



Board of Education Meeting  
September 8, 2015

2015-2016 Board of Education  
Katy Keohane Glassberg, President · Chris Repetto, Vice President  
Karen Belanger·Blake Jines·Storey·Nancy Pasquale· Kelly Smith Powers·Nicole Weber

## A Summary of the 9/8/15 Rye City School District Board of Education Meeting

### **Superintendent's Report**

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Frank Alvarez announced the District had a great opening day. The RCSD has 217 Kindergarteners and an overall enrollment of 3,385. The District has two interim administrators this year: Rod Mergardt, Interim Director of Physical Education, Health and Athletics and Julia Chung, Interim Director of Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education. There are 22 new faculty and 20 new staff members, including two former engineers and a Fulbright scholar.

In August, administrators attended a retreat to plan for the year ahead, new teachers attended 2 days of orientation and all teachers had 2 days of professional development. In July, a wonderful column appeared in the *Rye Record* noting the personal care Rosa DiMarzo from Food Service takes of each of our students. We learned Coach Mary Henwood will be joining the Westchester County Sports Hall of Fame. Teacher of the Year Dayna Reist Year gave a powerful, inspiring speech to the faculty on Superintendent's Conference Day.

Updating technology continues to be a priority. The District began a 5-year replacement cycle for computers, resulting in new desktops in the High School, Middle School and Elementary school labs and much improved Internet connectivity and security. In curriculum work, the Literacy initiative - extensive professional development for teachers in Columbia Teachers College Readers and Writers Workshop - continues at the elementary schools and this summer was expanded to include the Middle School faculty. The first year of full-day Kindergarten begins. STEM offerings at the High School include the debut of 3D Design and Architecture class and the second class in the introduction to engineering sequence of Project Lead the Way.

The Rye Fund for Education is beginning to have an impact on the District. The new courtyard is almost complete and the Band Room was completely renovated over the summer with new storage space, blinds and furniture thanks to the support of the Fund and the High and Middle School POs. The Fund also supported Middle School faculty professional development at the Teachers' College Readers and Writers Workshop this summer and purchased resources for the elementary schools in support of the literacy initiative.

## **Gifts to the District**

The Board of Education accepted with gratitude the following gifts: a **\$4,733.87** gift from Milton School PO for Scholastic Guided Reading Short Reads for grades K-5; a **\$4,500** gift from the RHS PO for Project Lead the Way; a **\$29,230** gift from the RHS PO for band room renovations and an increase to the General Fund budget accordingly; and a **\$9,000** gift from Rye Garnets Ice Hockey, INC. for the JV Ice Hockey expenses.

## **Presentations**

### **K-5 Literacy Presentation**

Shelley Klein, the literacy consultant providing professional development to the faculty, gave an overview of her work with the staff to date. In summer 2014, she worked with the K-2 teachers, and those same teachers returned this summer. She commended the RCSD teachers' enthusiasm and openness to learning. This year, K-2 teachers reviewed last year's program, provided feedback from fellow teachers, evaluated new resources, and worked on weaving in Common Core standards. Klein worked with K-5 teachers to develop reading units. She worked for the first time with Middle School teachers who serve as students' reading coaches by encouraging comprehension and depth of thinking about text. This year's professional development in the Middle School will assist teachers in learning how to "meet students where they are" and help build critical thinking skills in reading and understanding text. Ongoing professional development in the elementary schools will focus on in-class modeling: teachers will observe Klein and she will observe them in turn.

### **Public Hearing on SmartBond funding**

Gaby O'Connor presented on the status of the SmartBond funding. Link to her presentation [here](#). The original proposal, which allowed NY State Comptroller to sell bonds up to \$2 billion in value, was passed by voters in November 2014. Bond revenue is to be used by school districts for projects related to IT. The State delayed providing information about how to obtain these monies, but the information is now available and the Business Office is working on the application. The RCSD wishes to use the funds for upgrades in security. Why security as opposed to other areas? Much of the work over the summer had to do with technology infrastructure and wireless upgrades, and given the state of our Internet at the end of last year, the District had to act quickly. SmartBond funds cannot be used for expenses already incurred. The District is due to receive \$286,000 in funding. Given the restrictions of the SmartBond program and the relatively limited amount of funding, security needs identified as priorities by Stonegate Associates, Emergency Management Consultants, were determined to be the best possible use of the funds.

Because the matter relates to security, we are not able to provide details about the completed application. There will be an opportunity for the public to view the blank application when it is posted on the District website.

SmartBond funding restrictions include that the District must have a State-approved plan before any spending takes place. This is a reimbursement program: we must put the money forward, and then the State will reimburse the District. Plan approval is required for all expenditures; there will be no retroactive expenses. The application deadline is October 16<sup>th</sup>. It is difficult to predict how long the State approval process will take.

### **Strategic Priorities**

Superintendent Alvarez presented the District's Strategic Priorities for 2015-16 which can be accessed by clicking [here](#). The Strategic Priorities are grouped into 5 categories:

Academic Achievement: Continue work around literacy, enhance STEM offerings, and monitor Special Education to strengthen the program and work to create programs to bring students placed in programs outside the District back within the District if possible, review testing data to learn where students are performing well and distribute those instructional techniques across the District.

Teacher Effectiveness: Provide common Professional Development experiences in Literacy across grade K-8 teachers. Year 2 of teacher mentoring program will pair first-year teachers with a mentor, and adds a group time component. The District will continue to negotiate a new APPR plan with the State.

Culture of Caring: Continue to support social emotional programs at all schools and increase participation in the H.S. senior internship program. Support coaches and athletes regarding sportsmanship.

Fiscal Responsibility: The RCSD is asking administrators to start thinking about their school's needs ever earlier in the budget process. Continue to support the next phase of WinCap automation of personnel to increase scheduling efficiencies. Look again at the planning tool for staff in Special Education.

Community Engagement: Continue to explore new technologies as a means to communicate with our constituencies, and continue collaboration with the Rye Fund for Education.

### **Curriculum Work Over the Summer**

Dr. Betty Ann Wyks presented on 4 areas of curriculum development.

Kindergarten Art Curriculum It was necessary this be done over the summer as Kindergarteners are taking art for the first time this year in conjunction with the first year of full day Kindergarten. The resulting curriculum has elements of design, wherein colors and shapes are used in a very thought-out way to help students obtain art skills in art. The curriculum has interdisciplinary connections with literature and social studies.

Latin - Grade 6 David Perry wrote the curriculum. As a Latin text book author and scholar, he was the perfect person to create the updated curriculum. He looked at what our students needed to be successful, and took a very sequential approach. The resulting curriculum is similar in structure to what you would find in other foreign languages with emphasis on listening, speaking, reading and writing as required by New York State..

English 11 and English 11 Honors This is a class where the students are combined in one classroom. The two curricula look very similar but their assessments vary. The students have opportunity to work through Regents or Honors segments in order to differentiate according to student readiness. The teachers scaffold based on the needs of the students.

Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 These curricula needed to be rewritten due to the change in the math pathways. Parts from Algebra 1 and Algebra 2 were redistributed to account for the fact that the Algebra classes are no longer sequentially separated by Geometry.

Faculty will come to present on the new curricula at future board meetings.

Next Regular Meeting  
September 29, 2015  
7:30 p.m.  
Rye Middle School  
Multipurpose Room

Visit our District Website for complete information on Board of Education meetings, minutes, policies and actions: [www.ryeschools.org](http://www.ryeschools.org)

Streaming video of Board of Education meetings can be accessed on the District website. Videos should be available 2-3 days after each Board meeting. Past meeting videos are also accessible.