

**MINUTES**  
**RYE CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**Rye Middle School Multipurpose Room**  
**February 11, 2014**

Present:

Ms. Laura Slack, President  
Ms. Katy Keohane Glassberg, Vice President  
Ms. Karen Belanger  
Mr. Edward Fox  
Ms. Nancy Pasquale  
Mr. Christopher Repetto  
Ms. Nicole Weber  
And  
Dr. Frank Alvarez, Superintendent of Schools  
Dr. Betty Ann Wyks, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction  
Ms. Gabriella O'Connor, Assistant Superintendent for Business  
Ms. Elaine Cuglietto, Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources  
Mr. Gus Mountanos, Legal Counsel  
Mr. John Gross, Legal Counsel

The meeting was called to order by Laura Slack at 7:10 p.m. on February 11, 2014 at Rye Middle School.

On a motion by Mr. Repetto, seconded by Ms. Pasquale 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 review current litigation.

On a motion by Ms. Pasquale, seconded by Ms. Belanger and carried unanimously (7 -0) it was voted at 8:25 p.m. to reconvene in public. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

**SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Alvarez provided a report to the Board and to the community, announcing that on February 11 the State adopted changes to the roll-out of the Common Core. He explained that the graduating class of 2022, which is the current fourth grade, will be the first required to pass English and Mathematics Regents Exams of college- and career-ready levels. Previously it was the class of 2017. Although the State adopted nineteen recommendations in total, many do not apply to Rye. Dr. Alvarez assured that the District will keep the public informed as it receives more direction from the State, and expressed that these

recent changes show that the State is starting to listen to the thousands who have come out asking to slow down the roll-out of educational reform efforts.

Dr. Alvarez also made an announcement regarding the panel that will be held on February 12, stressing the need for parents to get involved in advocating for further changes to the educational reform initiatives. He explained that the District has been part of broader advocacy efforts, and holding this panel in Rye is intended to allow for discussion of issues specific to the Rye City School District. Topics for the panel, entitled, "The High Cost of Reform: How New York State Public Education Reform Affects Rye's Students, Parents and District Educationally and Financially," included the implementation of Common Core, high-stakes testing, privacy issues around inBloom, and the tax cap. Senator George Latimer and Assemblyman Steve Otis, both of whom have been very supportive of the District's efforts will be among the featured presenters.

### **PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION** **Spanish 1A (Grade 7) Curriculum Revision**

Ms. Dawn King and Ms. Kristie Orlando-Bangali led a presentation on the revised Seventh-Grade Spanish Curriculum, discussing the effectiveness of the program and the enthusiasm students have for learning the language. The presentation also highlighted the success of the Foreign Language in Elementary Schools (FLES) program in setting an excellent foundation for language studies.

The seventh-grade Spanish curriculum was revised with the following objectives: to align with state and national standards; to cover the cornerstones of language acquisition (listening, writing, speaking, and communicating in general); to prepare students for the future Advanced Placement exam; and to provide student motivation, meaningfulness, and rigor. The revisions were geared toward longer-term retention of knowledge; emphasis on useful vocabulary related to many topics encountered in everyday life; and mastery of the present, present progressive, and simple future tenses.

The Spanish program is based on an immersion model. Mrs. Orlando and Mrs. King explained that their classrooms are "Spanish-speaking-only" zones, prompting students to utilize the language and to challenge themselves continually. Communication is a key focus, with class lessons and activities including oral presentations, picture description, interviews, discussions and conversations with peers, skits, and simulated classroom dialogue. Students have shared overwhelmingly positive feedback, many reporting that their Spanish has improved tremendously and that they are eager to speak Spanish outside of the classroom.

### **HEARING OF THE PUBLIC ON NON AGENDA ITEMS**

Ms. Laura Labriola addressed the Board of Education referencing concerns she has with current Special Education Department decisions, compliance issues, class variances, and her requests to address the Board of Education in Executive Session. Dr. Alvarez advised Ms. Labriola that the district is working to resolve some of her concerns and to communicate the changes that are occurring.

Mr. John Nemsick addressed the Board asking for reconsideration of the school districts calendar for both the 2013-14 and 2014-15 school years relative to the required days of student attendance.

Mr. Daniel Harris addressed the Board asking them to consider the issues that were raised by Ms. Labriola earlier in the meeting indicating that her concerns are those of other special education parents in the district as well.

Ms. Slack announced that the following item was being removed from the agenda for consideration at a future Board of Education Meeting.

**Consent Agenda General 7.01**

**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the January 27, 2014 Minutes as presented.

Ms. Slack announced that the following item was being removed from the agenda for clarification and discussion:

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.05**

**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves this budget transfer #6, in the amount of \$60,000.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

On a motion by Ms. Pasquale, seconded by Ms. Keohane-Glassberg and carried unanimously (7-0) to approve the following agenda items:

**General**

**Consent Agenda General 7.02**

**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the January 28, 2014 Minutes as presented.

**Consent Agenda General 7.03**

**Recommended Action:**

That the Board authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to sign contracts for IEP out-of-district placements (revised) during the 2013-2014 school year. (Attachment # I)

**Fiscal**

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.01**

**Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the attached Emergency Resolution reviewed by counsel so the District can arrange for immediate remediation and repair in the basement area of the Midland School. (Attachment # II)

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.02****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the attached engagement letter for Cullen & Danowski to review three areas recommended by the Audit Committee: Grant Administration, Facilities and Capital Projects for an amount not to exceed \$20,000. (Attachment # III)

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.03****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves Participation in Cooperative Bids through SW BOCES. (Attachment # IV)

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.04****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Agreement for Health and Welfare Services with the Mamaroneck School District for \$13,696.15 for the 2013-14 school year. (Attachment # V)

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.06****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the amendment to the RFP Consulting Services Agreement with Kim Wilson-Gerardi for the 2013/2014 school year. (Attachment # VI)

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.07****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the amendment to the RFP Consulting Services Agreement with Dramatic Pragmatics for the 2013/2014 school year. (Attachment # VII)

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.08****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves a gift of \$29,687 from the Rye Crew Booster Club for 2 sets of oars. (Attachment # VIII)

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.09****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves a gift of an indoor batting cage for the Rye Middle School gym from the Middle School Parents' Organization.

**ROFESSIONAL****Consent Agenda – Personnel 9 .01****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Three-year Probationary Appointment of Toni-Marie Grosso Marano as a Special Education Teacher, for which she holds New York State Initial Certification in Students With Disabilities (Birth-Grade 2), assigned to Midland School, 1.0 FTE, MA Step 5 of the 2013-2014 Salary Schedule \$72,736 (pro rated amount of \$30,912.80) (pending proof of level of education), effective February 24, 2014 – February 23, 2017.

**Consent Agenda – Personnel 9 .02****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Appointment Amendment of Nanci DuPuis as a Leave Replacement Elementary Teacher, for which she holds New York State Initial Certification in Early Childhood Education (Birth-Grade 2) and New York State Initial Certification in Childhood Education (Grades 1-6), 1.0 FTE, MA Step 1 of the 2013-2014 Salary Schedule \$61,563 (pro rated amount of \$32,320.60), effective September 4, 2013 – February 7, 2014.

(Nanci DuPuis was previously approved as a Leave Replacement Elementary Teacher, effective September 4, 2013 – January 31, 2014 at the September 3, 2013 Board of Education Meeting.)

**Consent Agenda – Personnel 9 .03****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the following Appointments for Extra Pay for Extra Work, for the 2013-2014 school year:

2013/2014

EPEW

				13/14	13/14
	<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>NAME</u>	<u>INDEX</u>	<u>STEP</u>	<u>RATE</u>
<b>High School Winter Musical</b>					
Plays - Spring	Accompanist	Kostner, Douglas	0.01750	0	968
<b>Middle School – Clubs</b>					
Club Sports-Session 3	Floor Hockey	Rinaldi, James	0.00910	0	503
Club Sports-Session 3	Volleyball	Poccia, Erica	0.00910	2	555
Club Sports-Session 3	Basketball	McGlynn, Christopher	0.00910	0	503

**Consent Agenda – Personnel 9.04****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the following Per Diem Substitute Teacher, Teaching Assistant and Teacher Aide to be used only on an as needed basis for the 2013-2014 school year at the approved per diem rates:

Per Diem Rates as follows:

Per Diem Substitute Teacher - \$102.00

Per Diem Substitute Teaching Assistant for Special Education - \$102.00

Per Diem Substitute Teaching Assistant - \$102.00

Per Diem Substitute Teacher Aide for Special Education - \$102.00

Substitute Teacher Aide \$13.95 per hour

Deborah Scharbach

**Consent Agenda – Personnel 9.05****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Appointment of Lisa Kimmel as a Substitute School Psychologist, for which she holds New York State Permanent Certification as a School Psychologist, at the rate \$39.39 per hour, effective February 1, 2014 - June 30, 2014.

**CLASSIFIED****Consent Agenda – Classified 10.01****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Resignation due to Retirement of Lynn Ferguson-Mastalli from her position a Senior Office Assistant (Automated Systems) and Assistant School Tax Collector, assigned to Rye City School District, Central Administration, School Business Office, effective at the close of business June 30, 2014.

**Consent Agenda – Classified 10.02****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Resignation of Leann Serao from her position as a Teacher Aide, assigned to Midland School, effective at the close of business January 17, 2014.

(Leann Serao was previously approved as a Secretary to School Principal, effective January 21, 2014 at the January 28, 2014 Board of Education Meeting.)

**Consent Agenda –Special Education 11.01****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves the Committee of Special Education and the Committee on Preschool Special Education recommendations as attached. (Attachment # IX)

Board of Education President Ms. Laura Slack announced that The Board approved two gifts to the District on this agenda. The Rye Crew Booster Club funded a gift valued at \$29,687 for crew team equipment, and the Middle School PO supported the gift of an indoor batting cage at Rye Middle School. Ms. Slack expressed thanks on behalf of the Board to the parents and community members who generously provide gifts such as these, supporting the schools and students.

Ms. Slack announced that The Board approved the retirement of Lynn Ferguson Mastalli, who has provided the District with almost 28 years of service and, as a former resident and parent of Rye graduates, is a friend to many people in this community. Mrs. Ferguson was hired as a library clerk at Midland School in 1986, and transferred to the role of Senior Typist in 1988. Since then, she has served as a senior office assistant, assistant tax collector, and benefits coordinator in the Central Administration office. Board President Laura Slack spoke on behalf of the Board in thanking Mrs. Ferguson-Mastalli and wishing her a happy retirement.

**ITEMS REMOVED FROM THE CONSENT AGENDA**

After discussion and clarification of the necessity for this budget transfer by Assistant Superintendent for Business Gabriella O'Connor, On a motion by Ms. Belanger, seconded by Mr. Repetto and carried unanimously (7-0) to approve the following agenda item:

**Consent Agenda Fiscal 8.05****Recommended Action:**

That the Board approves this budget transfer # 6, in the amount of \$60,000. (Attachment # X)

-----

Ms. Slack announced that before the Board proceeds to the Presentation /Discussion portion of the meeting that she would entertain a motion for a Board Member to place the following on the agenda:

Be it resolved that the Board of Education herewith authorizes the release of an opinion letter of counsel dated February 4, 2014 as discussed in Executive Session.

A motion was made by Ms. Belanger, seconded by Mr. Repetto.

A question was raised by Mr. Fox asking when and how the Board decided to request this opinion letter. Ms. Slack stated that the Board requested this opinion on January 28, 2014 in Executive Session.

The motion was previously made by Ms. Belanger, seconded by Mr. Repetto did not carry. The Board voted (6 – 1) with Mr. Fox voting no to add this to the agenda. Therefore, the item is not added to the agenda.

### **PRESENTATION / DISCUSSION**

#### **College Presentation--Early Decisions - Patricia Taylor and James O'Hara (Attachment # XI)**

Rye High School Principal Patricia Taylor and Guidance Counselor James O'Hara provided a mid-year report on college applications, decisions, and acceptances for the Class of 2014. They shared a number of relevant statistics and facts as of January 31, 2014, specifically mentioning that 1,401 college applications to 267 different colleges have been processed to date for the 201 seniors at Rye High School. Many early decision and early action college applications were submitted and accepted! Eighty percent of seniors applied early decision or early action, and 55% of early decision applications were accepted while 30% of early action applications were accepted. Seventy-eight percent of students applied regular decision and can expect to hear from their selected schools in March and April. May 1 is typically the decision date for most students.

#### **Strategic Priorities - Teacher Effectiveness Update (Attachment # XII)**

**Ms. Angela Garcia, Dr. JoAnne Nardone, Ms. Kaitlyn Sassone, Dr. Ann Edwards** Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment Dr. Betty Ann Wyks provided an update on Teacher Effectiveness, one of the District's five goals. Academic Achievement was the focus at the January 28<sup>th</sup> Board meeting, and the remaining three goals -- Culture of Caring, Fiscal Responsibility, and Community Engagement -- will be addressed at future meetings.

Superintendent of Schools Dr. Alvarez introduced the presentation and summarized its contents of data-driven instruction, the Charlotte Danielson Framework for Teaching model that the District utilizes, revisiting of the Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) Plan, and Professional Learning Communities (PLCs). He also mentioned that the District is creating a best practices mentoring program for teachers, which Rye Middle School teacher Craig Dreves is helping to design based on what the District is already doing combined with other best practice

models that exist.

Dr. Wyks defined teacher effectiveness as meaning "All administrators, teachers and staff will perform at the highest professional levels to ensure the success of all students." She explained that many discussions and resources have been allocated to this, as it lies at the core of the District's mission to educate students.

### **Data Teams**

The first area discussed was that of data teams and how to use information about students to inform instruction and make the best decisions appropriate to each child's education. Osborn School Principal Angela Garcia elaborated on this subject, providing insight into some of the practices used at Osborn. Mrs. Garcia emphasized that, just as collaborative inquiry is important in the classroom, it also plays an important role to educators in improving instruction. She explained how inquiry ties in with the Framework for Teaching model, then reviewed data-driven dialogue protocol following protocol established by professional development/school data expert Nancy Love. Mrs. Garcia explained the protocol's three phases of prediction, observations, and inferences, and how they can lead to inferences about students based on factual data. She shared examples of spreadsheets containing assessment results and described the way that the data is examined, compared, and applied for improvement of instruction.

Following Mrs. Garcia's presentation, Dr. Wyks announced that representatives from each of the elementary schools recently joined her at Columbia University for an opportunity to explore the Framework for Teaching model and how it intersects with the Teachers' College Readers Writers Workshop models. She then discussed student engagement as an important component, in addition to data analysis, within the Framework for Teaching.

### **Student Engagement**

Milton School Principal JoAnne Nardone spoke about the focus on high levels of deep cognitive engagement in the curriculum as well as differentiation in instruction. She described a significant shift that is underway; the traditional role of teachers being in front of the classrooms lecturing has changed, and teachers are now often viewed as "guides on the sides," scaffolding and modeling skills that the students then have opportunities to directly engage in to enhance their understanding. Students initiate certain choices and topics, and have opportunities to engage with one another and participate in their own instruction based on examples provided by teachers.

Dr. Nardone highlighted several techniques and initiatives at Milton as examples that support student engagement. Literature Circles call for students working in groups and generally having different roles. Together they analyze, make connections, formulate questions, compare their materials, look at the language of the text, relate it to various other subjects, and practice vocabulary. The teacher rotates among groups to make sure that all are understanding and participating. The Science 21 curriculum, which has been implemented in each of the District's elementary schools, has had a dramatic impact on boosting students' levels of energy and excitement. The program prompts students to become more collaborative while reflecting on their own progress. Student Interest Centers are utilized by second graders at Milton and begin



with guided activities. The children then move on to conduct and present their own research and review their progress. The Responsive Classroom philosophy embraced by Milton has students meeting in groups to review messages for the day, including key areas that they will work on as they develop behaviors and skills that they need both academically and for good citizenship. Lastly, Dr. Nardone listed the many leadership opportunities that exist at all of the District's schools, as well as anticipated results such as greater enthusiasm and stamina for learning, higher self confidence, improved academic performance, enhanced social skills/conduct, and opportunities for leadership.

Dr. Wyks discussed additional best practices, mentioning the teacher mentoring piece, literacy initiatives with professional development expert Sharon Taberski, and the review and analysis of state-released items from the test bank for the Common Core. She also spoke about the APPR Plan, which is being revisited based upon its effectiveness in teacher evaluations, student growth, and local achievement. Dr. Wyks then introduced the District's Instructional Technology Specialist, Kaitlyn Sassone, to share some of the technological best practices found in the District's schools.

Ms. Sassone first discussed the increased use of mobile technology and collaboration tools to support curriculum at the K-2 level, explaining more fully two resources -- Nearpod and Raz-Kids -- that enhance student learning while also allowing teachers to monitor student progress. The Nearpod presentation tool utilizes mobile devices, as demonstrated in the video that was shown. Raz-Kids was mentioned as an online interactive library that helps students to improve their reading skills. Ms. Sassone then reviewed technology resources utilized in grades 3-5. Prezi, a visual and interactive presentation and storytelling application, serves as a way to share ideas by navigating throughout a single canvas rather than slides, providing a web-based alternative to PowerPoint. Other tools utilized include Wikis, which provide writing opportunities that can be shared with wider audiences in Wikispaces classrooms, and Kidblog, which offers a safe and private classroom blogging space.

At the Middle School level, Google Apps is used as a productivity suite that offers a way for students and teachers to collaborate and communicate on documents, research, and other assignments. It is supported by Hapara, a teacher dashboard that provides an overview of student activity across various apps and tools. Google Apps is also utilized at the High School, where a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) initiative was introduced this year, enabling students to use their own mobile devices in the classrooms.

In looking ahead at the future, Ms. Sassone explained that aging desktops will potentially be replaced with laptops and iPad carts, and that the BYOD initiative will likely be expanded to the Middle School.

### **Professional Learning Communities**

Rye Middle School Principal Ann Edwards provided insight regarding Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) and mentioned two books she read and discussed with Middle School staff. Doug Lemov's *Teach Like a Champion* focuses on how to deliver and maximize time in the classroom, and Andrew Solomon's *Far from the Tree* provides a greater understanding of what students in various circumstances are experiencing. Both have been read and discussed in

professional development sessions and have been reported as useful to teachers.

**2014-2015 District Calendar (Attachment # XIII)**

**The Board discussed the proposed school calendar and made minor recommendations for changes to the Superintendent.**

**COMMUNICATIONS TO/FROM THE BOARD**

Mr. Repetto asked for information regarding the issue of Recess Clubs and their consistency in the three elementary schools. Dr. Wyks indicated that she would be meeting with the elementary principals this week and would get information and report back.

On a motion by Ms. Belanger, seconded by Ms. Keohane Glassberg and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 10:55 p.m. to adjourn into Executive Session to review the employment history of current and prospective employees and litigation.

On a motion by Ms. Weber, seconded by Mr. Repetto and carried unanimously (7-0) it was voted at 11: 45 p.m. to adjourn the meeting.

Elaine Cuglietto  
District Clerk

Video of this meeting can be found on the District's website ([www.ryeschools.org](http://www.ryeschools.org)). Click on District and on Board of Education.