



**RYE NECK UNION FREE SCHOOL DISTRICT
300 HORNIDGE ROAD
MAMARONECK, NEW YORK 10543
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
OCTOBER 18, 2023**

Present: President Rebecca Mansell
Trustee Jason Carmel
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. Opening of Meeting

President Mansell called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

II. President's Report

President Mansell began by acknowledging the ongoing crisis in the Middle East and acknowledged that the war in Israel is causing anxiety, fear, and pain for many, and assured that the childrens' physical and emotional wellbeing are a top priority of the District. In addition, she stated that Rye Neck condemns terrorism, antisemitism, racism, bigotry, xenophobia, and discrimination in all its forms, and is committed to fostering an environment of inclusivity, empathy, and support for all our students and staff.

President Mansell stated that these values are central to the Rye Neck School District and are demonstrated through a partnership with the Anti Defamation League which designated the Middle School a "No Place for Hate" institution. All the schools in the district support the ADL's mission to protect democracy and ensure a just and inclusive society for all.

III. Superintendent's Report

Dr. Lutinski reported that Homecoming week was busy, and students in all four schools enjoyed spirit activities. At the Middle and High Schools, the Seniors and 6th graders enjoyed Buddy Day, and a pep rally on Friday, and student athletes visited the students at Daniel Warren and F.E. Bellows throughout the week. There was outstanding community turnout at the games on Saturday, and the Booster Club did a tremendous job of creating

spirit and a festive environment for the teams, athletes and coaches. All Homecoming teams were undefeated.

Dr. Lutinski also reported that last week, Rye Neck Middle/High School Video teacher, David Golden, was honored by LMC Media at their 40th Anniversary Gala. And thanked LMC Media for their work that supports our district.

Next, Dr. Lutinski announced that this week is Digital Citizenship Week. Students are participating in lessons built around digital citizenship, such as online responsibility, the power of words, the importance of media balance, and the impact of artificial intelligence.

Dr. Lutinski then advised the community that the district has sent applications for two opportunities for community participation on our Facilities Planning Advisory Team (FPAT) and on our Technology Planning Advisory Team (TPAT). Participants on the FPAT will help with activities such as review maintenance projects as proposed by the district architect based on the 2022 Building Condition Survey, identifying designs that enhance student learning, and crafting recommendations to the Board for project work and a five year capital project plan. Participants on the TPAT will help with a review of the new website template and enhanced Rye Neck app, help with prioritization of our equipment buying cycle, help with recommendations on technology infrastructure upgrades, and review technology security enhancements. Descriptions for both teams and applications can be found on the district website. The deadline for the FPAT applications is October 20th, and the deadline for the TPAT applications is October 27th.

Dr. Lutinski announced that the New York State School Boards Association recognizes October 16th through 20th as this year's School Board Recognition Week. He acknowledged and thanked Rye Neck's Board members for their commitment to our community and its children.

Lastly, Dr. Lutinski stated that he will be presenting three candidates for tenure, which is a process by which a teacher, assistant, or other professional staff member earns a status that ensures that they are free to advocate for their students above any other consideration.

IV. Tenure Recognition

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

RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, hereby that the Board grant tenure to **Nichole Flasz**, Certification: Physical Education, K-12, effective 11/01/2023.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

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

RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, hereby that the Board grant tenure to **Chelsea Gillespie**, Certification: Mathematics,

7-12, effective 11/20/2023.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

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

RESOLVED, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, hereby that the Board grant tenure to **Nicole Crispinelli**, Certification: School Psychologist, effective 12/29/2023.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

V. Curriculum Presentation - Enrichment

The Enrichment team of Leigh Ann Kowallick, Jessica Finney-Trotta and Linda Costelloe presented the Board with an overview of Rye Neck's Enrichment program. They explained that there is a new team structure and leadership with building-based enrichment coordinators and new opportunities for collaboration and communication with all members of Rye Neck's learning community; a new roadmap has been developed for the work ahead; and a renewed vision, purpose and goals for enrichment teaching and learning for all Rye Neck students has emerged. They explained how Rye Neck defines enrichment and reviewed the enrichment domains: collaboration, exploration, engagement, self-direction, global reach and creativity.

Next, they explained that enrichment is different at each of the schools. Each building crafts and cultivates experiences and programs that focus on the learning stages, styles and interests of the students, and is ever evolving. The types and phases of enrichment are as follows: wonder and exploration at Daniel Warren; deepening and delving and F.E. Bellows; expanding and cultivating in the Middle School; and specializing and refining in the High School.

Finally, they stated that the next steps in the year ahead will be to explore and identify enrichment in and out of the classroom; growth and expansion of existing enrichment programs and classroom experiences; development of new K-12 enrichment, including PD opportunities for staff; and enhance and expand communication to students, staff and community regarding enrichment.

VI. ESS Update - Wil Siegel

Mr. Siegel addressed the Board regarding Effective School Solutions (ESS) and explained why the district is using ESS to provide therapeutic services and how they were selected. He then explained the multi-tiered support services model they use to develop the tools that Rye Neck can use going forward. The in-house therapeutic clinician will provide services that allow students who are at risk to remain in school by providing in-house therapy, support groups, and therapy for families.

VII. Reports - Community School Groups

Student Senate - Dylan Schneider

Student Senate President Dylan Schneider reported that Spirit Week was a large success. Senior Buddy Day topped off with the pep rally formed bonds between the seniors and 6th graders. The Pep Rally was filled with activities such as dances performed by athletes, and kids participating in relays. He thanked Mr. Ceglia, the coaches, Mrs. Ianello, and the Booster Club, all of whom organize and support the teams.

Finally, Dylan stated that the Senate has a variety of ideas for upcoming events. They will be surveying the student body on the availability and selection of food in the dining hall, organizing a school-wide Pink Out for Breast Cancer Awareness month, working on the Halloween festivities in the High School, and hope to organize a school-wide collection drive as part of their Leading by Example campaign.

PTSA - Ruth Homberg

PTSA President Ruth Homberg announced that the PTSA raised almost \$2,000 at its back-to-school social with almost 150 attendees, and they just finished the Ribbons for Rye Neck fundraiser with donations totalling over \$38,000 from over 400 families. This money helps to provide enrichment opportunities for the district.

Mrs. Homberg reported that the PTSA organized class photos for both elementary schools and the Middle School, and the Health and Wellness Committee hosted an after-school playdate and costume swap in advance of Halloween. The Environmental/Recycling Committee is organizing the Fall Walk/Bike/Scoot to School Week and working with the Health and Wellness Committee to create a Living Mural where the children will collect leaves and lightweight blooms and attach them to the mural. Students will also have some trivia questions concerning the environment, and, in conjunction with this, the PTSA will host a Family Kickball night at FEB.

Mrs. Homberg then stated that the Tanglewood Marionettes came to Daniel Warren and performed *Cinderella* for all students, and at the Middle School they are sponsoring Steps to Success which is after school help for students. The Heard in Rye Committee will have an event tomorrow, and the first SEAC meeting is scheduled for October 24th where Wil Siegel will introduce Effective School Solutions (ESS). Additionally, afterschool clubs have started at the elementary schools with 27 clubs up and running between the two schools and 285 students enrolled. They are working to offer the winter clubs soon.

Lastly, Mrs. Homberg reported that the RNIC Potluck Dinner is this Friday in the Middle/High School Dining Hall, and the Middle School Spooktacular is scheduled for October 27th. There will be a DJ, pizza and more fun for students. Parent's Casino Night will take place on November 16th, and tickets will go on sale soon.

Booster Club - Jocelyn Donat

Booster Club President Jocelyn Donat reported that the Booster Club has been busy since early September with its Back-to-School swag sale which raised approximately \$600; the Fall Festival and silent auction at Rye Grill & Bar which raised approximately \$11,000; and Homecoming festivities for which they sponsored activities and games, sold food at the concession stand, provided Senior Signs, provided t-shirts for all High School students, and sold about \$1,800 worth of swag merchandise. She stated that the

concession stand raised \$550 for the Junior Class to help with expenses for Prom, and the Booster Club increased that amount to \$800.

In addition, Mrs. Donat stated that the Booster Club donated money to the theater for the fall play, and they will be selling concessions at the shows. They are having a Halloween “Fun”raiser, running a short auction to sell items leftover from the fundraiser, and sponsoring a self defense program, mindfulness walk and yoga class.

Finally, Mrs. Donat said that the community can look forward to a Holiday online swag sale, a basketball tournament, and the Harlem Wizards fundraiser.

RNTA - Linda Costelloe

RNTA Representative Linda Costelloe began her report by stating that districtwide, Spirit Day was a huge success, and activities to encourage digital citizenship are happening in all the buildings during Digital Citizenship Week.

At Daniel Warren, picture day took place; the fire department will visit on October 26th, the Kindergarten Pumpkin Fest is scheduled for October 27th, parents can begin signing up for report card conferences on Sign Up Genius, and students have been enjoying the Recess in the Peace Garden Activities.

At F.E. Bellows, the 4th grade took a trip to Museum Village, Town Hall meetings with Principal Scarantino begin this month, Halloween parade and parties are being planned, the Early Morning Library program has started, picture day took place earlier this month, Student Council elections are being held this Friday, and the 3rd grade will take a virtual field trip to the Amazon Rainforest at the beginning of November.

In the Middle/High School, Spirit Week and a Pep Rally were held to celebrate Homecoming. In addition, on Friday, Senior Buddy Day took place where the seniors linked up with their 6th grade buddy and treated them to lunch and an afternoon filled with games.

In the Middle School, students participated in Banned Book Week, the 8th grade will take a trip to Philadelphia this Friday, the 7th grade will visit the BOCES Ropes Course on October 31st for team building activities, Ms. Feinman’s 7th grade drama class made puppet shows about being a good friend to send to the elementary schools, and approximately 50 7th graders are working on their entries to the Lions Club International’s Peace Poster Contest.

In the High School, the seniors had their class trip to Chelsea Piers and 9th graders took a trip to the Maritime Aquarium. Tickets to the fall drama *The Outsiders* are currently on sale. Performances will take place on October 26th & 27th. Our SADD chapter will celebrate Red Ribbon Week next week, and the Junior Class is sponsoring a Chipotle fundraiser on November 4th and a Dig fundraiser on December 16th. Money raised from these events helps keep ticket prices down for the Prom. Lastly, new STEM Board will be holding an “Experiments Night” where high school students will design, demonstrate and teach various experiments to elementary school students.

VIII. Citizens' Privilege of the Floor

There were no comments made by the public.

IX. Approval of Consent Agenda

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Nashelsky and seconded by Trustee Wagner, 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 October 4, 2023 Board of Education Planning Session
2. Approval of Personnel Appointments, Leaves and Resignations
3. Approval of Transportation Contract
4. Approval of Authorizing Appropriations from General Fund to Retirement Contribution Reserve Subfund
5. Approval of Change to List of Impartial Hearing Officers
6. Approval of Additional Extraclassroom Activities
7. Approval of Updated District Consultant List
8. Approval of Disposal of Equipment
9. Approval of Piggyback Contract for HVAC Services
10. Approval of Updated District Maintenance List
11. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement
12. Approval of CSE Recommendations
13. Approval of Homebound Instruction
14. Approval of Budget Transfers
15. Approval of Financial Reports

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

X. Financial Reports for Information

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

XI. Communications to the Board

President Mansell reported that the Board has received 5 communications since the last Meeting, 2 concerning the Middle East, 2 concerning technology and 1 concerning the Technology Planning Advisory Team.

XII. Reports - Board of Education Office Hours

Trustee Golle and Trustee Carmel will represent the Board at the next Office Hours, November 1, 2023 at 5:30 p.m. Please call the District Clerk by Friday, October 27th to make an appointment and state your topic of interest.

West/Put Report

Trustee Wagner reported that the next meeting is scheduled for October 30th at which time they will discuss priorities for 2023/24.

Audit Committee

Trustee Yong reported that the first meeting of the year was held on October 5th at which the external auditors, Nawrocki Smith, LLP presented a summary of the district's audited financial statements, a summary of the single audit for the district's major federal award programs, and a summary of the audited Extraclassroom Activity Funds for the year ended June 30, 2023. Mr. Tellier praised Carolyn Mahar and her team for their quick and accurate completion of the books. All risk areas previously identified were fully addressed. There was one recommendation in the action plan to adopt a capitalization policy for right-to-use assets and subscription based information technology arrangements. This policy will be reviewed by the Policy Committee. The Audit Committee recommended that the Board accept the financial reports as submitted.

In addition to Nawrocki Smith's report, Trustee Yong stated that our internal audit firm, Sanossian Sardis & Co., LLP introduced members from Thrive Network to present their proposal for this year's special review project - phishing and penetration testing of the district's IT system. Thrive Network will provide the Committee with a proposal for their services. The Committee agreed to table this discussion until it has a chance to review the proposal.

The next meeting is scheduled for 8 a.m. on January 25, 2024.

Policy Committee

Trustee Nashelsky reported that the Policy Committee has not met since the last Board meeting, so there is nothing new to report at this time. The next policy meeting is scheduled for November 21st, so there should be more to report at the December Board meeting.

XIII. New Business

Acceptance of External Audit and District Management Action Plan

Upon Motion duly made by Trustee Golle and seconded by Trustee Carmel, it was

RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District accept the annual external audit report from Nawrocki Smith dated June 30, 2023; and it was

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District approve the attached district management action plans prepared in response to the external audit.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

Appointment of Special Counsel

WHEREAS, at the September 20, 2023 general meeting the Board of Education of the Rye Neck UFSD resolved to retain the services of Special Counsel for purposes of exercising an independent review of the process and all related matters associated with a recent proposed technology procurement, along with possible recommendations for amending the district's procurement policies; and

WHEREAS, at the same meeting, the Board of Education designated the Board President to research and recommend Special Counsel to the Board of Education as soon as practicable; and

WHEREAS; the Board of Education reviewed and evaluated four legal firms and, as a result of this review, has selected Volz & Vigliotta, PLLC as Special Counsel.

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

RESOLVED that the Board of Education of the Rye Neck Union Free School District appoint Volz & Vigliotta, PLLC as Special Counsel to perform the aforementioned independent review; and it was

FURTHER RESOLVED that the District to appropriate up to \$35,000.00 of funds in the District's 2023-2024 budget or unappropriated fund balance or a combination thereof to pay the cost the review by the appointed Special Counsel; and it was

FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board authorizes a corresponding increase (or so much thereof as is necessary) in the amount of the District budget for the 2023-2024 school year and fiscal year to satisfy this obligation and determines that such amount is hereby appropriated therefor.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

XIV. Public Comments Concerning Above

A few community members addressed the Board with questions and concerns regarding the resolution to appoint special counsel.

XV. Adjournment of Meeting

Upon motion duly made by Trustee Wagner seconded by Trustee Carmel, it was

RESOLVED, that there being no further business before the Board, that the Board of Education Meeting of October 18, 2023 be adjourned.

AYES: All Present

NAYES: None

President Mansell adjourned the meeting at 8:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Mary Ellen Chiera
District Clerk