

HARBORFIELDS CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
GREENLAWN, NEW YORK

Kind of Meeting	-	Regular Meeting
Date of Meeting	-	January 13, 2016
Place of Meeting	-	OMS Auditorium
Board Members Present	-	Dr. McDonagh, Mr. Mastroianni, Ms. Gaughan, Mr. Lee, Ms. Lustig and Mr. Steinberg
Board Members Absent	-	Mr. Giuliano
Others Present	-	Ms. Todaro, Dr. Ianni, Mr. Nimmo, Mr. Cox Ms. Whelan, and Community Members

Dr. McDonagh called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Ms. Gaughan, and carried (5-0), the board and central office administrators moved to Executive Session at 6:15 p.m. to discuss collective bargaining matters. Mr. Mastroianni joined the meeting at 6:20 p.m.

The board reconvened the regular meeting at 7:03 p.m., and Dr. McDonagh led those in attendance in the Pledge of Allegiance.

COMMUNITY FORUM – FULL-DAY KINDERGARTEN

Dr. Ianni gave a PowerPoint presentation providing an overview of the work undertaken by the Full-Day Kindergarten Committee with regard to the possible implementation of full-day kindergarten for the upcoming school year. The presentation included how a full-day program would be structured in comparison to the current half-day program, and provided an analysis of the costs associated with transitioning to full-day kindergarten and maintaining the program in future school years. Dr. Ianni reported that Governor Cuomo delivered his State of the State and Executive Budget Address earlier in the day which included his plan for public education funding. The governor's proposed plan would increase state-wide school aid by \$2.1 billion and completely eliminate the GEA (Gap Elimination Adjustment) over the next two years. Dr. Ianni cautioned that until the state budget is actually adopted, we should not count on that information; therefore, the cost analysis contained in the presentation is based on the information we currently have at hand. The Board of Education will continue to review and assess the possible implementation of a full-day kindergarten program as the budget process gets underway. A copy of the presentation is available on the district's website.

Ms. Todaro thanked Dr. Ianni, Ms. Kelly and the Full-Day Kindergarten Committee members for all their hard work and extensive research. She reminded everyone that the district's mission over the past several budget seasons has been to enhance programs and opportunities for our students. It is evident from the extensive work of the Full-Day Kindergarten Committee that the addition of full-day kindergarten would be one of the

programs that would enhance opportunities for our early childhood learners. Ms. Todaro continued that when developing budgets, the significant challenge is to develop a budget that is able to sustain all the wonderful programs and also add in programs, if possible. Full-day kindergarten is absolutely a program that would benefit our early childhood learners, but the challenge that confronts us is how do we fund it? As we go through the budget process, that discussion will continue.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – COMMUNITY FORUM

Several members of the WDPS PTA spoke in favor of a full-day kindergarten program, noting that such a program isn't an enhancement, but rather, a definite need in order for our children to have a fair start and equal footing with their peers in other districts.

A resident stated that she's overjoyed to hear the news out of Albany that our GEA funding might possibly be reinstated, and she inquired as to how much the district loses due to the GEA? Mr. Nimmo responded that the district's deficit is slightly over \$1 million dollars a year. The resident is hopeful that the GEA funds are restored, as it will provide the district with money not only for full-day kindergarten but other programs, as well. Even so, we must look at full-day kindergarten no matter what happens with the state budget.

A resident inquired why the presentation did not include an increase in the librarian. Ms. Todaro responded that the current staffing structure is sufficient but will continue to be evaluated. The resident stated she would also like to see full-time librarians at both the middle school and high school.

A resident stated that in her profession as a real estate broker, she sees a large percentage of buyers who are looking at school districts that have full-day kindergarten and the fact that we do not has and will continue to affect property values.

A resident inquired if we were looking to change our class size guidelines. Ms. Todaro responded that during each budget cycle we base our class size guidelines on the information we receive from BOCES, and each year our projections have been within guidelines. Some classes exceeded guidelines this year due to new state mandates and new entrants. Dr. McDonagh commented that as the budget process gets underway, class size guidelines is one of many areas that will be carefully evaluated. The resident also questioned the loss of rental revenue contained in the presentation. Mr. Nimmo explained that we must take into consideration the impact full-day kindergarten may have on our tenant and the possibility that they may need to lease less classroom space.

A resident asked what the "drop dead" date is to include full-day kindergarten in the budget. Ms. Todaro responded that the budget must be adopted in April.

A resident posed several questions with regard to state aid and budget development. Do we fully expect the state to have a decision in time for us to make a decision on full-day kindergarten? How do we plan if state funding does not come through? Is there any way we could partner with Treasure Cove for a full-day program? When we do a cost

analysis, do we compare with other districts that have a similar make up to ours to see how they make it work? Ms. Todaro stated that we're hopeful we'll have firm information from the state before our budget is adopted. Mr. Nimmo added that the state legislature has managed over the past several years to adopt the budget by the April 1st deadline. If they miss the deadline, then we use estimates to develop our budget. If no additional funding comes through, then there are a number of questions that would need to be addressed. Ms. Todaro stated that they would obtain a legal opinion with regard to partnering with Treasure Cove, but she did not believe it was permissible. Mr. Nimmo advised that it is difficult to compare to other districts since a large part of the budget is personnel and every district has different staffing and salary structures. Other districts should want to see what we do since we have one of the lowest per pupil spending.

A resident suggested that full-day kindergarten should be looked at as a moral imperative. Not all families have access to enrichment programs and there are very few items in the budget that have the same moral weight.

A resident stated that she sees the effect of the half-day program on her child. We already provide a full-day program for children in ENL and special education so we should extend the opportunity for a full-day program to all of our children.

A resident spoke in favor of the half-day program. Children can avoid the stress of getting burned out and can transition more easily with a half-day program. Clearly we're doing something right since our district has received top rankings and recognition all while having a half-day program.

A resident stated she worries that her child, who is thriving in Pre-K, will encounter a setback in a half-day kindergarten program. As a kindergarten teacher herself, she doesn't understand how our teachers are getting it all done with just a half-day program.

A resident stated that when you compare what the kids receive in a full-day program to a half-day program, the benefit is immeasurable. We should look at it as a business, if there is something that is beneficial to the people that your business serves; you need to find a way to fund it.

A resident stated that we should nurture the excitement children feel about school at a young age and instill in them a love of learning. A full-day kindergarten program would help achieve that.

A resident spoke in support of full-day kindergarten, noting that in a recent article the Children's Defense Fund was quoted as saying, "*Full-day kindergarten can no longer be viewed as an optional add on, enrichment or intervention program. It must be a stable part of early childhood education.*"

A resident stated that she understands why many parents would support a full-day kindergarten program, but she's concerned that funding such a program might jeopardize some of the other programs for the older students in middle and high school.

A resident stated that he and his wife are working parents, and his children are accustomed to a rigorous program through day care. He's concerned a half-day program will not be that challenging, and he wonders why we are in the position we're in with being one of the few districts left that does not have full-day kindergarten. Perhaps having the lowest cost per pupil isn't necessarily the best thing if we can't fund such an essential program. We should look at other districts to see how they manage to fund full-day kindergarten, and maybe we have to consider raising taxes.

A resident stated that full-day kindergarten is now the standard in New York State. She understands that there's a process that needs to be followed, and she's heard all the explanations as to why we don't offer full-day kindergarten, but the time has come to stop the excuses.

A resident thanked the board for taking the matter seriously. She has seen first-hand the effects a half-day program puts on the students as they struggle through the vigorous curriculum. She's concerned that the half-day program does not allow for students who struggle to be properly identified, thus denying them the opportunity to get appropriate services early on.

A resident stated that she believes the half-day program doesn't prevent children from burning out but instead causes it because they're being rushed through the day. She also doesn't agree that the fade out effect is an accurate statistic since many students attend supplemental programs paid for by their parents.

A resident stated that his child is in ENL so she is able to attend kindergarten full time. He expressed disappointment that this cannot be the norm for all students. We all pay taxes, we should all receive equal opportunities.

A resident stated that it's unfortunate that the district is receiving such negative press due to the lack of full-day kindergarten, and she doesn't believe it goes along with the reputation and tradition the school district has worked so hard for. She doesn't want to see the lack of a full-day kindergarten program affect our property values.

A resident stated that her children went through the half-day program and loved it; they learned a lot, and it's largely due to the wonderful kindergarten teachers we have here at Harborfields. She finds it a bit ironic that some parents want full-day kindergarten because of the tougher curriculum standards, yet those same parents are the ones who advocate for pulling their children out of taking the state tests on the new standards.

A resident stated that two of her children attended half-day kindergarten and were very happy. Her youngest child, however, was stressed out. Children don't have enough time to accomplish all they need to and the new standards are a large part of that. Her opinion on half-day kindergarten has changed; we need full-day kindergarten. It's time to stop talking about it and just do it.

A resident questioned why we did not include a third proposition for full-day kindergarten on the recent vote in October. Ms. Todaro explained that we cannot legally ask the community to vote on educational programs.

Dr. McDonagh thanked everyone for their contributions this evening. He noted that there's been discussion about the GEA funding, as well as the assembly bill that would aid districts like ours who are trying to implement full-day kindergarten. The way to get those things passed is for citizens to voice their opinions to the legislature. The board and district administration will be signing a letter tonight to implore that those funding mechanisms are put forward. Politicians respond to voters, and he encouraged the community to get involved.

The board took a short recess and continued with the meeting at 8:40 p.m.

ELECTION OF VICE PRESIDENT, BOARD OF EDUCATION

Dr. McDonagh announced that Mr. Donald Mastroianni has informed the board that he wishes to step down from the position of Vice President of the Board of Education. As a result of Mr. Mastroianni's decision, the board held a special election for the position of Vice President.

Mr. Mastroianni nominated Irene Gaughan as Vice President of the Board of Education. Mr. Lee seconded the nomination. The vote was as follows:

AYES: Ms. Gaughan, Mr. Lee, Ms. Lustig, Mr. Mastroianni, Dr. McDonagh,
Mr. Steinberg

NAYS: None

The district clerk will administer the oath of office to the Vice President of the Board of Education within thirty days.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORTS

Student Representative's Report

Trevor Jones, student representative from HHS, gave the following report:

- Congratulations to Ms. Regina Antretter on her upcoming retirement at the end of this school year. She's an excellent math teacher, offering material that challenges her students.
- High school students are gearing up for midterm exams as well as select Regent exams, which get underway in two weeks.
- Playfest, an annual Harborfields Theatre Company tradition where each grade level produces and performs a short play, saw the senior class come out on top with their

murder mystery, *Suspect*, written and directed by Scott Huffman. Each grade raised a profit of \$1,500.

- The HF Tornado News Team took an educational field trip to NBC studios where they learned about major news network functioning. The Tornado News team has greatly altered life at Harborfields with the implementation of video announcements, streaming events, etc.
- Members of the Interact Club served the community at the Gardiner's Barn Holiday Festival.
- Habitat for Humanity teamed up with Project H.O.P.E. serving over 160 guests at the St. Hugh Soup Kitchen.
- Global Justice delivered 40 full bags of clothing to a family service center to be distributed to those in need. Additionally, they are teaming up with Dr. Spencer in their 5000 Purses initiative which would provide impoverished women purses and bags filled with essential items.
- The Mathletes team has experienced great success due to two very skilled math minds: Connor Stewart and Cole Wadler.
- The Harborfields boy's basketball team has clinched a spot in the playoffs and is currently 6-0 in their league.
- The high school will host 8th grade students and their parents tomorrow to discuss the transition to high school. An activities fair will follow where the students will learn about the variety of clubs and organizations at the high school.
- As a testament to the success and achievements of our alumni, Mr. Jones shared news about Harry Solomon (Class of 2013). Mr. Solomon recently began an internship at the White House, charged with assisting the President's staff with researching and selecting official nominees. He currently resides in Washington DC, working alongside the best and brightest men and women in the nation.

Superintendent's Report

Ms. Todaro thanked Mr. Jones for an exceptional report. She also thanked Mr. Ambrosio and the Tornado News Team noting that the service they provide to the school community is outstanding.

Ms. Todaro announced that Harborfields High School has been nominated for a Blue Ribbon School Award. One of 16 schools to be nominated, the extensive process will be overseen by Dr. Manning. This is a significant achievement and is a testament to our entire school community.

Ms. Todaro reported on the ongoing discussions with the Town of Huntington regarding the library park property, noting that she spoke with a representative from the town earlier this week but there has been no new developments to report.

Ms. Todaro also noted that the 2016-2017 school calendar will be adopted at this evening's meeting. Staff will report prior to Labor Day and students will report the day after Labor Day.

BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

The Board of Education accepted the following minutes:

- Regular Meeting, December 16, 2015

FINANCE

4.1 Treasurer's Report

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Gaughan, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Treasurer's Report for November 2015 was accepted.

4.2 Schedule of Bills

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Mr. Steinberg, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the schedule of bills attached to the agenda of January 13, 2016 was accepted.

4.3 Financial Status Report

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Gaughan, seconded by Ms. Lustig, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Financial Status Report for November 2015 was accepted.

4.4 Claims Auditor's Report

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Ms. Gaughan, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Claims Auditor's Report for December 2015 was accepted.

4.5 Acceptance of Gift

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Ms. Lustig, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following gift was accepted:

- Gift in the amount of \$626.70 from General Mills, Box Tops for Education, to be applied to the WDPS Outreach Fund through the Expendable Trust Account.

4.6 Acceptance of Gifts/Grants and Increase in Appropriations

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following grant was accepted with the board's appreciation:

- Grant in the collective amount of \$1,000.00 from HACEF and the Booster Club (\$500.00 each) to be administered under the guidance and direction of the Director of Health, Physical Education and Athletics for the purposes outlined in the memorandum attached to the agenda of January 13, 2016; and

Further, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, pursuant to the anticipated receipt of the grant funds to reimburse our expenses, appropriations for 2015-2016 will be increased as follows:

A 2855.5010.36.2855 \$1,000.00

with the understanding that this increase in appropriations is matched by unanticipated revenue and will, therefore, result in no impact on the tax levy.

4.7 Scholarship Fund Donation

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Gaughan, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following donations to the respective Scholarship Funds were accepted:

- Gifts totaling \$400.00 from various donors for credit to the Evan (Edo) Gillies Memorial Scholarship Fund within the Expendable Trust Account
- Gift in the amount of \$250.00 from Gary Schoer, Esq. for credit to the James T. Brennan Memorial Scholarship Fund within the Expendable Trust Account

4.8 Surplus Equipment

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Ms. Lustig, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following equipment, as listed in the attachments to the agenda of January 13, 2016, was declared surplus and will be disposed of in accordance with board policy:

- One (1) Wurlitzer Baritone Saxophone, Serial #28772, Asset ID \$011220
- One (1) King Super 20 Baritone Saxophone, Serial #369164, No Asset ID number indicated on instrument

4.9 Acceptance of E-Rate Rebates and Increase in Appropriations

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Ms. Lustig, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following E-Rate rebate

was accepted: \$5,211.84 from Verizon, \$1,250.50 from Verizon Wireless and \$33,797.07 from Cablevision to be used under the guidance and direction of the Office of Curriculum and Instruction to support the district's technology program; and

Further, upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, pursuant to the anticipated receipt of the rebates, appropriations for 2015-2016 will be increased as follows:

A 2630.2000.42.2630 \$40,259.41

with the understanding that this increase in appropriations is matched by unanticipated revenue and will, therefore, result in no impact on the tax levy.

4.10 School District Attorney Agreement

Whereas, on July 10, 2013, the Board of Education adopted and entered into a Legal Services Agreement with Guercio & Guercio, LLP for the period July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2016 to serve as General and Labor Counsel for the district for legal and labor matters authorized by the Board of Education pursuant to the Request for Proposals received on February 8, 2013; and

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Ms. Gaughan, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education elected to enter into a new agreement with Guercio & Guercio, LLP for a term of three years (July 1, 2016 through June 30, 2019) to serve as General Counsel and Chief Labor Counsel for the Harborfields Central School District, subject to annual renewal by the Board of Education, and further authorized the Board President to execute the Legal Services Agreement, as attached to the official minutes of January 13, 2016, on behalf of the Harborfields Central School District.

HUMAN RESOURCES

5.1 Resignation

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Lustig, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following resignation was accepted:

- Antretter, Regina, Mathematics Teacher, HHS, for the purpose of retirement, effective the close of business June 30, 2016

5.2 Professional Appointment

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Gaughan, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following professional appointment, in accordance with the schedule attached to the official minutes of January 13, 2016, was approved. In order to be eligible for tenure, an individual receiving

a probationary appointment as a classroom teacher or building principal must receive annual composite or overall APPR ratings of H or E in at least three of the four preceding years, and if the individual receives a rating of 1 in the final year of the probationary period, he or she will not be eligible for tenure at that time.

Regular Substitute		
Name	School	Assignment
Megan Franchi	OMS	Special Education Teacher

5.3 Consultant

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Mr. Mastroianni, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, Victoria Melone was appointed as Director, Pupil Personnel Services Consultant effective January 14, 2016, at the daily rate of \$719.81.

5.4 Professional Appointments – Teaching Assistants

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following professional appointments, in accordance with the schedule attached to the official minutes of January 13, 2016, were approved.

Part-Time		
Name	School	Assignment
Kristen Hutchinson	HHS	Part-Time Teaching Assistant
Elizabeth Lindberg	TJL	Part-Time Teaching Assistant

5.5 Increase in Hours

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Lustig, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following employee was granted an increase in hours:

Name	Assignment	School	Change in Hours	Effective Date
Erin Nostro	P/T Teaching Assistant	WDPS	From: 4.75 To: 5.50	12/22/15

5.6 Abolishment of Position

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Mr. Steinberg, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, for reasons of economy and efficiency, the Board has determined that it is appropriate to abolish and create certain non-pedagogical positions in the District;

Further, the Board abolished the following position, effective close of business on February 29, 2016:

Position	School	Assignment	FTE
Clerk	HHS	10 Month	1.0

5.7 Creation of Position

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Lustig, seconded by Mr. Steinberg, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following non-pedagogical position in the Harborfields Central School District be created in the following area of classification:

Position	School	Assignment	FTE
Clerk Typist	HHS	10 Month	1.0

5.8 Civil Service Appointments

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the following civil service appointments, in accordance with the scheduled attached to the official minutes of January 13, 2016, were approved:

Probationary			
Name	School	Assignment	
Marybeth Anderson	HHS	Part-Time Clerk Typist	
Josephine Cummings	OMS	Food Service Worker	

5.9 Extracompensation Appointment Schedule

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Gaughan, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the appointees specified on the Extracompensation Appointment Schedule, as attached to the official minutes of January 13, 2016, were approved.

5.10 Substitute List Addendum

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the substitute list addendum, as attached to the official minutes of January 13, 2016, was approved for the maximum period through June 30, 2016 to serve at the pleasure of the Board.

5.11 Authorization for Board of Education Members and District Office Administrators to Attend Conference

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Gaughan, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Board of Education members and district office administrators were authorized to attend the conference listed below and be reimbursed for expenses in accordance with Policy File 2521.

- N-SSBA/NCCSS/SCSSA joint conference, *Public Education: Long Island's Assurance for the Future*, January 28, 2016, Hilton Long Island/Huntington, Melville, NY

INSTRUCTION

6.1 Review of IEP Recommendations and Authorization for Placement and Services

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, after reviewing the IEP recommendations, the Board of Education granted authorization to provide for the placement and services contained in the following recommendations of the CSE, SCSE, and CPSE.

- Committee on Special Education meetings dated December 8, 2015, December 9, 2015, December 10, 2015, December 16, 2015, December 22, 2015, and January 5, 2016
- Subcommittee on Special Education meetings dated December 3, 2015, December 7, 2015 and December 9, 2015
- Committee on Preschool Special Education meeting dated December 17, 2015

6.2 Adoption of 2016-2017 School Calendar

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Mastroianni, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), and upon the recommendation of the Superintendent of Schools, the Harborfields Central School District's 2016-2017 School Calendar, as attached to the official minutes of January 13, 2016, was adopted.

6.3 First Reading of Revised Board of Education Policies

The following revised policies are being presented to the Board of Education for a first reading for action at a subsequent meeting. No action is required at this time.

- File 8414.6: Idling Prohibition for Buses and Other School Vehicles
- File 8630: Computer Resources and Data Management
- File 8630-R: Computer Resources and Data Management Regulation

- File 8635-R: Information Security Breach and Notification Regulation
- File 9520.2: Family and Medical Leave
- File 9520.2-R: Family and Medical Leave Regulation

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Transgender Restroom

Ms. Gaughan inquired if the capital bond projects will include a transgender bathroom at the high school. Ms. Todaro noted that they have slated a location in the main lobby of the high school.

Letter from the U.S. Department of Education regarding Academic Assessments

Ms. Todaro reported that all superintendents received a letter from the U.S. Department of Education reminding them that districts are still responsible for ensuring that 95% of their students participate in the state assessments. Failure to attain 95% participation could jeopardize a district's title funding. Ms. Todaro reported that Harborfields receives slightly over \$100,000 in title funding, some of which is used to support our AIS programs. Last year, we did not make the 95% requirement at TJL and OMS, which means we did not make the necessary Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP). This, of course, is a concern. Harborfields High School did make the 95% requirement, which is one of the reasons it was nominated for the Blue Ribbon award. In their letter, the federal government has indicated that they may count non-participating students as not achieving the standards, which would negatively impact the district's federal and state funding.

Mr. Mastroianni suggested that we reach out to Congressman Israel to get guidance from him. Perhaps he can point us in the right direction about who we should speak to. Mr. Steinberg asked if the Commissioner of Education has weighed in on the matter. Ms. Todaro stated that the commissioner has truly tried to make some adjustments to Common Core. The governor's task force has indicated that we'll be moving away from Common Core in about a year and implementing our own New York State standards. In the interim, while not specifically addressing the federal government's letter, the commissioner did send all school districts a tool kit with guidance on how to address the 95% participation requirement.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident stated that the task force was formed due to the substantial number of students throughout the state who opted out of the assessments last year, and positive changes came about as a result. Common Core brought about curriculum and testing changes and not in a good way. Some of the tests are definitely unfair to those students with special needs.

A resident encouraged the board to also keep in mind the restoration of the third grade string program during their budget deliberations. If the money is available, they should strongly consider funding this worthwhile program.

A resident expressed concern for those students who suffer from food allergies. It is imperative for us to move away from food being brought into the schools. As a member of the WDPS PTA, she is working with building administration to design other methods of reward for our children and take the focus away from food.

A resident questioned if the initial budget presentation scheduled for the February board meeting will include full-day kindergarten? Ms. Todaro responded that the board will be discussing this further and decide if it will be included in the February budget presentation.

A resident stated that he was alarmed by recent news reports about child abduction attempts in nearby areas, and he inquired as to what measures the district takes to address this issue. Ms. Todaro responded that our health and physical education classes address the issue of stranger danger with all students. The resident went on to encourage the board to move forward with a full-day kindergarten program. He'd like them to make it a priority in the upcoming budget and asked that they not look at it as an elective; look at it as an absolute requirement.

A resident encouraged the board to act on establishing a policy that addresses food being brought into the classroom for celebrations and the impact on students with particular food allergies or sensitivities. She, along with her son, addressed the board at last month's meeting, and her son has been eagerly awaiting to hear if the board made a decision. There are plenty of ways we can have celebrations in the classroom without putting certain children at risk or making them feel left out. The board has the ability to make that decision and she urged them to do so.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon motion duly made by Ms. Gaughan, seconded by Mr. Lee, and carried (6-0), the board and district office administrators moved to Executive Session at 9:30 p.m. to discuss the employment history of a particular individual. Messrs. Nimmo and Cox left the meeting at 10:25 p.m.

The board reconvened the regular meeting at 10:58 p.m.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion duly made by Mr. Steinberg, seconded by Ms. Lustig, and carried (6-0), the board adjourned the regular meeting of January 13, 2016 at 10:58 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sharon M. Whelan
District Clerk