

**MINUTES**  
**ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS**  
**BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING**  
**October 27, 2003**

**Meeting called to Order at 7:35 PM.**

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Geraldine Thalen, President  
Michael Matera, Vice-President  
Jane Bonner, Trustee  
Howard Gimple, Trustee  
Joseph Sanseverino, Trustee  
James J. Gerardi, Superintendent of Schools  
Carla D'Ambrosio, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction  
Stephen Bilyk, Interim School Business Official  
Irene Pedota, District Clerk

Absent: None

**Mrs. Thalen opened the meeting to questions or comments from the audience:**

- In recognition of National School Board Recognition Week, Mrs. Audette and Mrs. Collesidis, on behalf of the PTA, presented gifts to the members of the Board of Education and thanked them for their commitment to the children of the district.
- Kim Kramer, a senior at Rocky Point High School, asked the Board to consider an idea that she is working on for her Government class whereby students would form a Student Advisory Board and they would have the opportunity to voice their opinions and sit in on board meetings. Mrs. Thalen replied that she thought it would be a wonderful idea, and after asking the other board members if they would like to see this happen, suggested to Ms. Kramer that perhaps she could do additional research to explore how it might work.
- Mr. Matera asked how students would be chosen. Mr. Gerardi explained that he believes there is a law on the books that allows students to sit on the board and that a resolution would have to be included in the annual budget vote and election in May. Mr. Gerardi said that he would look into it further.
- Mr. Matera asked if would have to be voted on by the community. Mr. Gerardi replied that he was pretty sure that it would.
- Mrs. Thalen asked Ms. Kramer if the students in her class would investigate how student representatives would be chosen and she thanked Ms. Kramer for bringing this idea to the board.
- Mr. Vedder, on behalf of the Rocky Point Teachers' Association, thanked the board for their dedication to the students of the district and in recognition of National School Boards Week, invited them to a dinner in December.
- On behalf of the Rocky Point School Related Professionals' Association, Mrs. Patricia Scalone announced that as a token of the association's appreciation to the board for their dedication to the children of the community, a donation was made in their name to the North Shore Youth Council to sponsor five needy families in the summer program.
- Mrs. Thalen thanked everyone and said that she was both honored and humbled by their kind words.
- Mrs. Johansen expressed her concerns with regard to falling eighth grade math scores.
- Mrs. D'Ambrosio agreed that the scores were disappointing. She further explained that data would continue to be collected and individual scores and questions would be analyzed in an effort to determine specific weaknesses. She added that special education students' results were included in the scores.

- Mrs. Thalen asked what the district was doing to raise the scores. Mrs. D'Ambrosio replied that they would continue to work with staff to improve instructional strategies and to find specific areas that are lacking.
- Mrs. Thalen asked if anyone was looking at how many students who took the eighth grade exam were students in the district in fourth grade. Mr. Gerardi replied that our student population has increased every year. The district would like to see how students who have recently entered the district compared to students who have been here since fourth grade.
- Mr. Howard Kartel said that he thought it might not be fair to compare this year's group with last year's group. Last year at the Joseph A. Edgar School a new system of grading was instituted. He asked how the system is working out with regard to evaluating students' progress. Mrs. D'Ambrosio explained that the new system allows teachers to know specifically where strengths and weaknesses are.
- Mrs. Thalen added that according to a New York State School Boards' training session that she attended, the trend in education calls for accountability. Assessment is something that everyone wants but some fine-tuning is needed. Eventually it might be possible to track a student's progress from the beginning in order to see the progress that is made over time. Mrs. Thalen offered to look for pertinent information that could be shared on the website.
- Mrs. Johansen expressed her concern regarding how her fifth grade daughter's performance is being evaluated as compared to the same quality of work last year.
- Mrs. Bonner added she received information from the training session that she attended with Mrs. Thalen about a private company that offers a system that districts can purchase for tracking individual students, their progress over time, and the accuracy of evaluations.
- Mr. Vedder added that academic intervention services are provided to students who do not perform well on the standardized math tests and that support from parents is very important.
- Mrs. King asked if the services are provided at every level. Mrs. D'Ambrosio replied that academic services are provided to students at every grade level.

There were no further questions or comments at this time.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- **Frank J. Carasiti School** – Mr. Paul Read reported:
  - A new assembly program has been instituted for students every Friday.
  - As part of their Harvest Celebration this month, first graders picked pumpkins, second grade students will play harvest bingo, and there will be a Harvest Day Parade on Friday, October 31, 2003.
  - Parent-Teacher Conferences will be held from November 19 through 21, 2003.
  - The theme for November will be Celebration of Family.
  - Mr. Read thanked the Board of Education for their dedication and support.
- **Joseph A. Edgar School** – Mrs. Carol Tvelia announced:
  - October has been a very busy month at JAE.
  - State Assemblywoman Patricia Acampora spoke to members of the Student Council two weeks ago.
  - A "Teacher Night" was held at McDonald's recently to raise money for improvements to the stage. McDonald's donated a portion of their profits and over \$400.00 was raised in just three hours.
  - Parent-Teacher Conferences are scheduled for November 12 through 14, 2003.
  - The Annual Veterans' Assembly will be held on November 7, 2003, and she encouraged anyone who knows a veteran to let the school know so that they could be invited to the assembly.
  - Fifth grade social studies assessments will be administered on November 19 and 20, 2003.
  - Mrs. Tvelia congratulated Patricia Alberti who was named by the NYS Council of English Teachers as a "Teacher of Excellence."
  - Students will dress up on October 31, 2003 as their favorite character from a book.

- Mrs. Tvelia thanked the PTA for donating \$300 to purchase a cart to hold information booklets for parents.
- After reading an article in *The North Shore Sun* about former graduate Colin Burke who is currently stationed in Iraq and serving as governor of a small town there, students are collecting school supplies to send to children there who have none because of the war.
- **Rocky Point Middle School** – Dr. Joseph Centamore reported:
  - Things are running very smoothly at the middle school.
  - The after-school library program has been extended. The program is available Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday till 3:00 PM and on Wednesdays until 4:00 PM.
  - They have initiated a student of the month program at the middle school, and two students are selected each month. In addition, any staff member in the building can nominate a student for “Character Counts” for doing a good deed.
  - The first dance of the year was held on October 10, 2003 and was a tremendous success.
  - The PTA will sponsor school pictures on October 28 and 29, 2003. These photos will be used for the year book
  - First progress reports were mailed out a few weeks back. The school returned to a four-quarter marking period system and he has received favorable feedback about the change.
  - The Science Club went on a field trip to Brookhaven National Lab’s Nassau Space Radiation Lab.
  - The National Junior Honor Society Induction will be held on November 17, 2003.
  - Report cards will be mailed home on November 21, 2003.
- **Rocky Point High School** – Mr. William Caulfield announced:
  - The Guidance Department has been busy meeting with every senior to review their college applications and discuss their future education plans.
  - The Guidance Department hosted a mini-college day last Wednesday and over 60 colleges sent representatives.
  - The Marching Band gave an incredible performance at *Newsday’s* Marching Band Festival at Hofstra University last Thursday night. Although students did not return home until after midnight, everyone was in school on time the next morning. He added that everyone should be proud of the band and all 177 members.
  - On Sunday, October 19, 2003 the Varsity and JV Cheerleaders participated in a Walk for Breast Cancer at Jones Beach and raised over \$5,000 for the American Cancer Society.
  - On behalf of the Rocky Point Administrators’ Association, Mr. Caulfield presented board members with gift certificates as a token of the association’s appreciation for their dedication to the community.

## MINUTES

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Minutes of the following Board of Education Meeting be accepted as presented: **Regular Meeting, September 29, 2003**. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## TREASURER’S REPORTS

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Howard Gimple, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accept the Treasurer’s Reports for the month of **September 2003** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **EXTRA-CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ACCOUNT TREASURER REPORTS**

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accept the Extra Classroom Activity Treasurer Report for the month of **September 2003** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Upon a motion made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that the Board of Education accepts the Financial Reports for the month of **September 2003** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **AUDITOR'S REPORT 2002-03**

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the Independent Auditors Report with accompanying statements and schedules dated June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2003, which has been submitted by our external auditors, Coughlin Foundotos Cullen & Danowski, LLP. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **EXTENSION OF THE WAIVER FOR A PASSING SCORE FOR REGENTS EXAMS**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Howard Gimple, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the Board of Regents action to extend the waiver for a passing score no lower than fifty-five on the five required regents for a local diploma in order to give students more time to improve achievement. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **ADD OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY**

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve that the Bank of Smithtown be added to the list of banks designated as the official depositories for district funds during the 2003-04 school year. Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked why this bank was being added. Mr. Bilyk replied that this is a new bank in the area that has offered a much higher yield on the district's money market account. Mrs. Thalen asked if the district was moving money from other accounts and if the rate was guaranteed. Mr. Bilyk explained that the rate would change. However, if the rate does not stay higher than other banks, the money would be moved to another bank. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **DONATION OF A PLAYER PIANO WITH ALL NEW MUSIC**

Upon a motion made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the donation of a Player Piano with all New Music to the Frank J. Carasiti School. Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked if the name of the donor could be known. Mr. Read replied that it was Mr. Lipinsky. Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Lipinsky for his wonderful donation. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **DONATION OF SCHOOL SUPPLIES**

Upon a motion made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education approve the donation of school supplies from St. Anselm's Church in Shoreham for needy students in the Rocky Point School District. Discussion ensued. Mrs. Thalen asked if this practice was new. Mr. Gerardi replied that the district has accepted these donations from St. Anselm's for at least as many years as he has been the superintendent. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **COMMITTEES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Upon a motion made by Joseph Sanseverino and seconded by Howard Gimple, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education votes to arrange for appropriate services pursuant to the recommendations of Schedule 10-27-03-A and 10-27-03-B. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

## **PERSONNEL**

Upon a motion made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Jane Bonner, the following resolution was offered:

**BE IT RESOLVED**, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, that the Board of Education accept the attached Personnel changes and resolutions. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

**Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any additional questions or comments before the board moved into Executive Session.**

- Mr. Kartel asked if the auditor's report was available to the public. Mr. Gerardi replied that he could speak to Mr. Bilyk to arrange to see it.
- Mr. Kartel added that he believes a lot of money is spent due to the rising costs of special education, intervention and additional programs for students who require these services. He has heard conversations that when students take tests, their performance is evaluated and based on the results, some children are recommended for intervention services. He wanted to know if extenuating circumstances are ever considered. For example, if a student normally does well in school but did not score well on the test, is any consideration given to the idea that the child might just have been having a bad day? He has heard that schools might place children in these services because the school wants to have a good record and be able to show improvement in the student's performance.
- Mrs. D'Ambrosio explained that Commissioner of Education's regulations mandate that all children scoring at or below level 2 must receive intervention services. Children who score as higher level 2 are monitored and re-evaluated after five or six weeks.
- Mr. Ward asked if scholarship information would be made available to seniors earlier in the school year so that they would have a wider choice of schools to apply to. Mr. Caulfield replied that the Guidance Department tries to make the information available as soon as possible so that students can make sound decisions.
- Claudia Guerrero thanked the Frank J. Carasiti School staff for making her little brother's kindergarten experience such a pleasure. She added that she's very pleased with the progress he's making.
- Mrs. Conway said that she is happy to see the school working so hard to provide for the children of the community and for the children in Iraq. She added that she is somewhat disappointed, however, to see that the fifth grade does not have enough bass instruments – there are only three and one is broken.

- Mrs. Thalen replied that the string program is being revitalized and the program would be receiving additional instruments.

There were no further questions or comments.

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION**

At 8:40 PM a motion was made by Jane Bonner and seconded by Michael Matera for the Board of Education to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Pedota  
District Clerk

The Board returned to open session at 10:18 PM.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

At 10:19 PM a motion was made by Howard Gimple and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino to adjourn the meeting. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James J. Gerardi  
Superintendent of Schools