

Board Advisory Committee Report - November 7th 2019

Board of Education - Great Neck Public Schools

On November 7th 2019, the members of the Board Advisory Committee convened for the second time in the Phipps Building.

In attendance, Miss. Cheung is a South High School student, Mr. Sanders and Mr. Taied are North High School students; Mr. Li is a school parent; Mr. Jahng a community resident; Ms. Applebaum, Dr. Holtzman are the school administrators. Ms. Peirez and Mr. Shi are the board members on the advisory. Ms. Berkowitz, the board president, is the ex officio in attendance. Mr. Powell and Dr. Hickey are the featured speakers.

Mr. Powell, assistant superintendent of business, discussed the financial operations from last school year. Our district received an unqualified audit opinion from our independent auditor, which in essence is a clean bill of health. Our school district also did well in the fiscal stress management system conducted by the New York State. For the current school year budget, we see a moderate increase in healthcare insurance, personnel and retirement system costs. We also forecast a favorable interest rate for the issuance of the second serial bond. Our school district is on a very sound financial footing.

Dr. Hickey shared with us the capital projects that were implemented over the summer, including the libraries at JFK Elementary, South Middle and South High; the security system upgrades in all our buildings and extensive roofing projects. Most projects are drawing to a close at this point. Due to the increasing enrollments in the last few years, both EM Baker and Lakeville schools are bursting at the seams. There will be a Capital Proposition vote on December 3rd to address this need for additional spaces at both schools. There will be no increase in taxes as the projects are funded entirely by reserve and fund balance.

Two assistant superintendents also shared with us the security enhancements made last year, including the vestibules installations at the main entrance of all our schools, the security and evacuation drills at building levels, the student badge systems for both high schools. We will continue to improve the school security and continue to work with our local police departments.

Our student representatives asked for possible improvement in the WiFi coverage in certain areas of our buildings, additional website access for educational purposes, allowance for personal devices on the school network to complement school-issued iPads, improved Google drive usage, etc. The list was quite long and would be passed onto Mr. Epstein, our director of Technology.

Some questions were also raised for GPA calculations in the South High School but we felt that it would be a more appropriate discussion at the Share Decision Making Committee at the building level instead.

e-Cigarette or vaping prevention was also discussed at length. Our student representatives were aware of the health concerns. They shared with us the prevention and education work that had already begun. The board policy specifically prohibits e-cigarette on campus.

The committee will meet three more times this school year. Our next meeting is January 16th and we wish everyone an early Happy New Year!

Respectfully Submitted,

Jeff Shi
Trustee, Board of Education
Chairperson, Board Advisory Committee