the committee's November 15 meeting. She noted that the committee discussed the three types of auditors that the district has. In addition, Assistant Superintendent for Business Dr. Patricia Rufo reviewed audit and financial statements with the committee. The representative also noted that Dr. Rogers provided the committee with an overview of Phase 2 of the capital improvement project and discussed the next steps in moving forward with a public vote.

Audience to the Public

- A concerned resident thanked Dr. Rogers for his update on the bias-related vandalism incident. She repeated her request from the November Board of Education meeting that the Board implement mandatory penalties for bias-related violations of the Code of Conduct. Several Board trustees commented on her proposal, noting that the Board does not determine specific disciplinary actions for students, and by law serves as an appeals body for administrative discipline. While agreeing bias-related incidents should be taken very seriously, some Trustees also questioned whether a "one size fits all" punishment is appropriate. Another Board trustee suggested offering a resolution at a

future meeting that outlines the Board's position on anti-bias incidents and the condemnation of such acts and asked administrators to research funding to help pay for extra security measures through grants.

- On behalf of Woodbury Cove, a resident thanked the Board of Education and administration for keeping their community informed.
- A district parent thanked the administrators and staff members of Robbins Lane Elementary School for how well they handled the incident last week when workers on school property struck a natural gas line. The parent expressed her gratitude with how well the situation was handled.
- A resident asked if the feedback from the community meetings about the district's capital improvement plan has been incorporated into the final proposal. Dr. Rogers noted that all of the community input was synthesized and that the district received some great feedback from residents. He noted that the suggestions were taken into consideration when developing the final proposal. The resident asked that the link to the final project be made more apparent on the District website.
- A resident expressed his opinion to the Board that they hold no blame for recent bias-related incidents, faulting parents instead. He also noted that the district needs to keep in mind that students who engage in such actions are still children and shouldn't be banished from the community based on one wrongdoing; at the same time, he argued that the district needs to ensure that Board demand financial restitution from the perpetrators for the damage they caused. He also urged the Board to consider having any student found guilty of bias-related behavior engage in a community service project.
- The same resident also questioned Dr. Rogers on the air conditioning proposed through Proposition #1 of the capital improvement plan. He suggested that current air conditioning window units at the middle and high schools be re-purposed for the elementary schools, as they are still in good working order. Dr. Rogers noted that the district is trying to eliminate window units districtwide in order to make the building envelope more secure. In addition, several of the elementary schools are at electrical capacity and would not be able to accommodate the increased electrical load from so many window units.

Discussion Items

- Legislative Grant – Trustee Christopher Di Filippo noted that the district will receive a \$250,000 grant through Assemblyman Charles Levine's office. Mr. Di Filippo inquired as to what this grant money would be applied to and if it could be put toward expanding the high school library. Dr. Rogers noted that the grant criteria specify capital construction and that the district has been exploring applying the money towards renovating the high school science research rooms. This would help defray some of the costs to taxpayers that is proposed through Proposition #1 of the capital improvement project. Dr. Rogers noted the grant would be insufficient for exterior capital

construction like expanding the high school library. Mr. Di Filippo asked that the District research other potential options.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved relating to appointments, transfers, reassignments, resignations and retirements.
- The Board approved a number of resolutions related to the management of the school district, including school district policies. Among the actions taken, the Board of Education approved the tentative calendar for the 2018-19 academic year. A copy of the calendar will be posted to the district's website.
- The Board approved a resolution to move forward to present the community with an Energy Performance Contract (Proposition #2) for public vote on Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2018.
- The Board approved a resolution to move forward with a special election on Tuesday, Feb. 13, 2018 for the public to vote on a capital improvement bond referendum. The resolution passed 8-1.
- The Board approved a number of resolutions related to purchasing such as bids received, as well as other financial operations of the school district.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, January 22, 2018 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m.