

### **Board of Education Highlights: 3/24/20 Meeting**

The following are highlights of discussions and actions from the March 24 Board of Education meeting. For the full minutes and audio recordings from the meeting, please refer to “Agendas and Minutes” under the “Board of Education” section. This meeting was held via teleconference in light of COVID-19 concerns and in accordance with Executive Order 202.1 from the governor, suspending certain requirements of the Open Meetings Law to allow for remote attendance.

The public was invited to attend the meeting in a virtual setting. A web link and phone number to dial in were posted on the district website and communicated to the public via an e-blast and Twitter. Approximately 40 people, including the Board and administration, were in attendance.

- A presentation on the proposed 2020-2021 budget, highlighting areas of the instructional portion pertaining to technology, athletics and special education, was postponed to the April 7 Board of Education work session. The presentation document will be made available online for the public to review in advance of the work session.
- Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance Dana Di Capua said that state funding projections for the proposed budget could be less than the governor’s proposal based on current interest rates and the COVID-19 pandemic. She stated that she will continue to dialogue with the appropriate state organizations and entities to provide the latest information as it develops. At this time there has been no change to the May 19 scheduled budget vote and trustee election; however, discussions are taking place at the state level regarding the possibility of moving back the vote date.
- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kusum Sinha reported that schools will remain closed at least until April 1, and further information will be forthcoming. She thanked the district’s faculty, staff, students, parents and the overall school community for coming together during this COVID-19 crisis. Remote learning is underway and all parties are adjusting to this new practice. She called the experience transformative and profound, and although the transition has been positive, the students are missed and nothing replaces the in-person connections made at school. “We want everyone to be safe; we remain committed to our families,” Dr. Sinha added.
- Emergency extended childcare for school-age children is available to medical workers and first responders who reside in the district. The program is run by SCOPE, who currently provides our before and after school program at Stewart Elementary School.
- The district continues its meal program for eligible families. Meals are available for pickup at the high school, weekdays from 9 a.m.-11 a.m.

- Board President Angela Heineman praised Dr. Sinha for her leadership during the crisis response and thanked the administration, faculty and staff for their dedication. Ms. Heineman said she remains in constant contact with village officials, the Garden City Police Department, colleagues across the county and State Education Department officials.
- Board Vice President Tom Pinou said he has received much positive feedback from parents and students regarding the district's remote learning plan and the teachers' responsiveness to online questions from students. Trustee Michael Cassaro echoed similar sentiments regarding feedback provided, specifically from parents of younger students.
- The Board of Education approved the revision and adoption of multiple policies, including those pertaining to student health services, student privacy and homebound/hospitalization instruction. The Board also adopted new textbooks and a new course offering, as well as other resolutions.
- The Board approved notice of the annual budget hearing and budget vote and trustee election (May 19), as well as the hiring of temporary election workers. The Board also approved a capital reserve resolution to appear on the May 19 ballot for renovation of instructional spaces at the high school and middle school.
- President Heineman reminded the community that the April 7 work session, scheduled for the high school, may once again be held via teleconference and that an announcement would be made in advance with similar virtual attendance information for the public to participate. On behalf of the Board, she wished everyone well and sent prayers to all.