

February 24, 2016

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District was held on Wednesday, February 24, 2016, in Conference Room B, 60 Weston Street, Huntington Station, New York.

**Present:**     Board Members:  
                  Vice President

Mr. Ciappetta  
Mrs. Brieff  
Mrs. Carey  
Mrs. DeGaetano  
Mrs. LaCara  
Mr. Nitkewicz

**Staff:**

Superintendent of Schools  
Deputy Superintendent  
Asst. Supt. for Personnel & District Services  
Assistant Superintendent for Instruction & Curriculum  
Business Administrator  
District Clerk

Dr. Bennardo  
Ms. Harris  
Dr. Centamore  
Dr. Bloom  
Mr. Light  
Mrs. McLean

**Absent:**     President

Mr. Kaden

**Call to Order:**     Mr. Ciappetta opened the meeting at 7 p.m.

**Executive Session:**     Motion by Mrs. DeGaetano, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the Board go into Executive Session to discuss the employment history of a particular person.  
Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Mrs. Carey, seconded by Mrs. LaCara, be it Resolved that the Executive Session be adjourned.  
Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ciappetta opened the Business Meeting at 7:30 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Hearing of Smart Schools Investment Plan:**     Mr. Ciappetta shared with the audience that Mr. Kaden was traveling and was unable to attend this evening's meeting. He reported that the first matter of business was the Public Hearing of the Smart Schools Investment Plan. Mr. Ciappetta further stated that the grant was targeted specifically for technology purchases by the Governor two years ago.

Dr. Bloom was asked to comment, and he stated that the Board had approved the preliminary Smart Schools Plan for the district almost one month ago; it was posted on our website since that time, as was required by the State. Through this Smart Schools Plan, the district will purchase interactive boards and tablets for the 1:1 program, costing approximately \$200,000. When this money was reimbursed to the district, there will be

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another submission for technology; the district's allocation from the grant was \$2,900,702. It could, however, take six to eight months before the district was reimbursed. Dr. Bloom indicated that there was no expiration date associated with the Smart Schools Plan. Mr. Ciappetta asked if money was going to the non-public schools within the district's boundaries. Dr. Bloom stated that the district lends the purchased technology to the schools. With the district's allocation, a certain percentage was intended for the non-public schools. The district purchases the equipment, tags it for inventory, and lends it to those non-public schools in the district.

Mr. Ciappetta asked if there were any further questions; there were none.

**2016/2017 Budget  
Overview:**

Mr. Ciappetta shared that the next order of business was the budget overview. The district has a low tax cap number. Inflation was low, and that was negatively affecting every district on Long Island. Mr. Ciappetta acknowledged that our district was in a better position than many districts, and that we would be happy just to maintain what we have currently.

Dr. Bennardo reported that this was a unique year on Long Island and the State. The inflation rate was .016%, a miniscule amount, and some districts must work with a negative levy. He added that the PowerPoint presentation will serve as an overview of taking a look back, and then a look forward. Dr. Bennardo continued and stated that districts have limited ways of raising funds—namely, taxation, state aid and what he termed as “other,” such as rents, grants, fees, savings, etc. The district's basic costs were identified—salaries, pensions, health care, utilities, insurances, transportation, curriculum needs, technology and supplies. Dr. Bennardo further shared that when expenditures are more than revenues, a district must cut programs, staff, or take money from their savings. Likewise, when revenues are more than expenditures, the district has the option of addressing needs and/or placing funds in a savings account for the future, much like a home budget. Our district, Dr. Bennardo explained, has been fortunate in that for the past two years, we have had more in revenues and were able to bank some of the money, as well as add classroom staffing. Dr. Bennardo acknowledged the Board's difficult decisions in the years prior to his arrival in South Huntington, which he believed led the district to this better position. Dr. Bennardo provided examples of the district's accomplishments for the past two years, such as adding classroom staff, reinstating middle school theater (which was in a sustainable position), expansion of advanced placement college opportunities, offering of full intramural programs for Grades 3-12, adding funds to a life skills room and academic intervention services, as well as adding technology/video production experiences, and expanding the school-to-career technology exploration program. Dr. Bennardo boasted that our district was the only district on Long Island, probably the State, to have a theater program for Grades 3-12.

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**2016/2017 Budget  
Overview  
Continued:**

Dr. Bennardo also stated that in an effort to avoid future massive debt, the district committed \$1,500,000 for planned building maintenance last year. Dr. Bennardo explained that this year's tax cap levy—the amount that the district was legally allowed to request from taxpayers—was .06%, which he coined as an “anemic” tax cap. The .06% tax cap only provided for \$70,640 in additional revenue, as compared to last year's \$1,856,781 at a 1.71% tax cap, and \$1,514,041 with a 1.41% tax cap two years ago. Dr. Bennardo then provided a very clear explanation of the formula utilized in developing the maximum allowable tax levy and provided an example for “Any N.Y. School District,” as well as the 2016/2017 work-up for the district.

Dr. Bennardo spoke of the Governor's State Aid proposal of \$988,602; nearly half of this was reimbursables, not “new” state aid per se. Dr. Bennardo added that both Senators Marcellino and Flanagan have articulated their belief that GAP Elimination will be restored; restoration would equate to \$800,000 more in revenue that would help the District to break even.

Dr. Bennardo stated that in looking forward, our pension costs were down, health care costs were up—but we had planned for that reality. Additionally, the District will receive a break on fuel/energy costs. Dr. Bennardo stated that it was hoped that we would be at a break-even point, offering a budget that holds steady, despite the near zero cap. The hope was to use creative solutions to address some very targeted areas of need without overextending the district, and to sustain what we have for a five-to-ten year period.

Mr. Nitkewicz shared that many residents applaud the tax cap; he also stated his distaste for the manner in which Albany was handling the GAP elimination matter. Mr. Nitkewicz recalled the difficult days of the past and gave credit to the Board members who endured those times. He agreed with Dr. Bennardo's stance in holding tight and acknowledged that other districts were not in good shape. He stressed how the Board must be open in considering all decisions. Mr. Nitkewicz also provided credit to our administrative team and bargaining units in supporting previous budgets.

With no other questions posed, Dr. Bennardo concluded the presentation.

**School Report  
Card Presentation:**

Dr. Bennardo introduced the next presentation, the School Report Card, and stated that this was “building the academic part of the house.” He added that the sun was shining on the District, and we could take things to the next step. Dr. Bennardo reported that ten years' worth of School Report Cards were examined in preparation for this presentation. Continuing, Dr. Bennardo added that our past practice has been to compare ourselves to ourselves and to rely on only similar school districts when comparing test results. He shared that now was the time

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**School Report  
Card Presentation  
Continued:**

when we can compare ourselves to County and neighboring districts. He felt that the District was in a “Renaissance” period—finances were steady, building leadership was steady, teaching staff was solid, facility needs were addressed, graduation rate was in a good place, and motivation, cooperative spirit and good morale existed throughout the District. Now was the time to talk about things that the District was doing well. He articulated the next steps in the approach—to shine a bright spotlight on academic excellence; build upon prior talk of “getting students through,” to pushing students to excel through mastery, aspirational measures, advanced diplomas, etc. We can compare ourselves to the best of the best, and close sub-group performance gaps, which was always a challenge. Dr. Bennardo added that the opt-out movement made Grades 3-8 district-by-district comparisons invalid, and the committee searched for indicators where we were able to make apple-to-apple comparisons in state assessments. He shared the time was now where administration can usher in a quarterly report card. Dr. Bennardo stated that while the Curriculum office was usually where report card information was disseminated, this year the desire was to have the entire administrative team be part of the reporting process.

Dr. Bloom reviewed the Grades 3-8 ELA and Math testing results. With the ELA testing, our Grade 7 results were Number 3 in the Western Suffolk BOCES cluster. With math, we were above the average in Grades 4-6. Dr. Bloom reviewed the areas of focus, i.e., decline in Grade 3 when compared to WS BOCES and similar schools; a slight decline in Grade 4-5 when compared to western Suffolk; and major achievement gaps in our Black/African American, Hispanic Latino, SWD, LEP and economically disadvantaged subgroups. Dr. Bloom shared that these areas will certainly be addressed. He then reviewed strategies for such improvement for this and next year by adding:

- Balanced Approach to Literacy in K-5
- Fundamental Phonics in K-2
- NYS Math Modules in K-5
- Programmatic changes in middle-level education
- Increased instructional time in Mathematics AIS
- Bilingual AIS Mathematics Support
- Math and Read 180 Intervention Program
- Implementation of ThinkCerca and iLit within Reading and ENL classes
- Increased enrollment of students taking Earth Science at the middle level school

Dr. Bloom gave specifics for each bulleted item providing additional information for implementing the various strategies.

Principal Toto spoke to the restructuring that was implemented at Silas Wood where they moved from a 3-teacher team to a 4-teacher team, with each teacher teaching one specific content area.

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**School Report  
Card Continued:**

Principal Smith spoke to changing the Math support class that ran opposite lunch. It was poorly attended due to that timeframe. He added a 45-minute block in the schedule for students to work with a Math teacher that runs on a Day 1/Day 2 schedule with Literacy Support on Day 1 and AIS Math support on Day 2. This arrangement allowed for more student participation. Mrs. Brieff asked what course this arrangement replaced for the students; Principal Smith responded that it was World Language. Principal Smith reviewed the Science 8 sub-group percentages at Levels 3 and 4, as well as the Earth Science results where the percentage was at 100% for each sub-group. The latter encompassed seven sections.

Ms. Poprilo reviewed the NWEA Reading and Math results. With both, 50% of the students in the study met their growth potential. The Math showcased the hard work of the teachers and the fact that our students are moving forward. Mr. Ciappetta asked if growth projection changes from year to year; Ms. Poprilo responded affirmatively that it does.

Dr. Bennardo spoke to the 5-Year Regents Trend with Comprehensive English; the 2015 percentage was 91%. Dr. Bennardo complimented Mrs. Joann Hili-Carbone and her team of English teachers for the efforts put forth in preparing the students for the English Regents. While the results are embargoed at this point, he has every reason to believe that they will be a source of pride, and Dr. Bennardo expressed confidence that the District was moving in a positive direction. Dr. Bloom also added that the Regents were in fact the Common Core English examinations, and the difficulty factor for students certainly existed, however, the preparation provided by our English teachers made all the difference.

Principal Murphy reviewed the 5-Year Regents Trend with Science examinations. He stated that there were very positive trends when comparing 2011 scores to 2015. The Earth Science scores went from 66% in 2011 to a present 75%; Chemistry and Physics scores, however, were dormant. Additional services must be provided to students.

With the 5-Year Regents Trend in Math, discussion ensued regarding the number of students who took the Common Core Algebra Regents (score 76%) vs. the “old” Algebra Regents (score 72%); approximately 100 students took the Common Core Algebra Regents. With the Geometry Regents, the Common Core Regents score was 48%, whereas the traditional Geometry Regents was 75%.

Social Studies 5-Year Regents Trend in U.S. History and Government had similar scores from year-to-year, with a drop in 2014 of 89%, but the 2015 score was up to 92%. Global Studies for the past three years has been steady, however, concern was articulated to seeing these numbers rise from the low 80% scores.

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**School Report  
Card Continued:**

Several more slides provided information pertaining to the district's ranking in Suffolk County, as well as when compared to the State.

The Advanced Placement courses were reviewed with the trends that have occurred from 2010 to present. There has been a 10% increase in student participation in that time span, a 5% increase in the number of exams given, and scores of 3, 4, and 5 maintained at approximately 70%.

High school trends were also reviewed for the past three years reflecting an increase from 89% three years ago to last year's 91% graduation rate. The Advanced Regents Diploma rate was reported as stagnant at 38%, requiring more pathways for improved achievement. Our percentage of students attending college increased to 90%, while the economically disadvantaged rate increased these past three years to a current 50%.

Mr. Ciappetta expressed appreciation for the presentation. He asked Dr. Bennardo to summarize—what was the district's strongest academic strength, and conversely, where was the most improvement needed? Dr. Bennardo immediately responded that ELA was the source of strength, and the area of most need was in closing the achievement gap.

With no other questions from the audience, the presentation concluded.

**Adoption of  
Agenda:**

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the revised tentative agenda be adopted.  
Motion carried unanimously.

**Motion on Minutes  
through Schedule  
of Bills (Warrants):**

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. LaCara, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District approve the following items:

**Minutes:**

Minutes of Board meeting held on January 27, 2016.

**Schedule of Bills  
(Warrants):**

General (A)	Warrant 81	\$3,685.38
“ “	82	\$758,836.28
“ “	83	\$13,213.85
“ “	V082	(\$103.50)
School Lunch	Warrant 28	\$19,906.38
Special Aid (F)	32	\$518.00
“ “	33	\$1,610.00

**Board Approved Packet of February 12, 2016**

General (A)	Warrant 79	\$320,266.39
“ “	80	\$26,327.05
School Lunch	27	\$15,682.85
Special Aid (F)	31	\$56,254.65

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- Vote on Minutes through Schedule of Bills (Warrants):** Mr. Ciappetta asked for any additional comments or questions on the above items, and then called for a vote on the motion.  
Motion carried unanimously.
- Budget Transfer:** Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. LaCara, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the budget transfer in the amount of \$2,300,000 from various budget codes to the Teacher Retirement Budget Code.  
Motion carried unanimously.
- TANS 2016/2017:** Motion by Mrs. LaCara, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the financial agreement relating to our 2016/2017 Tax Anticipation Notes between the District and Munistat Services, Inc.  
Motion carried unanimously.
- Approval of the Jordan Schumann Memorial Scholarship:** Motion by Mrs. Brieff, seconded by Mrs. DeGaetano, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the annual Jordan Schumann Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$300 for a student who possesses a weighted grade-point average of 85 or better, and pursues a college degree in theatre, journalism, or communications. Be it further Resolved that the candidate must participate in community service and be considered a positive role model at Walt Whitman High School; the recipient to be selected by Walt Whitman performing arts teachers.  
Motion carried unanimously.
- Donation from Huntington Mazda and Huntington Toyota:** Motion by Mrs. LaCara, seconded by Mrs. DeGaetano, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the donation of \$2,200 from Huntington Mazda to be utilized for the February 26, 2016, "Hoop Dreams with Chris Herren" presentation; Be it further Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the donation of \$5,000 from Huntington Toyota Scion to be utilized for expenses related to any specialized district event.  
Motion carried unanimously.
- Dr. Bennardo complimented Mr. Lee Nober, Special Projects Coordinator, for the work he has done in securing funds for the District. Mr. Ciappetta concurred, and stated that Mr. Nober was doing a great job with local businesses.
- Superintendent Travel/Conference Request:** Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. DeGaetano, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the travel/conference request for the Superintendent's attendance at the National Dance Competition, February 26-27, 2016.  
Motion carried unanimously.

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**Recommendations  
for Placement by  
CSE/CPSE:**

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington School District, having reviewed minutes of the Committee on Special Education dated January 6, 15, 20, 21, 22, 27, 28, February 1, 2, 3, 4, 9, 10, 11, 12, 2016, and the Committee on Preschool Special Education dated January 6, 15, 20, 21, 29, February 1, 9, 2016, is satisfied that the procedures of Chapter 853 of the Education Law were followed and accepts the recommendations for placement set forth, copies made part of these legal minutes, pp. 1048-1059.

Motion carried unanimously.

**Personnel:**

Motion by Mrs. LaCara, seconded by Mr. Nitkewicz, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington School District, having reviewed the recommendations of the Chief School Administrator, is satisfied that the provisions of Section 3012 of Education Law were followed, and thereby accepts those recommendations as set forth in schedules made part of these legal minutes, pp. 1060-1069, and authorizes implementation thereof:

Schedule 2: Probationary Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 7: Temporary Replacement Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 9: Coaching/Extracurricular Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 12: Leaves of Absence; Ext. of Sick Leave

Schedule 15: Appointments (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 16: Terminations (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 17: Leaves of Absence (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 18: Re-Employment to Positions (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 19: Temporary/Seasonal Appointment (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 22: Substitute Employee appointments (Inst./Non-Inst.)

Motion carried unanimously.

**Information and  
Reports:**

1. Final Risk Assessment Report, June 2015
2. Revised Memorandum from Ingerman Smith, LLP, re Calculating an Extended Probationary Term Arising from an Unpaid Leave of Absence
3. Letter re Western Suffolk BOCES Annual Meeting on April 12, 2016, and Budget Vote/Elections on April 19, 2016
4. The Long-Islander (1)

In Envelopes:

1. Letter from Western Suffolk BOCES (Mr. Kaden Only)

Information Sent to Board Week Ending February 12, 2016

1. Memorandum from NSSBA re Citizen Referenda – School Budget Votes
2. Letter from Dr. Bennardo to Birchwood Boosters - January, 2016
3. Letter from Dr. Bennardo to SAT/ACT Award of Excellence Recipients
4. Board & Administrator – February 2016 Issue
5. The Long-Islander (1)



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**Voice of the Residents:**

Visitors were invited to participate.

**Adjournment:**

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mrs. Brieff, be it Resolved that the meeting be adjourned.  
Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:30 p.m.



Nicholas Ciappetta, J.D., Vice President



Laura McLean, District Clerk

Attachments made part of these legal minutes, pages 1048 through 1069.