

MINUTES



Tuesday, December 22, 2015 Special Board Meeting Board Room, 8:00 AM

1. Call to Order

1.0 Meeting Opening - 8:03 a.m.

Mr. Goldman called the meeting to order.

In attendance, Mr. Michael Goldman, Board President; Ms. Tracy Baron; Mr. Robert Reiser; Mr. Jonathan Greengrass; Ms. Shannon Johnson; Dr. Lisa Brady, Superintendent; Ms. Sylvia Fassler-Wallach, Assistant Superintendent of Finance, Facilities and Operations; Mr. Douglas Berry, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction and Ms. Loretta Tularzko, District Clerk.

Mr. Louis Schwartz, Board Vice President and Ms. Jean Lucasey were not in attendance.

1.02 Acceptance of the Agenda

Mr. Reiser moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded, that the Board accept the October 22nd Agenda.

Vote: 5 ayes - 0 nays

1.03 Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Greengrass moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded, to omit the reciting of the Pledge of Allegiance.

Vote: 5 - ayes - 0 nays

2. Board Actions

2.01 Resolution to the Governor and NYS Legislature regarding NY State School Funding.

- ❖ NYS is underfunding our public school districts even though the NYS budget is now at a surplus.
- ❖ The approved resolution will be forwarded to the Governor, Legislators and WPSBA.
- ❖ Dr. Brady will draft a letter to the editor of the Rivertowns Enterprise with Board member names.
- ❖ The resolution and the link to the Voters Voice will be added to our website along with a K-12 from the District.
- ❖ The PTSA will also email the link and add it to their Facebook page and website.

Ms. Johnson moved, and Ms. Baron seconded, that the Board approve the following resolution, as amended, to the Governor and NYS Legislature regarding New York State School Funding.

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Whereas,
New York State, despite its promises, is underfunding our public school districts.

Whereas,
Highly publicized increases in state aid to education over the past two years have not made up for draconian cuts in State aid due to the Gap Elimination Adjustment (GEA) and the Foundation Aid freeze. This year, 20% of the school districts in Westchester and Putnam Counties still receive less State education funding than they did in 2008, and another 28% have been increased by only 7% or less.

Whereas,
Over the past six years, the State raided \$430 million in funds due Westchester and Putnam districts, and withheld \$9 billion GEA dollars statewide. This year alone, the Dobbs Ferry School District lost \$295,704 due to the GEA, for a total GEA state aid loss of \$3,124,687 since 2010. It is disappointing that 72% of the districts in our region are still being shortchanged by over one-third of the GEA money due them while NY State runs a surplus.

Whereas,
The multi-year freeze in Foundation Aid funding has deprived districts in our two-county region of \$186 million dollars in 2015-16 alone, most of which is being taken from the highest need districts. This year the State is shortchanging our district's Foundation Aid dollars by \$1,615,661. The formula must be reinstated to reflect current need and enrollment changes.

Whereas,
These cuts and freezes have been put in place despite a 2007 court order REQUIRING the State to increase its funding of high need school districts over several years.

Whereas,
School districts have been eliminating programs, teachers, support personnel, administrative staff, course offerings including art, music and other non-mandated courses, as well as student extra-curricular offerings such as team sports. They have also had to increase class size and student to adult ratios in key areas such as guidance counselors.

Whereas,
Since 2009, NYS has postured that it doesn't have the revenue to pay its share for public education; this simply is not the case. Comptroller Thomas DiNapoli stated in his October 2015 State Cash Report, "State tax collections through October totaled \$42.3 billion and were just under \$4 billion or 10.3 percent higher than the same period last year. Year-to-date tax collections were \$5.4 million over the latest projections (released Nov. 5) and nearly \$1.7 billion over initial projections from the Enacted Budget."

Whereas,
The State promise that reductions in costly state-mandated expenditures would be paired with the Tax Levy Limit (aka, the tax cap) has NOT been kept. State action is needed to reduce key expenditure mandates and provide local flexibility and local accountability; the era of one-size-fits-all initiatives must end. School districts have been saddled with new unfunded/underfunded expenditures despite the static revenue flow. Race to the Top (RTTT), Common Core Learning Standards (CCLS) and Annual Professional Performance Review (APPR) requirements are the largest underfunded mandates in recent history. While school districts continue to find ways to share services and reduce expenditures, significant State mandate relief is long overdue.

Whereas,
Given a 2016-17 tax levy limit based on a projected 0% CPI, and given the current State aid parameters, public school districts will continue to move towards educational and fiscal insolvency, and will continue to erode the programs and resources needed to provide a sound, basic education to every student. Some will reach a critical level sooner than others, but every district is traveling down that same path. Districts that have provided exemplary examples of quality education will have to level down their services, while they should be setting the bar for others.

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Whereas,

Public education is a New York State constitutional right; every child has the right to a sound, basic education; and New York State has an unconditional obligation to adequately fund our public school districts.

Therefore, be it resolved that,

Public Education must be a top priority item in New York State, not one that is adjusted to make ends meet or satisfy political expediency. The GEA must be relegated to history and the Foundation Aid formula must be reinstated. Adequate and appropriate State funding to ensure every child has access to a quality public school education is long overdue. School districts are relying on elected officials to take action to put students ahead of politics and make public education whole.

Vote: 5 - ayes - 0 nays

3. Adjournment

At 8.24 AM, Ms. Baron moved, and Ms. Johnson seconded, to adjourn the meeting.

Vote: 5 ayes - 0 nays



District Clerk