

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](#).

February 12, 2018 Board of Education Meeting

After an executive session, followed by attendance at the PTA's Reflections Awards ceremony, the first of four Budget Information meetings was held. The meeting touched on the recent history of the tax levy and the calculated tax cap as well as the projected cap for 2018-19. The presentation focused on the capital portion of the budget, which encompasses custodial operations, maintenance and grounds, security, and debt service and transfers.

At the conclusion of the Budget Information Meeting, the regular monthly public meeting was called to order. Following the Pledge of Allegiance, the Board approved the minutes from the January 22 meeting. The Treasurer's Report was delivered and also approved.

The Superintendent's Report and Other Monthly Items

- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Tom Rogers announced that Syosset High School is one of 24 schools on Long Island identified as high-achieving "Reward Schools" by the New York State Department of Education.
- Dr. Rogers also made the following announcements: Syosset Syborgs high school robotics team won the Inspire award at the FIRST Tech Challenge Robotics Competition, given to the team that embodies professionalism, teamwork and effective communication; Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts Michael Salzman was named New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) President for 2018; a student chamber quintet from the high school was selected to participate in the Young Musicians Long Island Regional Concert, sponsored by the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center; and the high school Forensics Society was ranked 49th in the country by the National Speech and Debate Association.
- Science Research Coordinator Veronica Ade introduced Syosset High School's prizewinning scholars in the Regeneron Science Talent Search. Justin Cohen and Monet Yuan each gave a brief synopsis of their respective research projects before receiving certificates of recognition from the Board.
- Coordinator of English Amanda Barney presented on the district's K-6 reading and writing instruction and use of the Teacher's College Reading/Writing Project program. Ms. Barney's presentation demonstrated several advantages of the current readers/writers workshop practice, including how it promotes active engagement, collaboration and independence. Other highlights of the presentation showed how ELA crosscuts with other subject areas, how students utilize Chromebooks to share writing in Google Classroom and how small groups at the elementary level are peer editing to improve their writing skills very early on. Dr. Rogers reinforced the program's effectiveness alluding to how the greater independence of the workshop approach enables students to better navigate and learn from their struggles.

- Dr. Rogers discussed a recent community open house tour of the high school, which provided a close-up look at many of the areas identified in the Building Condition Survey that will be addressed through the Phase II Facilities Improvement Initiative. He also mentioned that the district is piloting and evaluating the use of flexible/adjustable furniture at the high school (not part of the Phase II plan). Dr. Rogers used the update as an opportunity to remind the community about the Feb. 13 Phase II vote, including voting locations and hours. He also pointed out that there would be a much more visible security presence at the polling centers.
- In response to a question by Board Vice President Tracy Frankel, Dr. Rogers noted that all information pertaining to the Phase II Facilities Improvement Initiative and Vote could be found on the district website under “Syosset Future Facilities Improvement Vote” and that the Q&A is continually updated. He also referred to a special Twitter feed for information and comments on the initiative: @SyoPhase2Vote.
- Dr. Rogers outlined for the Board a proposed resolution that pertains to an agreement reached between the district and developers of 80 Jericho Turnpike in Syosset (site of a former trailer park). Building on the authority granted by the Board last October, the agreement provides for mitigation payments to the Syosset School District to offset the impact of any future PILOTs awarded to the developer by the Town of Oyster Bay. The Board later approved the resolution during the New Business portion of the meeting.

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 Jan. 24 meeting. The committee discussed: the district’s internal audit report; how overtime is estimated under the district’s new financial management platform WinCap; the Facilities Improvement Initiative, including timeline and communications for the vote; the Syosset Park proposal and its impact on the community; and national recognition awards for budget presentation. The committee is scheduled to meet next on Mar. 8.

Audience to the Public

- PTA Council Co-Presidents Meryl Bolnick and Diane Hornick reported that after polling every district PTA unit, the Council endorses the Phase II Facilities Improvement Initiative.
- A resident asked whether the Teacher’s College Readers/Writers Project was an evidence-based program, and referenced personal concerns with her child’s preparation in the area of grammar instruction. Dr. Rogers said the program has a strong evidence base and will follow up with the resident directly. He also noted that the district is in the first year of a new schedule designed to provide additional time for English Language Arts instruction, making more time available to provide more detailed attention to areas such as grammar and spelling.

New Business

- Various resolutions were approved relating to staff appointments, leaves of absence, transfers, reassignments, resignations and retirements.

- The Board approved a number of resolutions related to the management of the school District, including committee meeting minutes, student club charters, and the appointment of special district meeting/election personnel.
- The Board approved the scheduling of the budget public hearing and budget vote and Board of Education election, including establishing the time and election districts and polling locations for the Tuesday, May 15, 2018 vote. The public hearing was scheduled for Monday, May 7.
- The Board approved a number of resolutions related to financial operations of the District, including service contracts, and the disposal of old equipment.
- Trustee Susan Parker expressed some concern with accepting a gift of sporting equipment donated by one school's PTA, since any PTA fundraising for the purpose of providing additional sporting equipment beyond that provided by the District could result in inequities between schools. With Trustee Parker's support, the resolution was approved, however Vice President Frankel asked Dr. Rogers to research this practice and policies pertaining to such donations.

Next Meeting

- The next meeting of the Board of Education is scheduled for Monday, March 19, 2018 at South Woods Middle School, beginning at 8 p.m. A Budget Information meeting will be held at 7:45 p.m. (same location). There will also be a special School District Meeting in conjunction with the Districtwide community Facilities Improvement Vote on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 to formally accept the results of the vote.