

## **LWVS Questions Submitted on 2/5/19:**

### **Contractual Employee Vetting**

- 1. As the District is hiring contractual employees for the enhanced elementary Food Service Program and as we heard last night, increased Security staffing, what is the policy and process of vetting contractual employees? Is it the same process as for District employees?**

### **Summit Security**

Applicant must apply for a job at Summit Security. References are checked by Summit. Interviewed by Summit and then by the District. They are also fingerprinted and cleared by Summit. They must have 6 months experience and partake in ongoing training.

### **Chartwells**

Applicant must complete an online application process. On-Site Food Service Director does a telephone screening, if there is mutual interest they are sent to a fingerprinting center- HR notified that individual has gone for fingerprint check with New York State Department of Education through the vendor Identigo. If cleared, they are more formally interviewed by on-site Food Service Director as a final step before they are hired. During final hiring stage, applicant must present valid photo identification (passport and/or driver's license) and social security card. The applicant completes an electronic I-9 form to confirm validity of identification.

### **Security**

- 1. In light of the recent legislative activity in Albany, do the Administration and Board plan to reinstate a Legislative Advisory Committee in order to monitor relevant legislative issues, such as gun control, school safety, and the tax cap, and, as Stuart mentioned during the Budget Session,**

**the proposed reduction in BOCES aid, to ensure that Scarsdale School District interests are protected?**

- **For example, the Westchester Putnam School Board Association Legislative Forum on Feb 28**

There has been no discussion at this time.

**LWVS Questions Submitted on 1/28/19:**

**Brief Statement on Specific Seat vs At-Large:**

The League has formed a subcommittee to study specific seat nomination and at-large nomination to the School Board. We have done preliminary research and have begun our League discussion on this topic. The League Board has decided to host a consensus meeting on specific seats and at-large nomination on February 11.

**Strategic Plan**

1. How will the community-at-large be included in a ground-up strategic planning process for our schools?

Many school-based stakeholders have already been involved in the process. The community-at-large will be surveyed to collect additional feedback and provide further focus to this work.

2. What currently distinguishes Scarsdale from other K-12 public and private schools?

The District has been recognized nationally as a premier educational institution since the 1920s; today's program continues to reflect a rich mix of tradition and innovation. In

classes small enough to know their students, teachers address individual strengths and challenges. The Scarsdale Public Schools seek to sponsor each student's full development, enabling youth to be effective and independent contributors in a democratic society and an interdependent world.

Also, see our mission statement: High standards of scholarship in a reasoned and humane atmosphere. An education where adults know each student's mind and person.

- Teaching, guidance, and counseling which are caring, reflective, respectful of and responsive to individual aptitudes and needs, while mindful of the greater good.
- A school environment structured to help students develop a growing sense of responsibility and self-discipline, involving them in the development and direction of their own education.
- Integrated, continuous and progressively broadening opportunity in and beyond the classroom for students to grow intellectually and in leadership, selfexpression, talent, and interest.
- An education which reflects awareness of promising and effective new development in theory and methods.

Moreover, among noteworthy offerings are world language at the elementary level; a house structure at the Middle School, ensuring coordinated and student-centered instruction; alternative programs for able secondary students who prefer smaller settings; Advanced Topics classes at the High School, replacing Advanced Placement; an emphasis on teaching critical and creative thinking, collaborative learning, and interdisciplinary studies; an arts education program using the premier arts institutions of Westchester and New York City; a sustainability initiative aimed at education and carbon footprint reduction; and a Center for Innovation, sparking such initiatives as makerspaces, Design Thinking, the High School Design Lab and the Middle School NEST. Students take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities including debate, humanitarian activities, student government, and community service. Students also have opportunities to personalize their learning through unique programs like the

fifthgrade Capstone research project as well as a Senior Option experience at the High School. In addition, the Scarsdale School District is a founding member of the Global Learning Alliance, a consortium focusing on the definition of a world-class education.

### **Class Size/ Norms/ Staffing**

1. The historical norm at the High School is to have no more than 12% of class sections greater than 25 students. To what extent were the high school class norms met this year? How many classes are above 25 students in the high school? What percentage of classes are above the norm?

While there is no hard-and-fast cap or limit, we generally use 25 as an informal limit in the 4 major subjects, 20 in world language, with exceptions when we have singletons or staffing issues. We review and monitor class sizes every year to spot trends and areas where an additional FTE is needed or cuts can be made. We have no specific recollection of where the figure of 12% you refer to comes from.

2. Please explain the relationship between staffing, enrollment and educational needs. For example, in what ways are staffing needs connected, or not connected, to student enrollment? What are some of the specific examples and circumstances in which staffing changes are required to meet educational needs that are not related to student enrollment?

As Drew indicated at the January 28 meeting, and at the [Scarsdale Forum presentation](#) in December, staffing is driven by three different models.

- Elementary school- class size limits of 22 K-3 and 24 4-5. The encore experiences (art, music, PE, FLES, etc) operate on a 6-day cycle, so the number of sections in a school and number of meetings/cycle drive the staffing ratio.
- Middle school staffing is based around the house and team structure, with students distributed evenly across houses/teams. With 1100 students, 3 grades, and 4 houses/grade, the “rule of thumb” is about 90

students/house, and 23 students/class. This, of course, varies slightly, and interest-based enrollment in music dictates staffing needs there.

- High school staffing is based around graduation requirements, the course catalog, and student interest. Class sizes are flexible in order to account for interest and to maximize our ability to meet student requests.

3. Is there a specific practice or class size norm that is followed at the Middle School? What are the current class sizes in the Middle School? What is the range of class sizes for Middle School World Language instruction?

The range is 19-24; World language class sizes range from 15-24, depending on grade and language.

4. In light of the conversation tonight about adequate staffing at the elementary school level, would the Administration and Board articulate and clarify the policy regarding elementary class size and staffing practices, as well as spatial standards, for Co-taught Inclusion (CTI) and Bridge classes?

Regular education class caps in elementary are 22 students in K-3rd grade and 24 in 4th and 5th. The ICT sections are based on 2 factors:

1. Class caps are respected but can be expanded by 2 if necessary due to the expanded resources in those classes. It is rare that they expand the cap.
2. ICT classes are also filled according to a ratio of 60% general education and 40% special education at maximum.

There are no formal "spatial" standards. Every year we look at the needs of any given class and schedule them accordingly. There are many factors that drive the need for space.

## **Safety and Security**

1. Regarding the Director of Security position, are there any plans to create an inhouse cabinet position or will the position continue to be filled by an outside consultant? **Not at this time.**

2. Where are the funds coming from to pay for the interim security/ door guards at Quaker Ridge and Heathcote? Budget transfer from utilities (fuel oil) line item where there is an anticipated surplus due to both lower cost and usage below past norms to this point in the year.
3. Is there any effort to make sure that safety and security implementation is geared as well toward the general community feeling and experience of parent, teacher and most importantly student community?  
All safety, security and emergency management recommendations are informed from all aspects of the Scarsdale Schools Community including those that are mentioned above. This is accomplished through the work of the many committees involved in this endeavor.