

**ATTACHMENTS TO BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES**

OF MEETING OF October 12, 2011

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**V. PUBLIC BE HEARD**

**PLEASE NOTE: COPIES OF ATTACHMENTS SUBMITTED ARE GIVEN TO THE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND THEN KEPT WITH THE OFFICIAL MINUTES IN THE DISTRICT CLERK OFFICE.**

**The guidelines pertaining to Public Be Heard were read. Dr. Grossane and/or Board members will respond to questions, after the last speaker is heard.**

**Tom Kohlman                      806 Brent Drive, Wantagh, NY**

Mr. Kohlman wanted to know if the Board had answers to his inquiry at the last meeting, regarding where we stood against the top fifteen schools in Nassau County with the math test scores. Additionally, Mr. Kohlman wanted to talk about receiving the English Language Arts (ELA's) scores in a timely fashion by using BOCES services.

**In response to Mr. Kohlman's questions:**

Ms. Rifkin acknowledged that there were discussions about moving forward with BOCES and the Board is in support. She reported on the cost of the service using different colors. Since BOCES gets the scores before the districts, the parents would receive the scores at the earliest date possible. Ms. Rifkin commented that the science scores would be sent home using this service since it is more cost efficient. There was discussion on whether postage was included. Ms. Rifkin commented she would look into this.

Dr. Grossane responded he would be presenting a report on students test scores later on in the year.

**Kerry Olivos                      6 Wood Lane, Levittown, NY**  
**Michelle Fielding                41 Low Lane, Levittown, NY**

The residents listed above were here tonight to discuss the re-zoning issue. Ms. Olivos, who attended Salk and MacArthur schools, wanted her children to go to these schools. She bought a house in this area for safety reasons and closeness to the schools. The re-zoning only effects 15-20 students per year and has been this way for many years. Ms. Fielding was upset because she felt the district was dealing with overcrowding at Salk by re-zoning Abbey Lane. She noted the school has a higher enrollment which could change from year to year. Ms. Fielding spoke about busing children who are within walking distance of a school. She commented that the district should focus on class size, safety and budget, keeping students in schools closest to their homes will help the budget and the safety of the child.

**In response to the questions on re-zoning:**

Dr. Grossane responded that he had spoken with several members of the affected area and told them that this is an item that is under consideration by the Board. He is asking the sub-committee to reconvene since he has been gathering the information that they were requesting. The sub-committee will then present their report to the Board to determine what their recommendation will be. Dr. Grossane thanked everyone who called and appreciated their input. Before a decision is made, the community will be asked for their opinion. When the Board does make a decision the residents will be informed.

**Justine Ceriano****96 Gun Lane, Levittown, NY**

Ms. Ceriano, representing the Abbey Lane PTA, expressed disappointment with various changes that have been implemented since school began in September. She commented that the PTA supported the budget but now feels that the cuts that were instituted on the elementary level were never presented to them nor explained in the true content of how elementary school children would be impacted. They felt the cuts were sugarcoated. Ms. Ceriano remarked that budget cuts are necessary in this economy, however, some of the cuts are having a negative effect on the progress of our children and the interventions they need are not being academically successful. She stressed that they would never have voted yes to a budget that took away the library, an important resource. Another issue Ms. Ceriano spoke about was the staggering of buses. She feels children are spending too much time on the bus and getting home late, upset, tired and hungry. Ms. Ceriano asked that the Board consider restoring the services now so that the children do not have to suffer any longer.

**In response to Ms. Ceriano's questions:**

Mr. Pappas pointed out that the staggering of the buses saved the district well over a half million dollars. He noted that we are not satisfied with the service that the children are receiving and trying to rectify the situation. A consultant is being brought in to assure that our routes are operating in the most efficient manner. On the issue of the cuts, Mr. Pappas stressed that the Board made everyone aware of what needed to be done. He commented that we made the best of what we had, with little change in class size, a literacy program utilizing the library and reading teachers with differentiated learning. Mr. Pappas discussed the challenges the district is facing with reductions in state aid, pension and health care costs increasing and the continuation of step increases. However, we will make the best of an ugly situation, so our children will receive a worthy education.

Mr. Porrazzo commented that with the 2% tax cap, things are going to get more challenging. He noted that we may be forced to make additional cuts and we should be prepared. He stressed that the Board and administration will do their best to maintain what we have but withdrawing support for the budget is not the answer. Mr. Porrazzo stated we will weather the storm, and he has every confidence that with the changes that have been made our scores will go up with Dr. Grossane.

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Mr. Powers was upset with Ms. Ceriano's remarks that the Board did not present all the facts to the PTA's. He noted that he had attended many meetings where he informed everyone of the bleak situation. He remarked that he explained the budget and what was being cut. Mr. Powers reported that the Board made the cuts early because they are planning not just for next year but for the next 2 -3 years because the scenario is so bleak. Mr. Powers felt the idea of the Board sugarcoating the message was demeaning to the effort that the Board members put forth. He remarked that we are one of the few districts that added programs such as full day kindergarten and literacy centers. Mr. Powers addressed the concerns with busing and noted that we have to explore every option.

Ms. Marengi commented that even though in reality times are bad, she has tremendous faith in the administrative team of the district. She noted that to find areas we can cut, we have to work smarter instead of harder and start researching the best practices. We do not have the money to do business as usual, however, the Board is here for the purpose of finding the best education for the children. Ms. Marengi stated this community is made up of people who do not give up, and we will meet the challenges just not the conventional way we are used to.

Dr. Grossane noted that the literacy centers were implemented to offset the elimination of the librarians. He commented that we are trying to make good use of the student's time during that period in more supportive reading instruction and with an opportunity for those to excel. Dr. Grossane noted that the principals have expressed concerns regarding remedial reading and he is working with the department to try to service the students while operating within our financial constraints. He remarked that administration is aware of the concerns and is looking to see what they can do to ameliorate some of the issues.

Respectfully submitted,

Elizabeth Appelbaum,  
District Clerk



