

## Board of Education Highlights: 10/22/19 Meeting

The following are highlights of discussions and actions from the Oct. 22 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.

- Prior to the meeting, the Board of Education took a tour of Hemlock School to observe the facilities improvements to the school's kindergarten and grade 1 classrooms. Hemlock was the site of the October meeting.
- Hemlock Principal Audrey Bellovin led off the meeting with a presentation on computational thinking, which included several examples of how the school is applying computational problem-solving into the everyday curriculum.
- The Board and Superintendent of Schools Dr. Kusum Sinha honored seven Garden City High School students who are recipients of the Adelphi University Prize for Leadership. The award is given each year to high school students in recognition of their exceptional academic achievement and community service.
- The district's independent external auditor provided a report on its review of District's financial statements for fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. The auditor praised the business office as well as the district's Audit Committee for their detailed work in reviewing the financial report. Board trustee William Holub commended the work of the auditor in responding to questions from the committee. The auditor's report found no material weaknesses or compliance concerns and was complimentary of the district on its handling of the fund balance. The district has a AAA Bond rating.
- The district's construction manager provided an update on facilities work completed and projects coming to a close. Pony boiler replacement at the high school is complete. Masonry work at Stratford and Stewart schools is also complete. The roof work at Homestead and Stratford schools is also complete, and prior roof leaks at Stratford have been addressed. Punch list items regarding the Stratford bathroom renovation are being addressed.
- Board trustee Stefanie Granville reported that the Legislative Affairs Committee had a productive meeting with representatives from the Nassau County Board of Elections regarding efforts to remove Garden City school buildings as general election polling sites. She also encouraged residents to take advantage of the 15 early voting sites throughout Nassau County for this year's general election. Early voting is underway. For more information, refer to the **Important News** section of this website or <https://www.nassaucountyny.gov/566/Board-of-Elections>

- In observance of New York State School Board Recognition Week (Oct. 21-25) Dr. Sinha presented Board members with certificates, commending them for their voluntary service. Board President Angela Heineman said it is an honor to serve the community.
- Dr. Sinha reported on additional items of interest:
  - She praised the athletics program for the strong character and leadership traits demonstrated by student athletes on and off of the fields. Our student athletes are engaged in community service where they raise awareness and funds for different causes such as cancer. These student athletes are not only working on skills to dominate on the court/field, our athletic teams are developing life skills to assist our students in becoming great citizens who are kind and care about others. She also saluted the districts' Burning Bases program, which is run by Director of Physical Education, Health and Athletics Dawn Cerrone, to provide recreational opportunities to students with disabilities. She commended Ms. Cerrone for her leadership of the program and other inclusive programs throughout the year. Residents calling into the district office were reminded to take notice of recorded messages created by students that play while they are placed on hold. Students provide fun and interesting historical facts about Garden City as music performed by the high school orchestra plays in the background. Dr. Sinha praised Steve Mayo for his coordination of the project.
  - The district has fully subscribed to the Remind app to enable parents to communicate directly with teachers. Parents are encouraged to use Remind in lieu of email. Parents will be provided with information about enrolling in Remind (available for use on phones and other personal devices and free to parents).
  - In light of changes in scheduling middle school parent conferences, middle school parents are encouraged to contact the building to schedule conferences as needed.
- Assistant Superintendent for Business and Finance Dana Di Capua provided a detailed explanation regarding the differences between the approved school district tax levy and the tax rate set by Nassau County. Ms. Di Capua cited a decrease in assessed value, attributable to tax grievances, as well as a shift in the adjusted base proportion to the residential homeowner as factors. Neither are controlled by the school district.
- Several parents expressed concerns regarding class sizes at Hemlock School. The Board acknowledged that a demographic study is being updated from last year, as well as a facilities study that incorporates building utilization, but there are no imminent plans to expand the building footprint or redistrict attendance zones. All Hemlock class sizes are within district guidelines.
- Parents inquired about the potential vulnerability of student data when taking online exams. Dr. Sinha assured that student privacy is a top priority. Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction Dr. Edward Cannone confirmed that while student

performance data is utilized for instructional purposes and test analysis, all results remain anonymous and no other student data is shared.

- The Board approved the second reading and approval of several revised policies.