

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of South Huntington Union Free School District was held on Wednesday, September 9, 2009, in Conference Room B of the Administration Building, 60 Weston Street, Huntington Station, New York.

Present: **Board Members:**

President
Vice President

Mr. Kaden
Mr. Teresky
Mr. Ciappetta
Mrs. LaCara
Mr. Lupinacci
Mr. Nitkewicz
Mrs. Vassallo

Staff:

Superintendent of Schools
Asst. Supt. for Personnel & District Services
Asst. Supt. for Instruction & Curriculum
Asst. Supt. for Business
Asst. Supt. for Student Services
District Clerk

Dr. Shea
Mr. Romanelli
Mrs. Rogers
Mrs. Occhiogrosso
Ms. Harris
Mrs. Hammond

Call to Order: Mr. Kaden opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m.

Executive Session: Motion by Mr. Teresky, seconded by Mr. Lupinacci, 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. LaCara, seconded by Mr. Ciappetta, be it Resolved that the Executive Session be adjourned.
Motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Kaden opened the Business Meeting at 7:50 p.m. and led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda: Motion by Mr. Lupinacci, seconded by Mrs. Vassallo, be it Resolved that the revised tentative agenda be adopted.

Mr. Nitkewicz moved, with a second from Mrs. Vassallo, to move New Business Items 6 and 7 to the beginning of the New Business list.
Motion, to amend the agenda, carried unanimously.

Motion on Minutes through Schedule of Bills (Warrants): Motion by Mrs. Vassallo, seconded by Mr. Ciappetta, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington School District approve the following items:

Minutes: Minutes of Board meeting held on July 1 and 20, 2009.

Claims Audit Report: Claims Audit Report, August 2009, copy made part of these legal minutes, pp. 283-284.

Bids: The following bids, as recommended by Administration on schedules made part of these legal minutes, pp. 285-289.

Serving Line Equipment (Revision)	Schedule 16
Handicapped Transportation	37

Schedule of Bills (Warrants):	General Fund	Warrant 17	\$ 5,489.71
	"	18	114,652.50
	"	19	335,000.00
	"	20	2,282,006.47
	"	V000	(2,313.60)
	School Lunch	6	30,106.95
	Special Aid	8	323,774.55
	Capital Reserve Budget	12	253,880.43
	2003 Bond	11	198,815.91

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General Fund	Warrant 13	\$226,815.99
"	15	1,300.00
"	16	729.00
School Lunch	5	6,031.72
Special Aid	7	28,163.35
Dental Ins.	14	69,588.30
Capital Reserve Budget	10	11,598.80
2003 Bond	9	643,225.98

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General Fund	Warrant 11	\$ 354,608.57
"	12	1,340,416.75
"	V000	(3,470.40)
School Lunch	4	55,568.85
Special Aid	6	56,231.55
Capital Reserve Budget	8	61,849.75
2003 Bond	7	126,157.58

Vote on Minutes through Schedule of Bills (Warrants): Mr. Kaden asked for any additional comments or questions on the above items, and then called for a vote on the motion.
Motion carried unanimously.

Communications:

1. Invitation from Gene and Terry Sicard to the New York State Field Band Conference competition to be held on October 3, 2009
2. Letter from Lisa and David Brieff re Lowering of Passing Grade and the Eligibility Policy
Dr. Brieff was present at the meeting and addressed the Board. Dr. and Mrs. Brieff feel that the passing grade should not be lowered to 65 but kept at the current passing grade of 70. They also do not feel that the eligibility policy should be amended. They are concerned that these changes would send the wrong message to our students.

**Discussion of
Grading Policy:**

Mr. Kaden noted that there is concern among some Board members regarding our district's policy of having 70 as the passing grade rather than the state recognized passing grade of 65. Mr. Kaden stated that the Board and administration looked at data and found that there were 136 failing grades that fell within the failing grade of 65 and 66. Mr. Kaden noted that students who received a final grade of 67, 68 and 69 would be elevated to the passing grade of 70. Mr. Kaden also noted that our district and Bayport-Blue Point UFSD are the only districts on Long Island that use 70 as a passing final grade rather than 65. Mr. Nitkewicz noted that changing our policy would bring us in line with other districts, however, with our policy of increasing grades 67, 68 and 69 to a passing grade of 70, that leaves only grades 65, 66 and lower as failing. Mr. Ciappetta stated that he had a concern that if the grade was lowered to 65, students with a grade of 62, 63 and 64 would be elevated to the 65 passing grade. Mr. Ciappetta stated that he would not want to see that. Mrs. Vassallo stated that South Huntington is a fantastic district that holds their students to a higher standard. She is upset at times by the coverage the district receives in *Newsday*. Robert Bartolomeo asked for clarification on elevating the final grade to 70 and he also questioned what prompted the Board to reconsider the passing grade at this time. Sue Burton asked what kind of a message would we be sending the students if the passing grade was lowered. She stated that she felt it would be a bad message. Another resident asked about the impact on the budget if the grade was lowered. She also asked why the Board was considering this at this time. SHTA President Dennis Callahan stated that he strongly opposed changing the passing grade to 65. He questioned the message that would be sent to students in South Huntington at a time when students are being encouraged to set higher goals. He feels it would be counterintuitive to lower standards. Mr. Callahan stated that relaxing the eligibility standards would send the message that extracurricular activities are more important than academics. Mr. Callahan stated that Walt Whitman High School is a high performing school and he urged the Board not to lower standards. Other residents in the audience expressed their opposition to the lowering of standards. A resident questioned the figure of 136 failing students. Mr. Kaden clarified that it was 136 failing grades out of 16,000 total grades. Mr. Polansky noted that the focus at the high school would always be what support could be provided to help the students reach their academic potential. Mr. Kaden stated that he has been concerned with the failure rate. Now, he believes that we might be doing a disservice to the students in that window. He also feels we are not doing our district a good service. Mr. Kaden also noted that we would have fewer students attending summer school. PTA Council President Doreen Boehme stated that she would like to bring this matter to the PTA membership. After further discussion on this matter, the Board took the following action:

Mr. Nitkewicz moved, with a second from Mrs. LaCara, to table this discussion until the September 30, 2009, Board of Education meeting. Motion, to table, carried unanimously.

Eligibility Policy:

Mr. Kaden noted that the current eligibility policy stated that if students were absent on Friday, they could not participate on Saturday or Sunday. Also, if students arrived late to first period they could not participate in extracurricular activities. The Board is considering changing the policy. Mrs. Vassallo stated that a lot of children are being punished and the entire team is being punished. She feels it is possible to not feel well on Friday but be okay to participate on Saturday or Sunday. Mr. Ciappetta stated that he would like to move the disqualification from first period to the end of second period. Mr. Lupinacci stated that we are trying to give the students the benefit of the doubt. Mr. Kaden noted that nothing is black and white. There are extenuating circumstances in every situation. One idea the Board was considering was possibly allowing two excused latenesses that would not affect the students' eligibility. Dr. Brieff stated that he would not have a problem with students with extenuating circumstances, however, he feels that a lot of students would take advantage. Another parent questioned that if the rule was working, why are we going to change it. Mr. Teresky stated that rules change constantly. Once they are written it doesn't mean they are written in stone. Robert Bartolomeo stated that we are trying to elevate human behavior. He stated that he would be against anything that would teach the students that the reason doesn't matter. We cannot disregard reason. Mr. Ciappetta stated that he could accept two exceptions per season. Mr. Nitkewicz stated that he would be comfortable with that. It would give a fair measure of flexibility. Dennis Callahan stated that the penalty is not that extreme. It is just one day. Barbara Archer thanked Mr. Polansky and his staff for all their hard work. Mrs. Archer stated that she would not want to take a step backwards. She does not want the Board to lower the standards. She stated that she would like to see the policies stay as they are and she would trust Mr. Polansky to make the decision in extenuating circumstances. Mr. Nitkewicz stated that he appreciates and respects Mrs. Archer's opinion, however, he feels two excused latenesses would be okay. He feels the policy needs some built in flexibility. Mrs. Dell polled the Board and asked them how many times their children or they were late to school. After further discussion, the Board took the following action:

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mr. Teresky, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves amendment of the Eligibility Policy to state that Walt Whitman High School students must be in school by the end of Period 2 in order to be eligible to participate in extra-curricular and/or interscholastic activities on that day.

Motion carried 6-1, with Mrs. LaCara opposed.

Motion by Mr. Ciappetta, seconded by Mr. Lupinacci, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves amendment to the Eligibility Policy to allow students who are absent on Friday to participate in extracurricular activities on Saturday and Sunday.

Motion carried unanimously.

11:30 p.m. Time Limitation Extended: It was the sense of the Board to extend the 11:30 p.m. time limitation and continue the meeting.

Recess: Mr. Kaden called for a brief recess.

Transportation Concerns: There were parents in the audience with transportation concerns. Several parents spoke about their safety concerns. They stated that the buses are overcrowded. The buses that are a main concern to the parents are:

Silas Wood – Bus P and H15
Countrywood – Bus E, N, QQ
Maplewood – Bus B
Stimson – Bus H12

Robert Bartolomeo stated that some students are on the buses for 45 minutes plus and they are a half hour late to school. Doreen Boehme stated that she is hearing about a lot of problems with the buses. She feels it is a dangerous situation.

It was noted that the buses can hold up to 44 adults or 66 children. One parent asked at what age are they considered children. After further discussion, the parents were told that the administration would look into the matter.

Update on H1N1 Flu: Due to the late hour, this matter was postponed.

NYSSBA Annual Convention: Motion by Mr. Ciappetta, seconded by Mr. Teresky, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves attendance at the New York State School Boards Association Annual Convention and Trade Show to be held on October 16-18, 2009, in New York City.
Motion carried unanimously.

Internal Auditor Workshops: Mrs. Vassallo moved, with a second from Mr. Ciappetta, to table this item.
Motion, to table, carried unanimously.

Quick Environmental "Joe Greene" Scholarship: Motion by Mr. Lupinacci, seconded by Mr. Ciappetta, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington Union Free School District hereby approves the Quick Environmental "Joe Greene" Scholarship recipient, as outlined in Mr. Wright's August 31, 2009, memo, a copy made part of these legal minutes, p. 290.
Motion carried unanimously.

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

Motion by Mr. Nitkewicz, seconded by Mr. Lupinacci, be it Resolved that the Board of Education of the South Huntington School District, having reviewed minutes of the Committee on Special Education dated March 30, 31, April 2, 3, 14, 15, 16, 23, 29, May 5, 6, 7, 12, 13, 18, 27, 28, June 3, 11, 17, 18, 24, July 17, 20, 22, 29, August 6, 12, 19, 21, September 2, 2009, and the Committee on Preschool Special Education dated July 21, 28, August 11, 18 and 20, 2009, and Transition to CSE dated July 21 and August 14, 2009, 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. 291-316.

Motion carried unanimously.

Personnel:

Motion by Mr. Ciappetta, seconded by Mr. Teresky, 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. 317-337, and authorizes implementation thereof:

- Schedule 1 – Probationary Appointments (Instructional)
- Schedule 6 – Temporary Replacement Appointments (Instructional)
- Schedule 8 – Coaching/Extracurricular Appointments (Instructional)
- Schedule 10 – Terminations (Instructional)
- Schedule 11 – Leaves of Absence; Ext. of Sick Leave (½ Pay);
Sabbatical Leave (Instructional)
- Schedule 12 – Salary Change (Instructional)
- Schedule 14 – Appointment (Non-Instructional)
- Schedule 15 – Terminations (Non-Instructional)
- Schedule 16 – Leaves of Absence (Non-Instructional)
- Schedule 18 – Reemployment to Position (Non-Instructional)
- Schedule 19 – Temporary/Seasonal Appointments (Non-Instructional)
- Schedule 20 – Re-Appointments (Non-Instructional)
- Schedule 21 – Emergency Conditional Employees (Instr./Non-Instr.)
- Schedule 23 – Substitute Employees (Instructional)
- Schedule 24 – Substitute Employees (Non-Instructional)

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- Schedule 1 – Probationary Appointments (Instructional)
- Schedule 8 – Coaching/Extracurricular Appointments (Instructional)
- Schedule 10 – Terminations (Instructional)
- Schedule 11 – Leaves of Absence; Ext. of Sick Leave (½ Pay);
Sabbatical Leave (Instructional)
- Schedule 15 – Terminations (Non-Instructional)
- Schedule 16 – Leaves of Absence (Non-Instructional)
- Schedule 23 – Substitute Employees (Instructional)

**Personnel:
(Continued)**Board Approved – Packet of August 21, 2009

Schedule 6 – Temporary Replacement Appointments (Instructional)

Schedule 14 – Appointment (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 18 – Reemployment to Position (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 20 – Re-Appointments (Non-Instructional)

Schedule 24 – Substitute Employees (Non-Instructional)

Motion carried unanimously.

**Information and
Reports:**

1. Memo to Board Policy Holders from Mr. Romanelli re Approval of Board Policy 5684, Financial Software and Approval of Board Policy 5685, Information Security
2. Letter to Parent from Dr. Shea re steps to reduce spread of H1N1flu
3. Letter to Parent/Guardian from Dr. Shea re request to take different bus instead of regularly assigned one
4. Letter to Parents/Guardians from Mr. Polansky re "Red, White and Blue Day"
5. Letter from Rona Silverman to Mrs. Occhiogrosso re lack of street signs, together with Mrs. Occhiogrosso's response
6. Personnel Postings (4)
7. Memo to Dr. Shea from Mrs. Occhiogrosso re Meeting Minutes of Architect Meeting of September 2, 2009
8. News articles; *The Long-Islander*, 9-4-09

Information Sent to Board Week Ending August 28, 2009

1. Welcome back letter to Colleague from Dr. Shea
2. Memo to Dr. Shea from Mrs. Occhiogrosso re minutes of architect meetings
3. Personnel Postings (10)
4. Letter to Dr. Shea from Maureen B. Virsinger, Suffolk Association of School Business Officials re scholarship check in honor of Mrs. Occhiogrosso
5. Letter to Parent/Guardian from Ms. Robins re Red, White and Blue Day
6. Flyer re N-SSBA Annual Resolutions Dinner Meeting to be held on September 30
7. News article: *The Long-Islander*, 8-27-09

Information Sent to Board Week Ending August 21, 2009

1. Letter to Mr. Kaden from Katie McGowan, HorseAbility, re Autism Awareness Club
2. **Confidential** memo from Ingerman Smith, LLP re a personnel matter
3. Memo to Dr. Shea from Ms. Harris re Student Online Courses
4. Memo to Dr. Shea from Dr. Eagen re June Regents Exam Scores
5. Memo to the Board of Education from Stimson Middle School re Summer Mailing Packets
6. Letter to Parent/Guardian from Mrs. Tapler re temporary facility
7. Personnel Postings (4)
8. *Countrywood Chronicle*, September 2009

**Information and Reports:
(Continued)**

9. Referendum Info, Western Suffolk BOCES, August 2009
10. Flyer re Freedom Stone Ceremony to be held on September 11, 2009
11. Back to School Night letter to Parents from Mrs. Lewis
12. *American School Board Journal*, August and September 2009 (Board Members Only)

Committee Updates:

None given.

Comments from Board Members and Staff:

None given.

Voice of the Residents:

Visitors were invited to participate.

Executive Session:

Motion by Mr. Ciappetta, seconded by Mr. Teresky, be it Resolved that the Board of Education go into Executive Session to discuss the employment history of a particular person.
Motion carried unanimously.

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

Adjournment:

The meeting was declared adjourned at 12:15 a.m.

Jim Kaden, President

Judith A. Hammond, District Clerk

Attachments made part of these legal minutes, pages 283 through 337.