



General Library Item

Name Meeting Highlights - October 23, 2017

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Scarsdale Board of Education Meeting Highlights October 23, 2017

Dear Parents and Community Members,

At the October 23rd Board meeting we reviewed our progress in preparing a recommendation to the Board with respect to a proposed bond to address educational, infrastructure, and safety needs across the District, with a special emphasis on Greenacres. The most exciting aspect of this work to me is the educational importance that these recommendations represent.

In a recent *Insight* article, I wrote about A. H. Maslow's well-known "Hierarchy of Needs," which explains that physiological and safety needs must be met before students are able to develop a sense of belongingness, self-esteem, and ultimately, self-actualization: the ability of all students to reach their full potential as learners and citizens.

While teachers certainly play the most significant role in this work, the academic environment should not be underestimated. There are three major educational needs that are addressed in the proposed bond:

- Health and safety issues, mostly manifested here as required code compliance, but as understood from Maslow's work, are also the bedrock necessary for learning to occur;
- Security, a paramount concern of parents and staff, also provides the stability students need in order to begin the process of competency and confidence in their abilities; and
- Optimizing classrooms, library spaces, and new learning commons areas to support the implementation of a host of District-wide educational initiatives aimed at helping students be engaged learners, thus reaching the highest rung of Maslow's hierarchy: self-actualization.

The goals of Scarsdale's educational vision, The Scarsdale Education for Tomorrow 2.0 are: (1) to advance student knowledge with globally competitive skills and experiences while fostering a love of learning; (2) to think critically and creatively; (3) to learn independently and persevere; and (4) to inspire students to collaborate, embrace diversity, and make positive contributions locally and globally.

In order to accomplish these goals, we have taken a multi-pronged approach. We have developed new courses and content, including Singapore Math, Advanced Topics, FLES, Mandarin, and Science Research. Additionally, we have employed new approaches to student learning, including interdisciplinary problem-solving, inquiry science, collaboration, and student voice. Collectively, these changes provide increased opportunities for students to know, think, and act on real life problems in a deeper and more personal way.

So, how do our classrooms, learning commons, and other proposed renovations fit into this vision?

It is important to note that there are many tangible and intangible elements of a 21st century classroom. Most of these are teacher dependent; however, there are some universal elements around school design that are also critical for classrooms of the future, including the following:

Flexibility -- the ability to arrange and rearrange classrooms based on learning activities. Classrooms will be designed to maximize flexibility, and outfitted with furniture and other accoutrements that also encourage this practice.

Accessibility--Classrooms and other learning spaces will be designed so that all students are able to access all aspects of classroom and building learning, including those with disabilities.

Mobility--21st century classrooms require us to accommodate students who are "...introverts, extroverts, collaborators, solo thinkers, writers, dreamers, and fidgeters." New spaces will allow for different types of learners and the opportunity to collaborate in a variety of innovative ways.

Technology--Scarsdale is known for having cutting-edge technology to inspire and cultivate students' thinking. The renovated spaces in Greenacres will continue to incorporate this feature in all learning spaces.

Inspiration--Students should be inspired by their environment, and have access to light and the natural world. The renovated spaces at Greenacres will provide just that. As an example, 4th and 5th grade classrooms currently face the courtyard. The renovation will have these classrooms relocated to the addition facing the beautiful park across the street.

We believe that the proposed projects, most notably the renovations at Greenacres, absolutely embody these elements and will not only address the needs of students in the moment, but will continue to bend and mold around the changing needs of education long into the future, ensuring that all students have the opportunity to be fully-engaged in their own learning, and, in the process, reach their full potential as students, peers, family members and contributing members of society.

With Warm Regards,
Dr. Thomas Hagerman
Superintendent of Schools

Board Meeting Highlights October 23, 2017

Business Meeting

At 6:30 p.m. William Natbony, President of the Board of Education, convened the Business meeting, reporting that all Board members were present with the exception of Pam Fuehrer.

Mr. Natbony noted that in the past few weeks Board members attended a Greenacres PTA meeting and a Greenacres Neighborhood Association forum, at which District administrators presented projects under consideration for a proposed Bond Referendum in January, 2018, and fielded questions from the community. He urged the community to continue to contact the Board with their questions and viewpoints.

Dr. Thomas Hagerman, Superintendent of Schools, gave an overview of the educational values underlying proposed bond projects (See Dr. Hagerman's introduction to these Highlights)

Stuart Matthey, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Facilities, presented a comprehensive review of the scope of projects under consideration. Joining him in the presentation were Lynne Shain, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Assessment and Instruction; Drew Patrick, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources; Jerry Crisci, Director of Instructional Technology and Co-Director of the Center for Innovation; Erich Rauschenbach, Director of Special Education and Student Services; Sharon Hill, Principal of Greenacres School; and John Trenholm, Director of Facilities.

The slides for this 51-page report may be viewed in the [2017 Bond Project Planning Information page on the District website](#).

Following the presentation, the Board engaged in an extensive discussion on the proposed projects. Mr. Natbony noted that among issues to be resolved were whether some projects could be covered under operating expenses; the scope of the Greenacres renovation/expansion, including such items as modular classrooms and bathroom renovations; and whether to include Priority 3 items in the bond.

Board members discussed a wide range of issues pertaining to the bond, including instructional impact; long-term financial planning; the impact of proposed projects on the operating budget; whether other large-scale capital projects not included in this bond are foreseeable; whether remaining in the tax-neutral cost range is a priority; the feasibility of including District-wide air conditioning (pending a recommendation from the Districtwide Facilities Committee); and the need to convey how the bond supports sustainability efforts.

Mr. Natbony noted that the Board would like more information on projects that were not included in this bond scope, and the impact of shifting projects from the bond to the operating budget.

Community members were invited to address the Board, and four did so:

- Diane Baylor, Cohawney Road, PT Council President, noted that this is School Board Recognition Week in New York State, and took the opportunity to salute the members of the Board for their dedication and many hours of service.
- Mary Beth Evans, Edgewood Road, co-chair of the League of Women Voters Bond Study Committee, asked for clarification on the budget timeline, and the agenda for the November 6 Public Forum.
- Mayra Kirkendall-Rodriguez, Fox Meadow Road, speaking as co-Chair of the Scarsdale Forum Education Committee, reported on the progress of the Committee's study of a District long-term financial plan, and noted that the Municipal Services committee of the Forum was about to commence a traffic survey.
- Michael Levine, Walworth Avenue, requested more detailed information on the Energy Performance Contract.

The Board approved items on the consent agenda, including a Personnel Report.

The Board approved a Memorandum of Understanding with the District's transportation union, an Academic Services Intervention Plan for 2017-18, and a Settlement Agreement concerning a Notice of Claim.

Community members were invited to address the Board for a second time, but none did so.

In response to community questions, Mr. Natbony reviewed the meeting timeline, noted that the November 6 Public Forum would begin with an update similar to the one presented at this meeting, reported that Mr. Matthey's report on long term financial planning has been rescheduled for the December Board meeting, and that more information about the Environmental Performance Contract is being compiled.

Mr. Natbony conducted a wrap-up of the meeting and Mr. Silberfein announced scheduled upcoming Board meetings on November 13 and November 27, and a Public Forum on the 2018 Bond Projects scheduled for Monday evening, November 6, at 6:30 p.m.

The Board adjourned at 9:45 p.m.

The Board meeting may be viewed on the District website (under Scarsdale Cable TV) [here](#).