



General Library Item

Name Meeting Highlights - September 25, 2017 (PART 1)

Content

Scarsdale Board of Education Meeting Highlights September 25, 2017 (PART 1)

Special Meeting

At 7:00 p.m. the Board of Education convened a Special Meeting, and moved into Executive Session to discuss litigation matters.

Business Meeting

At 7:30 p.m. William Natbony, Board President, called the meeting to order and noted that all Board members were present with the exception of Leila Maude.

Mr. Natbony reported that earlier in the evening the Board had been given a tour of the completed Fitness Center at the High School and other projects still under construction, and were excited to see how these new spaces are progressing. He expressed the Board's gratitude to all involved in making these projects a reality.

Mr. Natbony went on to address some community concerns:

- He thanked the High School administration for its prompt and thorough response to recent incidents of racist graffiti and verbal harassment, affirming that the Scarsdale school community is dedicated to being safe, nurturing, open, and collaborative, and that there is no place here for inappropriate, disrespectful behavior;
- He and the Board acknowledged receipt of a petition for a formal school observance of 9-11, recognized its profound importance, and said the Board will be hearing from the social studies departments of the High School and Middle School on how best to proceed;
- Concerning the Board's decision-making process with regard to Greenacres and recent criticisms that have surfaced in online comments, Mr. Natbony noted that the Board of Education is comprised of seven independent-minded volunteers, who give hundreds of hours a year in service to the Scarsdale Schools, and that the Board works closely with District Administration, for whom it has the highest respect.
 - He noted that the Board receives a considerable amount of correspondence, which it reviews thoroughly and responds to, but that the Board is troubled by online blog posts and comments that are incorrect and stir up ill feeling.
 - Specifically he noted that the Board has deliberated openly and transparently concerning Greenacres plans, and that archival documents illustrating those deliberations are available on the website. Additionally, there are two public comment periods held during every Board meeting for community members to speak.
 - The Board has heard community suggestions about relocating students during construction at Greenacres, and has referred to the Greenacres Building Committee for a recommendation.
- Mr. Natbony urged the community to send further inquiries, concerns, and reports about the proposed bond projects to the District by October 6, 2017, so they may be considered at the Board's next meeting on October 16.

Dr. Thomas Hagerman, Superintendent of Schools, welcomed community members to the meeting and noted that the evening's format, encompassing reports from administrators and an Education Report, is usually presented every other month but because of time needed at recent Board meetings for review and discussion of proposed capital projects, has not taken place since last March. He explained that these meetings were designed to focus on topical areas around teaching and learning and feature presentations on a significant educational initiative in the District, this evening's being a report on Wellness Initiatives. Dr. Hagerman noted that Education Meetings serve as an opportunity to showcase the District's best practices, along with the administrators and teachers who bring this work to fruition on a daily basis.

Board of Education member Arthur Rublin reported on a recent New York Times article about Manhattan's Trinity School, and the view that some high-performing schools are seen as "credentialing factories."

Community members were invited to address the Board (at 7:50 pm, as noted by Mr. Natbony) and three did so:

- Mary Beth Evans and Linda Doucette-Ashman, Co-Chairs of the League of Women Voters' subcommittee that is studying the proposed bond, expressed concern that the Board has released a large volume of data about proposed bond projects but that it is not in "digestible" form, and requested that the Board provide a framework and overall objective for the proposed projects, affirm that they reflect community values, and consider a referendum vote date that would give more time for community input and engagement.
- Michael Levine, Walworth Avenue, asked for more detailed information on the Energy Performance Contract, and how it works.

The Board approved items on the consent agenda, including a Personnel Report presented by Drew Patrick, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Leadership Development. Mr. Patrick noted that the District is hiring an additional cleaner because of increased demand engendered by the new spaces at the High School.

Administration Portfolios

These reports cover a period from the end of March, when the last Administrative Portfolio reports were presented at a Board meeting, to the present.

Budget and Finance:

Stuart Matthey, Assistant Superintendent for Business and Facilities, reported on the budget process just getting underway, and reported that adjustments would be made to assure the inclusion of community feedback early in the process. Mr. Matthey also reported that he plans to present a report on long term financial planning at a Board of Education meeting in November.

Communications, Community Involvement, and Political Advocacy:

Dr. Hagerman reported on several major initiatives:

- On Twitter, District administrators have sent out over 100 tweets as they visit schools in the District and report on activities there.
- The District website has been redesigned for improved accessibility to information, and is regularly refreshed.
- The 'Dale Dispatch e-blast, with important updates from administrative departments, is distributed widely to community members, including High School students.
- BoardDocs was implemented last year to ensure the highest levels of transparency with regard to Board work and can be found on the District website, where the community can access all Board of Education meeting documents.
- Board of Education Meeting Highlights are distributed regularly, and are now being housed in BoardDocs to keep all Board-related information in one, easy-to-find place.
- Additional e-blast updates from the Superintendent and the Board of Education President on bond project planning have also been distributed regularly (the original SparkPage format for these updates has been replaced by regular letter format to accommodate the amount of information being conveyed).

Mr. Rublin added that Board meetings are now live streamed on the District website, making them accessible worldwide in real time.

In terms of metrics, Since April 1, the District has sent out the following:

Via Constant Contact to over 9,000 recipients:

- Seven Board of Education meeting notices and seven issues of Board Meeting Highlights
- Two issues of 'Dale Dispatch; the first issue of the school year is scheduled to go out this week
- Six messages from the Superintendent concerning bond projects presently under consideration, including information about District architect presentations, public forums, and general updates
- A survey on Bond Project Planning (plus two follow-up reminders)
- Two bond planning updates from the Board of Education President

Via postal mail to more than 6,000 households and Village businesses:

- The 16-page Budget issue of Insight
- The 16-page combined Summer/Graduation issue of Insight

School highlights are also updated regularly on the official Scarsdale Facebook page, which now has more than 1,350 followers. The latest posting garnered 4,569 views and 34 reactions, comments, and shares.

With regard to political advocacy, Dr. Hagerman noted the Board's work on reviewing bylaw amendments and resolutions proposed by the New York State Schools Boards Association (NYSSBA), and reported that work is being done to ascertain community support for potential advocacy issues.

Construction and Facilities:

Mr. Matthey reviewed the 2014 bond projects that are now completed or nearing completion. The 2014 bond projects that are open for student use include the new Fitness Room at the High School, the Middle School Instrumental Music Room addition and renovated Band Room, and the Edgewood Main Office and centrally situated main school entrance. Projects still underway include:

- High School: Learning Commons (estimated November opening), I-Lab (estimated November opening), Design Lab (estimated late January opening) and Courtyard drainage (estimated December completion)
- Edgewood: Library addition (estimated late spring opening)
- Heathcote: Multi-purpose room (estimated late spring opening)

Concerning projects proposed for a 2017 bond, Mr. Matthey reported that the Greenacres Building Committee has been meeting weekly, and has completed a review and affirmation of room allocations, and recommended additional noise and air monitoring during construction. They are continuing to review other aspects of the proposed Greenacres Renovation/ Expansion, including parking and traffic safety considerations, and possible use of classroom trailers during construction. Mr. Matthey noted that the District Facilities Committee has also been meeting regularly, and will be considering the feasibility of District-wide air conditioning.

Following Mr. Matthey's report, the Board discussed the possible addition of a Board meeting on October 23 to provide more time for discussion of proposed projects, and the possibility of moving the referendum date to January.

Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction:

Lynne Shain, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Assessment, and Instruction, reported that the NYS assessment results (Grades 3-8) would be released on Friday, September 29th. She noted that the curriculum and common assessment schedule are reviewed and updated continually for consistency and may be viewed on the website [here](#); she plans to present a report on assessments at the November 23 Board meeting. A report on physical education curriculum is scheduled for March.

Ms. Shain reported that the sixth grade Mandarin Enrichment morning program has an enrollment of 21 (the initial interest number was 41), and that therefore just one section will get underway on Monday, October 2. The Teachers College Reading and Writing program is currently in its third year, and full-time reading support teachers are now in each elementary school, enabling early intervention and resolution of learning issues. An initiative on elementary math instruction was launched in August, 2017 with special training sessions that will continue throughout the year.

Human Capital and Leadership Development:

Mr. Patrick reported that 55 new and returning staff were welcomed at the annual staff convocation prior to the start of school including new faculty members starting a three- or four-year probationary period on a tenure track, one part-time faculty member, four full-year leave replacements for teachers on leaves of absence, and another eight in partial-

year leave positions. Ten individuals have stepped into newly created, or filled vacant, leadership roles, including five elementary assistant principals, and the new Scarsdale Middle School principal. The District also welcomed a new nurse at Scarsdale High School, and promoted an accountant to the new position of assistant business manager.

Mr. Patrick also reported that 22 administrators and three representatives of the Scarsdale Teachers Association took part in a two-day workshop on "Analyzing Teaching for Student Results;" online tracking of professional development and evaluation activities is running smoothly; and that collective bargaining will soon be underway with the bus drivers and the custodial/grounds staff.

Special Education and Student Services:

Eric Rauschenbach, Director of Special Education and Student Services, reported on six major goals:

- The High School Emotional Support program currently has 14 enrolled, with positive parent and student response, and fewer outplacements. A review of emotional support needs in lower grades will be undertaken;
- Co-teaching has moved to a more intensive model, resulting in less pull-out of students;
- Administrative staffing realignments have been completed, resulting in more efficient and consistent case management;
- Work continues on improving communications with parents, including collaborating with CHILD and working on a master calendar;
- Professional development is being supported, particularly LRC skills assessments and student progress monitoring;
- In Health Services, procedures for Epi-Pens have been updated as recent regulation changes have made it possible to install Epi-Pens in all the eating areas in our schools. This will allow faster access to them in an emergency, and also provide students with no prior history of allergies prompt access to treatment if they experience an anaphylactic event.

Information Technology:

Rachel Moseley, Director of Information Technology, reported that the Information Technology team had a busy summer upgrading the District's technology infrastructure and applications; purchasing and configuring new computers and other technology items; and implementing a variety of system enhancements and automation:

- Replacing a large number of servers and services, including file storage, printing, and backups;
- Migrating the network operating system from Novell to Microsoft;
- Building a central user database with Microsoft's Active Directory, and migrating all users (staff and students) to Active Directory;
- Upgrading Windows computers to the Windows 10 operating system;
- Replacing the core network switches in all seven buildings; and
- Upgrading the District's wide area network (WAN) from 1 GB to 10 GB.

The Data Services team has started a large-scale project to replace the Time Clock system currently used by the custodians. A project team evaluated several systems and selected the one that best meets the District's needs. The plan is to install the new time clocks and software over the next few months, as well as to expand this time tracking solution to aides and bus drivers.

Instructional Technology:

Jerry Crisci, Director of Instructional Technology and Innovation, reported that work continues on evaluating possible upgrades of current classroom display technology, which will be in need of replacement soon. Some funds may be available for needed upgrades via the Smart Schools Bond; a hearing on the Bond will take place in November. In the area of technology curriculum, following last year's successful work on K-12 STEAM curriculum, this year the technology team will undertake drafting a K-12 coding curriculum. With regard to the Center for Innovation, 14 project grant applications have just been submitted for consideration this year; the CFI is also marking its fifth year of operations with a retreat and self-study.

(At this point in the agenda, the Education Report on Wellness was presented, and will be summarized in a follow-up Board Highlights).

The Board heard an explanation from Mr. Matthey on a proposed inter-municipal agreement on Knotweed Remediation; a brief description of the proposed 2017 fall/winter and yearlong STI courses by Ann Marie Nee, Director of the Scarsdale Teachers Institute (STI); and an explanation by Mr. Rauschenbach of a proposed contract with the Scarsdale-

Edgemont Family Counseling Center for youth services, and conducted a discussion of bylaws amendments and resolutions proposed by the New York State Schools Boards Association (NYSSBA).

The Board endorsed selected NYSSBA resolutions and by-law amendments, and approved the Knotweed Remediation inter-municipal agreement, the proposed 2017-18 STI courses, the contract with Scarsdale-Edgemont Family Counseling for youth services, and a new Time Clock contract.

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

Mr. Natbony conducted a wrap-up of the meeting and Board Vice President Scott Silberfein announced the upcoming Board meetings, including a potential meeting on October 23rd.

The Board adjourned at 10:50 p.m.

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