

MINUTES
ROCKY POINT PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
November 23, 2009

Members Present:

Michael Nofi
Edward Darcey
Michael Ferrara
John Lessler

Also Present:

Carla L. D'Ambrosio, Ed.D.
Gary Bixhorn
Anja Groth (arriving at 6:45 P.M.)
Michael Ring (arriving at 6:45 P.M.)
David Pearl (arriving at 6:45 P.M.)

At 5:35 P.M. a regular public meeting of the Board of Education was called to order in conference room 121-A of the Rocky Point High School by Michael Nofi.

Executive Session

At 5:40 P.M. John Lessler made a motion and Michael Ferrara seconded to adjourn to Executive Session to discuss particular personnel matters.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

At 7:25 P.M. Edward Darcey made a motion and Michael Ferrara seconded to end Executive Session and re-convene to Open Session in the auditorium of the Rocky Point High School.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

PUBLIC SESSION

Mr. Nofi called the meeting to order at 7:38 P.M.

Pledge of Allegiance

Present: Michael Nofi, President
Edward Darcey, Trustee
Michael Ferrara, Trustee
John Lessler, Trustee
Carla L. D'Ambrosio Ed.D., Superintendent of Schools
Michael F. Ring, Ed.D., Asst. Supt. for Finance/Operations
Anja Groth, Acting Assistant Superintendent for Instruction
Patricia Jones, District Clerk

Absent: Diane Burke, Vice President

Mr. Nofi welcomed those in attendance and invited anyone with questions and/or comments to come to the microphone.

- Mr. Joseph Cognito thanked Dr. D'Ambrosio for the opportunity to speak on behalf of VFW Post 6249. Mr. Cognito extended his gratitude and sincere appreciation to the students, administration and staff of both the Joseph A. Edgar School and the Rocky Point High School for the outstanding Veterans Day salute to veterans. Noting that this was the twelfth year the students recognized and honored veterans, Mr. Cognito said that he and his fellow veterans were proud that the "tradition continues." Mr. Cognito extended special thanks to Mrs. Tvelia, Mr. Knapp, Mr. Yashowitz and Mr. Tapler at the Joseph A. Edgar School and Mr. Caulfield, and his administrative staff and faculty members, for the moving ceremonies and guest speakers and for their extraordinary support of all military veterans and present-serving troops. Mr. Cognito singled out Mr. Brooke Bonomi in recognition of his dedication and support of the Wounded Warrior Project and his involvement with the Singing Santas. Mr. Cognito noted that the veterans at the Stony Brook Veterans Home looked forward each year to a visit from the Singing Santas. Mr. Cognito praised Mr. Richard Acritelli upon his receipt of the NYS Veterans of Foreign Wars Teacher Award and the work he performs in connection with the Wounded Warrior Project.
- Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Reilly thanked Dr. Ring for his professional involvement with a bus stop issue. Mr. Riley provided a detailed explanation of the circumstances contributing to the dangerous situation at his child's bus stop and asked that this situation be further looked into to avoid an "accident waiting to happen." Mr. Nofi stated he appreciated Mr. and Mrs. Reilly's concerns and asked Dr. Ring to continue to explore additional options in an attempt to resolve this situation. Mr. Reilly expressed his gratitude to Dr. Ring for answering his calls and responding promptly to his concerns.
- Mr. Friscia announced that he and members of the Rocky Point Teachers' Association were in attendance at the meeting to ask if the Board of Education and the school district were open to returning to the negotiation table in order to settle the teacher contract. Referring to the recently announced search for a new superintendent of schools, Mr. Friscia expressed his concerns that a wait for a new superintendent to settle the contract may be detrimental to the teachers. Mr. Nofi thanked Mr. Friscia for his question. Mr. Nofi provided an overview of specific meeting dates and circumstances surrounding both the union's and administration's attempts to resolve the issue. Mr. Nofi concluded his comments by stating the latest effort to solve the issue ended after a fifteen minute meeting at which the Rocky Point Teachers' Association declared an impasse. As a result, a fact-finding process has begun. Mr. Nofi commented that it was the Board of Education's desire to "put this contract behind us." Mr. Nofi informed Mr. Friscia that if the union was willing to bring something new to discuss at the negotiation table, he would be open to that conversation.
- Ms. Barbara Dallon expressed her concerns that the teachers did not have a settled contract and that administrative positions were being created. Ms. Dallon said both academic and sports programs were being decreased thus affecting the

students. Ms. Dallon commented that a settlement of the contract would be in the best interest of the community. Mr. Nofi responded to Ms. Dallon's comments by saying that neither he nor the members of the Board of Education were happy with the recent reductions in teachers, staff or administration and that the district had no place to go for further reductions in staffing. Noting that the district was a district of limited means, Mr. Nofi stated that difficult and fiscally prudent decisions needed to be made during the budgetary process, a process that was perhaps not as clear as it could be. Mr. Nofi said efforts would be made to clarify the process for a better understanding by the general public. Mr. Nofi further commented that if he could, he would bring back all fourteen teachers. In response to Ms. Dallon's comment concerning the creation of administrative positions while reductions were being made in academic and sports programs, Mr. Nofi clarified that a full-time administrative position was replaced by the addition of a 1/5 administrator only and that all programs, both academic and sports, were equally important to the children of the district.

- Ms. Dallon cited the recent two million dollars lost in state aid as a result of an untimely filing of the required paperwork to receive this aid. Mr. Nofi explained that the district has pursued and will continue to pursue all avenues to re-find the lost monies which impact the district at approximately \$200,000 per year. Mr. Lessler suggested that if the community united as they were united this evening in an effort to fight for its fair share of state aid revenue, and the fight was successful, it might be possible to bring teachers back.
- Following Mrs. Therese King's question as to how the community could do this, Dr. D'Ambrosio remarked that Long Island school districts account for approximately seventy-two percent of students and receive only twelve percent of state aid. Dr. D'Ambrosio mentioned her involvement with other superintendents in "One Voice for Long Island" to make this disparity clear and seek legislative action to correct it. Dr. D'Ambrosio expressed the importance of working collaboratively with the PTA, as Rocky Point Schools has done in the past, to brainstorm and seek solutions. Dr. D'Ambrosio commented that the present formula for the funding of school systems was no longer working, nor was it conducive in supporting education; Dr. D'Ambrosio stated that the funding of education "cannot continue to fall on the backs of property owners."
- Mr. Ferrara suggested district residents communicate with local legislators through phone calls and letter-writing. Mr. Ferrara announced that the district had applied to Governor Paterson to reinstate the lost monies and that Governor Paterson vetoed the district's request. Citing the possible prospect of reduced state aid in the near future, Mr. Ferrara stressed the importance of getting ahead of this possibility and the importance of the community in voicing its opposition to such reductions.
- Following Dr. D'Ambrosio's comment that the PTA planned to muster community support and make its presence known, Mary Heely, co-president of the PTA, announced that the PTA has worked and continues to work with administration but needs the support of community members. Ms. Heely implored the teachers to attend PTA meetings as, the more members present at meetings,

the more ideas to discuss. Ms. Heely invited teachers to become members in order to help the PTA get things done.

There were no further questions or comments. Mr. Nofi reminded all there would be another opportunity at the end of the meeting for additional comments or additional questions.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. William B. Caulfield, principal, Rocky Point High School

- Rocky Point students handily defeated the students from East Islip in the Long Island Challenge. The competition will be broadcast on January 11, 2010 at 6:30 P.M.
- The annual Singing Santas Concert will be held on December 5th in the high school auditorium beginning at 7:00 P.M. This is Mr. Bonomi's twenty-second year working with the Singing Santas and raising money for those in need.
- The annual Holiday Winter Concert will be held on December 17th in the high school auditorium beginning at 7:30 P.M.

Dr. Scott O'Brien, principal, Rocky Point Middle School

- During the month of November, students and staff collected nearly 1,000 items of food as part of the Thanksgiving Food Drive. Dr. O'Brien thanked the guidance department for overseeing the project and helping to distribute boxes of food and turkeys to those community members in need.
- Under the direction of Mr. Connelly, the Student Council sponsored its first fall dance.
- All middle school students participated in the second and third of a three-part series of Police Smart Assemblies during the month of November. All students learned about internet safety and drug awareness from a Suffolk County police officer.
- Congratulations to the members of the girls' field hockey team and the coaches for an undefeated season this year.
- Ms. Audra Hallock and other teachers from the science department held the second Community Astronomy Night on November 3rd. The turnout for students and their families was great. The next Community Astronomy Night is scheduled for December 18th from 6 to 8 P.M. in the back of the middle school.
- Following an overview of the Natural Helpers program, Dr. O'Brien recognized those students selected by their peers and who participated in the training to be a Natural Helper. Dr. O'Brien also recognized school psychologist, Meredith Dougherty and guidance counselor, Janine Quigley, for their direction in helping students and staff during the training to improve their helping skills, to contact helping resources when problems exceed their limits, and to take better care of themselves by setting limits with friends and peers. Under their direction, approximately thirty students and adult facilitators learned to develop the capability to prevent some of the problems of adolescence; to develop the capability to intervene effectively with troubled friends; to develop positive ways

of taking care of themselves; and to increase their capacity to improve their school and community. The students and those teachers and staff who participated in the training of the students were called to the front of the auditorium to be publicly recognized.

Ms. Carol Tvelia, principal, Joseph A. Edgar School

- Ms. Tvelia introduced Mr. Mark Yashowitz, Ms. Laurie Varriale and Mr. Craig Knapp for recognition of their fifth-grade Student Council members, GATES students and High Note students. Each teacher highlighted their respective students' contributions to the 12th Annual Veterans Day Assembly.
- Parent-Teacher conferences will be held on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday of next week. Early dismissal will be in effect on these days.
- Ms. Maria Amoscato was invited to the podium in recognition of her *Heroes of Hope Award* from the American Cancer Society. This honor was bestowed upon Ms. Amoscato in recognition of her work with the annual walkathon.
- Ms. Katerina Kyriakakis was invited to the podium in recognition of receiving a citation from Artsonia, an on-line art site for the posting of students' art work. Ms. Kyriakakis was one of only ten winners in all of New York State. Ms. Tvelia noted that the Joseph A. Edgar Intermediate School ranks number five in the nation for visits to the Artsonia website.

Mr. Kenneth Crawford, acting principal, Frank J. Carasiti Elementary School

- On November 6th, the students celebrated the Yankees winning of the World Series via "Yankee Day." Students and staff came to school dressed as Yankees.
- On November 6th a lockdown drill was conducted. The drill was highly successful and important for the security of students and staff.
- The students and staff participated in a food drive and collected a variety of items for the needy families in the community.
- On Tuesday, November 24th, the second grade will host a grade level assembly focusing on November's character trait: honesty. Students will listen to the book *Edwurd Fudwupper Fibbed Big* by Berkeley Breathed. Students will bring the bucket-filling program to the community by participating in Macy's Make-A-Wish "I Believe" program. Students will have the opportunity to write a letter telling why they believe in the holiday spirit. For every letter collected, Macy's will donate one dollar to the Make-A-Wish Foundation.
- Parents are invited to visit *Crawford the Cat*, an animated online friend that helps keep children focused and guides them through lessons that supplement the HealthSmart curriculum.
- All students will be dismissed one-half hour earlier on November 24th for the District Emergency Drill exercise.
- Parent/Teacher conferences will be held on November 30th, December 1st and December 2nd. The children will be dismissed at 11:45 A.M. Night conferences will be held on December 1st, from 7:00 to 9:00 P.M.
- The Winter Concert will take place on December 3rd at 7:00 P.M. in the high school auditorium.

MINUTES

Upon a motion made by Edward Darcey and seconded by Michael Ferrara, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Minutes of the following Board of Education meetings be accepted as presented: **Regular Meeting, October 26, 2009.**

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

TREASURER'S REPORTS

Upon a motion made by Michael Ferrara and seconded by John Lessler, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepts the Treasurer's Report for the month of October 2009 as presented.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

EXTRA-CLASSROOM ACTIVITY ACCOUNT TREASURER REPORT

Upon a motion made by John Lessler and seconded by Edward Darcey, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepts the Extra-Classroom Activity Treasurer Report for the month of October 2009 as presented.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Upon a motion made by Edward Darcey and seconded by Michael Ferrara, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Education accepts the Financial Reports for the month of October 2009 as presented.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

BUDGET TRANSFER SUMMARY – OCTOBER 2009

Upon a motion made by Michael Ferrara and seconded by John Lessler, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the October 2009 Budget Transfer Summary.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

INTERNAL CLAIMS AUDIT REPORT – OCTOBER 2009

Upon a motion made by John Lessler and seconded by Edward Darcey, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the October 2009 Internal Claims Audit Report.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

CONTRACT FOR RESIDENTIAL PLACEMENT – OUR LADY OF PEACE ACADEMY AT MONTFORT THERAPEUTIC RESIDENCE

Upon a motion made by Edward Darcey and seconded by Michael Ferrara, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education authorizes the president of the Board of Education to enter into a contract with Our Lady of Peace Academy at Montfort Therapeutic Residence for educational services for a student as required under applicable Individual Education programs, applicable law, and/or district policy.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

DONATION – OHIOPYLE PRINTS, INC.

Upon a motion made by Michael Ferrara and seconded by John Lessler, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves and accepts the donation from Ohiopyle Prints, Inc. in the amount of \$19.69.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

DONATION

Upon a motion made by John Lessler and seconded by Edward Darcey, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the donation of a PEC NEC projector valued at \$684.00.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

SURPLUS ITEMS

Upon a motion made by Edward Darcey and seconded by Michael Ferrara, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves for surplus the following attached list.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

ADDITIONAL COMMITTEE MEMBER: SPECIAL EDUCATION PARENT MEMBER

Upon a motion made by Michael Ferrara and seconded by John Lessler, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education approves the appointment of Betina M. P. Ferreira as Parent Member to the Committee on Special Education/Committee on Preschool Special

Education. (In accordance with the Commissioner's Regulations, Part 200 and the provisions of the Education Law, Section 4402.)

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

COMMITTEES ON SPECIAL EDUCATION/PRESCHOOL SPECIAL EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Upon a motion made by John Lessler and seconded by Edward Darcey, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education votes to arrange for appropriate services pursuant to the recommendations of Schedule 11-23-09-A and Schedule 11-23-09- B.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

PERSONNEL

Upon a motion made by Edward Darcey and seconded by Michael Ferrara, the following resolution was offered:

BE IT RESOLVED, that upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education accepts the attached Personnel changes.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

Mr. Nofi opened the floor to questions and/or comments.

- Mr. Friscia proudly acknowledged the students who spoke and were honored earlier in the meeting. Mr. Friscia stated that their accomplishments were made possible through the hard work and efforts of Rocky Point teachers. Mr. Friscia asked Mr. Nofi if the Board of Education was willing to change its current contract offer to the teachers.
- Mr. Nofi advised Mr. Friscia that he would not negotiate the contract in public but that he would negotiate in the proper forum.
- Mrs. Johannesen acknowledged the Varsity Cheerleaders' first place win in the 2009 Empire Regional Championship held this past weekend at Hofstra University. Noting that this was their sixth consecutive victory, Mrs. Johannesen offered her congratulations and expressed her pride in the team and the wonderful job done by the Varsity Cheerleading coach, Mrs. Anna Spallina. Mrs. Johannesen complimented the team members on their dignified and ladylike behavior during an awkward moment in the competition. Mrs. Johannesen also thanked members of the security staff for their kind assistance as she attempted to retrieve property inadvertently left in the locker room.
- Ms. Marianne Barber shared a thank you letter she wrote to her son's coaches for encouraging her son, complimenting him, and helping him to raise his self-confidence level. Ms. Barber voiced her concerns regarding cuts to sports programs and the possible detrimental impact these cuts could result in by prohibiting student-athletes from trying out at the higher grade levels. Ms. Barber

asked that the district look at all programs, not just sports programs, when making cuts.

- Mrs. Dawn Callahan expressed her concerns for the “early dismissal” procedures being implemented once again this year. Mrs. Callahan said that the younger children should arrive home last, not first, so that older siblings would be there to care for them and parents had additional time to make it home from their professional responsibilities in order to supervise them.
- Dr. D’Ambrosio explained that the purpose of the Emergency Drill was for parents to have a plan ready and in place for their children’s well-being and supervision in the case of an unforeseen district/county/national emergency more so than a school district early dismissal as in the case of inclement weather.
- Dr. Ring referred to the early dismissal for inclement weather that occurred on December 11th, 2008. Noting that the weather reports leading up to the dismissal were less than accurate, Dr. Ring stated that a “snow committee” had met this past October to review the district’s early dismissal procedure. Dr. Ring shared that it was the committee’s recommendation to reverse the current procedure and that this recommendation would be presented to Dr. D’Ambrosio for her consideration some time next week. Dr. Ring reported that the Emergency Drill was part of New York State guidelines in the event of an actual emergency and not designed solely for early dismissal in the event of snow/inclement weather.
- Mrs. Callahan questioned why the accomplishments of only certain teams were announced earlier in the evening and not others? Mrs. Callahan made reference to the volleyball team and its “Dig Pink” fundraiser. Dr. D’Ambrosio advised that Mr. Kies provided the board and meeting attendees with quarterly athletic reports, not monthly. Mrs. Callahan expressed her opinion that a team’s accomplishments should be noted in a timelier manner.
- Mrs. Callahan asked if the district had a plan in place for the relocation of the administrative offices to the portable building at FJC. Mrs. Callahan stated that poor planning on the part of the administration last week caused unnecessary disruption and resulted in her son’s inability to participate in a program. Dr. D’Ambrosio advised Mrs. Callahan a committee had been formed concerning the move and that there was a definite plan in place for the upcoming district office relocation.
- Mr. Chris Pinkenburg requested a swine flu update. Dr. D’Ambrosio announced a few cases had been reported in two of the schools as evidenced by the notes sent in by the children’s parents. Mr. Pinkenburg asked if all parents were informed of these cases. Dr. D’Ambrosio responded no, other parents are not informed, as the parents of the ill children do not have to reveal to the district the specific illness/reason their child is absent. Dr. D’Ambrosio confirmed the district is following the current guidelines set in place by the Suffolk County Health Department and that parents should assume the flu virus is in the district and respond accordingly by practicing good health habits and frequent hand washing. Mr. Pinkenburg expressed his concern for his child who suffers from asthma and asked Dr. D’Ambrosio if he should keep his child home from school for the next several months. Dr. D’Ambrosio invited Mr. Pinkenburg to contact his child’s school nurse for updates and advised Mr. Pinkenburg that students exhibiting flu-

like symptoms are moved to a private area in the nurse's office. Dr. D'Ambrosio suggested Mr. Pinkenburg contact his family physician for further information and guidance pertaining to his particular circumstances and to remain proactive during the flu season. Dr. D'Ambrosio assured Mr. Pinkenburg that the district was doing all that it could as a school district and was keeping a very close watch on the situation.

- Mrs. King stated the Rocky Point School District was a very special place and a settlement of the teacher contract was in the best interests of all concerned. Mrs. King commented that it was not only the teachers but the parents who make the district such a wonderful place. Mrs. King suggested that compromises be made on all sides to facilitate a contract settlement. In connection with the current search for a new superintendent, Mrs. King said she hoped someone who knows and understands the community of the Rocky Point School District would be chosen to lead the district.

There were no further questions or comments.

ADJOURNMENT

At 9:08 P.M. a motion was made by Edward Darcey and seconded by Michael Ferrara to adjourn the meeting.

All in favor – Motion carried 4-0

Respectfully submitted,

Patricia Jones
District Clerk

