

PTA General Meeting November 6, 2019

- Welcome from Tara
 - No minutes to approve
 - Thank you Dina, Alyson and hospitality
 - Panel: Terese Gerdere, Peter Cason, Mr. Albano, Amy Goodman and Dr. McDonnel (Laura Benke in the audience- only allowed 2 board members on the panel)
 - We have 12 questions. The panel knows the questions ahead of time
- What is the district doing to promote the high school to our middle school students, to keep them from leaving and attending private high schools? How are they promoting the academic achievements of its students, including the great colleges the high school students are getting into?
 - They have looked at the data of students who have left between 8th and 9th grade
 - 2015 10 left and 2 returned
 - 2016 5 left
 - 2017 10 left
 - 2018 18 left and 4 returned
 - 2019 9 left
 - There are under 100 graduates/ year
 - Dr. Linehan sees the benefit in a 6th-12th grade building. M.S will see what is coming up and he is able to spend time with 8th grade parents and events to promote the high school.
 - We offer 11 AP classes
 - In the past there were 4 AP's and there was a lack of vigor. Tuckahoe has been working to build that up.
 - Other districts have higher percentages of students leaving, but since they are bigger, it is not as noticeable.
 - On a positive note, the children who leave are going to good schools and are well prepared.
 - Dr. Linehan uses his weekly newsletters and social media to promote successes. All college the students are accepted to are published on a bulletin board.
- What is the district doing to reach out to colleges to promote our high school students?
 - 60 colleges came to meet with small groups of kids
 - We have expanded our reach of schools that come out.

- We have a college fair with approximately 70 colleges. Sometimes it is hard to get reps to come because our school is so small. Our students can attend fairs at Eastchester and Pelham.
- Guidance counselors have a good relationship with the SUNY colleges.
- Top things the colleges look at:
 - Standardized tests
 - Vigor of program
 - GPA and placement
- Jump start- all juniors get free test prep
- We have a great student to counselor ratio
- What programs is BOCES currently offering to our high school students and does the district have plans to expand those?
 - Only special ed kids take part in BOCES. They get students ready for on the job training and license jobs.
 - During budget time we can discuss if BOCES classes can be offered to others, but there would have to be a trade off.
- What is the process used to hire coaches; specifically for varsity sports?
 - First they post internal- if there is a qualified teacher on staff they have priority
 - Next they post on OLAS
 - Athletic director goes through resumes and looks for certification
 - Certified PE teacher in NYS
 - Certified teacher with coaching courses
 - Non-teacher with coaching courses
 - Brief interviews are conducted to narrow down the pool
 - Small committee conducts a more formal interview with the high school principal and assistant principal. References are contacted
 - A recommendation is made to the board and the coach is approved
 - Varsity coaches assist in interviewing assistant and J.V coaches
 - Coaches are up year to year. If coaches are liked they are recommended again the next year.
- What additional AP courses will be added to the high school if any?
 - Computer Science was added 2 years ago.
 - Currently looking at language classes for juniors, but can this be sustained? We currently offer AP Literature.
 - There is a budget aspect to the AP classes (i.e expensive to run a course for a small number of students.)
 - Classes are offered at different grade levels
 - Juniors and seniors can do AP classes online

- Who in the district is in charge of curriculum? What is the district doing to make the curriculum more competitive? How would a parent find out about the schools curriculum?
 - Dr. McDonnell's official title is Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum, Instruction and Technology
 - K-12 position
 - Includes professional development
 - Committee creates curriculum and presents it to Dr. McDonnell. They create new classes and refresh existing classes
 - All curriculum is on a website, Rubicon Atlas, and archived. All teachers are trained in it
 - As the curriculum is developed it goes on the website.
 - Once the curriculums are there the website can be public.
 - They are looking into making some public now.
 - English and science at Cottle are a big focus this year.
- What is the district's plan for specific professional development for the year as part of the strategic plan?
 - Deeper analysis of standardized test results
 - Look at sub groups of our students who didn't do well
 - More instructional collaboration
 - Grade level and department collaboration
 - Review standards and methods (right now focused on science)
 - There are 4 Superintendent Days built into the calendar
 - STEAM teacher will help all teachers add activities to their curriculums and lessons
 - Peer tech coach
- Although it's known that not all can be discussed, what are the plans/ priorities for the district's safety committee?
 - Building Level
 - Emergency response team- nurse, certified teachers- able to respond to emergencies daily
 - Building safety committee does more planning
 - Alteris is the company that helps with our safety plans
 - District safety plan is on the website
 - Building safety plans are very detailed and specific. They are private
 - District safety committee looks at the big picture and works with Eastchester and Tuckahoe police chiefs. (For example they hired an SRO for Tuckahoe.)

- SRO (Student Resource Officer) can deal with threats, build relationships with students. They want the SRO to be more involved with instruction. (ie go into health classes to talk about drunk drivers)
- Vestibules are being built. They are working on the new procedures
- Gov. Cuomo signed legislation that the district can put cameras on school bus stop signs. We are not sure if we will do it. The cameras cost nothing, but the company takes a portion of the fines collected for passing a stopped school bus. The district safety team is discussing this.
- What is the district's plan to address reading services in the middle and high school in terms of curriculum/ program and qualified support for continuity?
 - Needs to be cohesive- district wide
 - Looked at where kids struggle- 2nd grade phonemic awareness
 - How are we screening kids the best way possible to identify difficulties?
 - Are we teaching comprehension the best way possible?
 - Hiring a reading teacher part time in the middle school (will considering making it a full time position)
 - Middle school and high school will have a meeting to see how are are screening the kids and what the students need
- What is the board's plan for finding the new superintendent; specifically have you posted the position yet? What will the process look like and how will you be updating the community?
 - Board has started the process
 - Looked at search firms
 - Decided to include BOCES recruitment
 - Met with Dr. Kohls wo is running the search. The are going to do a national search.
 - The question now is will the do an open or closed search
 - Open search- more community input and involvement
 - Closed search- once the posting is out, it is done privately
 - Open search limits the pool because some candidates don't want their resumes out and they don't want their current district to know they are looking.
 - Town Hall meeting on Dec. 2nd to get community input
 - A survey will be sent to everyone to get feedback
 - Dec 12 board will meet to look at everyone's feedback and create a post
 - Dec 20th position will be posted until Jan. 31
 - They will meet in February to go over the applications
 - Mr. Kohl will create a list of recommendations for the board to look at. He will recommend approximately 8 candidates.

- They will start in. Interviews in March and narrow it down to 2. (If it is a closed process, the community will get involved at this point)
 - They will make the final decision by May
 - July 1st will be the start date
 - There is a page on the website with dates to keep the public up to date on the process
- There's been a lot of turnover in Tuckahoe in the last year. What is the board's plan to attract highly qualified educators for the district's leadership positions? What are the steps the board is taking to ensure that the many qualified educators we do have remain?
 - Most important- looking at the superintendent search. The right decision will help the future of Tuckahoe.
 - Promote good culture and create security for teachers that are here now- keep everyone informed about what is going on as much as possible.
 - Look at our policy to see how we do things in human resource
- Are we still on target for the capital project?
 - 3 aspects remaining
 - Cottle's 2nd floor-looking at late February completion
 - Noise level was a distraction so work stopped during the day and is now from 3:30 to midnight
 - Neighbors have been notified and supportive
 - Cottle's Security vestibule- January/February completion
 - 5.000 oil tank was found. It as been removed
 - Possible soil contamination
 - Needed additional testing, especially with the foundation
 - Now back on schedule
 - Mr. Morash was relocated.
 - There is a backup plan for Ms. Mitchell's class if the noise becomes a distraction
 - MS/HS interior security vestibule- December break completion
 - Interior glass vestibule
 - Give i.d and then buzzed into the building
 - Glass on back order. It should be delivered in December
 - H.S field is done.
 - Cottle field- There is \$400,000 for the field, but not sure what is going to be done with it. That is the only money left.
 - Board gets daily updates
 - Legally we don't have to do anymore air quality tests
 - Every area was tested after the abatement, no further testing is required.

- All areas have been cleared
- Ventilation systems are being implemented. Project manager gives updates
- Facilities director oversees the custodians and facilities. He makes sure cleaning is done to keep kids safe from construction.