

## **Board of Education Highlights: 9/24/19 Meeting**

The following are highlights of discussions and actions from the Sept. 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.

- The district’s construction manager provided an update on work completed over the summer and projects coming to a close in the future. Masonry work at Stratford and Stewart schools has been completed. The majority of roof work at Homestead and Stratford schools is complete, with the projects expected to be fully complete by mid-October. The Stratford toilet project is near complete, with some minor tile work to be completed within a week. All summer work is expected to be completed by the end of October. Projects approved as part of the May capital reserve vote are in the planning stages, with designs anticipated to be sent to the State Education Department shortly. Based on estimated approval time, these projects should be ready for bids by January.
- Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kusum Sinha and the Board of Education congratulated Garden City High School’s six seniors who have been named semifinalists in the National Merit Scholarship Program. They are Alexandra Kucich, James Lynch, Bridget O’Connor, Kayla Quinn, Katherine Staub and James Zheng.
- Dr. Sinha and the Board acknowledged two Garden City High School students who were named Long Island Scholar-Artists by the Long Island Arts Alliance: Kristen Flynn for media arts and Grace DeAngelo for visual arts. They also congratulated student Claire Vanwallendael for her third-place award in the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese Design-A-Card Contest; sophomore Ryann Henry for winning the “Future Creatures Challenge” sponsored by the Future Engineers Foundation; and senior Joey Wu for her winning entry in the district’s 2019-20 calendar cover design contest.
- Dr. Sinha showed brief videos from the opening day of school and the recent Spirit Week/homecoming celebration. She thanked the community for its participation in the homecoming festivities. Board Vice President Tom Pinou expressed his gratitude in having Detective Rich Pedone serve as homecoming Grand Marshall, based on his contributions in working with Garden City youth through the years.
- Dr. Sinha also reported on several items of interest:
  - The district is reviewing new legislation authorizing school districts to install stop-arm cameras on school buses to identify drivers who unlawfully pass a stopped school bus.
  - The SCOPE before- and after-school program began smoothly, with 14 students enrolled in the before-school program and 223 after school.

- The district’s information technology department has expanded its cybersecurity best practices and defense to combat the increased threat in security, especially given the recent ransomware attacks against school districts. Several key measures have been implemented, including training for staff.
  - Installation and training of the One-Button emergency lockdown system has been completed in each building. Installation of new security vestibules and a new visitor management system is ongoing and will be completed later this year. Vice President Pinou participated in a recent testing of the One-Button system and reported that the system worked seamlessly.
  - LIRR expansion project updates can be found on the district website homepage, <https://www.gardencity.k12.ny.us>, under “Important News.”
  - A screening of the movie “Intelligent Lives” will be held on Thursday, Oct. 3 at Garden City High School beginning at 7 p.m., followed by a panel discussion, sponsored by the PTA and SEPTA.
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- The Board conducted first readings on several policy revisions. Board trustee Michael Cassaro provide an overview of the policy revisions, which included new requirements for the comprehensive developmental school and guidance counseling program, graduation policies that allow students with disabilities to walk with their ninth grade cohort, expansion of alcohol and drug testing of bus drivers and additions to mandated reporting of child abuse in the school setting.
  - The Board also abolished multiple policies and regulations in accordance with state legislation removing nonmedical (including religious) exemptions from school vaccination requirements for children.
  - The Board approved a calendar for the 2020-2021 budget development process, which includes a timeline for adoption of a proposed budget and a schedule of public budget workshops.
  - Board trustee Stefanie Granville reported on initiatives discussed at the first Legislative Affairs Committee of the new school year and the committee’s efforts to join with other districts to achieve shared goals. Some of the goals include eliminating schools as polling centers for general elections, securing additional financial support for school security, assisting with the implementation of new state requirements regarding mental health in the curriculum, addressing concerns regarding the growing number of Payment in Lieu of Taxes (PILOT) agreements awarded to businesses through the Nassau County Industrial Development Agency (IDA), as well addressing the growing shortages of available instructional staff.