Board of Education Meeting Highlights June 8, 2015

Dear Parents and Community Members:

At the Board’s Work Session on June 8, we heard a terrific presentation from the High School staff on a proposed STE{A}M curriculum, with a focus on design thinking and engineering. One of the questions that emerged is how Middle School and elementary grade level work affects the High School curriculum.

As we endeavor to put a framework in place for our common work in STE{A}M, one area that we know anchors us is the pockets of innovation that serve as incubators for teacher passion, student creativity, and community engagement. I attended a perfect example of that on May 30, when Heathcote School held its first, STE{A}M-inspired HExpo, (Heathcote Technology Exposition). And, it certainly served as an important reminder of why this work is so critical for all of us.

When asked about the genesis of this initiative, teacher Christine Boyer said that the HExpo began as a germ of an idea last August when she and PTA President Karen Palaniappan were conceptualizing a STE{A}M Committee for Heathcote. Using other local events
(such as the World Maker Faire in Queens and Tinker Night in Larchmont) as their inspiration, they transformed the idea into a grand vision. And, even more importantly, they used the design thinking process themselves to imagine, prototype, test, and build out their idea until it came to full fruition.

Christine and Karen recognized that they would need to rely on the expertise and knowledge of others and quickly banded together past students, teachers, parents, artists, community members and vendors, folks all willing to give of their time and talent.

More than 200 children and adults registered for 10 workshops covering a wide range of disciplines, such as 3D design, collage art, architecture, coding, astronomy, and circuitry. Students were encouraged to build using Keva Planks and Legos, tinker with Ozobots and LittleBits, explore Caine’s Arcade and the StarLab, and create their own art projects with collage artist Michael Albert.

The workshops were buzzing all day with excited participants. A unique feature was that parents and children alike were exploring their “inner child,” learning from our workshop leaders and one another. In talking with some parents in attendance, a common theme that emerged was that this day was an amazing opportunity for our children to get involved with more challenging activities that encourage deep problem-solving and critical thinking.

Outside agencies and organizations were also in attendance, presenting resources available to our students in the broader community, such as programs on “The New Bridge” (Tappan Zee Bridge construction), and the new Westchester Children’s Museum in Rye. These and other groups in attendance are eager to form meaningful relationships with districts like Scarsdale,
and it was important to have them be a part of this inaugural effort.

In this one-day experience, the goal was to provide students with enhanced and enriched exposure to STE(A)M, and it certainly did that. But, perhaps even more importantly, it galvanized a community of learners that not only left a lasting impact on our children, but, I would say, on everyone who had the good fortune to attend.

I would like to thank all the volunteers, students, teachers, parents, and others for their remarkable contributions to our first HExpo.

In Service,

Dr. Thomas Hagerman
Superintendent of Schools

BOE Meeting Highlights June 8, 2015

Work Session
At 6:30 pm, Lee Maude, Board of Education Vice President, convened the Work Session (Mary Beth Gose, Board President, arrived shortly afterwards). Board Members heard an update on the High School’s AT (Advanced Topics) program, and a report on the plans for establishing a STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math) curriculum to be housed in the Design Lab that is planned at the High School (as part of Bond construction). Ken Bonamo, High School Principal, gave an overview; two High School teachers, Larry Brown and Monica Palekar, provided details on the evolution and future plans of the AT program; and two High School teachers, Jeremy Szerlip and Lisa Yokana, reviewed the STEAM curriculum planning
process. A video of the presentation, which included videos of students discussing the programs, is available on the District website here:

At 7:30 p.m., Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, Dr. Joan Weber, presented tributes to four retiring staff members: Joann Nahabedian, Greenacres classroom teacher; Cindy Sansone, Greenacres Teacher-in-Charge; Aqualina Viani, Greenacres Occupational Therapist; and Vivi Samoladas, District Census Enumerator.

**Business Meeting**
At the 8 p.m. Business Meeting, Ms. Gose reported on the Work Session held earlier, and asked for a motion to move the Personnel report to earlier in the agenda, to accommodate the large number of new teachers and administrators, whose probationary appointments were being announced.

Ms. Maude noted that members of the Greenacres community were also in attendance, and reported that the Board had conducted a thorough tour of the building last week led by Director of Facilities John Trenholm. She then gave a detailed explanation of how the Board’s decision-making process on addressing Greenacres School building options, as well as other District building proposals, would proceed. She went on to explain that many public meetings that will be held over the course of the next 18 months, along with the appointment of a District Facilities Steering Committee next fall.

Dr. Hagerman reported on his attendance at Heathcote’s Tech Expo on May 30th, and the many exciting workshops and exhibits presented there. He also thanked all the organizers and volunteers for their work on behalf of our students and families.
Community members were invited to address the Board, and seven did so. Lisa Eisenstein, 3 Rocky Hollow Drive, expressed support for the Board’s proposed resolution in opposition to APPR that was to be considered later in the meeting. The six who addressed the Board afterwards all spoke in opposition to “Option C” (relocating Greenacres School) in the Greenacres feasibility study: John Singer, 8 Montrose Road; Aaron Lamport, 27 Huntington Avenue; Vivian Braun, 17 Kingston Road; Mike Greenberg, 21 Brite Avenue; Joel Gantcher, 164 Brewster Road; and Harry Green, 172 Brewster Road.

The Board heard and accepted a personnel report presented by Dr. Weber, which included the introduction of Dr. Bernard Josefsberg, newly appointed interim Assistant Superintendent for Personnel, and the announcement of probationary appointments for eight new teachers and administrators, including Raymondo Pappalardi as Director of Physical Education, Health, and Athletics.

The Board then approved items on the consent agenda.

The Board reviewed proposed changes in the Code of Conduct and District Safety Plan, both of which will be voted on during the BOE Re-Organization meeting on July 1. The Board also reviewed the Draft Board Meeting Dates for 2015-16, which proposes to hold one Board meeting each month during a Monday evening, and another on a Wednesday day; the Draft Budget Calendar for preparing the 2016-17 budget; the appointment of a telephone equipment and service provider; new textbooks; a proposed resolution from WPSBA opposing Education Investment Tax Credit legislation; and the annual Professional Development Plan required by New York State. All these items will be voted on at the June 22 Board meeting.
The Board voted to approve the District investment policy; an administrative services agreement with POMCO for the District’s self-insured health insurance plan; an agreement with Aesop for a substitute placement and absence management program; and a revised school calendar for 2015-16. The Board also reviewed and adopted a resolution drafted by Ms. Maude in opposition to the State’s 2015 APPR Plan implementation.

The Board accepted, with thanks, a donation from the Society for Science & The Public and Intel, in recognition of Scarsdale High School students’ participation in the Intel Science Talent Search 2015; and a donation from the Fox Meadow PTA to purchase and install ceiling fans and Smart TVs at Fox Meadow.

The Board presented a summary of written communications received by the Board from community members, and announced a list of upcoming meeting dates.

The Board then adjourned into Executive Session to discuss matters of litigation.