

MINUTES
RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room
December 22, 2009

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Nathan at 7:21 p.m. and the roll was called:

Present

Mr. Joshua Nathan, *President*
Ms. Laura Slack, *Vice President*
Ms. Kendall Egan
Mr. Edward Fox
Ms. Young Kim
Mr. Ray Schmitt
Mr. Robert Zahm

And

Dr. Edward Shine, Superintendent of Schools
Dr. Steven Cohen, Assistant Superintendent
Ms. Kathleen Ryan, Business Manager
Ms. Elaine Cuglietto, Director of Personnel
Mr. Gus Mountanos, District Counsel

On a motion by Ms. Slack, seconded by Mr. Nathan and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted to move immediately into executive session to review the employment history of current and prospective employees, discuss negotiations pursuant to the Taylor Law and current litigation.

On a motion by Mr. Schmitt, seconded by Ms. Egan and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 8:15 p.m. to reconvene in public.

Mr. Nathan welcomed those present and the Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Mr. Nathan acknowledged and read aloud a letter received from Mrs. Colleen Powers, the daughter of Ms. Jeanne Sinnot thanking the Board of Education for its recognition of her mother.

Report of the Superintendent

Dr. Shine presented information on the following happenings around the school district:

- Mary Henwood, the Girls' Basketball Varsity Coach, celebrated her 300th career win. The team was also the tournament champion with a win against White Plains.
- Lia Bellizzi and Tatiana Saunders both members of the RHS Varsity Girl's Soccer Team were named to the 2009 NSCAA Adidas Girls High School All-America Team. Congratulations to both girls and to Rich Savage, their coach.

- Dr. Shine announced that Catherine Telfer has achieved National Board Certification. She is the first teacher in Rye to meet these national standards. Ms. Telfer teaches art classes at the high school, including AP Art History and AP Studio Art. Catherine is also the advisor the Zephyr Art and Literary Magazine. To earn National Board Certification, teachers are required to build a portfolio that includes student work samples and assignments, videotapes and an analysis of their classroom teaching, and are assessed on their knowledge of their subject area.
- Milton's 3rd grade Japanese Festival was organized last week. The students ate a typical Japanese meal. Then the children learned origami, kimono, games, art and calligraphy. Each activity highlights a different aspect of Japanese culture.
- Dr. Shine was proud to report that the 12 Osborn School students on the school Ballroom Dance Team won a Silver Medal in a competition last week in Queens. Congratulations to all Team Members.
- Osborn students had a visitor from the Red Cross who initiated them into the “Scrub Club.” Students were taught proper hand washing techniques, and hand hygiene in order to decrease the spread of contagious illnesses.
- The fourth graders in Mr. Illium's class at Midland School presented an Indian pow-wow. Each child was in costume and regaled us with a Native American legend.
- The true spirit of the holidays has been evident in Rye. Each school has been collecting items or food to help the needy. Milton students helped the Porch Elf Toy Drive for the Carver Center. They also collected items for the ASPCA Animal Shelter of Westchester in honor of Susan Stemmer, a Milton teacher who passed away a few weeks ago. The drive has been re-named in her honor.
- Osborn’s Holiday Angels donated gifts and food items for families served by the Carver Center in Port Chester.
- Rye Middle School donated several tons of food to local food pantries. They came in second in the contest to a school district that had collected 27 tons of food.
- The Middle School also collected toys for about 90 children in public housing in Port Chester via Reach out Rye. Organizer Craig Dreves asks that we congratulate the following students for being great elves: Emma Schmitt, Taylor Maurer, Morgan D'Antoni, Alexander Reifsnnyder, Peter Mackenzie, Emma Siefert, Catherine Fairies, and Ryan Conway. Thanks, too, to the following faculty for giving of their time to make the afternoon a great success: Dina Farewell, Jenai Cayea, Phyllis Reynolds and last, but certainly not least, Craig Dreves.
- All of the schools had holiday concerts for parents and family members. In each school

the Orchestra, Band and Chorus performed. Our students traveled to other locations to entertain such as Blythedale Children's Hospital, The Sarah Newman Nursing Home and The Osborn Home as well as at the Doral Arrowwood.

- Dr. Shine extended his holiday good wishes to all present and reminded everyone that school will reopen after the Winter Break on January 4, 2010. The Central Administration Building will be open on December 28, 29 and 30 from 8:30 to 2:30 pm.

Hearing of the Public on Non-Agenda Items

Mr. Bertrand deFrondeville addressed the Board of Education inquiring about when the draft policies being considered by the Board would be posted on the district website for the public to review. Dr. Shine will provide Mr. deFrondeville with the draft policies. Dr. Shine advised that the draft policies are not posted on the website until they are adopted. Mr. deFrondeville also requested that on the Board of Education meeting agendas that dollar amounts be listed on the fiscal items being considered.

Jennifer Palermo addressed the Board of Education. Ms. Palermo currently directs the rowing program at the New Rochelle Rowing Club and is a resident of Rye. Ms. Palermo would like to open rowing for the high school students as well as for the modified students in 7th and 8th grade. Ms. Palermo is willing to work with Rye, the City and the Superintendent to make rowing affordable for all Rye students.

Dr. Shine indicated that this is the first he has heard of it, and he will investigate and gather information regarding this issue. Dr. Shine invited Ms. Palermo to come to see him tomorrow to discuss this topic in greater detail.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Nathan announced that there were no items pulled from the Consent Agenda:

On a motion by Ms. Egan, seconded by Ms. Slack and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted to approve the following items:

General

1. The Minutes of the Board of Education Meeting of December 8, 2009.
2. Acceptance of the following gifts:
 - The renewable Scholarship from the Neihaus Family in the amount of \$4,000 (Attachment #I)
 - The Anonymous gift of one SmartBoard to Milton School (Attachment #II)
 - The gift of two SmartBoards to Osborn School from the Reinhold Foundation (Attachment #III)

Fiscal

1. Contract Amendment with A&T Healthcare, LLC for Nursing Services (Attachment #IV)
2. Award of Bid #09-10-013 for Electrical Repairs to Mecca Electric (Attachment #V)
3. Award of Bid #09-10-014 for Plumbing Repairs to Robert M. Rispoli Plumbing and Heating Inc. (Attachment #VI)
4. Consultant Contract with Program for Little Learners, LLC for transitional teacher assistant services at the rate of \$55 per hour (Attachment #VII)
5. Contract Amendment with Children’s Hearing Institute for Audio logical Consultations (Attachment #VIII)
6. Approval of Theracare Preschool services for Summer 2009 Special Education /Consultant Teacher services and Physical Therapy services (Attachment #IX)
7. Approval of Treasurer’s Report for the period ending November 30, 2009 (Attachment #X)

Personnel-Professional

1. Termination of Employee #1526 from Extra Pay for Extra Work, effective December 22, 2009.
2. The Additional 0.2 FTE Assignment of Leslie King as a Physical Education Teacher, assigned to Rye High School and Rye Middle School, MA Step 2, of the 2006/2007 Teacher Salary Schedule, \$58,331* (pro rated amount of \$7,344*), effective January 4, 2010 – June 30, 2010.
3. The Appointment of the following Extra Pay for Extra Work for the 2009/2010 School Year:

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>INDEX</u>	<u>STEP</u>	<u>RATE*</u>
Wrestling	±Billington, Max		Volunteer	
MS Drama Club	O’Donnell, John	0.02000	4	1,230
MS Homework Club	Mount, Lisa	0.02000	4	1,230
High School Winter Musical				
Orch./Cond.	Frost, Peter	0.03250	6	2,203
Choreog.	Sherwood, Lauren	0.03250	6	2,203

±Emergency Conditional

4. The Appointment of the following Per Diem Substitute Teacher to be used only on an as needed basis for the 2009-2010 School Year at a daily rate of \$100.00 per day:

Kyle Casey

Effective Date: December 7, 2009

Special Education

The recommendations of the Committee on Special Education and Preschool Special Education from its meeting on:

December 9, 2009 for Student ID # 1233

Hearing of the Public on Agenda Items

Ms. Stacey Koenig, PTO Co-President of Midland School addressed the Board regarding an item on the agenda particularly the Board of Education's acceptance of an anonymous gift of one SmartBoard donated to Milton School. Ms. Koenig stated that we need to be very careful when accepting gifts of this type from individual families. If the SmartBoard ends up in the classroom of that particular student of the family donating this gift, it could reflect badly on our public schools. Ms. Koenig stated that all donations of this type from individual families be filtered through the PTOs in order that there be an equal and fair distribution of SmartBoards to all of the student's classrooms.

Dr. Shine stated that the principal needs to be involved in the distribution rather than the PTO. The principal is made aware of the gift and it is the principal's decision where the SmartBoard is placed.

Mr. Schmitt reminded everyone of the discussion at the last board meeting regarding maximum usage of SmartBoards. The Board has discussed the appropriate strategy for the deployment of the SmartBoards by administrators with a couple of objectives in mind:

- Consistency applied across grades and schools
- The decision as to where they would be placed would be curriculum based matching up with highest use
- Find the maximum usage so that as many students as possible can use and partake in the SmartBoards.

Mr. Nathan expressed appreciation for and accepted gifts from the Neihaus Family of a \$4,000 Renewable Scholarship, and from the Reinhold Foundation for two SmartBoards to Osborn School, and from an anonymous source of one SmartBoard to Milton School. Mr. Nathan thanked all the members of the community who volunteer and support the school district.

Presentation/Discussion

College Placements

Ms. Patricia Taylor, Rye High School Assistant Principal/Guidance presented a detailed report on College Admissions for the Class of 2010. The theme of her presentation was "definition". One of the ways in which Rye High School is able to define itself is through the successful Advanced Placement program. Examples of that success were demonstrated through different comparisons from previous years as well as neighboring school districts. Mrs. Taylor

also congratulated the senior class on their success in the college admission process. Many of our students have already been accepted to college while others are anxiously awaiting their notices.

Mr. Zahm requested that all presentations be provided to the Board electronically and/or hard copy access of the materials, as well as to have it posted on the district's website.

Foreign Language Priorities Report

Dr. Steven Cohen, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction presented a detailed report on the Foreign Language Priorities for the Rye City School District. Dr. Cohen's report included information and recommendations related to FLES staffing; second foreign language options in the middle school and a review of online learning opportunities as well as virtual learning environment options for grades 6 – 12.

A discussion followed regarding the implementation of Spanish becoming a required course in grades 6, 7 and 8 beginning in 2012. Dr. Edwards explained that she has had discussions with the State Education Department as to what the requirements are for art, technology, health and wellness.

The discussion of second language options, online learning opportunities and virtual learning environments included discussion from Ms. Carole Andreasen, District Director of Technology and Ms. Lisa Jenner, Department Chairperson for Foreign Language at Rye Middle/High School.

At this point in the meeting, Mr. Nathan summarized what he felt were the "take-aways" from the discussion.

1. The district has a strategic goal of graduating students who are competent in a foreign language. What are the best ways of achieving that goal?
2. What are the impacts on the other parts of the District's educational program?
3. Can we gather data from other districts and private schools that have been successful on this?
4. We should gather whatever research is available on virtual learning environments before we do any pilots.
5. We should offer a second language option starting in 2010.
6. How do we manage exceptions?
7. How do we support students who already have a language expertise? Can they take Regent's examinations without taking a course for academic credit?
8. Mandarin needs to be included.
9. FLES should not limit the curriculum.
10. In considering an option of requiring Spanish through grade 8, there is a concern for what Rye High School's profile would look like and conclusions that colleges would draw about the quality of our high school program without French and Latin.

Fiscal Constraints and Challenges

Mrs. Kathleen Ryan, Business Official delivered a detailed presentation on the fiscal constraints and challenges to our school district. This was the second part of Mrs. Ryan presentation. The first part was presented to the Board of Education in October and is posted on the district's website. Ms. Ryan's report detailed the recent news about school funding, the impact of the recently announced withholding of state aid/ ARRA funding and STAR payments. She also noted that a likely scenario is a significant reduction in state aid for the 2010-2011 school year.

Mr. Zahm inquired if we can have a letter or link posted on our website regarding salient facts and points including the names of our governmental representatives that we and our community members may contact regarding state aid, ARRA funding, Star payments and unfunded mandates. Mrs. Ryan concurred with this suggestion that community members do contact their local legislators. Mr. Nathan reminded everyone that we can notify the community who they are to contact to voice their opinions and they may state the facts in their communications.

Addition to the Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Zahm, seconded by Ms. Egan, for the administration to place an item on the agenda directing the Superintendent not to pay the MTA tax. The motion was approved 7 – 0 to place the item on the agenda.

Subsequent discussion resulted in the Board asking for an opinion from legal counsel before voting on this agenda item. The item was postponed to the January 12, 2010 meeting.

On a motion made by Mr. Zahm, seconded by Mr. Schmitt, carried unanimously 7 – 0 for the administration not to pay the MTA tax payment until the next Board of Education meeting.

Open Topics Issues

Dr. Shine indicated that he would send a written response to all Board Members for review highlighting the topics discussed at the Open Topics Forum. After review by the Board, the Superintendent will follow up with written responses to all individuals attending the meeting and then post the written responses on the website.

COMMUNICATIONS TO/FROM THE BOARD

Mr. Zahm reviewed the warrants and transfers for November, 2009 from the previous meeting and discussed in particular a transfer for Senior Prom transportation for last year. Mr. Zahm requested that this type of issue does not happen again. Ms. Ryan explained that next year the expense will be encumbered ahead of time. Mr. Zahm inquired as to why there was money

available in Other Computer lab monies. He is concerned that what was planned to be used with these monies is now not possible due to the need for this transfer.

Mrs. Ryan reported that in responses to the Board's previous request, the forecast for expenditures and revenue, has been included in their Board packets.

Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Fox, seconded by Ms. Egan and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 11:30 p.m. to move into Executive Session for the continuation of discussion of topics discussed during an earlier executive session this evening to review the employment history of current and prospective employees, discuss negotiations pursuant to the Taylor Law and current litigation.

On a motion by Ms. Slack seconded by Mr. Nathan and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 12:15 a.m. to reconvene in public and immediately adjourn the meeting.

Elaine Cuglietto
District Clerk

Video of this meeting can be found on the District's website (www.rveschools.org). Click on District and on Board of Education.