

**ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
October 25, 2004**

Meeting called to Order at 7:35 PM

Pledge of Allegiance

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

Absent: None

Mrs. Thalen opened the meeting to questions or comments from the audience. There were none. Mrs. Thalen informed everyone that there would be another opportunity for questions at end of the regular meeting before the Board moved to Executive Session.

AUDITOR'S REPORT

Mrs. Thalen introduced Mr. Peter Rodriguez of Coughlin, Foundotos, Cullen, & Danowski, LLP (the district's external auditors). Mrs. Thalen announced that Mr. Rodriguez would take questions from the Board and the community at the conclusion of his presentation of the Independent Auditor's Report.

Mr. Rodriguez presented an overview of the report, which was completed at the end of September. The report is prepared once a year to audit the district's financial statements, and transactions are reviewed to make sure that the district is complying with state and federal laws. Mr. Rodriguez further explained that the report expresses an "unqualified opinion on the financial statements" of the district, that the district qualified as a "low risk" auditee, and there were no findings or questioned costs to be reported. Mr. Rodriguez also described recommendations for the segregation of duties with regard to controls over payroll processing and flaws within the computer software system for processing payment to vendors. Mr. Rodriguez announced that the report, once accepted by the Board of Education, would be made available to the community.

Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any questions concerning the report:

- Mrs. Thalen asked what it meant for the district to be considered a "low risk auditee."
- Mr. Rodriguez explained that the district earned the designation because there were no findings after audits were completed for two years in a row.
- Mr. Sanseverino asked if he was correct in gathering that the district didn't have any compliance issues.
- Mr. Rodriguez explained that this was confirmed on page 40 of the report.
- Mr. Sanseverino asked how the district compares to others with respect to our fund balance.
- Mr. Rodriguez explained that it was comparable to a lot of other districts on Long Island, and that the fund balance was under 2%, which is the percentage that is mandated by New York State. Mr. Rodriguez added that the district is in good financial shape.
- Mr. Matera asked if he believed that the district should be developing people within the district to expand on internal auditing functions.
- Mr. Rodriguez replied that the district must consider the cost of training an individual to do the audit. He explained that some firms have moved to hiring CPA firms to be internal auditors to perform claims functions.

- Mr. Matera asked if the external auditor follows up to make sure that the district follows their recommendations.
- Mr. Rodriguez replied that it does and that the district must document all changes.
- Mr. Bilyk explained that the district has been pro-active after the problems at Roslyn and that the district asked the external auditor to come in to make sure that everything was in place. He further explained that the changes that were recommended with regard to payroll have already been instituted and that they are in the process of implementing other recommended changes.
- Mr. Sanseverino asked if using federal ID numbers would alleviate problems associated with changing vendor names.
- Mr. Rodriguez replied that he doesn't know if the computer system can be set up that way.
- Diane Burke asked how long the firm has acted as the district's external auditor.
- Mr. Rodriguez explained that the firm has performed this function for the past four years.
- Ms. Burke asked whose responsibility it is to make changes to the software.
- Mr. Rodriguez replied that it was the software manufacturer's responsibility.
- Ms. Burke asked if that could take a long time.
- Mr. Rodriguez explained that the manufacturer was already making corrections and changes should be completed by November.
- Ms. Burke asked to whom the internal auditor reported.
- Mr. Rodriguez explained that it reports to the Board of Education.

There were no further questions. Mrs. Thalen thanked Mr. Rodriguez for his presentation.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT PRESENTATION

Mrs. Thalen introduced Annette Sclafani, Director of Student Services. Mrs. Sclafani offered a summary of entrance criteria for advanced placement and honors classes, as well as current procedures and recommendations for changes to ranking, weighting and grading.

- Mrs. Thalen had questions concerning students enrolled in AP US History. Mrs. Thalen asked Mrs. Sclafani for an explanation as to why although 51 students were enrolled in September, only 40 students remained in the class in June and only 31 of those 40 remaining students took the exam. Mrs. Thalen added that out of the 31 students, more than half didn't score high enough to earn AP credit.
- Mrs. Sclafani explained that scores for that year weren't great across the state. She added that only two out of twenty students passed in Comsewogue. Mrs. Sclafani further explained that students aren't forced to take the AP exam and that it has always been an option at Rocky Point.
- Mrs. Thalen suggested that since only 15 of the 51 students originally enrolled achieved a passing grade, perhaps the way students are placed should be re-examined.
- Mrs. Sclafani replied that she believes a B+ is a solid grade and that counselors do a good job of placing students.
- Mr. Shultz (Social Studies Coordinator) added that it has always been our policy to consider teacher recommendations and to encourage children. He added that many times, students who are enrolled in AP social studies are also enrolled in AP Chemistry or Physics. They sometimes later decide to either drop AP social studies or opt not to take the exam in order to concentrate on science. He further explained that 50% passing is typical and that he believes even students who choose not to take the exam benefit from the course because it is excellent preparation for college. Mr. Shultz added that students now have an opportunity to earn college credit through SUNY. He also believes that it should be understood when analyzing these results that many children are encouraged to try it, however many leave because of the amount of work.

- Mrs. Sclafani said that if there is a student who really wants to get in, but doesn't have the grades, the student is allowed to enroll.
- Mrs. Thalen said that she was concerned with the discrepancy in 2002 and asked what happens to students who are placed inappropriately. Mrs. Thalen expressed her concerns with entrance criteria and inappropriate placement.
- Mrs. Sclafani said that she would be willing to meet with the Board to discuss recommendations for changes to the entrance criteria and is open to their ideas.
- Mr. Matera expressed his concern that the possibility exists that students might be set up to fail.
- A member of the audience asked if anyone asked students why they drop out.
- Mr. Shultz replied sometimes students drop out because they know they can get an "A" in a regular class. Mr. Shultz added that New York State recommends that we give the students an opportunity to be challenged.
- Mr. Sanseverino asked when students begin to take AP classes.
- Mrs. Sclafani replied that students begin in tenth grade.
- Mr. Gimple asked why a student would want to take a course that is more difficult when it won't be reflected on their average and might actually make it worse.
- Mr. Gimple suggested raising the formula for weighting AP courses and leaving honors classes where they are.
- Mr. Sanseverino asked how weighting impacts a student's average.
- Mrs. Sclafani explained that credit for honors classes amount to 11% and for AP classes 13%.
- Mr. Sanseverino expressed his concern regarding how changes to the current ranking system would impact students who are at the top of the lower half of the class.
- Mrs. Gilbert inquired if weighted GPAs are used for National Honor Society consideration. Mrs. Sclafani replied that she didn't know.

There were no further questions at this time.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mrs. Thalen took the opportunity to announce that the Board received a letter from Senator LaValle's office informing them that the district would be receiving an additional \$50,000.00 in aid. Mrs. Thalen explained that this sum would go into the general fund. If these funds aren't used this year, they will go towards lowering taxes next year.

Susan Sullivan, Assistant Principal – Rocky Point High School announced:

- The Pocket Theater will present *The Crucible* on November 18, 19 and 20, 2004.
- Due to the Marching Band's performance at Hofstra tonight, the Shared Decision Team meeting has been postponed until Monday evening, November 1, 2004.
- The first marking period ends on November 10, 2004.
- On-site college registration will start soon. Students will be able to fill out applications and find out immediately if they are accepted.
- Mrs. Sullivan read an excerpt from a congratulatory letter to high school student James Murrin from Art Chairperson Joyce Connolly on his winning the VFW mailbox- decorating contest. The mailbox, which is located in front of the VFW and is used for the collection of flags for proper disposal, will be painted in a patriotic theme.

Joseph Centamore, Principal – Rocky Point Middle School announced:

- First quarter progress reports were mailed home to parents a couple of weeks ago. Dr. Centamore encouraged parents to contact the Guidance Department or the main office for an appointment to address any concerns they might have.
- Middle school students are participating in a "Name the Park" contest for the new park on the wedge in Mount Sinai.
- PTA sponsored school pictures are scheduled for Wednesday and Thursday.
- There will be a dance for sixth graders after school on November 12, 2004 and for seventh and eighth grade students later on that evening.

- The National Junior Honor Society induction will take place on November 15, 2004.
- Later that week, the middle school will hold its first “Poetry Night.”
- Dr. Centamore thanked the PTA for sponsoring the recent Frederick Douglas assembly for seventh and eighth grade students.
- Dr. Centamore wished everyone a safe Halloween and a Happy Thanksgiving.

Carol Tvelia, Principal - Joseph A. Edgar School announced:

- On behalf of the Rocky Point Administrators’ Association and in honor of School Boards Recognition Week, Mrs. Tvelia presented the members of the Board with tokens of appreciation for their hard work and dedication to the students of the district.
- Mrs. Tvelia reported that students just completed their participation in the PTA PARP program.
- Recently Ms. Herburn helped students organize a very successful food drive. Enough food was collected to stock the shelves of three local food banks.
- Students were also able to raise enough funds to purchase an entire ark of animals, as well as extra sheep to help disadvantaged people in other parts of the world.
- Students also raised \$1,000.00 during their “Hands Across the East Coast” drive to support children in Florida whose schools were damaged during recent hurricanes.
- There will be an assembly to honor veterans this Friday.
- Students were able to purchase phone cards from the Post Office for soldiers stationed in Iraq and Afghanistan by selling tee shirts.
- Parent-teacher conferences will take place on November 22, 23, and 24, 2004.
- This Thursday students will participate in “Book Character Day” where students dress as their favorite characters.
- Mrs. Tvelia also wished everyone a safe Halloween and Happy Thanksgiving.

Paul Read, Principal – Frank J. Carasiti School announced:

- Most of the technology computer training over the past two years has been accomplished in-house.
- Mrs. Meschi has been training teachers how to integrate technology into everyday classroom instruction. Several teachers have been trained to participate in videoconferences. Mr. Read explained how the use of video-conferencing, which will begin in March, links students and teachers anywhere in the United States.
- Mr. Read also announced that parent-teacher conferences have been scheduled from November 22 through November 24, 2004.
- During parent-teacher conferences, parents will be introduced to the new parent resource room where they can select grade/reading level-appropriate books to share with their children. The room will be available before and after school. Parents and children may use the room to read together or to explore computer programs and websites.
- A guest speaker has been invited to speak about students with ADHD during Superintendent’s Conference Day on Tuesday, November 2, 2004.

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 27, 2004**. 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 2004** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

EXTRA-CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ACCOUNT TREASURER REPORT

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 months of **September 2004** 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 accept the Financial Reports for the months of **September 2004** as presented. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

AUDITOR'S REPORT 2003-04

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 30th, 2004, which has been submitted by our external auditors, Coughlin Foundotos Cullen & Danowski, LLP. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

RESOLUTION TO APPROVE IMPARTIAL HEARING OFFICERS

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 appoint the following Impartial Hearing Officers (As per provisions of Chapter 403 of the Laws of 1993 Commissioner of Education Mandate Amendment to Section 4404(1) of the Education Law).

Peter Albert, Diane Cohen, Jonathan Heidelberger, Amy Itzla, Howard Jacob, Mary Margaret Keniry, Robin Kent, James McKeever, Gary Peters, Susan Richmond, Martin Schiff, Conrad Singer

All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

COMMITTEES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

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 votes to arrange for appropriate services pursuant to the recommendations of Schedule 10-25-04-A and 10-25-04-B. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

PERSONNEL

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 accept the attached Personnel changes. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF SCHOOLS

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education relieves Carla D'Ambrosio of her duties as Acting Superintendent of Schools effective October 31, 2004. Ms. D'Ambrosio is commended for her actions and the diligence she applied both to her position of Assistant Superintendent of Schools and as Acting Superintendent of Schools. The District is indebted for her services. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

ROCKY POINT ADMINISTRATOR'S ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT RESOLUTION

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 authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to enter into an agreement with the Rocky Point Administrator's Association for the period July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2006. The agreement calls for no change in fringe benefits. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

CONFIDENTIAL ADMINISTRATOR'S AGREEMENT RESOLUTION

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 authorizes the Superintendent of Schools to enter into an agreement with Carla D'Ambrosio, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction and Sherry Alessandro, Director of Human Resources, Confidential Administrators, for the period July 1, 2004 through June 30, 2006. The agreement calls for no change in fringe benefits and the same percentage increase provided in the Administrator's Association agreement. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

Mrs. Thalen announced that in order to obtain input from the community for consideration during their superintendent search, the Board has been preparing a questionnaire that will be available on the website by the next Board meeting. Residents are encouraged to email Board members if they have any questions or recommendations before the questionnaire is available.

Mrs. Thalen asked if there were any other questions or comments before the Board moved to Executive Session:

- On behalf of the North Shore Youth Council, Mrs. LaCascia thanked the School Related Professional Association for their generous donation towards the purchase of phone cards and various items for holiday packages for 53 soldiers stationed in Iraq.
- Leisha Murray thanked the principals for sending home supply lists over the summer and for simplifying her shopping.
- Ms. Murray expressed her concerns regarding the cafeteria at the JAE. She asked if the Board has plans to expand the cafeteria so children wouldn't have to eat lunch in ten minutes in order to go out to recess.
- Mrs. Thalen inquired if Ms. Murray had brought the issue up to Mrs. Tvelia.
- Ms. Murray replied that she hadn't because she thought the Board needs to consider expanding the cafeteria.
- Mrs. Tvelia explained that lunch periods, with the exception of third grade lunch periods, which are slightly longer, are 43 minutes long – the same amount of time as regular teaching periods. Lunch periods are divided in half so students can go out to recess, however, a child may remain in the cafeteria if they haven't finished their lunch until they are done.
- Mrs. Thalen added that now that it has been brought to her attention, Mrs. Tvelia will speak to her staff to make sure that children have time to eat their lunch and are not rushed out.
- Mrs. Tvelia said that lunch periods are sometimes held over on busy days (such as taco or nacho days) so children have enough time to obtain their lunches and eat them.

- Mrs. Thalen suggested that sometimes children might not be aware that they have the option to stay in to finish. She encouraged Ms. Murray to meet with Mrs. Tvelia if her child is not allowed to do so.
- A parent in the audience thanked Mr. Read and Mrs. Tvelia for scheduling their parent-teacher conferences on the same days.
- Mrs. Komorowski thanked Dr. Centamore for attending several conferences on high functioning autism, and she encouraged others to do so.
- In recognition of School Board Recognition Week and on behalf of the Rocky Point Teachers' Association, Mr. Daniel Vedder presented Board members with tokens of appreciation for their countless hours of dedication to the children of the community, and he pledged that the association would continue to work with the Board for the benefit of the children.
- President of the School Related Professional Association, Mrs. Patricia Scalone also took the opportunity to thank the members of the Board of Education for their service and commitment to the Rocky Point community. In honor of School Boards Recognition Week and to acknowledge the association's appreciation for the Board's hard work, Mrs. Scalone announced that a donation has been made in the Board's name to the First Marine Expeditionary Unit serving in Iraq.

There were no further questions or comments.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 9:10 PM a motion was made by Michael Matera and seconded by Howard Gimple for the Board of Education to go into executive session to discuss particular personnel matters. All in favor – Motion carried 5-0.

Respectfully submitted,

Irene Pedota
District Clerk

Mrs. Bonner left the meeting at 9:47 PM.

The Board returned to Open Session at 9:51 PM.

EXTENDED PROBATIONARY PERIOD

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

BE IT RESOLVED, that the probationary period of a certified staff member identified in the annexed letter dated October 19, 2004, be extended for a period not to exceed June 30, 2005 in consideration of and upon the conditions set forth in such correspondence. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:53 PM a motion was made by Michael Matera and seconded by Joseph Sanseverino for the Board of Education to adjourn the meeting. All in favor – Motion carried 4-0.

Respectfully submitted,

James J. Gerardi
Superintendent of Schools