



**RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
300 HORNIDGE ROAD
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
DECEMBER 20, 2023**

Present: President Rebecca Mansell
Trustee Jason Carmel (Joined meeting at 7:03 PM)
Trustee Gloria Golle
Trustee Patty Nashelsky
Trustee Erica Wagner
Trustee Elizabeth Yong
Dr. Eric Lutinski, Superintendent of Schools
Carolyn Mahar, Assistant Superintendent for Business
Corinne Ryan, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum and Instruction
Mary Ellen Chiera, District Clerk

I. Public Hearing Regarding Amendment of Policy 5300.55 - Corporal Punishment and Emergency Interventions

Trust Nashelsky explained that amendments were made to address recent amendments to the Commissioner of Education's Regulations. Since this Policy is a part of the Code of Conduct, a public hearing needs to be held before the Policy is voted on by the Board. Redlined and clean versions of the Policy will be posted on the District's website for review, and there will be a second reading and adoption at the January 17th Board Meeting.

II. Opening of Meeting

President Mansell called the meeting to order at 7:02 p.m.

III. President's Report

President Mansell began by reflecting on Rye Neck's achievements in 2023. Our athletes have performed brilliantly in sports, our musicians and thespians have excelled on stage, winning a Metro Award for best musical, *Anastasia*, and our students for taking advantage of our wide array of course offerings.

Next, she thanked the administration for their commitment to providing high quality curricula, programming and facilities for our students and families, and the teachers and staff for developing valuable relationships with our students and fostering their love of learning. She acknowledged the parents for supporting the students and the school community by volunteering their time.

Finally, President Mansell wished everyone a joyful holiday season and a Happy New Year.

IV. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Lutinski began his report by updating the community on the work of the Strategic Planning group. He stated that the group, made up of parents, an alumni, students, teachers and administrators, had a two-day session with a consultant at which they set three goals for the District, extending into 2025. Goal one is to embrace the mind by focusing on our ability to approach problems by asking questions, exploring solutions, taking action, and reflecting on outcomes; goal 2 is to embrace the heart by building environments that foster empathy, compassion and connection to the world, extend our sense of purpose outside the classroom, and fuel our curiosity and passion; and goal three is to build a professional learning community that ensures teacher growth leading to enhanced student outcomes. In other words, the head, the heart, and the staff development to support it all.

Next, he explained that they are now forming staff action plan teams for each goal. They will get started after the break to determine what needs to be done to accomplish each goal, and will refine revisions to our Mission Statement and our new Portrait of a Rye Neck Learner to make sure they are properly integrated.

In addition, Dr. Lutinski advised the community that he attended a symposium entitled *Addressing Anti Semitism & Other Forms of Hate*. The foundational discussion was about recognition and collective identification of antisemitism, but there was a broad theme about humans treating humans with dignity and respect.

Finally, he wished everyone a wonderful holiday recess with family and friends.

V. Recognition

Retirement - Lauren Wolman

Mr. Scarantino recognized Lauren Wolman on her retirement from Rye Neck after 26 years in the District.

Athletics

Mr. Ceglia recognized the following student athletes who were selected for the Section One All Sportsmanship Team:

Leah Miceli - Game Day Cheer
Alexis Favre - Cross Country
Ainara Schube Barriola - Cross country
Amelia Kligman - Field Hockey
Anthony Santiago - Football
Nicholas Fernandez - Boys Soccer
Estefani Medina - Girls Soccer
Dylan White - Girls Tennis
Isabel Palacios Ferrer - Volleyball

VI. Curriculum Presentation - Data

Mrs. Ryan reviewed for the Board the 2023 data for the District. With regard to the grades 3 - 8 State assessments, she reviewed the proficiency rates by grade, and a comparison of the proficiency rates from 2022-2023 by cohort.

With regard to AP's, she reviewed the number of students who participated in APs from 2019 to 2023 and the number of students who scored a 3 or higher. In addition, Mrs. Ryan noted that the College Board recognized Rye Neck as AP School Honor Roll Platinum Level - their highest honor. Rye Neck also received the AP Access Award.

Next, with regard to New York State Accountability (ESSA), Mrs. Ryan reviewed the indicators calculated in the 2024-25 school year using the 2022-23 and 2023-24 school year results. The criteria for elementary/middle school is weighted average achievement, core subject performance, English language proficiency, chronic absenteeism and student growth. For the high school, the criteria is weighted average achievement, core subject performance, English language proficiency, chronic absenteeism, graduation rate, and college, career and civic readiness.

Finally, Mrs. Ryan advised that grades 5 through 8 will be taking computer based tests, and she reviewed the new recommendations from the Blue Ribbon Commission.

VII. Approval of Consent Agenda

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Wagner and seconded by Trustee Nashelsky, it was

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District approves the following consent agenda:

1. Approval of the Minutes of the November 29, 2023 Board of Education Planning Session
2. Approval of Personnel Appointments and Leaves
3. Approval of Retroactive Appointment
4. Appointment of Extraclassroom Activities
5. Approval of Disposal of Furniture & Equipment
6. Approval of Disposal of Unused Ballots
7. Approval of CSE Recommendations
8. Approval of Homebound Instruction
9. Approval of Settlement Between the District and Icon Const. Gr., Inc.
10. Rescission and Approval of Change Order
11. Awarding of Contract for E-Rate Category 1 and Category 2
12. Approval of Budget Transfers
13. Approval of Financial Reports
14. Approval of Tax Certiorari Settlements

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

VIII. Financial Reports for Information

The Board was presented with the Warrant Schedule - All Funds for information Purposes.

IX. Communications to the Board

President Mansell reported that the Board has received one communications since the last meeting regarding personnel.

X. Citizens' Privilege of the Floor

There were no communications made by the public.

XI. Reports - Community School Groups

Student Senate - Dylan Schneider

Student Senate President Dylan Schneider reported that the Freshman class was underrepresented in the Student Senate, so the Senate spoke directly to the Freshman class at a homeroom assembly and held a special election to fill the three open seats.

Next, he stated that the SADD club organized "Lei Off Marijuana Day". There were Hawaiian shirts, tropical music, and leis around everyones neck in order to raise awareness and prevent drug use. In addition, the high school is having a pre-break spirit week this week with Holiday Hat Monday, Twin Tuesday, White Out Wednesday, PJ Thursday and Ugly Sweater Friday, and the Senate and Key Club will organize a food drive to help needy families in the community in January.

In addition, Dylan reminded the community that while it is great to support and praise the seniors on successful college acceptances, it is important to remind them that a rejection letter does not define who they are as students and that their futures are still very bright.

Finally, he reported that he had the opportunity to participate as a member of the Strategic Planning Group.

PTSA - Piper Stevens

PTSA representative Piper Stevens reported that the Health and Wellness Committee donated 234 pounds of candy to Rye Smiles Pediatric Dentistry who donates it to local first responders or ships it to our troops overseas. The Environmental/Recycling Committee ran a coat drive and all winter apparel was sent to The Sharing Shelf in Portchester.

At Daniel Warren, Animal Embassies visited the students in November. At F.E. Bellows, Path to Rhythm visited third graders on December 6th, and the fourth grade held their annual Circus on November 17th. Fifth Grade Affairs sold concessions at the circus. The middle/high school students were visited by historian and storyteller, Sheila Arnold, and parent meteorologist Rob Marciano spoke to high school students about extreme weather. In January, the sixth grade students will have a virtual visit from The Cleveland Museum regarding Egyptian mummification.

With regard to Fundraising Mrs. Stevens, stated that both Daniel Warrena and F.E. Bellows had book fairs this past month; a casino themed Parents' Night Out took place in

November; and After School Club registration for the winter session is underway until December 22nd.

In addition, the SEAC brought in psychologist, Candida Fink to speak about “Supporting Our Neurodiverse Children: Keeping Them Safe So They Can Learn and Thrive”, and will be bringing in another speaker in February for which the topic will be “Surviving the Teenage Years”; the Culture Club visited the Smithsonian American Indian Museum and went to the Met on December 18th; the Origami Club had a holiday themed workshop; the Book Club met to discuss “The Years” by Annie Ernaux; and class parents are planning holiday parties at Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows this week.

Finally, Mrs. Stevens advised that the next General Membership meeting is scheduled for January 16th at 7 p.m.

Booster Club - Jocelyn Donat

Booster Club President Jocelyn Donat reported that the Booster Club sponsored the annual basketball tournament during the first week of December at which Rye Neck hosted three schools. The girls’ team finished first and the boys’ team finished second. They provided trophies, plaques and healthy snack bags for each team.

In addition, Mrs. Donat advised that they are now preparing to host the Harlem Wizards on January 26th. Staff from all four schools will be playing against the Wizards. In addition, they will be visiting Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows on January 11th to promote the game.

Finally, she reported that the online holiday spirit wear store took 85 orders totaling over 300 items.

RNTA - Kathy Offner

RNTA President Kathy Offner began by stating that the RNTA honors and thanks Ms. Lauren Wolman for over 20 years of work on the RNTA and wished her good luck in her retirement. She stated that the Rye Neck school district is an exceptional place and she is honored to work alongside her colleagues and friends in the district and could not find a better group to represent as RNTA President.

Next, Mrs. Offner pointed out that teaching can be the most criticized and undervalued profession and since Covid, there is a new lack of civility and tolerance than ever before. Within this community there is, among some, a feeling of mistrust and lack of faith in the abilities of the teachers and administrators and in the schools curriculum. Sometimes the tone of emails directed at teachers and administrators can be angry and critical. She stated that they are deserving of civility, respect and appreciation, and asked that parents take a moment before sending an email and remember that the teachers and administrators are people who have dedicated themselves to creating a school district that the community is proud to live in.

Additionally, Mrs. Offner reiterated that the RNTA is strongly united in stating their deep affection and unwavering support for Dr. Eric Lutinski and the administration of Rye Neck. She stated that it is their profound privilege to have Dr. Lutinski in the role of Superintendent.

Finally, on behalf of the RNTA, she wished the Board of Ed, Administration, and the entire community a Happy Holiday Season and a healthy, Happy New Year.

XII. Reports - Board of Education

Office Hours

President Nashelsky and Trustee Yong will represent the Board at the next Office Hours, January 3, 2024 at 5:30 p.m. Please call the District Clerk by Friday, December 22nd to make an appointment and state your topic of interest.

West/Put Report

Trustee Wagner reported that she attended WestPut's advocacy meeting on December 4th at which they focused on finalizing the list of legislative priorities for 2023-24. The priorities primarily focus on funding, flexibility, long term funding and financial planning, staffing, and special services.

Audit Committee

Trustee Yong reported that the Committee met on October 5th. In addition, they received a proposal last week from internal auditor, Sanossian, Sardis & Co. with specifications for this year's special review project which is conducting a phishing and penetration test of Rye Neck's IT systems. This will begin after the December break. She advised that the next Audit Committee meeting is scheduled for January 25th.

Policy Committee

Trustee Nashelsky reported that there are nine policies on tonight's agenda for a first read. The next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for January 24th.

XIII. New Business

First Reading - Policy 0110 - Sexual Harassment Prevention Policy

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to address changes to New York State's Workplace Sexual Harassment policy.

First Reading - Policy 2410 - Formulation, Adoption and Amendment of Policies

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to clarify the Board's obligations related to creating, reviewing or amending policies.

First Reading - Policy 4321 - Programs for Students with Disabilities Under the IDEA and New York's Education Law Article 89

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to address the New York State Education Department's recent clarification that districts are obligated to provide special education services to students with disabilities until those students turn 22.

First Reading - Policy 4321.12- Use of Time Out and Physical Restraint

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to address recent amendments to the Commissioner of Education's Regulations regarding the use of timeout and physical restraint.

First Reading - Policy 4772 - Graduation Ceremonies

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to address the New York State Education Department’s recent clarification that districts are obligated to provide special education services to students with disabilities until those students turn 22

First Reading - Policy 5300.55 - Corporal Punishment and Emergency Interventions

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to address recent amendments to the Commissioner of Education’s Regulations.

First Reading - Policy 5605 - Voter Registration

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to address a recently amended state law about student voter registration and pre-registration.

First Reading - Policy 6240-R - Investments Regulation

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to be consistent with the practices of the District’s banks.

First Reading - Policy 6645 - Fixed and Right to Use Assets

Trustee Nashelsky stated that amendments were made to address the auditor’s recommendations to address right to use assets and subscription based information technology arrangements. The title of the policy was also revised to “Fixed and Right to Use Assets”.

XIV. Public Comments Concerning Above

There were no comments made by the public.

XVI. Adjournment of Meeting

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Wagner and seconded by Trustee Yong, it was

RESOLVED, that there being no further business before the Board, that the Board of Education Meeting of December 20, 2023 be adjourned.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

President Mansell adjourned the meeting at 7:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Chiera
District Clerk